

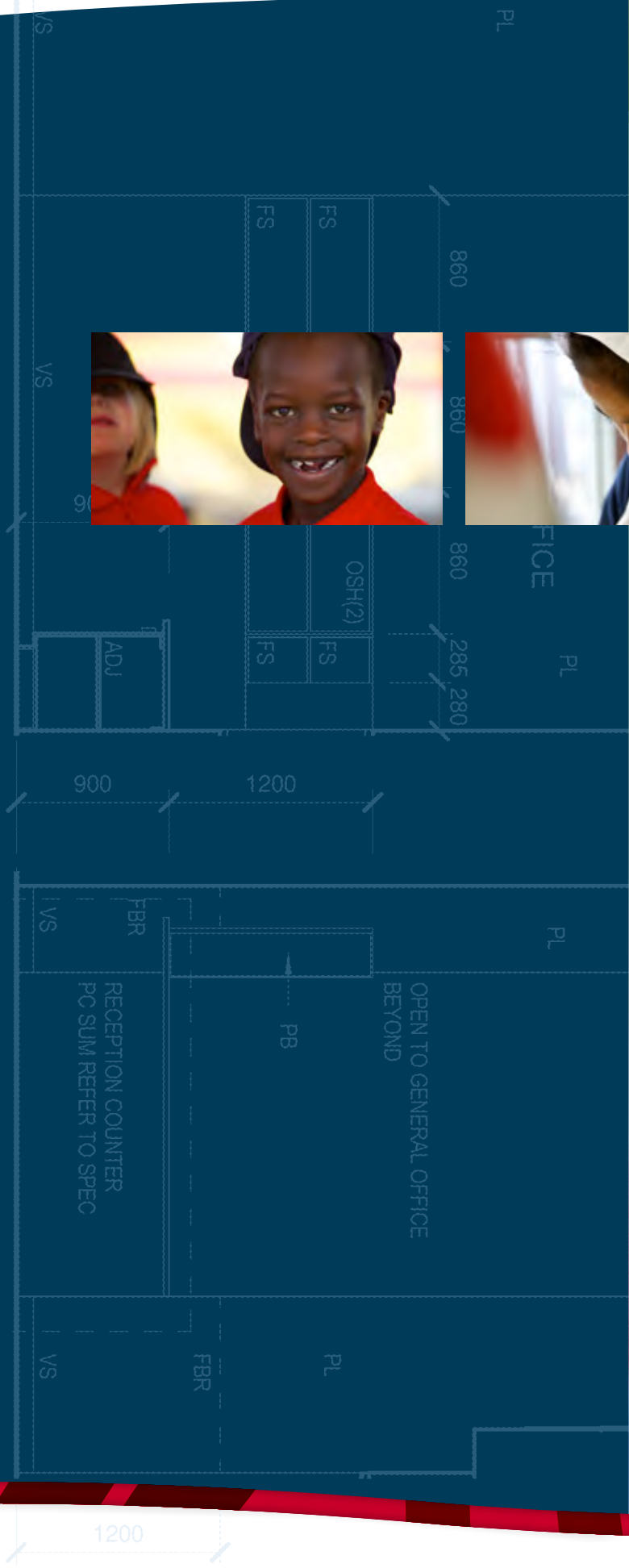




Doveton College



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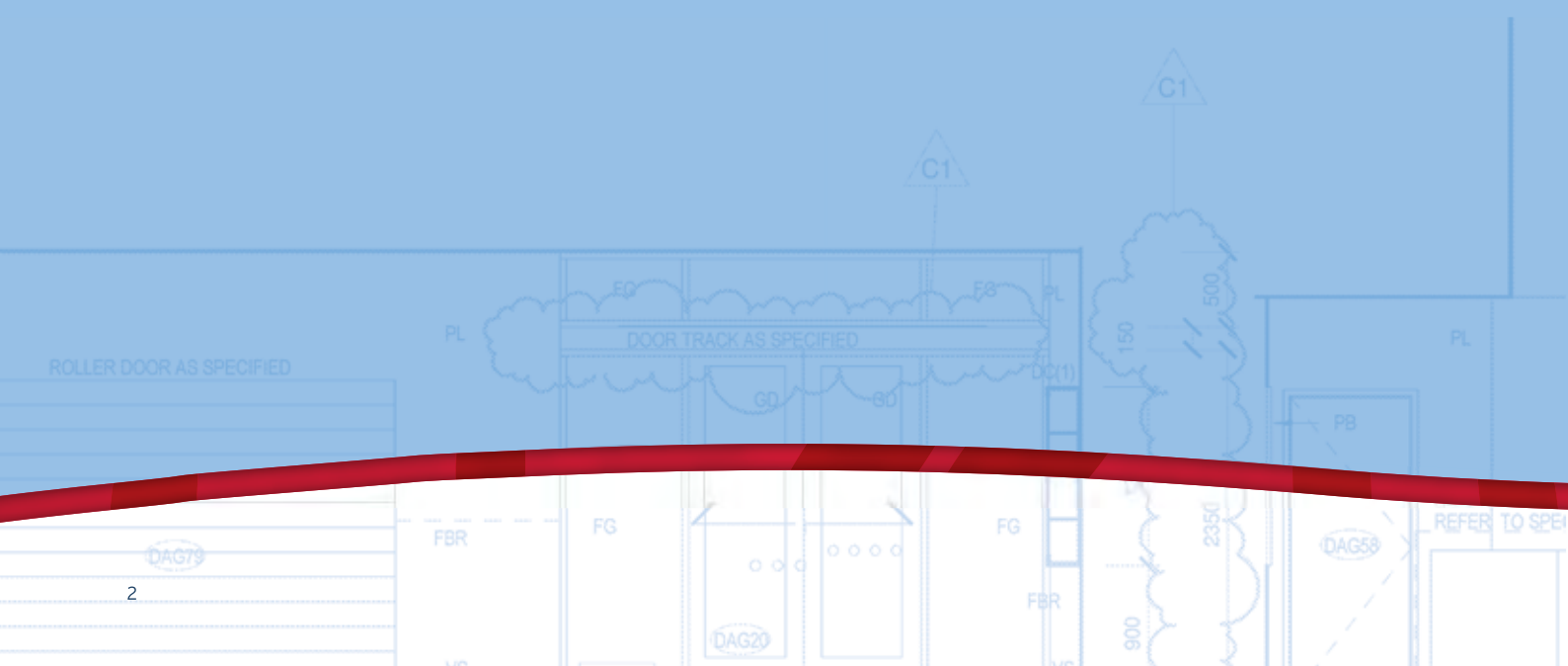
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All of us are born with the ability and desire to learn. This ability and desire needs to be supported and encouraged from birth. At Doveton College we believe passionately that early learning programs are vital if our most precious resource, our children, are to grow to reach the potential they all have to lead healthy, rewarding and productive lives.

At Doveton, this is our mission. From the toddlers room, through the early years' program for three and four year olds into the learning program for school aged children our focus is on the individual child; what they can do and what we, as professionals, need to do next to support their continual growth and achievement.

Bretton New | *Executive Principal*





Purpose of report

This report was written at the beginning of 2013 following the first twelve months of operation of Doveton College.

This narrative is not intended to provide a comprehensive evaluation of Doveton College, but rather illustrate how the involvement and contribution of many partners, across many levels, with shared visions, have allowed a well-grounded concept to evolve into the creation of an exemplary, integrated community-focussed school seeking to nurture children from pre-natal through to Year 9.

The College would like to thank Shannon Newman for her work over many months in bringing the narrative of the establishment of Doveton College together.

Report structure

This report has been organised into the following sections to assist readers explore components of the College's development that are of relevance and interest.

Section 1: Background – growing the concept

Section 2: Building and infrastructure – creating from the ground up

Section 3: Programs, pedagogy and partnerships – creating solid educational foundations

Section 4: Opening the gates – delivering on promises

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Summary



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CONFERENCE

This project will be the first to specifically target a particular 'at-risk' community with the aim of drastically boosting educational standards and hence, whole life opportunities for the children of the community through early intervention, family support and community integration.

Doveton Regeneration Project 2010



What is Doveton College?

Doveton College which opened in January 2012 is a community focused school catering for families and children, prenatal to Year 9. Doveton College offers a fully integrated wrap-around service including early learning, family support, maternal and child health and Prep to Year 9 schooling in purpose built learning communities for the 21st Century. The College has been built to cater for an estimated long-term school age enrolment of around 900.

The College program model takes into account the latest research about the best learning environments for children and young people and will provide for seamless transitions from the early learning centre through to the early secondary years.

The community expectation is that Doveton College will provide a secure, safe environment where the individual child can learn and develop to their full potential. The integrated wrap-around program will adopt the Government targets appropriate to both early year's education, and primary and secondary schools and provide links to integrated resources within the local community.

Primary Aim

The primary aim of Doveton College is to provide a fully integrated model of education and community support with the specific aim of nurturing children from pre-natal to early adulthood.

The College has a strong focus on early intervention, seeking to integrate both early years and family support services with traditional school education, facilities and services to support a community in need.

The vision is clear and based on the belief that children, young people and families attending Doveton College will succeed in their endeavours.

The College's mission is to believe in the potential of each child and young person to learn, to do their best and to achieve by:

- engaging with the community to best support the health, education and social well-being of children
- supporting high achievement, excellence and measureable progress
- encouraging teamwork, accountability, tolerance and the highest personal standards

- demonstrating respect, trust, honesty in our words and in our behaviour
- providing an environment that is safe, secure and orderly and which promotes strong learning, high achievement, excellence, engagement and leadership
- ensuring evaluation is a key part of operations so that every success or failure leads to improvement

Contributors

The evolution of Doveton College, as part of the Doveton Regeneration Project, has been possible as a result of contributions from state and federal governments and the Colman Foundation.

More than \$A32 million has been allocated for the build phase of this College, with additional funds allocated, on an ongoing basis, to support the provision of exceptional services and supports for the College community. Further details as to the costing arrangements associated with the building are provided in later sections of this report.

This College is the first in the state system to operate on a governance model that has committed support and participation of a private foundation.

Where to next

In 2013 the College will open the remaining learning spaces supporting the educational needs of Year 7 to 9 students.

"In one sense, to label this project as a school understates its wider objectives of early intervention and community support"

Regeneration Blueprint, 2010



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Background: Growing the concept

From a concept to
a new school model

Efforts to cement
required funding

Implications of the decision
to create Doveton College

Service delivery model,
governance and outcomes



The big challenge is for systems like education to work out how to learn for themselves. If the goal is equity as well as excellence, they must learn how to meet the needs of people they have never successfully served, as well as operate at the leading edge of pedagogical and organisational innovation...

Professor David Hargreaves | *Associate Director
Development and Research, Specialist Schools and Academies Trust, UK*





From a concept to a new school model

Understanding how Doveton College has evolved requires patience. The description provided in this report has required peeling back the layers of complexity and attempting to draw out key aspects of the College's creation in a historical manner to fairly demonstrate the remarkable achievements reached so far.

The following presents the evolution of the concept from its base in early years research and the interest level from philanthropy, coupled with an appreciation of the policy context within state and federal governments during this time.

Existence of research rationale for integrating early childhood and family services within the education sector

Without providing a detailed account of relevant literature, for that is not the purpose here, what we know is that there is a wealth of research illustrating the importance of the early years of life and the opportunity to positively influence outcomes for children from very early on in their life trajectory.

