

Eastern Ipswich Update

State Schools of Tomorrow

New era for schools one step closer

A \$75 million transformation of Eastern Ipswich state schools has moved a step closer, after months of community consultation.

A wealth of community ideas and views have now been shaped into recommendations by a Community Reference Group (CRG). Its report has been sent to the State Government and will now be considered by the Government, as part of its planning for the future of education in Eastern Ipswich. (See article below right).

The CRG made recommendations on the structure of schools in the cluster, which new facilities were most wanted, and how schools rated in terms of sustainability, based on agreed criteria. It reported strong support for:

- renewing schools with high-quality facilities and resources, to raise them to a similar standard to new schools;
- retaining both high schools;
- strengthening partnerships with the University of Queensland and TAFE; and
- giving schools facilities to improve students' life skills and leadership.

Changing school structures with Year 7 moving to high school was also suggested by the CRG, although this could pose some practical challenges as both high schools have significant enrolments from feeder schools outside the cluster.

Support

The CRG reported enthusiastic support for the facilities and resources to be put into every renewed school, including larger, more flexible classrooms, the latest communications technology and suitable areas for arts, science and other activities. (See article on Page 3).

The CRG also expressed enthusiasm for a multi-use covered area incorporating a stage and performance space.

During the consultation process, the CRG identified facilities to suit the particular needs of students of the Eastern Ipswich community. The CRG gave high importance to a multi-function area which would be a "Learning for Life" centre at each renewed primary school.

With facilities such as a kitchen and laundry, the centre could be used both for teaching and for activities such as a breakfast club. The space could also have a room available to promote closer contact with parents.

The State Schools of Tomorrow initiative also enables shared facilities to be provided – resources located at one school in the cluster but accessible to all. One strongly favoured resource was an inter-agency support centre, where student welfare, health and education services could be co-located, making them more accessible to students and families across the cluster.

A leadership development centre was also put forward. The report said it would "target both student leadership and staff development to facilitate team building and leadership skills".

The CRG recognised the importance of individual schools being closely involved in the detailed design process which is planned before renewal works begin.

The report also highlighted the importance of Indigenous and Pacifica cultures and of sport and the arts in the Ipswich community.

Where to from here?

The CRG's report has now been sent to the Queensland Government, where it will be considered along with other available information in the Government's planning for the future of education in Eastern Ipswich.

The recommendations are the result of significant community consultation. The CRG, consisting of the principal and Parents and Citizens Association (P&C) representatives of cluster schools, was established as the central consultation group to represent the interests and consider the feedback of the wider community.

For the time being, it is business as usual at all of the cluster schools. The schools and wider communities will be kept informed as more information becomes available.

Through the State Schools of Tomorrow initiative, communities are helping create a long-term educational vision for their state schools. This encompasses what schools they need for the future; where they should be located; what they should look like, and what facilities they should have.

The Eastern Ipswich project involves seven state schools: Blackstone, Bundamba, Dinmore, Riverview and Silkstone primary schools; Bremer State High School and Bundamba State Secondary College.



Schools rated on sustainability

The CRG considered a range of factors in determining the sustainability of individual schools in the cluster. Its objective was to put forward the best pattern of schools to serve the community's needs for the next 20 years. It considered such factors as enrolment projections and future development; the area of the school grounds; special contributions to the cluster and community; and proximity to other schools and infrastructure.

The CRG concluded there was a need to maintain both high schools, as each had strong enrolments.

Difficulties with the Bremer State High School site and a desire to improve the pattern of delivery of secondary education led to the consideration of a number of options for Bremer. These included splitting the school with a senior campus co-located with the University of Queensland (Ipswich) and the junior campus located at the current Bremer SHS site.

Silkstone and Riverview State Schools were clearly sustainable, however the CRG reported that Dinmore State School was the least sustainable, considering its small land area and enrolments, and its location.

The two schools given the next lowest sustainability ratings were Blackstone and Bundamba State Schools.

The report said: "It was felt the sustainability issues for Blackstone related to its small size, limited land area and the condition of its facilities." The CRG acknowledged the strong sentiments within the Blackstone community about retaining the Blackstone State School.

