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1. Executive summary

The Victorian Government is committed to establishing an education precinct in Footscray. The Footscray Learning Precinct will integrate learning at all levels, and deliver world-class education for Melbourne’s inner-west.

The Victorian School Building Authority (VSBA) ... “commissioned a feasibility study into delivery of the precinct’s vision. Once finalised, the feasibility study will inform a recommendation to the Victorian Government on how the precinct can be delivered and the priorities for staging”.

Over four weeks, the VSBA ran community engagement activities to ensure they had opportunities to express support or concerns about the proposed concept before the feasibility study is finalised and a decision is made by Government.

Key findings

- There is a high level of support for the proposed concept.
- The community would like more information about how the precinct will operate as a whole, particularly how students will move around the precinct.
- More work would need to be done to communicate the benefits of a single-point of entry for the early childhood centre and Footscray City Primary School.
- There is acceptance that Footscray City Primary School has potential to increase capacity, but there is strong preference to maintain open space on this site. This would need to be factored into the design.
- There is support for the development of the southern hub, however parking limitations and traffic congestion are of concern.
- Most people recognise the need for additional secondary capacity. There is support for the proposed junior/senior model, but a desire for more information about how this would operate.
- The proposed junior secondary school at Pilgrim Street was supported by parents living in the suburbs in close proximity to this site (Seddon, Kingsville, Yarraville), however:
  - Some people expressed a preference for a site located further south
  - There was concern about the size of the site presented and lack of surrounding open space
  - While proximity was a key factor, for some parents timing was also a determinant for support as they wanted the school to be delivered as soon as possible.
- Through the community engagement, a number of alternative sites were suggested. These sites were determined to be unsuitable due to contamination, land acquisition timelines and budget.
- There is a high level of support for Gilmore College for Girls to be redeveloped into a co-educational school. Respondents expected there would be a transition plan to support current students. Many respondents also believed this redevelopment could be delivered within a short timeframe.
- A number of respondents suggested that the Gilmore College for Girls site be considered for the senior campus. The Victoria University Nicholson Street campus was also raised as an alternative site.
- There was a high level of support for a Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Learning Centre.
- Amongst respondents, there is a preference for a drama or music performance space over a sport and recreation centre. There was support for these facilities, and virtually no resistance to them being co-located with schools or as stand-alone facilities.
Background

Proposed concept:

1. Develop a new children’s centre, co-located and integrated with Footscray City Primary School.
2. Expand and redevelop Footscray City Primary School to cater for additional students.
3. Deliver extra secondary school places, through one secondary school with three campuses (two reconfigured, one new).
4. Establish a new Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Learning Centre.
5. Deliver sports and performing arts facilities to be shared by schools and the community.

Approach to community engagement:

The community engagement sought to raise awareness about the Footscray Learning Precinct, inform the community about the proposed concept, and engage with people to gather feedback.

The VSBA:
- established a website to provide information about the proposed concept and capture feedback
- promoted the engagement period through newspaper and Facebook advertising
- distributed information materials to various locations, including local community centres
- displayed brochure stands at partner sites, such as schools
- developed a kit to encourage stakeholders to share information
- distributed content consistently through VSBA social media channels
- produced videos and reached thousands of people through Facebook
- translated information materials into six languages
- hosted a series of pop-up information sessions were in the local community, which attracted more than 200 people
- received feedback through a survey, discussion forums, hard-copy forms and formal submissions.
2. In brief

![FOOTSCRAY LEARNING PRECINCT COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PARTICIPATION](image)

3. Background

In 2014, $15 million was committed to make Footscray the “home of a preschool-to-postgraduate education precinct.”\(^1\) In the 2015-16 State Budget, $1 million was allocated for planning purposes including to undertake a feasibility study.

In June 2015, a Strategic Advisory Group was established to provide advice and drive the establishment of the precinct. The same announcement committed: “A community engagement campaign, to be launched later this year, will work with locals to ensure that the new centre of learning has what the community needs at its heart”\(^2\).

Consulting agency, Aurecon, was engaged to complete a feasibility study and develop options for the precinct. The feasibility study informs the development of the proposed concept and includes a needs assessment, and initial stakeholder feedback on possible options through qualitative research.

A pedagogy group was also formed to develop a Learning Framework in conjunction with the Mitchell Institute, which consulted with a range of local and international education experts.

In October 2016, a draft of the first phase of the feasibility study was complete. Before the feasibility study could be finalised, the VSBA needed to inform the community about the proposed concept for the precinct and obtain feedback.

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A community engagement period was implemented throughout November 2016. This document reports on the activities executed and provides a summary of the sentiment expressed through the engagement process. This report will inform the final feasibility study and recommendation to the Victorian Government.