The importance of investing in high quality learning environments for all children at home, in early childhood settings and at school is well documented. Such support helps to address known biological and environmental risks, offers children protection against these and promotes the early identification of concerns, while obtaining better outcomes from the existing service structure.

The research further illustrates the importance of:

- high quality, flexible early childhood development and learning opportunities
- the need for integrated service delivery models with parent/child Centres located within schools and other community settings
- offering high quality staff, appropriate child to staff ratios and group sizes
- sound pedagogy guiding teaching practices
- partnerships with a range of other health and community services
- flexible in home support programs to address specific needs of highly vulnerable families.

Alongside the capacity and importance of these aspects, the research also shows that many barriers prohibit a child's capacity to learn:

- Poor health and well being
- Parental capacity – low parenting skills
- Lack of safe, secure home environment
- Child protection issues
- Drug, alcohol, family violence, mental health issues within the family,
- Intergenerational poverty
- Lack of resources/role models
- Lack of stable housing
- Unemployment
- Disability or developmental delay
- Education programs not addressing need

The need for integration

In order to address such barriers, the need for schools to become community learning centres – where school and community resources can be restructured and woven together to support children and families becomes clear. If the school community can add value to its existing structure and offer a range of child and family services that are barrier busters – such as parenting support, playgroups, high quality early learning, health services, resources and supports, home visiting, adult education programs – the capacity to enhance a child's school readiness and increase opportuneness for adult family and community members is significant.

International counterparts have paved the way regarding integrated service models supporting both the early childhood education sector and school based services, with research over the last decade detailing the efforts applied in Canada, the US and the UK. Traditionally, and in Victoria specifically, integrating the two, rather than simply colocating, has been a goal within and beyond government for many years.

“The concept [of integration] is simple. The hard bit is making it happen in the settings we have”

Peter Greenwell | DEECD

One of the finest examples of an integrated universal early learning and care program is the Toronto First Duty (TFD) program which commenced in Canada more than 10 years ago and sought to showcase the recommendations from the first *Early Years Study* by the late Dr Fraser Mustard and Margaret McCain. This program brings together traditional school years, kindergarten, childcare and parenting supports into a single program to meet the developmental needs of children and support parents to return to work or study or improve their parenting role.

Five key elements characterise this model: integrated governance (including pooled resources); seamless access (single enrolment opportunities); integrated early learning environment (across ages and space needs); integrated staff teams (integrated staffing and common curriculum and resources); and parent participation (as welcome and beneficial to children's success). The program has been evaluated across its implementation, with the third and final evaluation report released in 2012 depicting the "story of how scientific evidence was turned into community action and ultimately public policy" (Corter et al., 2012).

Reference: Corter, C., Janmohamed, Z., and I.Pelletier, J. (2012) *Toronto First Duty Phase 3 Report*, University of Ontario: Canada

Rethinking school readiness

Alongside the research around integration, in recent years there has been a shift in the understanding of what school readiness refers to. While historically school readiness was based on the individual child's readiness for school – with children entering school on reaching the designated chronological age or achievement of specific skills and competencies against norms or standards, the concept has now broadened; it is now seen as a shared responsibility between the family, the school and the community. This shift has occurred, in part due to a better understanding of brain development, the influence of risk and prevention factors and the impact of the environment on family functioning and child health and development. With this in mind, integrated services provide the opportunity for this shared responsibility around school readiness to be addressed.

Philanthropic interest in education and the early years

The true origin of the model that currently exists at Doveton College is due, to a large extent, to the work and involvement of a philanthropic organisation – namely The Colman Foundation. The Colman Foundation was established in 2005 to educationally support significantly disadvantaged children. Its founder, Julius Colman, developed a strong interest in the *Andre Agassi College Preparatory Academy* in Las Vegas and the work of the Harlem Children's Zone in New York, each documented to have transformed the lives of underprivileged children within their respective communities.

Following a visit to The Agassi School, Julius became more excited about the prospect of supporting the education of children in need via the provision of private, fee-free school for children from prep to year 12, and by integrating the needs of community, health and education to provide the opportunity to make a considerable difference to children's outcomes.

The Colman Foundation approached the Brumby Government in late 2007 expressing the Foundation's desire to become directly involved in the education of children from kindergarten to Year 12 in an area of significant disadvantage within Victoria, ideally one with a large migrant and refugee population where residents low socio-economic status further impacted on their capacity to create change – the Foundation wanted to build a new independent school, with a new governance structure and a new goal.

Linking with the existing School Regeneration Program

Prior to the Colman Foundations approaches to the Victorian Government, the then Department of Education (DoE) had commenced the *Building Futures Initiative*, an initiative that provided a process allowing government to work with schools and communities to plan and approve funding for school infrastructure developments. Further, the *Building Futures Initiative* offered a framework for guiding school capital investment under the *Victorian Schools Plan* (known as the Government's 10-year investment plan to transform Victorian schools by funding rebuilding, renovation or extension of all Victorian schools by 2016).



In 2006 and 2007, Doveton North Primary School, Eumemmerring Primary School, Doveton Heights Primary School and Endeavour Hills Secondary College had been working together with the Department to prepare a submission to seek funding within the *School Regeneration Program*, a specific program that sat under the *Building Futures Initiative and the Victorian Schools Plan* funding regime. The *School Regeneration Program* specifically sought to support the regeneration of schools in selected local communities which had developed plans for new curriculum and facilities to transform educational options for students into the future.

Agreement of a new school model and location on which to test it

Discussions between the Colman Foundation and the Brumby Government continued into 2008 and beyond, and led to a compromise on the original proposal put forward by the Colman Foundation. Agreement was reached that a better way to assist disadvantaged communities would be via the Foundation offering funding support to develop a new model of state school in an area of recognised need. As a result, of these discussions, during early 2008 DEECD personnel and the Colman Foundation inspected several sites already identified by the government as potential locations for future school regeneration/community development projects – Doveton was one of these sites.

Julius Colman has reported many times that when viewing Doveton as a prospective site, he *'simply fell in love with it'*.

Despite strong interest in moving forward with the concept of a new school model for Doveton, there was also a keen awareness of the tight fiscal climate and lack of sufficient internal government funding to allocate to pilot such a model. The impact of the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) of 2007-08 was felt far and wide and resulted in delays in moving forward with intentions to create change at this time.

Seeking community level agreement for a new school model

With the promised funding support from the Colman Foundation, the government prioritised plans for Doveton and the parties embarked on consulting with the community to seek agreement as to the specifics of the development of a new integrated school model.

A critical step in taking the model to the next level was the process of seeking agreement from the School Councils from each of the schools to be impacted by the proposed new school model.

The model, as it existed at that time as Prep through to Year 12 school, was discussed with each of the School Councils. The concept and impact it had on many of these schools raised much local debate, requiring careful consultation and negotiation. However, despite initial concerns, consensus was reached at the local community level and each of the four schools signed off the proposal for Doveton College.

In summary:

- Doveton Heights Primary School and Doveton North Primary School merged at the end of 2009, with operations remaining on the site of Doveton North Primary School now renamed Doveton Primary School, until the end of 2011, to allow building works to occur at the old Doveton Heights Primary School site.
- Doveton Primary School and Eumemmerring Primary School closed in late 2011, with students attending the new Doveton College from the beginning of 2012 (with services for Prep to Year 7 located at Doveton Primary School for the first Term of 2012).
- Students from Endeavour Hills Secondary School will be offered places at Doveton College from 2013, with the former school closed.

A number of other services have also been affected, either closing or moving operations to become part of those offered within Doveton College. For example, a decision was made by Connections/Uniting Care to cease operating the childcare services provided at their TiTree Drive location. Therefore, the needs of children aged from birth to 3 years required consideration. Doveton College reworked the initial idea of providing a kindergarten service to incorporate the needs of long day care and sought the advice of key partners and School Councils regarding the provision of a revised service model.

"The community came together and moved forward in the best interests of children"

Bretton New | Executive Principal, Doveton College

Impact of a 'responsive' government policy context on the proposed model

The Colman Foundation's interest was incredibly timely. The growing research evidence as to the benefits that could be obtained from linking community, schools and early years, and the need for service integration was providing both interest and a responsibility from within Government, at both national and state levels, to demonstrate a joined up education model aimed at improved outcomes for children.

Actions within the *National Early Childhood Development Strategy* included the planned establishment of some 260 Child and Family Centres across Australia to increase the supply of integrated early childhood education and care in areas of unmet demand for childcare, with an emphasis on connecting with schools to ensure all Australian children are fully prepared for learning and life. This was achieved through the delivery of universal access for all four-year old children to an early education program for 15 hours a week and the introduction of a National Quality Framework for application to all early childhood education and care and school age care settings. The Framework offered a new *National Quality Standard* and rating system, a national *Early Years Learning Framework*, improved educator to child ratios, new educator qualification requirements, streamlined regulatory practices and a new national statutory body; the *Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority* (ACECQA).

At a state level, DEECD released the *Blueprint for Education and Early Childhood Development* in 2008 which outlined the department's five year agenda and targets for learning and development in relation to reform strategies supporting system improvement, partnerships with parents and workforce reform.

The *Growing, Learning and Thriving Statement* (DEECD 2009) was released a year later, conceptualising how the *Blueprint* should be implemented and how the framework aligns with and pursues Victorian and national commitments to early childhood education and care agendas.

During 2009, DEECD also released the *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework* (VEYLDF), and the *Transition: A positive start to school* initiative document. These documents set the framework for early years learning from 0 to 8 years and sought to support early childhood professionals to support families to achieve common outcomes for children.

Therefore, while the program model for Doveton College was being created and efforts to obtain community agreement and capital funding were underway, the thinking shifted. The collective impact of government agendas including the *National Quality Framework* and concerns regarding poor student educational performance resulted in the adaption of the original school model from one offering programs from Prep through to Year 12 to one that reflected the needs of the *National Quality Framework*.

After many and lengthy discussions, a Memorandum of Understanding was created on 11 September 2009 to create the first government social partnership to establish a community learning facility. This Memorandum of Understanding reflected a unique service partnership between government and philanthropy that would seek to transform education for children in Doveton.

Efforts to cement required funding

Investment from the Colman Foundation

Crystallising his passion and interest in the early years of life and a child's education, Julius Colman, via the Colman Foundation committed to contribute some \$1.8million towards the costs of construction of the school and the early learning centre, so as to help ensure that state-of-the-art facilities were available. A further annual funding commitment, for at least 8 years, specifically targeting the needs of the early childhood sector, was also committed.

Further cementing the agreement, the Colman Foundation requested that the build be a 20% enhancement on the then standard Victorian school build. The Colman Foundation also requested four seats on the College Board (School Council). This introduced a governance structure different to anything seen before in Victoria, but still adhering to the requirement of the *Education Reform Act 1996*.

By the end of 2009, a considered program approach, community agreement, a detailed MOU and the selection of a suitable site were achieved. There was sufficient momentum within the Department and beyond to support the development of Doveton College. However, at that stage the only investment was via the Colman Foundations contributions. There was no capital on which to support such a build. The "opportune" timing of two key funding streams resulted in the impossible becoming very possible.



