







Doveton College, as we know it, pretty much began as a concept just four years ago. Today it is a vibrant learning community serving the families, children and young people of Doveton as well as many other members of the broader Doveton community.

What Doveton College 'is' at this stage of its development can at times be hard to define. At the end of last year I asked one of our first graduating students how she would describe Doveton College to an individual unfamiliar with our work. She thought for a while and replied *"Doveton College is different. It's more a community centre than a school. Well; it is a school but it's also a community centre. That's really good you know. It's really cool seeing and working with the little kids, you know the teeny tiny ones!"*

Doveton College is that and much more.

As Doveton College ends its second year of operation it is a fitting time to celebrate, to reflect and also take stock of this unique community development project. *Doveton College - The Journey Continues* takes the narrative outlined in our 2013 publication *Doveton College: The Early Days* into the second year. The telling of the story of our second year of successful operation is also an appropriate time to outline the challenges ahead if we are to stay true to a fundamental tenet - "Together we can make a difference." *Doveton College - The Journey Continues* does this for us.

**Bretton New** | Executive Principal



## Purpose of report

The purpose of this second report is to take readers on a journey of reflection. A story of how Doveton College, in its second year of operation, is supporting and contributing to the lives of the children, families and communities that enter its doors each and every day. A story of the challenges and hurdles encountered by those who work within Doveton's gates and along the path to building, creating and delivering a unique model of education and care for which there are few examples to go by...

This report compliments *The Early Days* report that was released in early 2013, which recounted how the involvement and contribution of many led to the evolution of Doveton College as a fully integrated model of education from birth to Year 9, providing wrap around health, education and support services for children and families within the Doveton community.

The College would again like to thank Shannon Newman for her continued efforts in bringing the second narrative of Doveton College's development 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.