3.1. The Footscray Learning Precinct

Over the past decade, Melbourne’s thriving inner west has experienced a baby boom. The number of young families has grown dramatically and the data shows this trend will continue. The number of school-aged children in the area is forecast to significantly increase in the future.

In response to this growing demand, the Victorian Government has committed $15 million for the first stage of the Footscray Learning Precinct — a national first in integrating learning at all levels. This ambitious project provides a long-term vision for world-class education in the inner west.

The precinct will create and link state-of-the-art facilities across Footscray, providing innovative and world-leading education from early childhood through to university, including adult education.

The vision

The proposed concept is the result of extensive discussions with inner west school principals and school councils, students, Maribyrnong City Council, Victoria University, international education experts and community groups.

The agreed aims of the Footscray Learning Precinct are to:
- take a world-class approach to education so that learners can reach their goals
- focus on meeting future demands for education
- provide more choice through a range of education providers and subjects
- include the community in learning
- connect education providers in the inner west.
World-class learning

While infrastructure gives students and educators the best possible environment in which to collaborate, create and learn, it is teachers and innovative teaching practices that are at the core of the vision for the Footscray Learning Precinct.

That is why we have developed a draft Learning Framework for the precinct in partnership with local and international education experts and school leaders in the inner west. The framework recognises the achievements of parents, students and teachers, and provides clear direction for the best possible outcome.

The framework presents the aspirations for learners at all ages and all stages of education, capturing both knowledge and capabilities.

The framework understands that literacy and numeracy are core capabilities that need to be enhanced. To ensure learners thrive, they need to be resilient, but also capable of learning to think and grow. Health and wellbeing are critical, and both need to be supported by partnerships with family and community agencies.

To provide the foundations for the framework, the precinct aims to incorporate:

- open and welcoming spaces for parents and communities to ensure parents and their children are engaged early, while offering safe places to play and travel between providers to support physical wellbeing
- opportunities for teachers to collaborate and learn, with a shared approach to professional learning across the precinct (this would reduce variability between schools, smooth student transitions and improve education outcomes)
- data measurement to understand each child’s knowledge and capabilities, help students transition between education providers and encourage greater collaboration
- managed and supported transitions between schools. Students have told us that they are interested in working with different age groups, such as primary children working with pre-school children. The precinct will offer students the opportunity to take subjects at other year levels and with other local and global providers.
- effective leadership and governance to enhance collaboration, shared use of facilities and joint planning.

3.2. Proposed concept

The Footscray Learning Precinct proposes to link, expand and upgrade learning spaces across the inner west to provide better learning opportunities for students at all ages and all stages of life.

Located in the heart of Melbourne’s growing inner west, the precinct is made up of three hubs which work together to provide an integrated learning community.

The precinct aims to deliver on five key opportunities:

**Opportunity 1:** Work with the City of Maribyrnong to develop a new children’s centre, co-located and integrated with Footscray City Primary School, in the southern hub. The new children’s centre would add much-needed early years’ education capacity and allow children to progress to a co-located primary school.

**Opportunity 2:** Create extra primary school places by expanding and redeveloping Footscray City Primary School.

**Opportunity 3:** Deliver extra secondary school places in the southern and central hubs, while making better use of Footscray City College to meet the needs of senior students.

**Opportunity 4:** Create opportunities for excellence and pathways through establishing a new Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Learning Centre, delivered in partnership between the Victorian Government and Victoria University.

**Opportunity 5:** Deliver sports and performing arts facilities to be shared by schools and the community.
Below is an outline of the proposed concept presented as part of the community engagement.

The proposed concept includes three hubs – northern, central and southern spanning the area from Farnsworth Avenue (Footscray City College) in the north, and down to Hyde and Nicholson streets (Footscray City Primary School and Victoria University) in the south. Key elements of the proposal within each hub are outlined below.

**Northern hub**
- Redevelopment of Footscray City College to a senior secondary college catering for Years 10-12.
- A new Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Learning Centre delivered in partnership with Victoria University, to offer specialised teaching and learning spaces in state-of-the-art facilities.
Central hub

- Redevelopment of Gilmore College for Girls as a new co-educational junior secondary school, catering for Years 7-9.
- The central hub could also house the performing arts centre.
Southern hub

- A new integrated Early Learning Centre developed in partnership with the City of Maribyrnong, co-located with Footscray City Primary School.
- Extra school places at Footscray City Primary School, created by expanding and redeveloping the school.
- New sports centre and recreation building, that could also house the performing arts centre.
- New junior secondary school catering for Years 7-9.