Contributions from State and Commonwealth funding streams

In early 2010, with the assistance of the *Building Futures* process, \$14 million was secured from State Government funding via the *Victoria Schools Plan* budget to support the Doveton Regeneration Project and assist with the building of Doveton College.

A further \$13 million was sourced from the *Building the Educational Revolution* (BER) program released by the Australian Government in 2009 as part of the National Economic stimulus package designed to improve school facilities across Australia. DEECD notes they applied the *Building Futures* framework to combine and reallocate some BER funds originally allocated to the Doveton schools from the Primary Schools of the 21st Century (P21) and the Science and Language Centre streams to the Doveton Regeneration Project.

Given the steady and tenacious ground-work established prior to the federal election in August 2010, it was reported that Ministerial sign off was in fact achieved the day before the government entered care-taker mode in lieu of pending elections (which resulted in a change of government). The second stage of the build was locked in by Treasury further protecting the college before the first piece of earth was dug.

As a result of State and Commonwealth contributions, together with the Colman Foundation investment, the Doveton Regeneration Project had \$32million with which to “build a better school”. All that was left was to orchestrate a design and build phase, develop a whole-of-school program model, recruit staff, engage students and get the College operational – in a year!

Implications of the decision to create Doveton College

The implications of the agreement between the DEECD and The Colman Foundation and the achievement of required funding were significant. Several things needed to happen, and they needed to happen simultaneously and with efficiency. A detailed understanding of the demographics of the Doveton area was required as was a mapping of education, community and health services currently operating in the area. An exploration of required infrastructure and the design and construction of a new school facility was a priority, as was the process of closing the existing Doveton schools. A program model, business approach and pedagogy needed to be considered and the creation of various positions, partnerships and working groups to facilitate these tasks established.

Establishment of Doveton Regeneration Project Board to support the projects intent

In late 2009 a senior officer of the DEECD was appointed Project Director, Doveton Regeneration Project. In early 2010 the *Doveton Regeneration Project Board* was established.

The key work of The Project Board centred on the unique feature of the project, namely the integration of wrap-around family and children’s services in the school setting.

In February 2010 the Centre for Community Child Health (CCCH), one of Australia’s most pre-eminent research institutes in the area of childhood development, was engaged to support the Project Board in the development of the needs and model for the Early Learning Centre (ELC).

“Unlike any other project; agencies and government are in it [have committed] for the long haul – the goal is to succeed”

Julius Colman

This support involved: consultation and engagement with local early childhood education and care service providers and other service stakeholders to inform processes (particularly the development of the vision, outcomes and objectives of the ELC); the mapping of child and family pathways through the service system to further understand the services that were available to children and families at that time and the identification of blockages and barriers to families and children accessing services to promote optimal child development.

In order to develop a model for the Early Learning Centre and an outcomes framework to assist with measuring the extent to which Doveton College achieves what it has set out to and in the manner planned, an Early Childhood Reference Group was also established in early 2010. This reference group including membership from the Doveton Regeneration Project Board, The Colman Foundation, the CCCH, and major services providers in the Doveton area including City of Casey, Southern Health, Southern Health's Cardinia Casey Community Health, Good Beginnings Australia, Mission Australia, Connections/Uniting Care and Neighbourhood Renewal.

These meetings allowed facilitated discussion between stakeholders to establish a shared vision for the Early Learning Centre and develop a comprehensive evaluation framework.

Understanding the demographic context

To provide a model for a place based project it was important for the key stakeholders to understand the "place".

Based on the 2006 Census the population of Doveton and Eumemmerring totalled less than 10,000 people with 2,500 families. Thirty percent were aged 20 years or under, with the projected increase mainly in the number of children aged between 0 and 4 years, suggesting increased demands for early childhood care needs in the future.

At this time, Doveton was identified as an area experiencing significant social and economic disadvantage, with a highly transient and culturally diverse population.

According to the SEIFA Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage, the Doveton and Eumemmerring postcode area of 3177 had a SIEFA score of 846 in 2006 (ABS) placing Doveton and Eumemmerring within the lowest quintile compared to all other Australian Communities.

Census Data suggested that 12.5% of all Doveton residents reported living at different addresses one year prior to the 2006 Census.

Approximately 75% of residents were reportedly eligible and holding a Health Care Card.

In terms of cultural backgrounds, almost 50 different languages were spoken by residents, with a large number of families from Samoa, Sudan, Afghanistan and Cambodia.

A range of data sources also illustrated that children across Doveton and surrounding areas were struggling to maintain or keep up with their peers (at local level and across the State) in terms of health and educational development.

Data from the 2009 Australia Early Developmental Index (AEDI) suggested that many children living in these areas were not 'on track' developmentally, compared to other children in the City of Casey and indeed across Australia. Published data indicates that 32.4% of children in Doveton were considered developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains (compared to 25% for Casey and 20% nationally), with 21% developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains (compared to 13% for Casey and 10% nationally). The results are more alarming for Eumemmerring, with some 55% of children in this suburb area considered developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains, with 35% developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains.

Results from the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) conducted in 2009 indicated that children attending schools in Doveton and surrounds were performing significantly poorer than the Victorian average across each year of testing (where testing occurs for each of years 3, 5, 7 and 9). Results indicated that a higher proportion of children from these areas were performing below the expected level on national reading and numeracy tests, with far lower proportions of children at or above expected levels for these tests.



Understanding the existing service structure within Doveton, the barriers and gaps

At the time of the concept development, a number of early years services and local schools were operating in the Doveton area, each experiencing differing levels of utilisation. Some facilities were also considerably dated, in terms of both design and practices.

The collective research from efforts by the CCCH and from within and beyond the Department presented the following findings in terms of the barriers or gaps within the existing early childhood service structure operating in Doveton:

- High number of families presenting with complex needs – often beyond the capability of any single services
- Limited service capacity to meet the needs of vulnerable families and children
- Higher demand for support than services could provide
- An absence of information and clear referral pathways
- An absence of available ongoing intensive support for families
- An absence of service coordination resulting in families having difficulty accessing the services they needed
- Generally poor Maternal Child Health service and kindergarten attendance
- Poor linkages between early years services and the school system

Within the school system across Doveton, and with a specific focus on the four local schools, the research evidenced that:

- Infrastructure was dated, offering poor and limited physical environments
- Traditional teaching methods predominated the pedagogy
- Attendance data and low retention rates characterised too many children
- Students performance in literacy and numeracy was low compared to elsewhere in Victoria
- There was a general lack of parent involvement in the school curriculum
- Parents reported that they did not feel welcome in the classrooms
- There were poor linkages between schools and other services that sought to support families with young children

It is important though to recognise the efforts of services such as the Doveton Connect Program which commenced operation as the Doveton North Family Resource Centre (on the grounds of Doveton North Primary School) in 2005 in an attempt to address concerns and barriers to services access and use. The Doveton Connect Project evolved from the recognition that there was a need within the local community to provide a more responsive early childhood system, with supportive and accessible services for families with young children.

It was established as a partnership between Good Beginnings Australia, Doveton North Primary School, Casey Cardinia Community Health Service and City of Casey Best Start initiative with the intention of delivering a range of services to families with children experiencing disadvantage in early childhood or key transition points such as birth or school age entry.

The CCCH evaluated the Resource Centre in 2007, reporting that the model was concurrent with national strategies seeking to meet the needs of families with young children and indeed delivering a range of programs that were well-integrated with other agencies and services and easy for vulnerable families to access compared to traditional models. In terms of limitations, the Centre was not successfully attracting or servicing families from many CALD backgrounds (including those from Sudanese, Afghani and Indigenous communities), where evidence of growing numbers of families from such backgrounds residing in the Doveton area and requiring support was evident.

The value of the Doveton Connect approach has been carried across to Doveton College, with agencies involved in the original delivery of Doveton Connect forming part of the expanse of services and supports available to families within the purpose-built community spaces.

“The link between early childhood development and the early years of formal education is critical to the success of the project”

Doveton Regeneration Project 2010

Service Delivery Model, governance and outcomes

The service model supporting integration

In line with the intentions of service integration, and in response to the research and consultation work undertaken, by CCCH and the views of the key partners and The Early Childhood Reference Group, the integrated service model developed for implementation at Doveton College sought to offer wrap-around services and supports across three levels of the school:

1. Services funded and operated by the College
2. Services that partner organisations provide from the College on an ongoing or occasional basis with their own funding
3. Services that partners deliver off-site

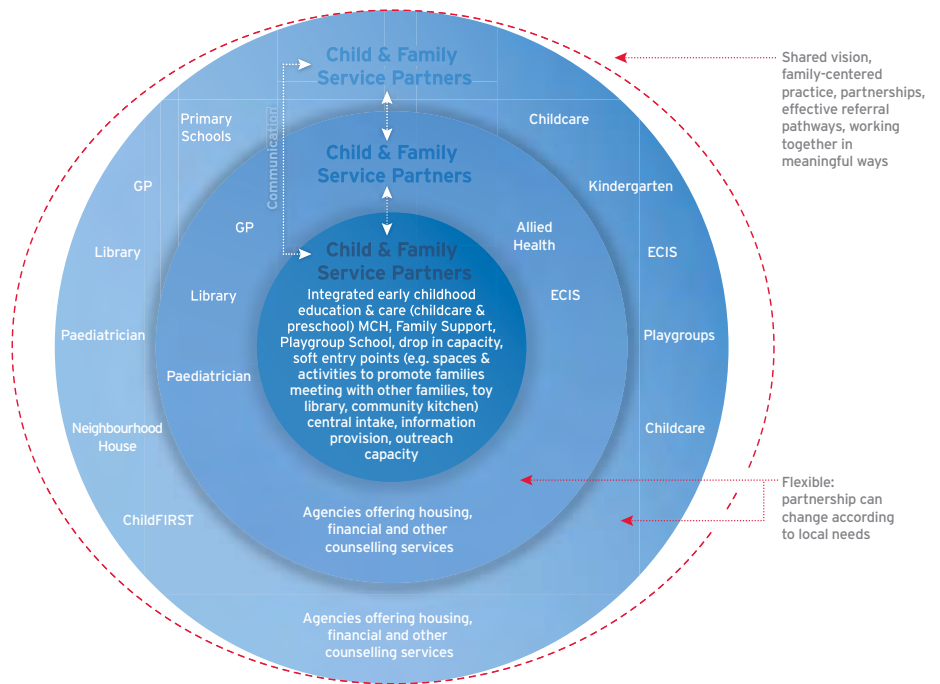
All services within the three-tiered model are expected to contribute to and subscribe to a shared vision, one family file, establish partnerships with one another and create effective referral pathways within and between each participating agency. All participating agencies would be required to sign an MOU with Doveton College for the programs they provide.

This structure has been at the forefront of how Doveton College has set about developing its operating program. The specific components of the services offered and key agencies currently working with Doveton College are detailed in subsequent sections.