### Summary

**Section 1:** Setting the scene: The concept taking shape...nurturing its development

**Section 2:** Extending the gates: Broadening the reach... expanding operations in 2013

**Section 3:** Growing the community: Engaging children, young people, families and community members

**Section 4:** Reflecting on achievements: "Doveton College...more than a school"

## Contents

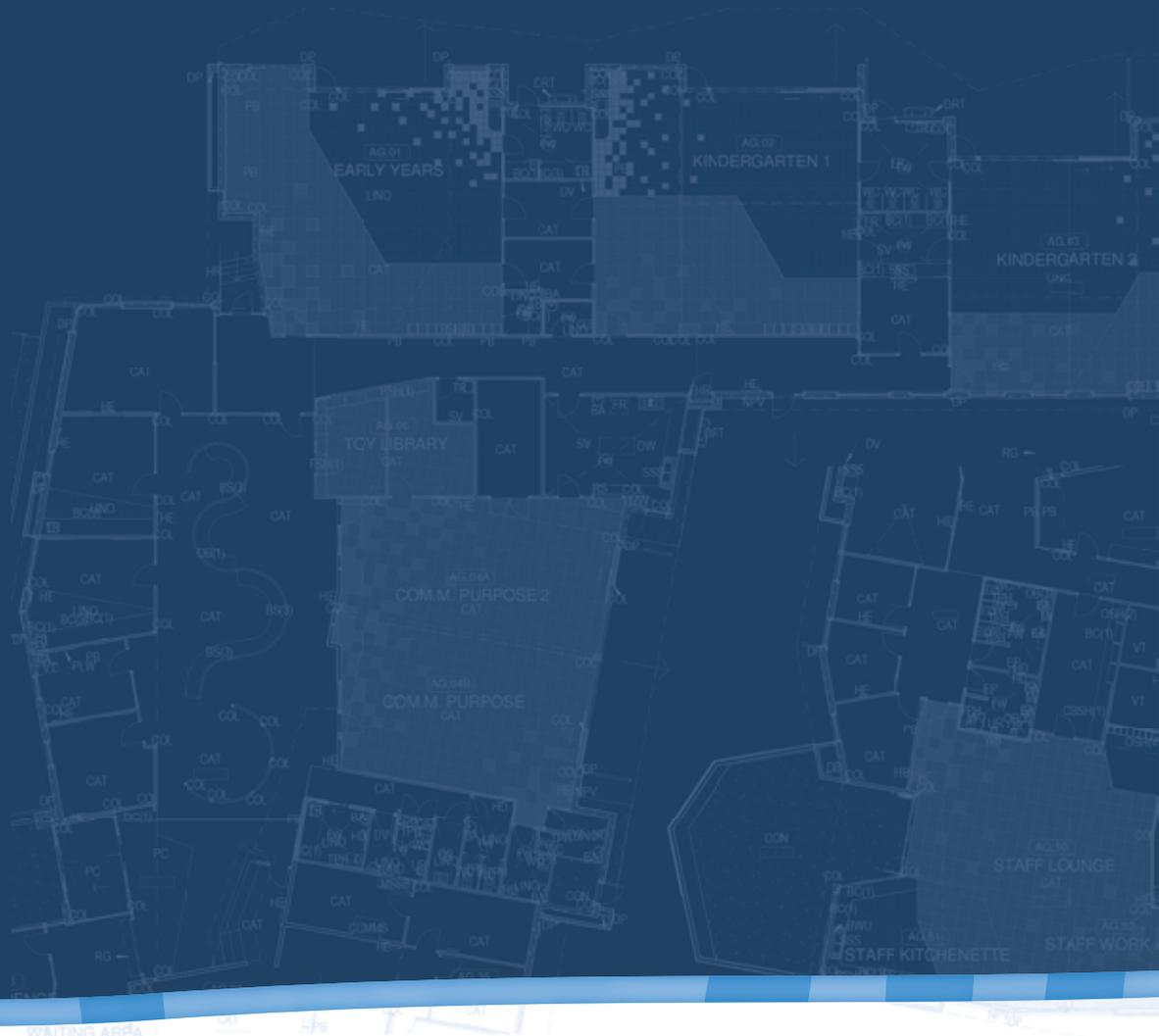
Summary	5
Setting the scene: The concept taking shape...nurturing its development	9
Extending the gates: Broadening the reach... expanding operations in 2013	17
Growing the community: Engaging children, young people, families and community members	27
Reflecting on achievements: "Doveton College...more than a school"	39





“...Doveton College is a 100 step journey... we are half the steps in...it has provided an example of considerable challenge and the opportunity to develop and implement solutions...no one knows what it will be...”

Julius Colman | Colman Foundation





## 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. It 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 seeks to provide for seamless transition from the early learning centre through to the early secondary years. It seeks to provide a secure, safe environment where children can learn and develop to their full potential. It also seeks to adopt the Government targets appropriate to both early years 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 learning and 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 was allocated to complete the build phase of the College, with additional funds allocated, on an ongoing basis, to support the provision of exceptional services and supports for the College community.

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.

## Design and construction

The College has been designed and built to offer integrated early learning, family support and maternal and child health services catering for children from birth to age 4 and teaching and learning spaces for Prep to Year 9 children in purpose built learning communities for the 21st Century.

## Progress so far...

In 2012, after two years of intensive planning and construction of state-of-the-art facilities, the gates of Doveton College opened. The Early Learning Centre, learning houses for Prep students through to those completing Year 7, along with the community spaces essential to support the provision of wrap-around services for the families and children within the local community opened.

In early 2013 the remaining buildings works were completed, resulting in learning spaces available to support the educational needs of young people completing Years 8 and 9. By the end of 2013 the College was home to more than 800 children and young people from birth to Year 9.

## Where to next...

Owing to the exceptional work of the development years, the foundations for lifelong learning at Doveton College have been cemented and ahead lies the challenge of continually engaging and supporting the children, young people and families of Doveton to succeed in their endeavours...whatever path they take...