Feasibility review conducted by Aurecon Australasia Pty Ltd and images supplied by MCG Architects.
3.3. Timeline

Project timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 2015</td>
<td>• Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) established</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July - Dec 2015</td>
<td>• SAG formulated precinct vision and principles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 2015</td>
<td>• Appointed consultant to undertake feasibility study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May - June 2016</td>
<td>• Key stakeholder consultation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug - Sept 2016</td>
<td>• Formative research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2016</td>
<td>• Draft feasibility study complete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2016</td>
<td>• Community engagement (see below)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2017</td>
<td>• Finalise feasibility study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early 2017</td>
<td>• Submit recommendation to the Government</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Community engagement timeline

Community engagement was open for a four-week period. The engagement website went live on Monday 31 October with a soft launch. This was followed by an official launch and media release from the Education Minister on Wednesday 2 November. The community engagement period was open until Wednesday 30 November.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 2016</td>
<td>• Briefing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2016</td>
<td>• Material development &amp; planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2016</td>
<td>• Community engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2016</td>
<td>• Analysis &amp; draft report</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.4. Topics of interest for community engagement

The following topics of interest were explored as a part of the community engagement or identified as challenges beforehand.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISSUE</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proposed secondary school configuration</td>
<td>It has been proposed that one secondary school is established with three campuses - one senior and two junior campuses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposed location for the new junior secondary school</td>
<td>The proposed site for the new junior secondary school would be subject to land acquisition. The site presents design challenges in terms of size and configuration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposal to transition Gilmore College for Girls to a co-educational school</td>
<td>The school has experienced consistent decreasing enrolments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared community facilities</td>
<td>Council was in caretaker mode when the proposed concept was finalised for community engagement. Therefore, only Department of Education and Training elements have been included in the proposed concept.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining open space</td>
<td>Land availability and limited open space is a challenge for the project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking</td>
<td>Consistent with Departmental policy, no additional staff or visitor parking will be provided at inner city schools with good public transport access and walkability. Any additional car parking would result in a reduction of outdoor play space.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport</td>
<td>Movement of teachers and students around the precinct will need to be determined once the concept is decided. This level of detail was not available for this phase of community engagement.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Community Engagement

The community engagement approach was to first establish awareness of the Footscray Learning Precinct, inform the community of the proposed concept and to then actively engage to obtain feedback. Specific tactics were selected to align with this model and support each stage.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Awareness</th>
<th>Inform</th>
<th>Engage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social media</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posters &amp; postcards</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Videos</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brochure stands &amp; factsheets</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translations</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pop-up sessions</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student forum</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online platform</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to maximise the number and quality of submissions, a number of channels were available.

- Pop-up information sessions - feedback forms
- Survey - online platform
- Discussion forum - online platform
- Direct questions ‘Ask us’ & FAQs - online platform
- Submissions - email
4.1. Engagement materials and channels

**Communication materials:** public-facing feasibility report, factsheet, overview video, student forum video, postcards and posters.

**Print advertising:** In an effort to raise awareness about the community engagement period, press advertisements were placed in the Maribyrnong Leader in the second and third week of community engagement (newspaper published weekly). The press advertisement was also translated and published twice in Il Globo (Italian), Chinese News and Viet Times (Vietnamese).

**Facebook advertising:** Facebook newsfeed advertising ran throughout November. We created and ran three different ads over this time. The advertising was geo-targeted (within 10 miles of Footscray) to reach a targeted audience. The overarching purpose of the advertising was to raise awareness and drive traffic to the online platform.

**Owned social media:** The VSBA has Facebook and Twitter pages. These owned channels provided an ideal platform to publish messages about the precinct that could then be shared by stakeholders with an existing follower base. Ten tweets and 11 Facebook posts were published.

**Partner/stakeholder channels:** Key stakeholders, including schools, Victoria University, Maribyrnong City Council and community groups have a range of communication channels that directly reach the community engagement target audience. In an effort to leverage these channels, we developed a stakeholder communication kit. Each key stakeholder shared content through at least one communication channel.

**Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communication:** The inner west of Melbourne is a diverse multicultural area. In an effort to ensure all groups within the Footscray area were represented in the community engagement, factsheets and stakeholder kit content was translated into six languages: Vietnamese, Traditional Chinese (Cantonese), Simplified Chinese (Mandarin), Arabic, Greek and Italian. The factsheets were published on the website, and stakeholder kits distributed to 10 local cultural organisations.

**Website engagement:** More than 3,000 people visited the engagement website, and more than 10% registered to engage with the site (to do the survey, join the discussion or ask a question). About 7% of visitors completed the survey. Anecdotal reports indicate that a 2% to 3% engagement rate can generally be expected for a government engagement website. We had 214 complete the survey, 24 people leave a comment on the discussion form and 455 people download documents.
4.2. Community engagement implementation

A local on-the-ground presence was key to implementing the community engagement program. This was achieved through a three-tier approach.