Sustainability issues for Bundamba were generally site-related – safety issues associated with a frontage to a major road, its location and generally older facilities reflected by significant upgrade costs, the CRG report stated.

Where students live and go to school

Suburb	School						
	Blackstone State School	Bundamba State School	Dinmore State School	Riverview State School	Silkstone State School	Bremer state High School	Bundamba State Secondary College
Bundamba	21.0%	58.1%	11.6%	1.2%	7.3%	2.1%	24.9%
Riverview	0.6%	4.2%	38.4%	85.0%	1.0%	0.8%	12.7%
Silkstone	10.5%	3.8%	0.0%	0.0%	23.3%	10.9%	2.8%
Raceview	5.6%	1.9%	0.0%	0.0%	10.3%	20.9%	3.1%
Flinders View	4.9%	1.5%	0.0%	0.0%	4.6%	11.4%	1.6%
Eastern Heights	3.1%	1.5%	0.0%	0.0%	7.5%	8.0%	1.5%
Booval	4.9%	6.4%	2.2%	0.0%	8.5%	2.7%	2.9%
North Booval	1.9%	4.2%	0.7%	0.0%	3.5%	3.5%	4.3%
Dinmore	0.0%	3.6%	33.3%	2.4%	0.3%	0.3%	5.9%
East Ipswich	0.0%	1.9%	1.4%	0.0%	4.7%	3.0%	3.8%
Yamanto	3.1%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	4.7%	5.7%	0.4%

As this table shows, the Eastern Ipswich cluster of state schools draws enrolments from a large number of suburbs and students do not necessarily attend their nearest school.



Uni, TAFE give support

The CRG report says that although the project is still in its formative stages, there are encouraging signs within the cluster of schools and the wider community which indicate the spirit of State Schools of Tomorrow is already becoming evident.

The principals of the seven schools hold regular meetings and have forged a stronger working partnership around the “birth to graduation” management of student progress.

The University of Queensland Ipswich campus has been an enthusiastic supporter of the project, seeing it as a wonderful opportunity to enhance tertiary education participation rates in Ipswich and to further promote links with schools.

Similarly, support from Bremer TAFE indicates that a more dynamic partnership between schools and TAFE to meet the growing need for skills training in the Moreton region is developing.

Quality facilities for all renewed schools

All schools to be renewed under State Schools of Tomorrow will receive high-quality facilities and resources which raise them to a similar standard to new schools. This means:

- ✓ Larger and more flexible classrooms with modern furniture and fittings
- ✓ Multi-purpose rooms which can be used for parent meetings and interviews etc
- ✓ The latest information and communication technology
- ✓ Teachers’ preparation and storage areas
- ✓ Practical learning areas for arts, science and other activities

- ✓ Improved landscaping, indoor/outdoor linkages and more attractive school entries
- ✓ Better school parking
- ✓ Modern administration and staff facilities
- ✓ Improved toilets
- ✓ Incorporating environmentally sustainable initiatives, such as water tanks.

The CRG report said: “The CRG felt the upgrades enhanced the sustainability of schools in the area and would contribute to greater educational outcomes for students at the schools, as well as better conditions and facilities for staff.”

A priority project

Eastern Ipswich is one of just four areas — along with Innisfail and two metropolitan Brisbane clusters — chosen as initial State Schools of Tomorrow projects.

In all, the State Government has set aside \$850 million for state school renewal — the largest one-off investment in education in Queensland’s history.

Schools in the Eastern Ipswich cluster were chosen because they have older facilities in significant need of upgrade or renewal, and they share an area where state school enrolments have been in decline since the 1970s and early 1980s.

