



The following is John Durow's foreword at the launch of the new Master Plan, followed by Jim Laussen's presentation.

We acknowledge and pay respect to the Marin Balluk people of the Kulin Nation, the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet. It is upon their ancestral lands that Overnewton Anglican Community College is built.

As we share our own knowledge, teaching, learning, faith, and research practices within this College, may we also pay respect to the knowledge embedded forever within the Aboriginal Custodianship of Country.

I am John Durow, the Chair of the Overnewton College Board and it is my pleasure to welcome you to this significant evening in the history of Overnewton College.

The purchase of the additional 13 hectares at the Keilor Campus in 2015 provided an opportunity for the College to reimagine how it could best serve the needs of current and future generations of Overnewton students through its physical assets.

The discussions about a new Master Plan for both campuses, quite rightly, began with the work undertaken, in consultation with teachers, parents and students, which resulted in the launch of the College Strategic Plan: *Taking the Alpha Generation to Excellence* at the beginning of 2017.

It was essential for the Strategic Plan to be in place before planning for new classrooms, specialist facilities and playing fields. For it is the Strategic Plan that has set the educational priorities for what would be needed physically in our Master Plan.

With the appointment of new College architects in the latter part of 2016, many consultation opportunities were provided for parents, staff and students to contribute their dreams, hopes, and aspirations for the physical future of the College. We are grateful to *Law Architects* for the work that they have achieved in developing our new Master Plan, as well as the work they are doing currently on the plans for the new Junior School and Middle School buildings.

Much work has been undertaken by the College Leadership Team and College Board in setting an agenda for a bright new future for the College and I thank those involved for their ideas, passion and dedication in getting us to this point. Whilst the desired direction was determined during the latter part of 2017, very careful consideration, strategic thinking and financial planning has culminated in the new College Master Plan.

The following is Jim Laussen's presentation at the launch of the new Master Plan.

It is wonderful that so many people have attended the launch of the new Master Plan, to be part of this really exciting development in the history of Overnewton College. Thank you so much for your support and interest.

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In preparation for the launch, we have produced the Master Plan in hard copy format. Additionally, the information that has been presented, as well as a set of possible questions that you might have, is now available on the College website. *A video of the night's presentation will be available early next week.*

I am extremely grateful to the parents, staff and students who contributed their hopes and dreams during the master planning consultations, and can assure you that every suggestion and discussion made was considered carefully. In fact, this helped to lead us to the model we have announced.

You will not be surprised to know that traffic, new classrooms, hospitality, STEM, sports and performing arts facilities, equity between the campuses (and did I say traffic?) were major considerations in the development of the masterplan.

So, let me share with you how we made sense of all the wonderful suggestions and what the bright new future of Overnewton College will be.

To me, the most important statement in our new strategic plan is the one: ***“Students are at the beginning and centre of every decision”***. It may seem obvious in a school that this would be the case but it is important for us to be confident and determined that every decision can be assessed putting the learning needs of students first.

With this in mind, there is a long-standing board policy that states that every student must have the same opportunities for learning regardless of the campus they attend. You would know that an enormous amount of careful planning by staff occurs each day to ensure that this is the case for students in our Junior School and Middle School so that all students arrive at Year 9 similarly prepared. Cross-campus planning occurs to ensure that there is consistency with the curricular and co-curricular programs, assessment, reporting, exams, special days, such as the recent Middle School market day, assemblies, chapels, camps, excursions and leadership. Even Whispers articles are written as joint Junior School and Middle School articles, to show that the experience of an Overnewton student is similar regardless of the campus at which the child is located.

It is possible to talk about a student receiving an Overnewton education, not a Taylors Lakes or a Keilor education, because of the work of our staff in achieving this.

This does not mean that families and students have not expressed concerns about a perceived difference in opportunities between campuses. At previous parent forums, I have provided the data to show that there has been a similar amount of expenditure per student on each campus over the past 20 years. I don't intend to do that again tonight but do raise this to add to the understanding that an enormous amount of time, care, thought, planning and money goes into ensuring that our students have an equitable experience regardless of the campus they attend.