- **Events and pop-up information sessions**: These initiatives were attended by at least two VSBA staff and supporting events staff. Each team member had a defined role and comprehensive Q&As were developed to prepare staff to respond to questions.

  The purpose and attendance at pop-up information sessions varied. Sessions hosted early in the engagement period, or those located to target hard-to-reach (i.e. low English proficiency) audiences were less well attended. Sessions hosted later in the engagement period and at locations to target a highly-engaged audience (i.e. Yarraville) were very well attended. For example, in excess of 60 people appeared during three hours at the Yarraville pop-up park.

  Information sessions provided an opportunity for staff to explain the proposed concept directly to community members, answer questions and invite people to provide feedback via a hard-copy feedback form or directly to the website using an iPad.

- **Brochure stands**: Key stakeholders agreed to have brochure stands in main thoroughfare areas, such as school reception areas. Stands contained factsheets and postcards. Stands were placed in seven locations and refilled at intervals during the engagement period.

- **Poster and postcards**: These were placed in more than 20 venues, with 30 posters and 1000 postcards available.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Events &amp; pop-ups</th>
<th>Brochure stands</th>
<th>Posters/postcards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highpoint shopping centre</td>
<td>Footscray City Primary School</td>
<td>20+ venues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Footscray Market (x2)</td>
<td>Footscray City College</td>
<td>Community Centres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yarraville pop-up park</td>
<td>Gilmore College for Girls</td>
<td>Youth Centres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Footscray City Primary cake stall</td>
<td>Footscray Library</td>
<td>Kindergartens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yarraville Farmers Market</td>
<td>Victoria University (x2)</td>
<td>Women’s health centres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Footscray pop-up school</td>
<td>Maribyrnong Community Centre</td>
<td>Cafes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Footscray Library</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local MP’s office</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student forum</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Feedback

5.1. Survey results

5.1.1. SURVEY PARTICIPATION

We had 214 people complete the survey.

| 8/10 female | 9/10 only speak English | 7.5/10 aged 36-50 years | 6/10 parent of primary student |

Participants within the City of Maribyrnong:
- 59% - parents of primary student (public)
- 34% - parents of early years children
- 8% - parents of secondary students
- 18% - did not identify as parents

Note. People could identify as parents of multiple children
The suburbs with the highest number of respondents were Yarraville, followed by Footscray, Seddon and West Footscray. This sample reflected the anticipated engaged audience, with a large number of SKY High members and parents living in the suburbs south of Footscray who have been petitioning for a new secondary school for a number of years. It was positive to see a high response rate from Footscray and West Footscray. Future activities will aim to further boost engagement in these suburbs.

### Survey responses

#### Overarching

Overwhelmingly the community supported the proposed overall concept. Around 84% said they support the precinct, and about half of those would like more information. 16% said they believed some aspects required more work.

- I think there are some aspects that need more work: 35 (16.4%)
- I'm excited, I look forward to connecting education services across the precinct: 87 (40.7%)
- The concept looks good but I would like more information: 92 (43.0%)
Early childhood

When asked what is most important for early childhood services, in order of importance, respondents named the following:

1. Outdoor learning spaces for children
2. Access to early childhood care and education places
3. Having access to community managed early learning care

One third of respondents identified other priorities for early childhood education in the inner west, including:

- availability – more places and centres
- allocation of places (i.e. the process of securing a place at a centre)
- longer hours and integrated kinder with long day care options

12. Do you support the idea of co-locating a new children’s centre and Footscray City Primary School?

   Optional question

   I don't have a view on this: 76 (37.0%)
   Yes: 118 (55.9%)
   No: 15 (7.1%)
Around 56% supported co-locating the childcare facility with the primary school – however less were supportive of a single point of entry.

Some of the concerns included:

- parking and congestion
- concern for welfare of smaller children (e.g. intimidation/overwhelming, safety)
- not seeing this as essential or a priority

The benefits identified included:

- better integration/education continuity
- convenience for parents
- improved and more efficient administration

For consideration:

There may be a need to further consult on a single point of entry and more comprehensively communicate the rationale and benefits of this approach. The engagement could focus on the Footscray City Primary School and Hyde Street Kindergarten communities.
Primary school

The majority of respondents acknowledged that there is a need to meet demand for primary school places, and supported increasing the capacity of Footscray City Primary School.