---

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

## Doveton College Mission





# 1

## Setting the scene: The concept taking shape... nurturing its development

Doveton grew out of need  
and opportunity

Operates under funding structure  
that supports integration

Based on research, evidence  
and considered planning

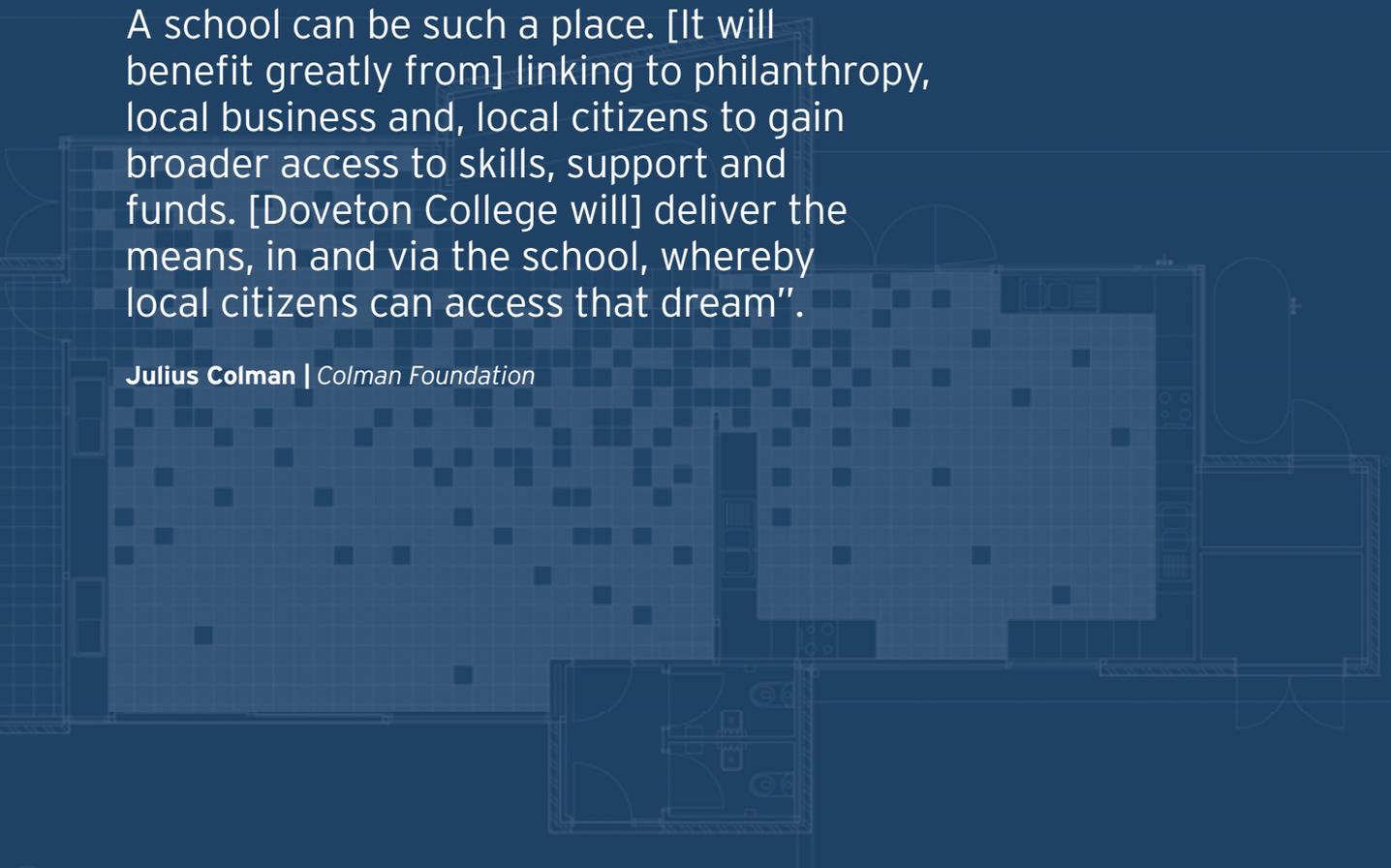
Established to provide a  
fully integrated model with  
wrap-around services

Working to achieve an  
agreed vision for Doveton



“One way of making a real difference to children and families is to have a central place in areas where the local community has access to a broad range of services (education, health, child safety, family service etc.), where early assessment, intervention and prevention is available. A school can be such a place. [It will benefit greatly from] linking to philanthropy, local business and, local citizens to gain broader access to skills, support and funds. [Doveton College will] deliver the means, in and via the school, whereby local citizens can access that dream”.