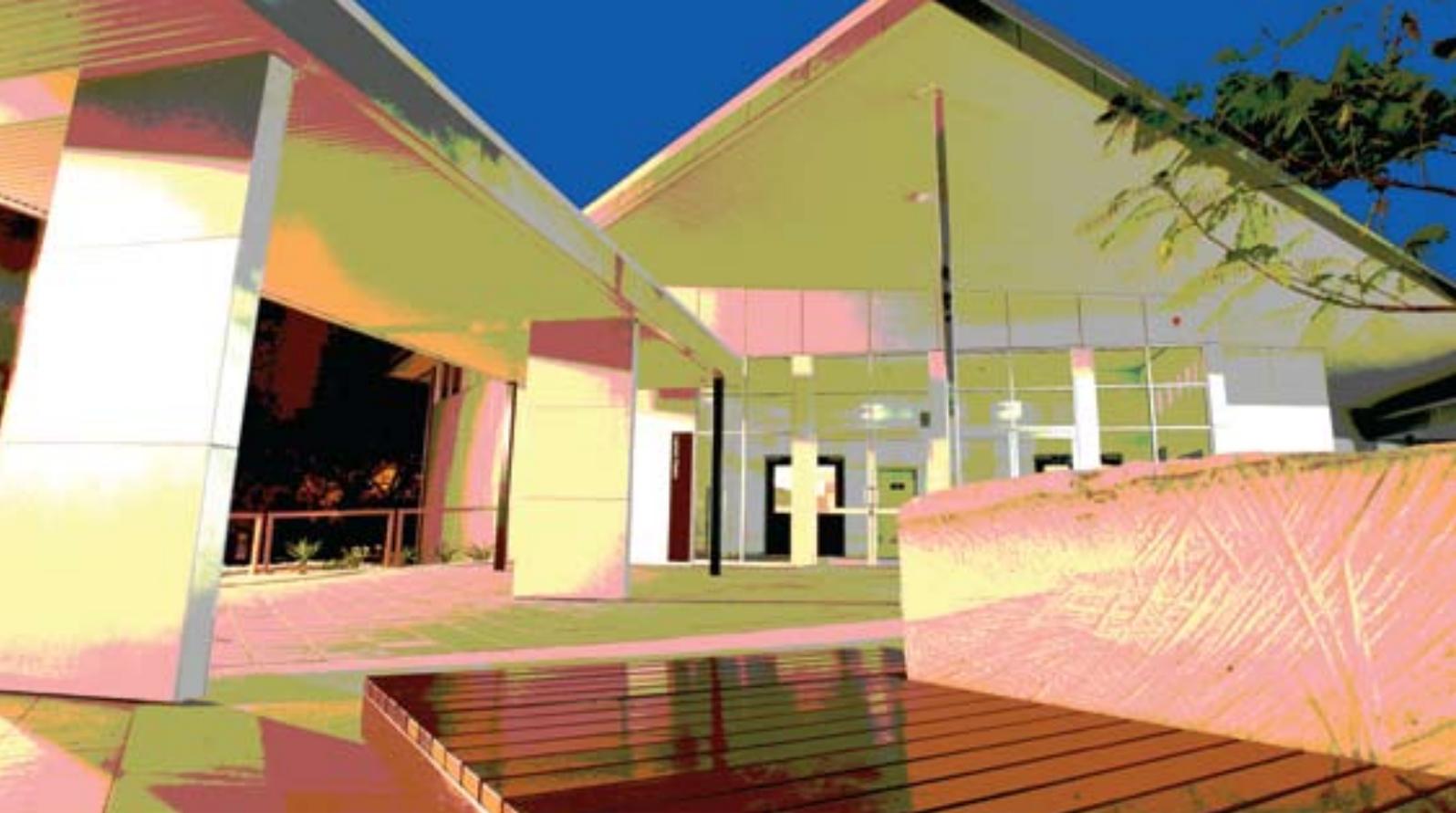
This means that most of the schools have considerable spare capacity. The close proximity between the schools means there

is also an opportunity for them to work together more closely to deliver educational services.

State Schools of Tomorrow comprises the major part of a record \$1 billion five-year investment in the State’s education system, to modernise and build new school facilities across the State.

The package has three guiding principles:

- enhancing educational opportunities — to promote students’ skills, knowledge and creativity;
- enhancing partnerships with the community — for both educational outcomes and to encourage community use of school facilities; and
- enhancing sustainability — for schools to have long term viability and service their community.



Further information

Information about Eastern Ipswich State Schools of Tomorrow Project is included on the website,
www.education.qld.gov.au/tomorrows-schools

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