Of the small portion of people who did not support the concept, they:

- want a whole new primary school
- want to keep class sizes small, or would prefer the school to remain small
- were concerned about losing open space.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support</th>
<th>Oppose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“The school is the only school in the area that has potential in terms of physical grounds to house more students &amp; it is currently low in numbers compared to the other nearby primary schools.”</td>
<td>“Well, keeping class sizes as small as possible is essential. Why not find opportunities to open a new primary school if it’s feasible rather than cramming more students in the one school. Once it hits capacity, then what?”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Overarching secondary school configuration**

The secondary school configuration drew the most interest at community information sessions. The secondary school model presented was that there would be one secondary school with three campuses – one senior and two junior campuses.

Overall, the general breakdown for all questions relating to secondary education, was that:

- 3 out of 4 people supported the proposed concept
- 10% did not support the concept and
- 15% didn’t have a view.

The following four questions relate to secondary school configuration.

**Junior/senior model**

The majority of respondents supported having separate campuses for junior and senior school sites.

18. Do you support having separate campuses for Years 7-9 (junior school) and Years 10-12 (senior school)?

- Yes: 156 (72.9%)
- No: 23 (10.7%)
- I don’t have a view: 35 (16.4%)
There is a massive developmental difference between a Year 7 and a Year 11 or 12 student, not to mention learning needs. It makes sense to me to differentiate campuses to allow education providers to provide more specialised education and facilities according to the needs of students.”

“Continuity through secondary school assists with social development. A blend of older and younger secondary students is good preparation for society. School is not just about academic factors.”

Support for junior/senior model by suburb

The ratio of support for the junior/senior model remained relatively stable when looking at the results by suburb of residence, with slightly higher proportion of people living in Footscray opposing the model compared to Yarraville and Seddon.
New junior secondary campus

There was strong support for the construction of a new junior secondary campus, and firm belief that the demand for places justifies the need for a new campus.

There was very strong interest in this element of the proposal at the information session, it was this element that generated the most detailed questions.

Parents were predominately interested in knowing:
• details of when the facility will be completed
• how the neighbourhood boundaries for each junior campus would be determined.

19. Do you support the proposal to build a new junior secondary school (Years 7-9) in the southern hub of the Footscray learning Precinct?

Optional question

- I don't have a view on this: 26 (12.2%)
- No: 21 (9.9%)
- Yes: 166 (77.9%)

The close proximity to Seddon was a strong determinant of support for this proposal.

There was some concern about the size of the site proposed at Pilgrim St. A number of people wanted more information about the vertical school model, and were concerned students would be deprived of open space.

A number of people were also keen to know if the option of a Years 7 to 12 coeducational school at the Gilmore Girls site had been considered.

Some people were keen to see a new secondary school built further south and suggested locations, including the Bradmill site and the old bus depot (Buckley/Albert St).
“Places, places, places! Seddon, Kingsville, Yarraville and Footscray communities are crying out for quality (local) education options for our children. Seamless transition from local public primary schools to a junior secondary campus (at southern and central hubs) should alleviate the anxiety around the lack of secondary education choices in the inner west.”

“Build a large school that will accommodate students from Years 7-12. Don’t short change people in Seddon, Yarraville and Kingsville out of a local senior secondary school.”

Support for junior secondary campus by suburb
There was very strong support for the proposed new secondary campus amongst people living Kingsville, Yarraville and West Footscray. There was some uncertainty amongst Footscray residents, with a substantial proportion indicating that they don’t have a view.
**Gilmore Girls site**

Similar to other secondary elements, there was strong support for transitioning the Gilmore Girls site to a co-educational school. Many felt this was a practical solution. They noted the central location is convenient and believed the change could be implemented quickly. Many expressed their support for co-educational schools.

A number of people who supported the change also believed that students currently attend the school for cultural and religious reasons. They wanted to see a managed, gradual transition to a co-ed school. A number of people suggested that a ‘girls stream’ could be considered.

It was also suggested that the Gilmore Girls site should be considered for the senior campus due to its central location.

---

**20. Do you support the proposal to create a co-educational junior secondary school (Years 7-9) at the Gilmore College for Girls?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>161 (75.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>22 (10.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don't have a view on this</td>
<td>30 (14.1%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Support Oppose

"An under-utilised state resource, as is Gilmore Girls, in hand with a demand for additional secondary seats is a travesty. Enrolments for Gilmore Girls are low, and demand for those seats to be used by a co-ed cohort is high. This is a practical solution."

“Because girls are still worse off than boys. Because girls need safe spaces. Because girls of varying cultures and religions may need same-sex education. Because Gilmore is a school that has paved the way for girls to become leaders.”

Support for redeveloping the Gilmore Girls site into a co-educational school:

There was no outstanding obvious variance in responses based on where respondents live.
The majority of survey respondents were parents of primary-school aged children.
Senior campus

Again 75% of respondents supported having a senior campus at Footscray City College. Survey participants said they thought this would:

- Better prepare students for university
- Enable strong links with Victoria University and TAFE
- Offer diversity and choice of subjects
- Provide strong support for senior years study

Some expressed that they would still prefer a 7-12 campus at both FCC and Gilmore Girls.