Key service model components

The **key service components** that sit alongside the three-level model that Doveton College seeks to implement are:

- The provision of **high quality education programs** for all children with wrap around support available as needed
- **High quality long-day early learning programs**, including supported playgroups, Lets Read, Sing and Play and a range of other specific programs with an early years focus
- **Health and well being services** including Maternal and Child Health (MCH), first time mothers groups, healthy eating programs, immunisations, Paediatric consultations, therapy and other early childhood intervention programs
- Provision of **programs for adults** including computer skills, sewing groups, coffee and chat
- **Opportunities for students and families to make appointments** with the school nurse, community engagement coordinator, social worker, family support worker, or other allied health professionals
- **Opportunities for volunteering** in various areas across the College
- **Availability of staff** to discuss education, employment opportunities as well as family payments and entitlements
- **Access to settlement services** including refugee health and well being



Source: Proposed Doveton Learning Centre Service Delivery Model (created by CCCH October 2010)



Developing the required governance structure

Doveton College Council

As the Project developed a Ministerial Order, constituting the Doveton College Council was signed off in June 2010. The Doveton College Council became operational in September 2010, replacing the Doveton Regeneration Project Board.

Backed up by the steady and grounding work of the Doveton Regeneration Project Board and the Early Years Reference Group, the College Council has responsibility for ratifying the strategic intent of the new facility, determining key partners, developing a shared and unifying vision, underpinning values and undertaking joint planning. The twelve seats of Council are comprised of four parent representatives, two co-opted community representatives, one senior manager from the early childhood sector on-site, one representative from the DEECD and four representatives appointed by the Colman Foundation.

While the Doveton College Council has the same accountabilities as other school councils under the Education and Training Reform Act 2006, this style of governance structure is different on a number of levels. The blending of traditional school council models with Committees of Management approaches that often govern early childhood service operations is only one difference. The nomination of four of the seats on Council to reflect representation by the Colman Foundation as a philanthropic contributor of substantial funding to the schools development is another.

The need for this newly-formed Council to govern the operations across the College – from the Early Learning Centre through to the Year 9 school level is yet a third difference.

While this new approach has resulted in learnings for members of the Council, members both on council and within the department agree that the blending of members and the new Council model has provided far more benefits for the progression of Doveton College than challenges.

Goals and outcomes

In line with the intended integrated service model, the goals endorsed by Doveton College Council and the integrated service model that Doveton College seeks to embed into practice are as follows:

1. Serve and engage an entire neighbourhood

Engaging an entire neighbourhood helps to achieve three goals:

- a. Reach children in numbers significant enough to affect the culture of a community
- b. Transform the physical and social environments that impact on children's development
- c. Create a program at a scale large enough to meet the local need

2. Create a network of support

A network of support developed through a School of Excellence linked to local service providers can provide:

- a. Uninterrupted support for children's healthy growth, starting with prenatal programs for parents and finishing when young people move to further education, training and employment
- b. Additional programs that support families in not only raising their children but also in their own educational and employment opportunities
- c. Work to build community among residents, institutions and stakeholders who help to create the environment necessary for children's healthy growth and development and families participation in education and work

3. Evaluate program outcomes so that what Doveton College is doing is open and transparent and every success or failure informs future practice

4. Develop and support a culture of success rooted in passion, accountability, leadership and teamwork

The broader **outcomes** that Doveton College seeks to achieve for children, families, services and the community over time were identified as:

For Children: Our children are ready and able to benefit from age-appropriate learning and social opportunities

For Families: Our families are able to meet the health, social, emotional and learning needs of all family members

For Services: Our child and family services actively support families and children in an integrated fashion, delivers high quality evidence based programs and is ready for children and families

For Community: Our community member are connected to local services and facilities that meet their diverse needs

"The purpose...to explore a model that other people can learn from...and to define what you need to do together to make a difference to children's outcomes"

Julius Colman



2

Building and infrastructure: creating from the ground up

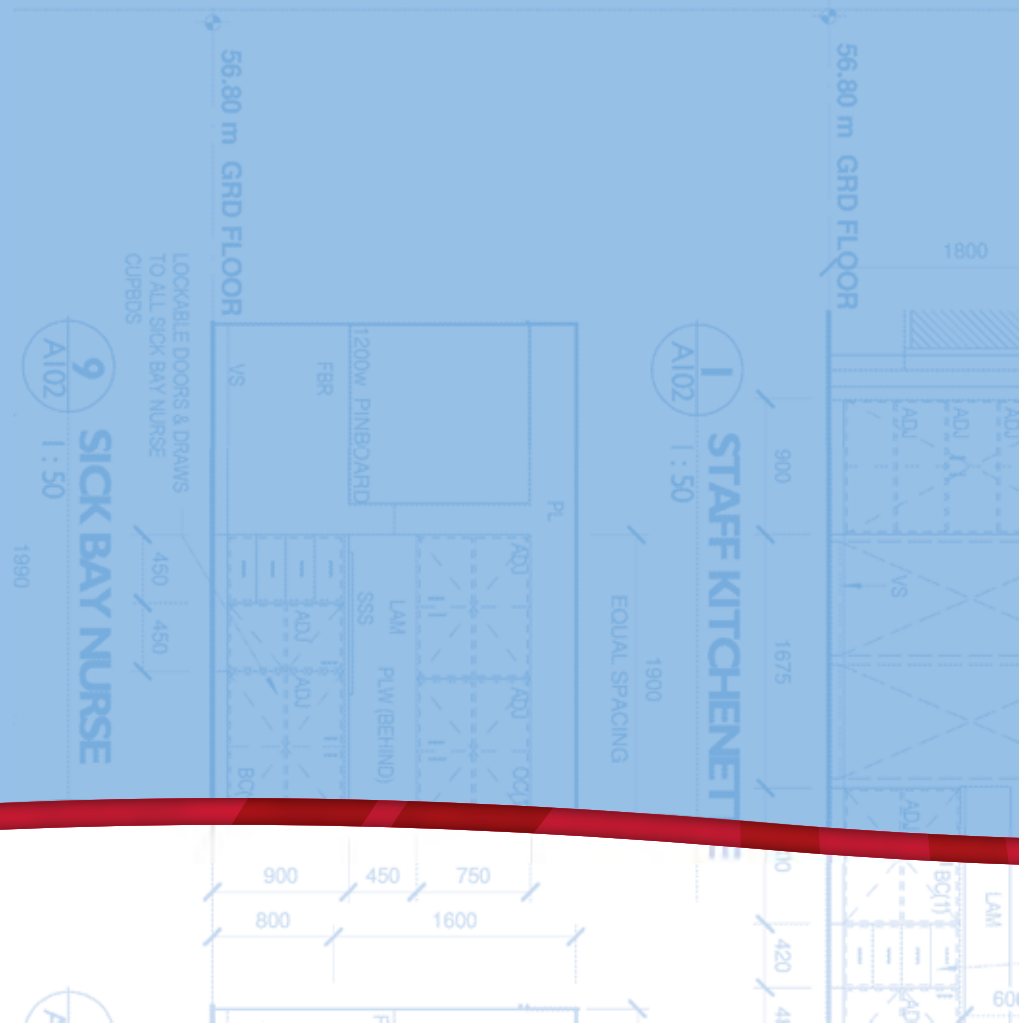
Designing Doveton College

Challenges during the
design and build phase



There were very few examples of how to transform the evidence-based concept of an integrated, community focussed school catering for pre-natal to Year 9 such as Doveton College into a workable building design, particularly given the program model evolved alongside the design and construction phase.

Laurence Robinson | *BRAND Architects*





Designing Doveton College

From model concept to building design

In late 2009 BRAND Architects were contacted by the Department and invited to visit the site of the then Doveton Heights Primary School, to test the capability of the site and assist in putting together a brief of what would be needed to deliver a pre-school to Year 12 model on the location.

BRAND Architects noted that while they had designed a number of co-located school and community facilities in the past, this request was the first “under a single management model combining school and community spaces”.

In early 2010, BRAND Architects were appointed and requested to commence the schematic design phase for a pre-school to Year 12 School – within two phases – each reflecting traditional junior and senior year levels. Due to the BER projects operating at that time, BRAND Architects was under considerable pressure to perform across a range of education sector projects.

During 2010 the Design Phase for Stage One – including the Early Learning Centre through to Year 6 buildings – was a key focus, with the schematic designs for Stage Two – Year 7 to Year 9 learning houses and remaining buildings also required.

Stage One: Design considerations

In collaboration, the Department and BRAND Architects developed a matrix of the service and supports that would need to be included on site and detail the space and building requirements of each in light of the different regulations under which each are governed. The designers were interested in achieving an efficient use of facilities and wanted to ensure the college was designed in such a way to allow “all-day operations” and therefore, a time-based overlay was also factored into the design phase.

In line with the research, the design phase of Doveton College sought to retain the concept of being child-centred. As a result, definition around the core child-centred activities to be offered was required and the design of these prioritised. The space and building needs of family-centred activities to support families using the facility needed consideration, and in turn, the needs of the community-centred services and supports required to provide a the desired holistic approach.

As previously noted, the agreement to build Doveton College resulted in the closure of several local schools, with the forecast number of children anticipated to attend Doveton in the order of 900. Sufficient learning space to teach and support this number of children, and the needs of staff and partner organisations utilising the site were priority considerations in the design phase.

Further, a range of design requirements needed to be addressed in line with 21st Century school facilities and alignment with the desired teaching and learning approach. Such requirements included:

- Designing facilities and building structures that were able to be easily adapted or modified to respond to changing educational priorities and teaching and learning styles
- Provision of safe, secure and welcoming environments which promoted a sense of connectedness
- Integrating science, technology and art/project spaces
- Offering a range of purposeful spaces that allow students to work differently depending on the year level and learning focus; the spaces needed to allow for a spectrum from working alone, one-one assistance, small group work; large group work and as a whole class.
- Provision of appropriate space, access and storage for ICT resources
- Mobile or fixed storage for students' books and bags
- Spaces for specialist subjects including music, visual art, performing art, Languages Other Than English and physical education
- Access to smaller withdrawal areas for paraprofessionals, English as an Additional Language and special needs programs

“It's not just about the building or services but there are lots of interrelated factors [you need to know] about how to run an integrated model – otherwise it falls apart”

Laurence Robinson | BRAND Architects

Achieving a modern, responsive (and 20% better) school build

The goal of the building design was to provide a new, state of the art school, providing the best opportunities for education and access to high quality facilities – far beyond that previously seen in the local area. However, this too presented challenges across a number of levels – in terms of design and build. It was difficult to move away from traditional school designs and vary the standard *Facilities Schedule and Entitlement* governed by the Department and provide a new modern school design.

Within the design phase, parents and the broader community were provided the opportunity to voice their views and thoughts regarding the proposed design and intention of the new school.

Consultation indicated that in addition to providing the best facilities and opportunities for their children, parents also desired suitable spaces within the school they could access. Children would see parents as active and interested learners, willing to participate in the school system and demonstrating their desire to embed their children in better educational systems and experiences than they received previously.

In response to this, the site offers several discrete places for parents to have discussions, chat and access services without the stigma that can be attached to visiting particular services or supports.

Stage Two: Detailing the design for the second stage

While the schematic design for Stage Two was completed with Stage One, the design detail occurred during 2011, as Stage One was being constructed. This process allowed for a greater level of discussion around the function and needs of the services, learning environments and space. Consequently, the form and design of Stage Two buildings has been influenced by function, with variation from the traditional school building model a little more possible than occurred in Stage One.

An example of this involvement is evident in the provision of studio spaces within a Technology and Visual Art Centre. Traditional woodwork and metal work rooms were suggested for inclusion in the design of Stage Two, yet the close involvement of the project team has allowed for smaller studio spaces to be included to allow the curriculum to be delivered in the way it is intended within the new school model and according to VELS.