**Julius Colman** | *Colman Foundation*



2 GROUND FLOOR PLAN  
A602 1 : 200



## Doveton College grew out of need and opportunity

### *How Doveton College began*

As outlined in *The Early Days* report, in 2009 the philanthropic organisation The Colman Foundation, a Foundation that helps children from low-income families get a top quality education, approached the Victorian Government expressing a desire to become directly involved in the education of disadvantaged children in an area with a high migrant and refugee population.

At that time, the government was implementing a statewide reform program to regenerate schooling in Victoria. Agreement was reached to build a birth-to-year 9 community learning centre, which included early childhood services and a school, at Doveton, in Melbourne's outer south eastern suburbs.

### *Why Doveton College is a pioneer*

The state government, the Foundation and the federal government agreed to establish a unique partnership to plan, build and operate the new facility, Doveton College. The result is the first government school partnership of its kind in Australia.

The Colman Foundation donated some \$1.8 million to the construction of the school and Early Learning Centre, on top of the state and federal governments' \$36 million contribution. The Foundation has also pledged long-term annual funding until at least 2017 for program and community facilities at the College.

## Operates under funding structure that supports integration

### *Partnership arrangements supported by the funding structure*

The **Colman Foundation's** financial contribution does not replace government funding for the College. It is extra money that gives the College flexibility to strengthen services, develop innovative new programs for children and families and support the community.

The state government signed a *Memorandum of Understanding* and a *Deed of Agreement* with the Colman Foundation to secure the funding partnership.

The College's funding arrangement allows it to partner with other non-profit agencies and philanthropic foundations to provide services to families and the community on site and in a flexible manner.

In addition to the Colman Foundation, other generous philanthropic partners of the College include the **G Hicks Foundation** and the **The R.E. Ross Trust**.

### *Advantages of the funding structure*

The flexibility within the College's funding arrangement provides a number of benefits. Firstly, it acknowledges that meaningful change takes time. The long-term partnership with the Colman Foundation gives the College greater scope for innovation, strategic planning, research and evaluation. Secondly, the involvement of partners from the start of planning leads to better ideas, greater collaboration and richer community engagement. Thirdly, it creates a school-community relationship that becomes a tool to identify and address local needs of children.

## Based on research, evidence and considered planning

### *Why Doveton?*

The Doveton community was selected as a suitable site for the creation for the development of a new model of state schooling for many reasons. This community had already been recognised by Victoria's Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) as an area of significant need. It reflects a deeply disadvantaged area in Melbourne where many children face a range of barriers that prohibit learning due to family circumstances.

Exploration of community data about Doveton reveals that it sits in the lowest quintile, according to the SIEFA Index of Relative Socioeconomic Disadvantage, with around 80 percent of residents holding a health care card. There is a general absence of stable housing, high rates of unemployment and entrenched intergenerational poverty. Further, Doveton is home to more than 50 different first languages, with a high proportion of children and families speaking very little English. Many families have complex needs that often require the support of multiple agencies.

### *Research informing practice*

In the initial planning stages, the project team commissioned research to investigate how children, families and agencies experienced service delivery in Doveton and what improvements were needed. The project team also used data from Victoria's Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) on student achievement and student and parent perceptions of educational provisions.

This research revealed that school and community services needed to be woven together to overcome barriers to children's learning and development. To help children thrive, it is important to help and engage parents at the same time.

This led to the development of **Doveton College's innovative model of service delivery**: the integration of family and children's services within a school, providing a central, safe place for children to access education and care and for families to access needed programs and supports. This approach has had considerable recognition at the international level, with researchers over the past decade detailing efforts applied in Canada, the US and the UK; however efforts in Victoria specially have focussed on colocation of early childhood education and school sector rather than actively applying models of integration of family and children's services within the universal education and early learning setting.

**Evidence for integration**

Peter Shergold's recent report on *Service Sector Reform* (2013) discussed how service support for Victoria's most vulnerable could be delivered in a more integrated way and lead to better outcomes. Shergold's report, which is based on discussions with a broad audience of stakeholders and community members about community and human service operations, contains some 25 recommendations, many of which align with the initial intentions of Doveton College for delivering an integrated service model of education and care.