21. Do you support the proposal to redevelop Footscray City College to be a senior secondary school (Years 10-12).

- Yes: 159 (74.3%)
- No: 21 (9.8%)
- I don't have a view on this: 34 (15.9%)
STEM Learning Centre

87% of respondents feel the STEM Learning Centre is very important or essential. There was a lot of support for:

- a strong focus on getting girls engaged in STEM subjects
- hand-on learning experiences
- preparing students for the jobs of the future
- innovative teaching and student engagement
- providing a link to industry, research institutes and universities.

Some people questioned:

- how students in the southern hub would access the Learning Centre
- if ‘Arts’ would be included, therefore creating a ‘STEAM’ Learning Centre.
Sporting and performing arts

Almost two out of three people supported the need for performing arts facilities, particularly performance space, and almost half support the need for sporting facilities.

Performing arts:
- 63.4% believe we need more performing arts facilities

Sporting facilities:
- 48.6% believe we need more sporting facilities.

The demand for performing arts and sporting facilities does not appear to be as strong as the desire for additional school places.

For these ‘community shared facilities’, there is scope to engage more broadly with community sport and performing arts groups.
Participants were asked if these sporting and performing arts facilities were to proceed, would they be supportive of these facilities being shared with the community. There was very strong support (86%) for these facilities being shared between the school and community.

Most respondents either support the facilities being co-located at a school, or would support either co-location or stand-alone facilities. Less than 5% indicated a preference for stand-alone facilities.
Priorities
To finish the survey, it was reiterated that the Footscray Learning Precinct would be implemented over a number of stages.
We asked what they saw as the key priorities for development and investment.
The community’s top three priorities in order were:

1. Increased secondary school capacity
2. STEM Learning Centre
3. Increased primary school capacity

5.2. Discussion forum
Two discussion forums were open on the website for the duration of the community engagement period.
The approach to this forum was not to engage in conversations and public debate on the platform, rather for the online community to self-moderate. When people asked questions, or used inaccurate information to support their views, the FAQs on the site were updated and a post was published on the forum directing participants to the new information.

One forum asked about first impressions of the proposed concept, the second asked for feedback on the aims of the precinct. The first discussion forum achieved a much higher rate of participation. This could be attributed to the generic nature of the question. Below is a summary of the themes and feedback raised via the forums.

Themes
Comments/requests/questions relating to:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General schools</th>
<th>Neighbourhood enrolment boundaries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Construction completion/school opening dates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Justification for focus on Footscray and not Seddon/Kingsville/Yarraville</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transport between campuses</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunity 2</th>
<th>Support for junior secondary in close proximity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Footscray City Primary School</td>
<td>Families currently located outside of the neighbourhood enrolment boundary for Footscray City Primary School or Footscray City Secondary College hoping to gain access to the precinct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Concern the sport and recreation centre would be constructed on the current oval therefore reducing the open space at Footscray City Primary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conflicting messages about current capacity of sites and proposed increase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Junior senior model** | • Request for evidence based research demonstrating educational rationale for multi-campus proposal  
• Concern about accelerated learning options for Year 9 students  
• Want school to be located further south – want two junior schools to be spread out further  
• Question rational for selection of Pilgrim Street site  
• Concern about ability to attract and retain teachers within a multi campus environment as it would limit career opportunities and engagement  
• Concern about breadth of curriculum offering limited due to multi campus approach |
| **New junior secondary school** | • Support for location (close to Seddon and FCPS)  
• Concern about the site constraints – lack of open space  
• Concern about impact on educational offering of sharing space with FCPS  
• Suggested use of VU Nicholson St campus for new secondary school (P-12, 7-12) and Pilgrim St site to be used for the sport and recreation centre |
| **Gilmore Girls** | • Majority belief site should become a co-educational school by the start of the 2018 school year  
• Suggest it be a Years 7-12 co-ed site or the location of the senior secondary campus  
• Question if former site of community health provider Co-health had been considered, or whether adjoining church land will be used |
| **Footscray City College** | • Current capacity of FCC and current neighbourhood boundaries  
• Current maintenance costs (could be in reference to ongoing contamination management plan) |
| **Community** | • Opportunity to partner with Footscray Arts Precinct  
• Want performing arts centre in the central hub (to balance out sport and recreation in the southern hub, and STEM Learning Centre in the northern hub). Believe this will also provide better access from all sites. |
| **Languages other than English (LOTE)** | • Current subject choice limited to Italian/Japanese. Believe Chinese (Mandarin) and Spanish should be offered  
• Coordinate languages classes being offered between campuses  
• Sharing of specialist teacher/s across campuses |
5.3. **Formal submissions**