Challenges during the design and build phase

Meeting the needs of a changing policy context

Part way through the design phase of Stage One, and due to a growing awareness of the early years research and the impact of integrated service models on improved outcomes for children, the Colman Foundation requested that the model be altered to reflect the need for stronger educational support opportunities for children from birth through to the end of the compulsory school years.

DEECD supported this change, noting that such a shift would result in stronger alignment of the new school model with the then Government's early childhood agenda and the requirements of the National Quality Framework. DEECD further noted that the extension of the program into the post compulsory year levels did not align with population projections nor the declining number of students completing later secondary years of schooling in the area, and that such complimentary schooling at the older year levels may be better achieved in the existing local schools.

As a result, the Years 10, 11 and 12 dropped from the proposed model, in favour of strengthening the provision of early learning and education services at Doveton College for children from birth to five years – through to Year 9.

“Doveton was a blank canvass and [we are] starting to make our paint marks... We were trusting of the department to follow through with integrity of what would happen...and the school build is brilliant”

Julius Colman



Challenges of “form before function”

Not only were there few examples of how to transform the concept into a workable model, the reality was that the model was evolving alongside the design and construction phase. In many respects, the creation of Doveton College, particularly in Stage One, did not necessarily follow the logical sequence of concept through to design and build.

Another example of the impact of form before function relates to the location of buildings within the site itself. For example, the Prep Learning House sits nestled within the traditional school learning houses and separate to the Early Learning Centre. Yet the desired links between the two and the children supported within each, in this model, are strong. In hindsight, building the Early Learning Centre and Prep Learning House together would have allowed and encouraged easier transitions between the students, staff and pedagogical approach.

Selecting a suitable site with sufficient space

The Doveton Heights Primary School site was selected as the site for the new school for many reasons. It reflects such a prominent location, high on the hill overlooking the very location it seeks to service. This site also had the advantage of being co-located with the City of Casey Pool in the Park site and throughout the design and development phase, interest in enhancing the land and pool facility was a focus. A small portion of the land on the swimming pool site was bought by DEECD for \$2million to allow the College sufficient space to complete the desired buildings and surrounds.

Out with the old, in with the new

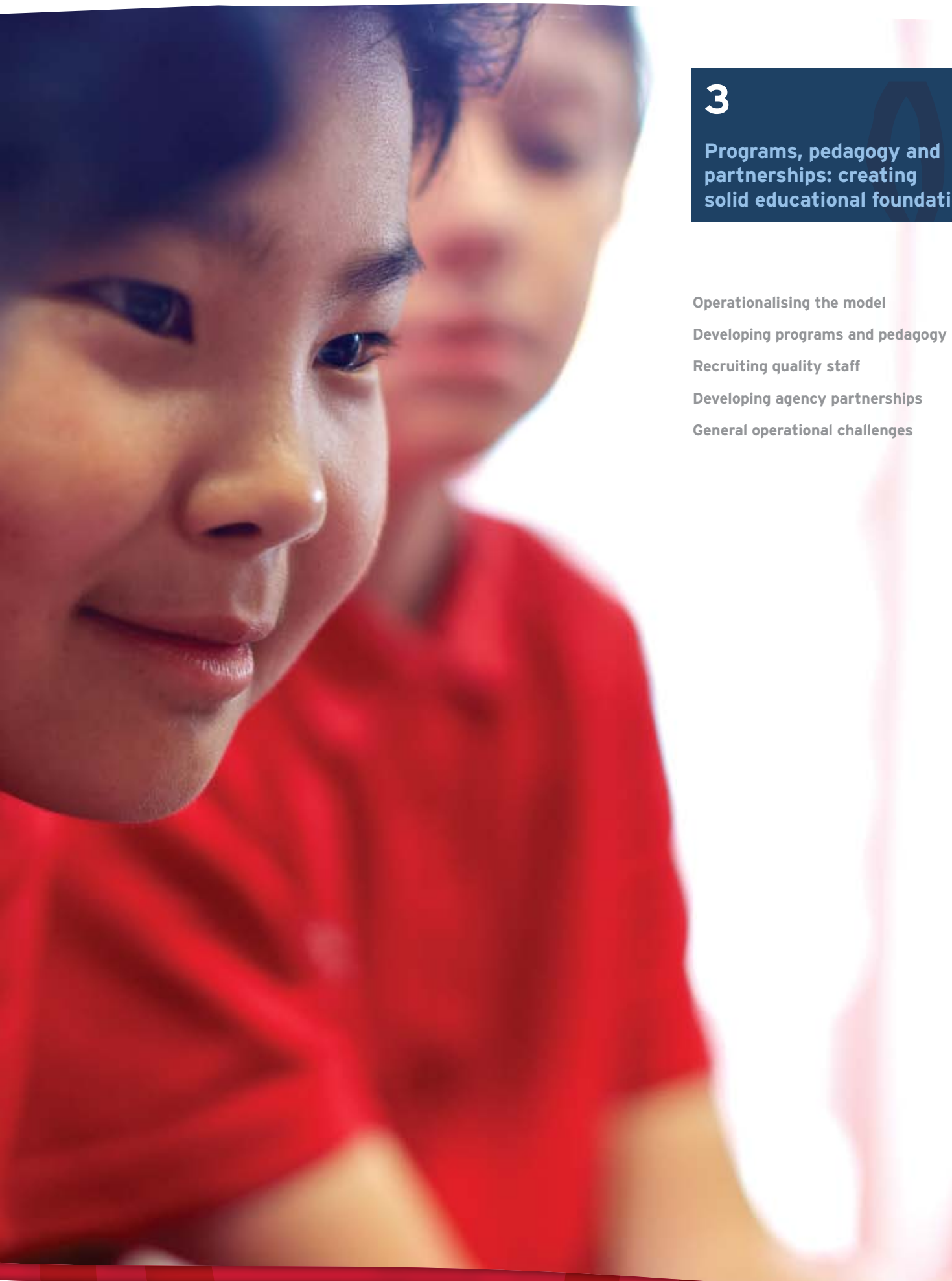
Given the construction of Doveton College has involved the demolition of an existing school site and the construction of a new, much larger school – reflecting a design that had not been built before – it has indeed endured many challenges.

Some of the challenges experienced reflected issues that are, generally speaking, part and parcel of buildings of this size and nature. Other challenges related more specifically to the building of a school design that had no building history. This was not a BER template design that had been built previously. The design was new, the program model continually evolving and therefore many decisions and alterations needed to occur as the build stage progressed.

“Building the program model first would have resulted in an even better design and build for Stage 1, though time did not allow this flow”

Bretton New | Executive Principal, Doveton College





3

Programs, pedagogy and partnerships: creating solid educational foundations

Operationalising the model

Developing programs and pedagogy

Recruiting quality staff

Developing agency partnerships

General operational challenges

In developing the teaching and learning program at Doveton College, we do so in the knowledge that the concept of teaching and learning is changing. Our new buildings and our learning environment reflect this and allows our students to develop and learn in a safe, supportive and stimulating environment.

Bretton New | *Executive Principal*





Operationalising the model

Running alongside the construction process, significant behind the scenes work to develop and refine the service model and provide solid educational foundations to support the College was underway.

A key leadership team was appointed to drive the creation of the school, develop the Pedagogical and Teaching and Learning Framework and recruit and secure staff to implement the agreed model. This team has supported the development of MOUs with agreed service partners and refined needed business models, addressed budget and finance needs, enrolment processes and other regulatory requirements. The components required to operationalise the school are complex. Many have occurred simultaneously and each has each been met with challenges not always evident to those outside of the process.

In December 2009, a Project Director was appointed to facilitate both the design and build, development of the program model and the subsequent operation of the Doveton College. In May 2010 a Director of Family and Children's Services was appointed to establish the early childhood facility programs and partnerships.

Developing programs and pedagogy

With the model taking shape, from the beginning of 2010 a Pedagogy and Programs Working Group was established to work with the Doveton Regeneration Project Board, South Metropolitan Region DEECD, in particular the officers of the Regeneration Unit, staff from existing schools and consultants to shape an educational philosophy and framework for the College.

Doveton College's Mission

Doveton College's mission seeks to provide high quality programs for the children and young people of Doveton in partnership with their families and the community. This mission statement is displayed in the front entrance to the school as a continual reminder to all within the College of what it strives to achieve.

Doveton College

Our mission

Doveton College believes in the potential of each of our children and young people to learn, to do their best and to achieve

At Doveton College

We believe in:

- engaging with our community to best support the health, education and social well-being of our children
- high achievement, excellence and measureable progress
- teamwork, accountability, tolerance and the highest personal standards
- demonstrating respect, trust, honesty in our words and in our behaviour

We will provide an environment:

- that is safe, secure and orderly
- which promotes strong learning, high achievement, excellence, engagement and leadership
- where evaluation will be a key part of every thing we do, so that every success or failure teaches us how to do better

We have a deep shared passion to do what it takes to improve the lives of the children of Doveton

Doveton College's Learning Charter and beliefs

The Working Party developed a Learning Charter and beliefs about learning within the College and local community. This Learning Charter was adopted and has guided the development of the detailed teaching and learning program.

Personalised learning is considered a key focus

The framework applied at Doveton College focuses on personalising learning and ensuring that every child's education is structured and tailored to meet their learning needs and supports high levels of achievement.

Personalised learning is often defined as series of practices that collectively recognise and promote individual growth and attainment with a common curriculum program. It is a child centred approach that responds to the needs of today's learner.

The pedagogical approach applied at Doveton College recognises that for personalised learning to be most useful, effective and orderly teaching and learning environments are a prerequisite. This would be characterised by:

- Rigorous systems of accountability and assessment to guide school improvement, program development and teaching and learning to ensure high achievement
- Organisation and structure that supports quality teaching and learning to ensure high levels of achievement
- Provision of a flexible curriculum catering for personal leaning needs and supporting high levels of engagement
- Effective teaching and learning practices that are consistent and matched to learning needs to ensure high levels of achievement
- Continuous, respectful long term effective relationships between teachers and children ensuring teachers know their children better and are more able to address individual needs, strengths, experiences and interests
- The utilisation of all available resources and supports beyond the classroom to support high levels of learning and engagement to widen options for children

High quality, caring and professional staff are vital

The Doveton College mission will be achieved through staff who:

- Foster continuous, long-term relationships with children and young people
- Have a shared commitment to and understanding of the vision and goals and continually engender pride in the college
- Understand the developmental continuum of learning and are able to assess the strengths and weaknesses of each individual child and select the most appropriate instructional methods to help the individual child
- Set high expectations of what each and every child can achieve
- Design rigorous and coherent teaching and learning programs based on the interests, skill level and capability of the individual child
- Are data wise and monitor performance against expectations, applying assessment strategies and providing timely, accurate and special feedback on each child's progress
- Are committed to high levels of collegiate planning, sharing, instruction and learning from one another and to staff performance and development processes to improve learning

This underpins the professional culture being developed at the College.