Shergold commented that while systemic change is needed to deliver better outcomes for service users, such reform needs to reflect a "system-wide and joined-up approach," He continued to state that: "services need to be wrapped around the individual. A more integrated and coordinated service approach lies at the heart of raising productivity in the delivery of government services, offering the chance to deliver better outcomes at a lower cost" (Shergold, 2013, p4).

Source: Shergold, P. (2013). *Service Sector Reform*. A roadmap for community and human services reform. July 2013.

**Established to provide a fully integrated model with wrap around services**

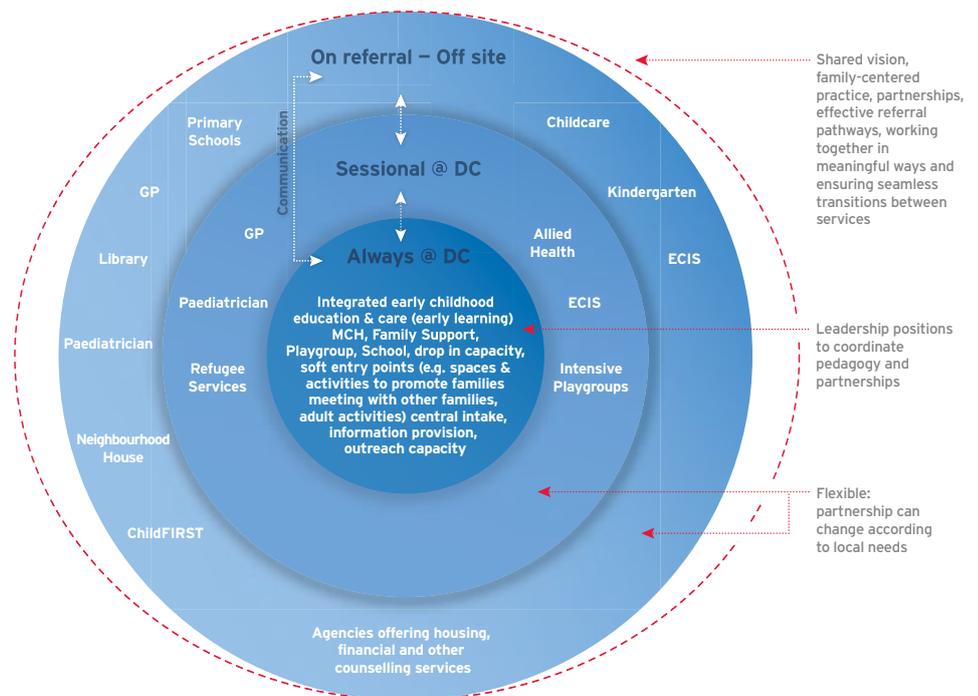
**How this integrated service delivery model looks on the ground**

The integrated service model implemented at Doveton College offers wrap-around services and supports across three levels:

1. Services and supports funded and operated by the College; these are the services that are always available at Doveton College including early learning, schooling, MCH, family support services, playgroup and so on.
2. Services that partner organisations provide from the College on an ongoing or occasional basis with their own funding; such as general practitioners, allied health, early childhood intervention services, paediatric and refugee services.
3. Services that partners deliver off-site; these services are available on a referral basis and further extend the support offered to the Doveton community.

All services within the three-tiered model are expected to contribute to and subscribe to a shared vision, utilise one family file, establish partnerships with one another and create effective referral pathways within and between each participating agency. All participating agencies sign a *Memorandum of Understanding* (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 and allows for the partnering services to flow in and out of the College as they endeavour to work with and for families and children.



Current Doveton College Service Delivery Model - Oct 2013 (adapted from the original version created by CCCH October 2010)



*“The service delivery approach provides an effective and efficient model of intervention for some of Victoria’s most vulnerable children...the success of which relies on a continual emphasis on the importance of building relationships and understanding and responding to community need”*

**June McLoughlin | Director, Family and Children’s Services**

The College prides itself on making access and connections to services and supports as easy for families and children as possible. A single file and enrolment system to reduce families telling their story multiple times, a “no wait-list” policy whereby needed services can be accessed without normal delays (thanks to strong partner agency relationships) and the provision of services in one central and safe location, or close to it where this is not possible.