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Our new strategic plan took up the opportunity afforded to our students through the new land at Keilor Campus, to plan for significant work around the water project and food sustainability for middle years students. There are some exciting authentic opportunities that will be created for students to be involved in longitudinal studies of water and food, two of the greatest issues facing the planet, as we all know.

Initially, we felt that Taylors Creek on the western border of Taylors Lakes Campus, which feeds into the Maribyrnong, could provide a great opportunity for students on that campus. Additionally, there was an opportunity to grow crops in a small part of the Taylors Lakes Campus to provide food for the new hospitality centre that we would be building as part of our strategic direction.

But more and more I was developing a sense of disquiet about whether it was going to be possible to continue to say that students would have the same experience regardless of the campus they attended. As an environmental scientist myself, I could see that the opportunity for rigorous research and science at Keilor Campus, afforded by its amazing access to the Maribyrnong River as well as hectares of farm land, could never be replicated in experience for students at Taylors Lakes Campus. Neither could the access that Keilor Campus Middle School students have to VCE teachers be replicated at Taylors Lakes Campus.

Likewise, I knew that opening up the middle years curriculum to food studies meant that we would be building new hospitality centres on both campuses at the same time. Anyone in the hospitality industry will know that such facilities are costly and require a lot of space.

Additionally, the need for performing arts facilities at Taylors Lakes Campus to match the quality of the ones at Keilor Campus, the provision of early years learning for both campuses and STEM Centres for both campuses, were adding to the priority list.

I remember that one of the questions I was asked by Board members early on in my time as Principal was why we kept our current six school structure – that is two Junior Schools, two Middle Schools, Canowindra and Senior School. “Surely it was a costly and time-consuming model?” was the general question.

However, putting students at the beginning and centre of every decision meant that providing small schools to ensure that every student was known by at least one adult has been far more important than the cost in terms of the duplication of facilities, or staff time in cross campus planning and thinking. I have been the strongest supporter of this structure in the College and have ensured that our Heads of Schools, middle management leaders and teachers, have worked together to make this happen over the past 18 years.

But in March last year, I remember having a conversation with another member of my leadership team saying that the new land at Keilor Campus had meant that providing the same opportunities for students regardless of the campus, not to mention the pressure on the budget for replicating facilities, was no longer as straight forward as it had been.

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Within a very short time of that conversation, I was convinced in my mind about the direction in which the College needed to head. This kept being confirmed in the master planning forums with parents, staff and students, as well as the planning that was being undertaken by our new architects.

You might ask why it has taken us some 12 months since this idea first sowed its seed to finally announce it to the whole community. That is because we needed to test the possibility to see whether it was best for students learning and whether it would work from a facilities perspective, from the number of students on each campus, from a financial perspective, or whether there were other models - various models were explored and tested. But each time, we came back to the model I am about to announce.

The final piece of the puzzle came when we received notification that it would be possible to work within the significant constraints of the current Keilor Campus Master Plan, a plan that can be changed only with an act of parliament, that we knew we could finish off the final stages of the planning that would be necessary.

The future for Overnewton College is one that sees our two Junior Schools united together as one at Taylors Lakes Campus, and our two Middle School united together as one at Keilor Campus. All students will enter Overnewton at Prep at Taylors Lakes Campus in our Reggio Emilia-inspired, purpose built Junior School and then move to Keilor Campus to begin their middle years journey, in a wonderful new purpose built Middle School.

I am delighted that Anne McNaughton has agreed to head up the new look Taylors Lakes Campus as one of my Deputy Principals, joining Rob Huntington who will also become Deputy Principal.

To reflect this exciting new direction, we will be renaming our campuses.

Since 1998, the Aboriginal name **Canowindra** meaning 'a home or meeting point' has been synonymous with the Year 9 Centre. As the newly developed Junior School will become the meeting point for students joining the College, the entire campus will adopt that name.

The College Vision Statement '*a community of learners, embracing the future*' is reflected in the new name of our Keilor Campus: **Yirramboi**. In the shared languages of the Boon Wurrung and Wurundjeri peoples of the Kulin Nations, **Yirramboi** meaning 'tomorrow/the future'.