"We want parents not to be afraid to embed their children in a better [education] system than they had"

Julius Colman



Provision of specific learning programs across year levels

With the College Charter and pedagogical vision in mind, the Pedagogy and Programs Working Party and appointed staff members set about developing the specific learning programs across each of the year levels. The Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF) in conjunction with the Victorian Essential Learning Framework, under which the Victorian Essential Learning Standards sit, have guided the development of Doveton College's learning programs and curriculum.

The program has been developed for delivery across a three level structure – the Early Learning Centre which focusses on 0-5 year olds, the Early Years program for students from Prep to Year 3 and the Middle Years program for students from Year 4 through to Year 9. It is anticipated that the purpose built Learning Houses and specialist facilities for ICT, Digital Media, Visual Arts, Performing Arts, Technology and Fitness and Recreation provide the state of the art facilities to support students to reach their true potential.

However, while these age structures apply in the broad sense, the learning program is not structured along traditional chronological age or indicative year levels but rather based on a multi-age approach, with the program addressing the social and emotional needs of children and recognising their relationships with family and peers within the community.

For example, the Early Learning Centre does not run a traditional 3 year old kindergarten program separate to a 4-year old program, but rather chooses to address the learning and development needs of children aged from 3 to 5 years within mixed room arrangements, providing individualised learning opportunities to each child based on need. In the early and middle years of schooling at Doveton College, efforts to support this multi-ageing concept are also being applied, though the shift from traditional year level approaches is proving more complex.

Early Learning Centre (0–5 years)

Children learn from birth and their learning and development at each stage of life forms the foundation for the next years. During these years educators within Doveton's Early Learning Centre work with children to assist with the development of outcomes in line with the VEYLDF which include ensuring all children:

- have a strong sense of identify
- are connected and contribute to their world
- have a strong sense of wellbeing
- are confident and involved learners
- are effective communicators

Early Years (Prep–Year 3)

The Early Years (Prep–Year 3) curriculum covers Levels 1-3 of the Victorian Essential Learning Standards. In Years Prep to Year 3, an integrated curriculum approach designed by teachers within the Learning Teams is used. The focus at Doveton is on foundational Literacy and Numeracy skills and building on personal development and social skills. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is integrated into all areas of learning and is used as a tool in student learning. The Early Years includes specialist learning areas of Science, Physical Education and Health and the Visual Arts. Further to this, the Personal Learning, Thinking Processes and Communication domains and the Information Technology domain are integrated in and across the Learning Areas and the Learning Groups.

Middle Years (Year 4–9)

Students at the College have the opportunity to participate in an innovative Middle Years program that is based upon best practise and research. The curriculum program reflects student interests and needs, and is linked to the Victorian Essential Learning Standards. Throughout the Middle Years program students are supported in the development of skills and behaviours to be successful learners.

In Years 4 through to 6 the program extensively builds on the Early Years with a focus on consolidation of literacy and numeracy skills at the appropriate levels. At this level students become active in their own learning and undertake short or extended inquiry around engaging questions, investigations and problem solving.

“Making good teaching happen for every child, every day, in every classroom, is the single most important means by which schools can deliver on their promise to enable all children to learn and achieve at high levels”

Julius Colman

Whilst the full Years 7 to 9 program will not commence until 2013, the curriculum has already been developed. Literacy and numeracy remain a strong focus within the integrated approach. At these year levels the curriculum program will continue to be designed according to the Victorian Essential Learning Standards and enhanced with a range of special programs. The curriculum is based around four broad areas – Communication, Problem Solving and Investigations, Design Briefs and Recreation. English will be offered as part of Communication, and English as an Additional Language (EAL) support, in recognition of the significant number of students entering Doveton who speak a language other than English, will be provided through team teaching, withdrawal or discrete classes.

The Middle Years program has been designed to include the specialist learning areas of Physical Education and Health; the Performing and Visual Arts and Technology. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is a significant component and is integrated in all curriculum areas.

Special Programs

In addition to the core program, the curriculum has been designed so that students have access to a range of special programs such as:

- Doveton LIVE – students have access to state of the art multimedia facilities through Doveton Live and its teaching staff. Students are able to use this facility as a resource to assist them with their work across each of their subjects. Normally, students work within the areas of film, animation, claymation and music technology.
- Student Voice – which provides students with the opportunity to take on a leadership role in the school. It will work through a system of sub-committees with each making use of the individual talents and interests of the particular group. The Student Voice teacher will work closely with the students in a supportive and advisory capacity.
- Camps – allowing students the opportunity to attend at least one three-day camp throughout the year
- Sport programs – where students can participate in a minimum of three interschool sport days as well as school based Athletics and Swimming carnivals, coaching and clinics.
- Instrumental music – small specialised classes in a range of instruments will be provided once a week to interested students. These students will have the opportunity to participate in performances through band and other groups.
- Out of Hours Learning Program – Qualified tutors from will be employed to provide support to students on two afternoons each week

Recruiting quality staff

To support the implementation of the program and service model, respected and strategic staff members have been recruited along the way. Given that the model development was occurring alongside the school build, there were many challenges associated with recruiting and appointing staff without the physical presence of a school facility.

Despite this, since October 2011, 120 staff have been appointed to the College, reflecting the model and a new way of working.

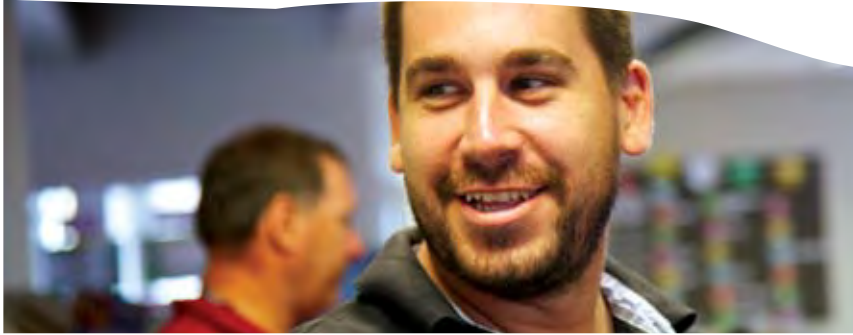
Challenges in staffing structures

Traditionally in Victoria the agreement structures under which staff employed to work within early learning settings differ to those employing teachers and educators within the school system.

Lengthy discussions were required to negotiate for the employment of all staff at Doveton College under a single industrial agreement – namely the Victorian Government Schools Agreement (VGSA).

“The recruitment of staff for this model has required the unlearning of structure, policy and process...and the recruitment of staff who are willing to re-think how a teacher teaches in the class room and operate in line with the College’s vision – this has been an enormous challenge”

Bretton New | Executive Principal, Doveton College



Developing agency partnerships

Developing relationships

Whilst the curriculum framework was being established and teaching and support staff being employed to allow the core services at Doveton to be provided, links were also being formed with agencies with whom Doveton College sought to develop partnerships to allow additional services and support to be delivered within the school site. The partnerships also facilitate improved access to off-site service for families and children, as outlined in the agreed service model.

The partnerships developed have resulted in services being available for families to access immediately, without the normal barriers to service access such as waiting lists, transport difficulties and unfamiliar service environments.

Key agency partners

The relationships that have been developed, and continue to be developed, with key agency partners have resulted in MOUs that allow families of Doveton to access many additional services and support on-site. By way of example:

Agency partner	Nature of service
Good Beginnings Australia	<i>Play and Learn</i> program, drop in playgroups, parenting outreach support
City of Casey	Maternal and Child Health Service (MCH), Enhanced MCH and first time mothers groups and immunisation program
Southern Health, and Cardinia Casey Community Health	<i>Healthy Eating, Play Gym</i> , therapy, oral health and family Counselling
Southern Migrant Refugee Centre	Settlement workers, adult training programs, conversational English classes, craft sessions
Monash Children's Hospital	Paediatric fellow
Parenting Research Centre	Early Home Learning Study, Psychology support
DEECD	Specialist Children's Services, Secondary School Nursing
The Smith Family	<i>Learning for Life</i> program, Each one Teach one
Family Life	Family Support Mental Health Creating Capable Community Leaders
Brotherhood of St. Laurence	Work and Learning Coordination

"Doveton is working best with partners who share our learnings, share professional development experiences – it's a community model for professionals as much as what they delivery for families themselves"

June McLoughlin | Director, Family and Children's Services

General operational challenges

A range of other backend, operational issues have presented challenges in the establishment of Doveton College, largely in relation to the integration of the early childhood services within the school model.

Establishing business models

Establishing business models that detailed everything from hours of service, staffing ratios, numbers of children and students within core programs and additional service provision requirements, to employment structures and available funding and subsidy arrangements for both the Early Learning Centre and the school facilities needed consideration. This consideration required considerable and lengthy meetings and consultation with the Project Board and later on the College Council, key stakeholders and the boarder community on occasions over eighteen months.

Allocation of funds and resources

Reaching agreement in relation to what components of the Early Learning Centre could or could not be funded out of the *School Resources Package*, and vice versa, has required ongoing, lengthy discussions with the DEECD and Colman Foundation, as key contributors to the resourcing of the College. Flexibility in understanding how costs would be spread across the whole was required. The ELC is funded through a combination of State and Federal government funds and allocated through the *Schools Resource Package*.

Operating systems and enrollments

The challenges extended from the allocation of resources and development of budgets, to operating systems and enrolment processes. In the absence of physical building, Doveton College was not recognized as a school and thus operating systems such as CASES21 (the integrated school administration and finance software used in Victoria) and the CCMS (Child Care Management Systems package used in early childhood services) were not available. As a result, many aspects of the schools budgeting, financial structures and enrolments needed to be done initially without access to the relevant systems and databases designed to support such processes.

Operating policies and license

The two entities, the Early Learning Centre and the school-based service, require different registration processes – the Children's Services Register and National Quality Framework (NQF) relates to early childhood education services and the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) for the school component. However, because each authority required different things and are not advanced sufficiently to allow discussion of how the specific needs of each policy area are addressed under an integrated model, 130 separate policies have been drafted to address the individual needs of each regulatory authority.

Developing the new school... on old grounds

The challenge of the recruitment process and the reality of supporting staff from closing schools who did not receive employed positions at Doveton College also presented significant challenges for newly appointed Doveton College staff. While these new staff were excited about the new venture, the location of many staff during late 2011 in the Doveton Primary School building in Rowan Drive, Doveton and the eventual delivery of services there in early 2012 meant that Doveton College staff were trying to develop and grow a new school in a physical environment where some staff knew their old school and their old role would not be continued.

"The next steps will be to solidify partnership relationships so these are sustained in the long term"

June McLoughlin | Director, Family and Children's Services



"While Doveton reflects a robust model at the front end - there are real challenges (to overcome) at the backend or technical level that allows the front end to operate as it does"

Bretton New | Executive Principal

"Overcoming challenges is what builds Doveton College and we will make a difference"

Doveton College | Staff member



4

Opening the gates: delivering on promises

Opening the gates – Year One

Understanding the
student population

Reflecting on achievements

Considerations for 2013



Opening the gates – Year One

With the wealth of planning and hard work that had been occurring for many years, Doveton College opened its doors in January 2012.