**More than a school...**

It is clear to see that with the Early Learning Centre and Prep-Year 9 school levels at its centre, coupled with wrap-around health, family and children’s services on site (and other services accessible as needed), Doveton College is more than just a school.

It is believed to be Australia’s first fully integrated education service, offering child and family services that include:

- The provision of **high quality education programs** for all children and young people with wrap around support available as needed
- **High quality long-day early learning programs**, including supported playgroups, *Let’s Read, Sing and Play*, *Play 2 Learn* and 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 and training for adults** including computer skills, literacy, sewing and craft 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 including classroom support
- **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

*“[With the challenge of the first two years behind us] now we are going to be able to work on making it a special school of excellence that really does cater for individual student’s needs”*

**Tim Hannan | Year 7 Coordinator**

*“Building better partnerships with parents starts with families feeling welcome when they enter the College and when they speak with any staff member”.*

**Catherine Murphy | Parenting Research Centre**

## Working to achieve an agreed vision for Doveton

### **An agreed mission and vision**

Doveton College's mission seeks to provide high quality programs for children and young people. Since its commencement in 2012, those working within the College gates, and many beyond have been striving to support this goal.

Doveton's Mission takes pride of place as a visual statement as you enter the front door.

### **Mission**

Doveton College will provide high quality programs for the children and young people of Doveton in partnership with their families and the community.

#### **At Doveton College**

##### **We believe in:**

- the potential of each of our children and young people to learn, to be their best and to achieve

##### **We are committed to:**

- 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 everything 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.**

---

*"I think outside people see Doveton as a really tough place to work, and it can be, but I find it very rewarding. I think there's a stigma attached to this area, and what this school is doing is flipping it on its head. I don't think anywhere else you'd get the opportunity to work with the calibre of staff we have here and there's a freedom to experiment, to try new things, to be at the forefront of education in the world, not just Australia. It's pretty exciting".*