Below is a summary of the themes that emerged through the formal submissions. This section also includes some direct quotes from submissions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunity</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Opportunity 1</strong></td>
<td>Early childhood • Co-location with a primary school is a highly effective model for improving the learning opportunities and outcomes for children • The built environment needs to embrace the shared (community supporting education) learning concept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Opportunity 2</strong></td>
<td>Footscray City Primary School • Would like to see exploration of the best use of the existing buildings. These could be refurbished and extended to meet the needs of the student population, support the delivery of high quality learning programs as well as provide opportunities for shared community use • The sports/performing arts space is a welcome resource. However, concerns about a crowded and chaotic schoolyard, with few opportunities for unstructured and imaginative play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Opportunity 3</strong></td>
<td>Additional secondary capacity • Investigate space available at the VU Nicholson Street site, including how the space can be reconfigured to meet the Precinct objectives • Provide a ‘girls stream’ to replace the loss of a girls only school • Provide further detail on student enrolment numbers and neighbourhood boundaries for junior campuses for the next phase of community engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Opportunity 4</strong></td>
<td>STEM • Inclusion of a specific focus on the engagement of girls (possibly a ‘girls stream’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Opportunity 5</strong></td>
<td>Community • A performing arts complex that provides larger performance spaces and cutting edge media/design technology that set a new standard within a collaborative learning space • Provide a targeted initiative to develop specialist sports programs for girls • Lack of shared community infrastructure may present risks • Development of shared spaces for learning and for community engagement • Build on current environmental science programs and create a sustainable hub for joint community use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Precinct</strong></td>
<td><strong>Other</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>• Requires more than new physical assets but a clear plan to differentiate it as a centre for educational excellence</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>• Hub specialisation, financial and operational benefits should be the focus of the proposal</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>• Implement Victoria University’s “University Town” connectivity concept to create a seamless and integrated precinct</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>• The concept should identify information and communications technology elements that will be implemented – in line with equivalent educational facilities</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>• Provide a quality wifi network to connect the education institutions of the precinct and the community</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>• Provide flexible access to programs across the different education institutions within the precinct</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>• Enhancing utilisation of what currently exists</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Schools</strong></td>
<td><strong>• A broad range of curriculum options to cater for the diversity of students</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>• Student directed learning supported by teachers and monitoring/tracking tools</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>• Development of practices which enhance positive transitions for students</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inclusivity</strong></td>
<td><strong>• Foster an inclusive community</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>• Advance the ideal of inclusive education by considering the need for space to make life for disabled students easier – access to disabled toilets, sensory calm spaces and small breakout rooms for on-site therapy or small group support</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Open space</strong></td>
<td><strong>• Overcrowding of the southern hub would impact on a space that is due to become more populated</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>• Concern about the loss of the open green field, while appreciating the need for shared spaces as part of inner city life</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Movement</strong></td>
<td><strong>• How children will get safely to and from shared spaces and with increased independence. Without this being addressed, access to the learning spaces that are pivotal in improving educational opportunities will be significantly compromised for a vast majority of the students they are meant to benefit</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>• There are opportunities to resolve transport challenges</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teachers</strong></td>
<td><strong>• Establish a centre for excellence in teacher training and ongoing professional learning</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>• Should have a dedicated objective and a plan to develop and secure industry leading teachers and management staff</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.4. **Student forum**

On 9 November, a Student Forum was hosted at Footscray City College in an effort to obtain feedback on the proposed concept directly from students. Approximately six students attended from each school, including Footscray City Primary School, Footscray Primary School, Gilmore College for Girls and Footscray City College.

The students were asked:
- What is it that you like about the concept?
- What are the opportunities?
- What’s missing from the proposal?

Below is a summary of the feedback from the students:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunity 4</th>
<th>STEM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Would create more opportunities for students such as enhanced technology, performing arts, sports and science facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Like the idea of an enhanced partnership with Victoria University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Upgrade technology to support 21st Century learning and more interactive learning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunity 5</th>
<th>Community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spaces for indoor and outdoor recreation/sports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Greater interaction around the world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group projects/exhibitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Footscray Learning Precinct state-of-the-art library that can be shared by all</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Precinct</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The concept shows innovation from the system and caters for all interests and will assist with future choices and pathways</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student input across the precinct to support governance and school operations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Creation of multi-purpose spaces</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Schools
- Having a number of campuses instead of separate schools brings greater opportunity for collaboration and interaction between students and staff.
- A greater range of subjects could be offered, including things like music and performing arts.
- Provide more opportunity to work on issues that deal with real world challenges and allow students to get involved.
- Makeover of existing schools.
- Create a VCE Centre of Excellence (10-12) rather than a senior campus.
- More opportunities for musical learning outside school and inviting professional artists and musicians into the school.
- New and existing facilities should be eco-friendly and use solar energy and other energy efficient measures.
- The design of classrooms should be purposeful with some designed specifically for particular specialist areas.
- Greater opportunities for leadership programs.
- Need to think of something with a “wow factor!” Questioned if this could be a competition involving the students.
- Real life health classes, particularly in relation to mental health prevention and resilience.