Overnewton College, Canowindra Campus will provide a secure and stable learning environment for our youngest students.

Overnewton College, Yirramboi Campus will be a place where excellent education provides the pathway for older students toward a successful future.



We know that families choose to send their children to the College because of our strong inclusive community.

Inclusivity means that people of all nationalities, cultures, religions, the gender and sexually diverse, the introverted, the extroverted and our first nation people, all are treated as equals and all can safely and fairly access a good education.

The College name **Overnewton** reflects settlement by the Taylors family as squatters and the Anglo-European history of this land.

The campus names **Yirramboi** and **Canowindra** provide balance by reflecting the occupancy of indigenous Australians, specifically the people of the Kulin nation.

Yirramboi and Canowindra will help us to acknowledge our connection with the indigenous history of this land. These campus names reflect the reality that we are a community that embraces diversity and the richness of culture and language that comes with it, in a stimulating meeting place for our students to develop and thrive in preparation for their lifelong pursuits.

Already, our architects have been working with a selection of staff, consultants and board members, in the planning of new buildings to be constructed on both campuses. A new Prep to Year 2 building will be constructed on the Canowindra Campus in 2019. The current Middle School will be renovated and become our new Year 3 and 4 centre.

The new Junior School will adopt the Reggio Emilia approach to learning. This is an educational philosophy focused on pre-school and primary education, based on the principles of respect, responsibility and community, through exploration and discovery through a self-guided curriculum. At its core is an assumption that children form their own personality during early years of development and are endowed with "a hundred languages", through which they can express their ideas. The approach is child-centred and parent focused, two aspects that you will know resonate with this community. More details of this approach to early years will be presented to families in coming months.

On the Yirramboi Campus, the current Junior School will be converted into a building for students in Years 5 and 8, and a new building will be constructed alongside it for students in Years 6 and 7. This will occur in 2019 as well. The intentional split of the year levels in our buildings will highlight a true middle years' focus, so that it is not a Year 5/6 and Year 7/8 split of traditional primary and secondary schools.

I look forward to providing details of the plans for these buildings as the year progresses.

In time, Year 9 will move to the Yirramboi Campus, completing a campus that has a true focus for all students on working towards academic success in Senior School in the best way for each child.

These changes are not linked to an increase in enrolments by the College. The Junior School and Middle School will become larger but simply because of children moving campuses, not because we are changing our current enrolment strategy.

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It is our intention that the new buildings will be completed and ready for students for the start of the 2020 school year. Therefore, from the beginning of 2020, a switch will be flicked and Overnewton's bright new united future will see all Junior School students learning on the Canowindra Campus and all Middle School students learning on the Yirramboi Campus.

In the coming weeks, we will start to provide specific details of the new buildings we are about to construct. As we have done with all previous buildings, also we will provide the plans that we will have in place to ensure that there is no impact on student learning during construction.

If you remember back to my comments about why I have so fiercely supported the existing structure, you will know that I am passionate about the personal and pastoral care of every student in this College. Therefore, a lot of the planning that has occurred in developing this united future has been to ensure that every student will continue to be known.

In both the new Junior School and Middle School, students will be physically located in facilities that have no more students than they interact with currently. The Prep to Year 2 building and Year 3/4 centre, as well as the Year 8/5 and Year 7/6 buildings, will still provide students with small homes in which to learn each day.

To this end, the current Junior School staff at Keilor Campus will move with their children to the Canowindra Campus, as will the Junior School leadership team, and the Learning Development Support and counselling staff. Each of those staff members will take with them the important knowledge learned about their children over many years. I am pleased to announce this evening that Tracy Fielder will continue to be the Head of the new Junior School, and Anne McNaughton will move campuses having accepted the new position of Deputy Principal, Head of Canowindra. Tracy and Anne have worked closely together as a united team for many years and they will continue to do so into the future.

Additionally, the current Middle School staff at Taylors Lakes Campus will move with their children to the Yirramboi Campus, as will the Middle School leadership team, and the Learning Development Support and counselling staff. Each of those staff members will take with them the important knowledge learned about their children over many years. For at least the first year of its operation, the new Middle School will be led jointly by Tim Mahon and Jan Jolley, and this will ensure that the connections that our children and families have with their leaders is as strong as it can be.