Early Learning Centre

The Early Learning Centre commenced service operation on 6 February 2012

- The Centre comprises 3 rooms, each offering a long-day early education program. One room caters for the needs of children less than 36 months of age, with the other two offering programs for children aged 3–5 years.
- The Centre is staffed at a room level by early childhood educators together with diploma qualified and Certificate III Children's Services staff low child to staff ratios, and in accordance with *National Quality Framework*.
- The program and curriculum are supported by the Assistant Principal Early Learning who is a pedagogical leader and the Director of Family and Children's Services.
- Children are offered three healthy meals a day, plus early and late snacks, all prepared in the College ELC kitchen.
- The outdoor play area offers a naturalistic environment where the children can interact across the three rooms, moving freely in and out of the space as they wish.

Within the community space attached to the Early Learning Centre, families have access to the following services delivered by agency partners:

- Maternal and Child Health Nurses onsite
- Good Beginnings Australia programs
- Community Engagement Coordinator appointed - George Hicks Foundation and R.E. Ross Trust
- Volunteer Coordinator Role

Program for Prep to Year 7 students

A decision was made in late 2011 to include a Year 7 cohort in the 2012 Doveton College program.

As a result of the building delays, the programs for school age students from Prep to Year 7 commenced in February 2012 some 4km away – under the Doveton College banner at the old Doveton Primary School site.

Implications of operating the school program off-site

In delivering on promises and implementing these programs, significant challenges have been experienced, some expected with the implementation of a new model such as this, other challenges were not so expected. The buildings delays which resulted in the need to run ELC and Prep-Year 7 on a separate sites in the first term of 2012 was not expected and has significant impact at a number of levels, for students and families, for staff, and for the provision of the integrated model intended.

- For the students entering Doveton College in 2012, there was disappointment as Prep through to Year 7 students were required to commence the year in a school environment very different to what they were hoping for and one which required a second transition at the end of the first term – just as many, prep students particularly, were ready to settle.
- For parents there was disappointment that the school was not ready to open and deliver what they had been promised. As with students, parents too needed to transition their routine from school based activities at the school site in Rowan Drive to the new building in Term 2. For many parents new to the school or the school system, this resulted in an unsettled period.
- For staff, alongside the natural disappointment (along with the project team) that the school was not ready, staff also experienced other challenges at this time. From a practical sense, the newly appointed staff had little time to establish the foundation of the school, they were attempting to build relationships between many new colleagues at the same time as settling students, establishing policies and procedures of a new school, and one with a new way of working, and delivering the program on limited resources and in dated infrastructure.
- The school program needed to be implemented from day 1 but with the prospect of needing to pack up and transition to the new site at the end of Term 1 2012. The Early Learning Centre, children and staff meanwhile were well settled on the new site, had established routines and patterns of operating, putting them considerably ahead of the rest of Doveton College.



Understanding the student population

Student enrolment and usage in 2012

Despite the challenges experienced, there is no doubt that from a blank canvass a thriving, popular school community has evolved!

Enrolment data for 2012 indicates the school has attracted some 140 children into the Early Learning Centre, with these children attending an average of 2-3 days a week. During the same year, in excess of 500 students have enjoyed the facilities offered by Doveton Colleges Prep to Year 7 Learning Houses and complimentary buildings. The efforts to engage the community and support the needs of students and families from school services that are no longer operating have paid off.

In its first year of operation Doveton College provided services for 663 children aged from birth through to Year 7.

More than half of the children and young people accessing Doveton College speak a Language Other Than English (LOTE) at home. Of the children enrolled in the ELC in 2012, the two major languages were Arabic and Serbian. A further 5% of children were identified as from ATSI backgrounds.

At the Prep to Year 7 level, more than 50 languages other than English were spoken at home with the three major languages being Arabic, Samoan and Dari with 83% of the students eligible for English as an Additional Language (EAL) funding.

Supporting the growing population into 2013

As 2012 came to a close, enrolments for the ELC were in excess of 130 children, reflecting an occupancy rate of more than 95%.

As the school moves to support the needs of Year 7-9 students in 2013, the enrolment is expected to exceed 800.

The Prep students for 2013 will come largely from the ELC student pool, each year level from Prep to Year 6 from the prior year level.

In 2013, Year 7 students will reflect the current Doveton College Year 6 students. A number of Year 8 and 9 students are expected from Endeavour Hills Secondary College which is due to close at end of 2012. This school has remained open offering Years 7 through to 9 only, and formed a relationship with Hallam Secondary College (the old senior campus of Eumemmerring Secondary College). Hallam College will most likely be the senior college of choice for Doveton College students. Hallam College offers the breadth and depth of subjects and has a Sports Academy to support students' needs in the area.

Addressing the needs of EAL students and changing demographics

The current student population includes a significant proportion of students from different cultures, often where English is not the first or preferred language spoken at home. This has implications for the teaching and learning program, both in how students are taught and how reporting is achieved. Coupled with this, the population of the area is continually changing and therefore the challenge for Doveton College to remain aware and responsive to these changes is critical going forward.

With the continued rise in children presenting from backgrounds other than English, there is a need for teachers to understand the English as an Additional Language (EAL) Companion. The teaching of English as an Additional Language is different to teaching English. As a result, Doveton College offers significantly higher resourcing and support aids around the needs of students from backgrounds other than English relative to other schools.

“Even though Doveton College represents a new model, so far it has been robust enough to handle change in demographics”

Bretton New | *Executive Principal*

This change also requires a change in the workforce plan, the development of relationships with new and varied agencies and resource supports.

In addition to the specific needs of students and families from diverse backgrounds, the general demographics within the Doveton area have and are changing since the model was initially developed and even since the school opened in January 2012. Further investigation of these changes and their implications will be warranted in the future, however, based on data for 2011. The Doveton-Eumemmerring postcode reflects:

- A population has increase to more than 10,245, with increases in both the number of children aged 0-4 years and the young workforce (aged between 25-34 years), with decreases noted in the number of secondary school aged children.
- A transient population 27% having taken up residency in the last five years.
- Less than 38% of the population aged over 15 years have completed studies at the Year 12 level.
- 40% of residents continue to come from countries where English is not the first language, with noted increase in residents from the India, Afghanistan Sri Lanka, and Sudan.
- A decline in the number of residents speaking English only, with large increases in the number speaking another language. Around 10% of the population report having difficulty in speaking English.

Further, as a result of these combined changes, there is an awareness that some of the biggest issues families need support with are around housing, immigration and visa needs and for many assimilating to life in the local area following their progression from refugee camps. Doveton College, together with key agency partners will need to be responsive to supporting these needs in the future.

Reflecting on achievements

As the first year of operation draws to a close, the achievement of the first year is exceptional.

A new school exists!

The existence of Doveton College as a physical, functional and evolving school is evidence that the model developed has been successfully designed and built. Relationships with agency partners have been built, programs and pedagogy created and quality staff recruited to implement the intended service model. Enrolments and engagement by the community continue to grow and significant steps to operate as an integrated facility have been taken.

However there is honest awareness that Doveton College is still in its infancy and it will take time and continued commitment to the vision to ensure that the community – stakeholders, staff, families and children alike – work in partnership and across traditional education settings.

Interest in the value of the model

There is growing interest from many sources regarding what Doveton College is and how the model of integration works. The interest stems not simply from how it works across the early years and school structure, but beyond to the service partnerships and community and health services available. The concept that children accessing Doveton College can be supported by speech, paediatrician, MCH services and allied health almost immediately and without normal delays has come as a surprise to many who have visited the new school.

Further, from the onset, the intention was that the Doveton Regeneration Project is “scalable” – that is that the concept reflects a stand-out best practice approach and a model that can be applied elsewhere with minimal additional funding. Further evaluation efforts to determine the ongoing costs and achievement of the College across outcomes for children, families, service and the community will be required into the future to further support the possible application of the approach elsewhere.

“If the department wants to see outcomes, then we need agreement on the key factors that need to be explored”

June McLoughlin | Director, Family and Children's Services



Considerations for 2013

Completing Building Phase 2

There are concerns at the time of writing this document that Doveton College is again facing service provision challenges with the completion of Stage Two building works also delayed. The College has been advised that the final stages of the build will not be completed until into the 2013 school year. With commitments made to more than 300 families that the school will be ready for operation in Term 1 for senior year levels, Doveton College has been currently devising the best plan to support operations for these years level in 2013.

However, just as the hurdles presented during Year One, with drive and determination Doveton College will again raise the bar and confidently provide the needed services on site as soon as is safe and practical. When complete, the buildings will provide open plan, flexible learning spaces for the Year 7 to 9 programs. Students will have access to a purpose built Technology Studio for electronics, robotics, wood, metal, fabrics and plastics and a purpose built Art Studio for painting, sculpture and ceramics.

A multi-media studio will contain high end equipment for computer assisted design, animation and film production, a fully equipped Performing Arts Theatre will be a feature of the College, as will a music studio and music practice rooms. The College gymnasium will be the main feature of the Fitness and Well-being Centre and Food Technology will be delivered out of the Colleges "Master Chef" inspired kitchen.

Building stronger integration links

In addition to expanding the school population and settling the senior year levels into Doveton College, a key focus for 2013 will be on expanding the level of integration operating between the Early Learning Centre and the school environment. Strategies are being explored, with options around better utilising resources to allow current staff to be more involved with the staff and families using each of the core service components and the support services that wrap around these. Working within the ELC and the school, to develop a greater understanding of the way in which they operate, the pedagogy that each follows and the benefits each has to offer students, families and staff, is expected to assist with the integration process.

Hopes for the 2013 and beyond

In conclusion while the completion of the build in early 2013 will mark the end of a major long-term building project, the interest and curiosity around the outcomes for children achieved in the next five to ten years will be of just as much interest. The capacity of the school to grow into its intended integrated approach will be in the spot-light, as the shift from co-location of traditional school and early years' service develops to reflect a truly seamless and transparent child-centred model of education and support for children and their families.

There is a hope from within the school that aside from the impact Doveton has and will have on children, their families and the local community, consideration is given as to "how Doveton has impacted on social and educational policy". These hopes will require structured evaluation efforts against agreed outcomes originally devised for the model as well as efforts to utilise the learnings and challenges experienced in developing Doveton, to inform and change policy and systems going forward to aid future efforts to implement other service integration models such as this.