### Inclusivity
- By creating a new school, it provides the opportunity to explore new ways of learning and address diversity of student need.
- Western English Language School (WELS) should be incorporated into secondary campuses.
- Consider maintaining a ‘girls stream’ (i.e. Williamstown High model) and a guaranteed secondary placement for those girls who do not want to be part of the new precinct.
- Plan to ensure Gilmore College for Girls Islamic students are supported should the coeducational option not be palatable.

### Open space
- Spaces for indoor as well as outdoor recreation and sports.
- Consider outdoor areas for classrooms.

### Movement
- Transition process for students moving through the precinct.
- Need to develop specific transport solutions so that ease of movement through the Precinct can be facilitated.
- More information about how we connect the campuses.
- Buses to connect campuses to facilitate the use of shared facilities.

### Teachers
- Stronger focus on guidance and career councillors.
6. Conclusion

Project:

- There is a high level of support for the Footscray Learning Precinct amongst the informed audience.

- There is a strong perceived need for additional secondary school capacity. The survey responses demonstrated support for the ‘one school, three campus model’ but from the one-on-one engagement, and as evidenced by some of the submissions, information is required for the community to provide informed feedback on the rational for the proposed configuration. There is scope to further communicate the rationale for a junior/senior model.

- There is strong support for Gilmore College for Girls to transition to a coeducational facility. It is recommended that a transition program be considered. Two paradigms emerged through community engagement. Some community members see the Gilmore Girls site as a ‘quick and easy’ solution to manage the demand for secondary capacity. This group would expect to see a coeducational school delivered within a short timeframe. Conversely, some community members acknowledged cultural sensitivities, and expressed the need for a ‘managed transition’. They suggested this should include options for current students to continue education at an all-girls school, and consideration be given to a ‘girls-stream’.

- There is a very high level of interest and engagement amongst parents of primary school students living in the Seddon, Kingsville and Yarraville area. This community generally had a high level of support for the proposed Pilgrim St site due to the proximity, and expectation that they are located within the designated neighbourhood boundary. Timing was also a major driver for this community - they want to see prompt action. However, this may have been more of a reflection of the audience interested in the community engagement - largely parents of primary school students.

- While there is support for the Pilgrim St site, there are concerns about the space that were identified in the communication materials supporting engagement. People felt that this was a very small site for a school, even a vertical school, and were concerned about the lack of open space in the surrounding area. There was generally support for a vertical school, if there is sufficient nearby open space that students could access.

- A number of suggestions relating to secondary configuration arose throughout the engagement period. These may have already been considered as part of the feasibility study. These suggestions included using Gilmore Girls as the senior campus due to the central location, upgrading both Footscray City College and the Gilmore Girls site to be coeducational Years 7 – 12 schools, and using the Victoria University Nicholson St site.

- There is general acceptance of the need for Footscray City Primary to increase capacity. However, there is concern about the potential loss of open space. Therefore, it is recommended that efforts are made to ensure that designs seek to maintain the maximum amount of open space possible.

- Designated neighbourhood boundaries for enrolment could prove to be an issue if they exclude people living in the suburbs south of Footscray (Seddon, Kingsville, Yarraville). There was a high level of engagement from parents in these areas, and expectation that developments in Footscray would offer an alternative to Bayside. There will need to be careful management around how these boundaries are communicated throughout the transition to any new secondary school configuration.

- There is a high level of support for the STEM Learning Centre.

- There is an expectation that traffic and parking will be managed as part of the precinct. There are some concerns about the impact of the proposed concept, particularly on the southern hub.

- The community would like to see more information about how the precinct will work as a whole, particularly how students will move around the precinct.

- There is support for community facilities to be either co-located with schools or stand-alone. There was a higher level of interest in the performing arts centre, particularly a
drama or music performance space. The community responded positively to the sporting and recreation centre, but it was not seen as a key priority. There was some concern that it would be at the expense of open space.

- There is interest in how the proposed concept will interact with Maribyrnong City Council services, for example the library and other council-managed early childhood centres.
- There is a general understanding that the precinct will be delivered in stages and a strong interest in the anticipated priorities. There is an expectation that further funding will be allocated to the project.