Often, people have referred to the Year 9 centre as our third campus. I have never seen it like that. However, I do know that we have a "third campus" at Overnewton and that is the digital campus. This is a space where parents, staff and students interact on line, accessing and receiving information, accessing and submitting learning tasks, as well as interacting with each other. Our use and development of this third campus has not been as strong as it could be. I am delighted that Gabe Alessandrini has agreed to use his exceptional expertise in leading this work of our third campus, as the new Head of Digital Futures. This is an exciting new opportunity for the College, as we enhance the Parent Portal, online learning and reporting, as well as having a staff member devoted to ensuring that Overnewton remains at the forefront of technological developments and opportunities for our students. I look forward to working very closely with Mr Alessandrini in this new role on the College Leadership Team.

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We acknowledge that there are a significant number of families in the College with children spread across a number of schools. Therefore, from the first day of operation of the new campuses, an adult-supervised bus service will be provided between the campuses so that families who drive their children to school will need go to one campus only. For instance, Junior School families would drive to Canowindra and drop off their Junior School children. If there are older siblings in the family, they would use the supervised bus that would take them to Yirramboi. The return journey would occur in the afternoon. Of course, Junior School children could be dropped off at Yirramboi and catch the supervised bus to Canowindra as well.

We are confident that this approach will mean that families are driving to one campus only each morning and afternoon, and that the traffic issues of each campus are going to significantly improve as a result.

We would love to widen the bridge on Overnewton Road, we would love to build a road out to Arundel Road as a second entry and exit point on that campus. Unfortunately, even if we did get permission to widen the bridge, it would cost tens of millions of dollars to do so and that is money that we need to spend on learning, not asphalt. It is still my hope that we will be able to build a new connecting road along the riverbank.

In the meantime, changes to traffic flow inside the Keilor Campus will be improved and moving Junior School students to Canowindra will ease the congestion as well.

At Taylors Lakes Campus, we have been in discussions with the council over moving the pedestrian crossing to where the soccer car park is. This will make parking in that area more attractive for parents and safer for children to get into the campus.

I am excited that this new model is going to provide significant improvements in planning time for all staff and therefore the learning programs that they will develop for the children of Overnewton.

Just like the students, our teaching staff will thrive in the new campuses. They will enjoy more interaction and engagement with like-minded professionals and the students in their care, sharing a focus on quality learning. Our teachers will have the space and time for expert professional dialogue, working collaboratively with students on the best curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. Bringing together Junior School students and Middle School students enables more efficient consolidation of programs such as Talent and Potential, as well as other opportunities for extension and enhancement of students, along with centralisation of supporting programs, such as Learning Development Support. This can only help to support better outcomes when students reach VCE.

I appreciate that not everyone who attended the launch of the Master Plan is going to be impacted by the change to the campus model. Equally, I know that there will be families who will take some time to process this information and acknowledge that they will be concerned by the impact that it will have on their children. I know that parents choose Overnewton for their child's education and then they pick a particular campus and we are throwing that up in the air for a little while.

Nevertheless, I hope that the trust you have built in the College and your experiences will help you to know that this change has occurred with much thinking, dreaming, planning, prayer and careful consideration. As a

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Leadership Team and Board, we could not be more convinced that this is the right move to provide a united, exciting, and wonderful future for the children, families and staff of Overnewton College.

To recap:

- You have invested in your child's education and this consolidation will bring greater returns.
- It was costly to replicate facilities across two separate properties, and those expenses would rise with the expansion of subject areas like hospitality, performing arts and technologies.
- Resources and staff will be used more effectively at each campus for students' specific needs.
- We are seeking the continued support and enthusiasm of families to ensure real benefits for your children and minimal disruption.
- Your children will have the advantages of larger, more diverse school communities, but their class sizes and pastoral care won't change. Our College policies and our culture are all about making sure every student is known and valued.
- Please read all the information on our website, check out the Questions and Answers section, and keep the lines of communication open.
- Parents, teachers and students will be proud that we have taken these bold, positive steps to lead the Alpha Generation to Excellence.

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