"There is growing interest from the sector regarding what Doveton College is and how the model of integration - not just across early years and schooling but beyond to the service partnerships across community and health services"

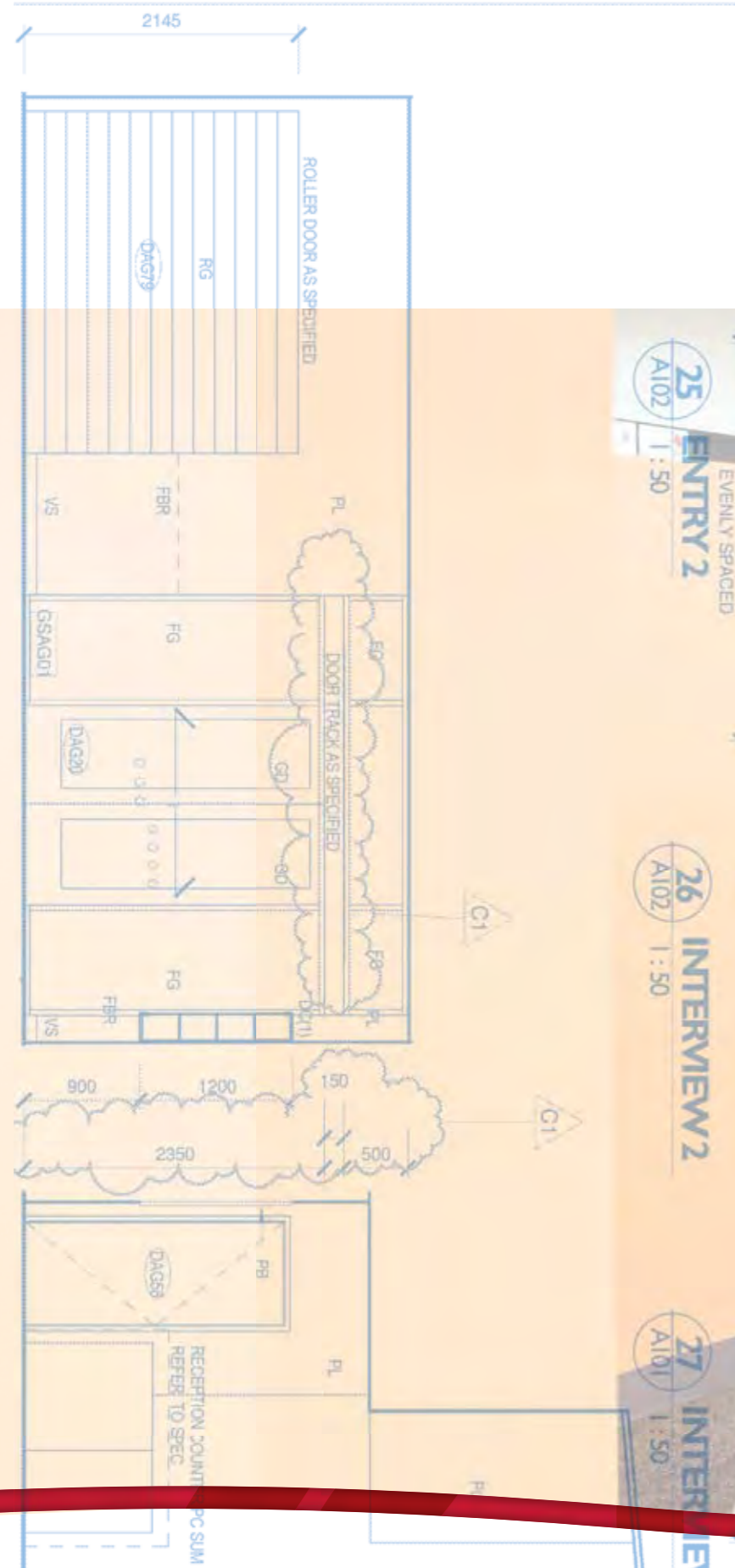
June McLoughlin | Director, Family and Children's Services



Development Timeline



DEVELOPMENT TIMELINE



2007

2008

2009

2010

2011

2012

2013

CONCEPT EVOLUTION

School Regeneration Work underway in Dandenong and Springvale

Colman Foundation approaches Brumby Government signally investment interest

Ongoing discussions with Government and identification of suitable sites

Doveton agreed as site for new school

MOU Agreement (Sept)

Colman Foundation (\$1.8m) plus ongoing funding

COAG announced investment in EY = \$970m

Funding approved from Commonwealth BER (\$14m) initiative and State Government VSP (\$13m)

DESIGN & BUILD PHASE

Schematic Design for Stage 1 and 2

Detailed Design - Stage 1

Build Stage 1 Detailed Design - Stage 2

Build Stage 2

MODEL REFINEMENT, PROGRAMS & PEDAGOGY DEVELOPMENT

Key project staff and College Council established. Research undertaken to support model refinement. Business models, pedagogy and curriculum developed and agreed, and key agency partnerships developed.

Staff recruited and trained

DOVETON COLLEGE OPENS THE GATES

Doveton PS and Eumemmerring PS closed (Dec)

Early Learning Centre (opened in February) Prep-Year 7 sessions (operated at Rowan Drive in Term 1) Community programs (commenced in February)

Prep-Year 6 Learning Houses (Opened Term 2, April) Year 7 operates our of Language and Science Centres

Endeavour Hills Secondary College closed (Dec)

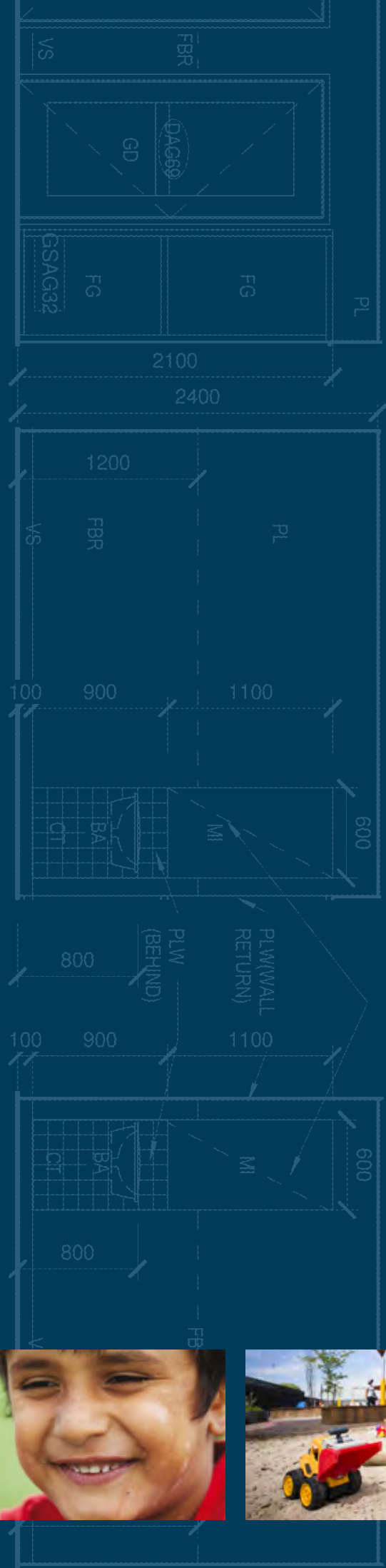
Year 7-9 Learning Houses and specialist facilities (Opened Term 2, April)

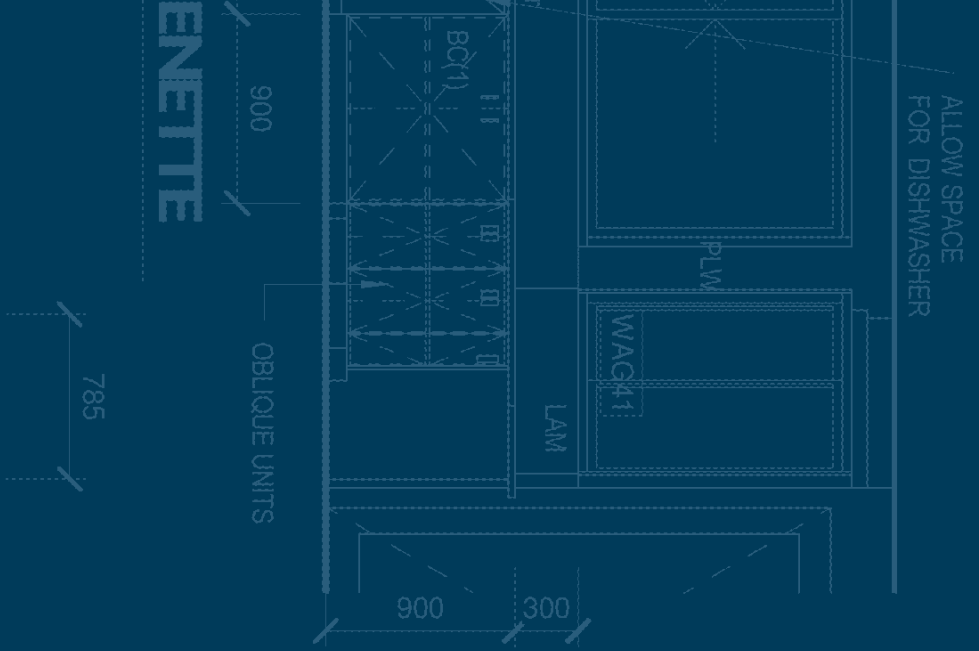
Doveton Heights PS and Doveton North PS merged and operated as Doveton Primary School at the Doveton North PS site.

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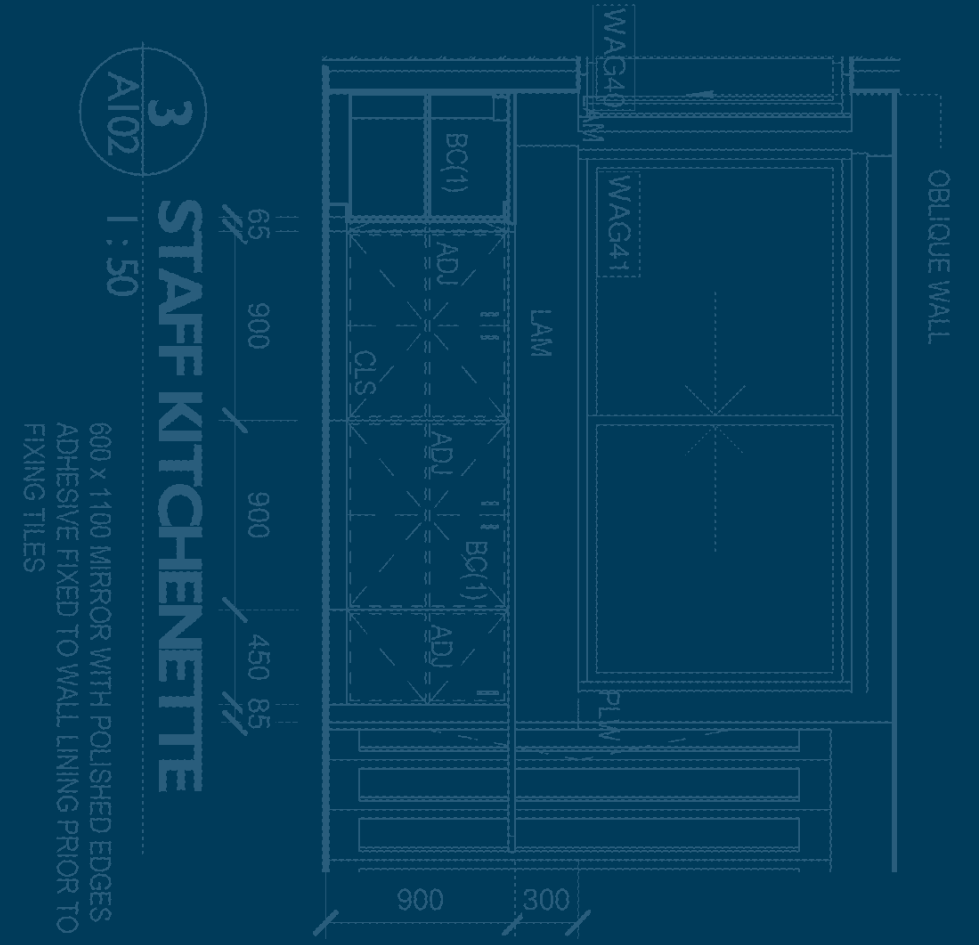
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This report *Doveton College: The Early Days* was produced and written by Doveton College, April 2013.



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