**June McLoughlin** | Director, Family and Children's Services







## 2

### **Extending the Gates: broadening the reach... expanding operations in 2013**

Opening the gates in 2012

Extending the reach in 2013

Building an effective  
staffing culture

Enhancing pedagogy  
and program quality

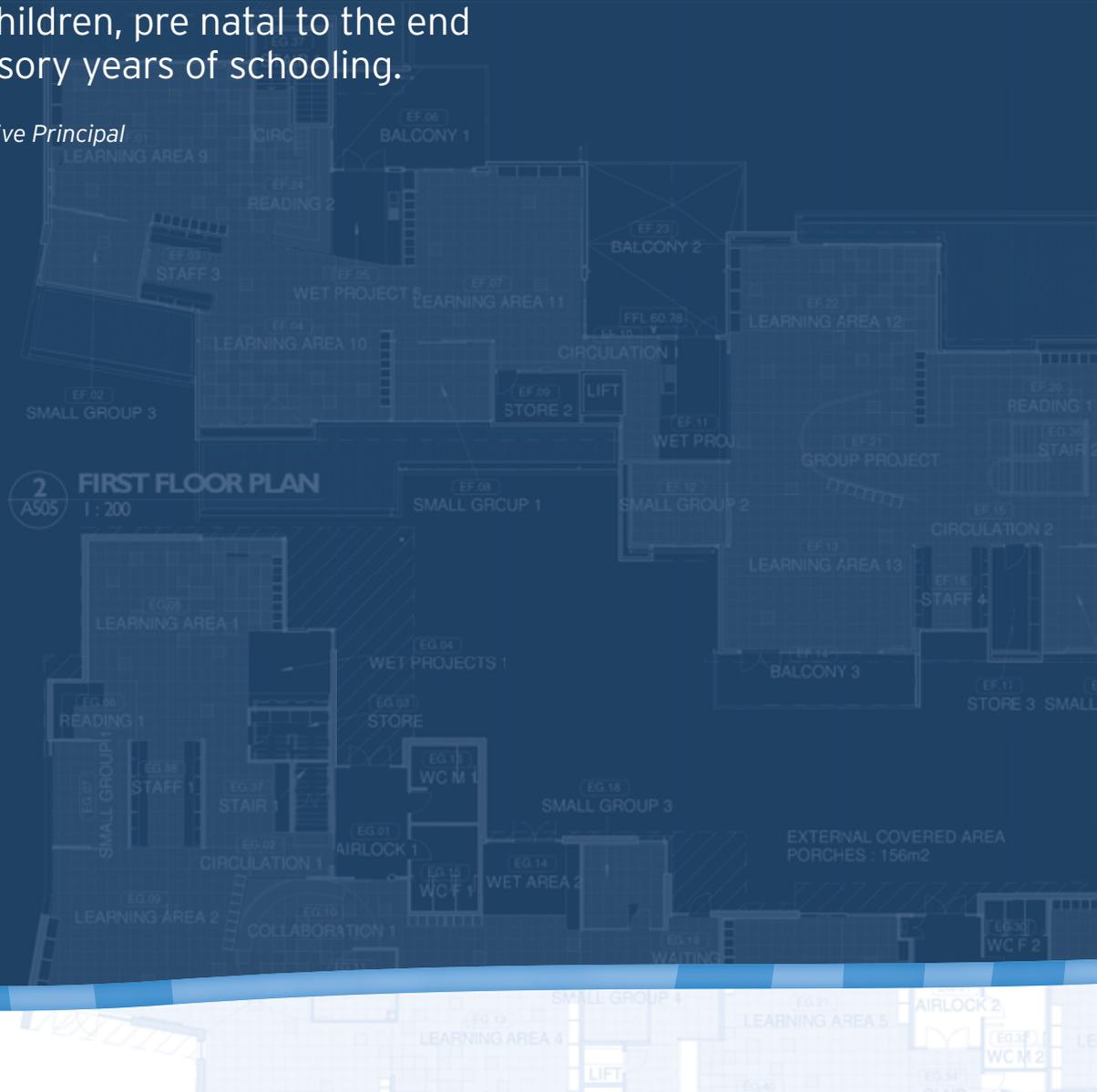
Growing wrap-around  
services and supports

Appreciating the  
importance of space



2013 saw the completion of the two and half year Doveton College building project delivering a state of the art 36 million dollar education and community complex for the families and children of Doveton. The completion of the build meant that we were able to put in place the remaining College programs, most significantly the programs for secondary school students. Doveton College was now truly serving our families and children, pre natal to the end of the compulsory years of schooling.

**Bretton New** | *Executive Principal*





## Opening the gates in 2012

In 2012, after two years of intensive planning and construction of state-of-the-art facilities, Doveton College opened.

The **Early Learning Centre** commenced supporting children and families in January 2012, offering three rooms of long day early learning within a naturalistic play environment and nutritious daily meals supporting children aged from 16 months through to 5 years. During 2012 the ELC supported some 130 children with an occupancy rate of 95%. While there has been some fluctuation in the occupancy rate (due in part to the transient nature of families in the area, to the inability to pay and perhaps the unfamiliarity with the College's itself), the overall number of children supported in 2013 has been similar and the Centre continues to enjoy the support of children and families in the local area.

Due to delays in the building works, the program for school aged children from **Prep to Year 7** commenced in February 2012 some 4km away, under the Doveton College banner, yet at the site of the former Doveton Primary School.

In April 2012 students were relocated to commence second term at the Doveton College site in Tristiana Avenue. Despite these challenges, by the end of 2012, in excess of 500 students from Prep to Year 7 had enjoyed the facilities and program approach offered by Doveton College.

## Extending the reach in 2013

### *Building work is complete!*

The final building works were due to be completed for the beginning of the 2013 school year to support an additional 150 Year 8 and 9 senior students.

However, the completion of the build suffered from delays due to weather and the complexities of completing a building project where students were already onsite. As the school year commenced in February 2013, some building spaces were not complete and required several weeks of work whilst school students were attempting to settle in for the year. Sections of the school grounds were unusable and fenced off pending completion. The space in which to accommodate the senior school

students embarking on their journey at Doveton College was limited, and created added complexities for students and staff alike; albeit for an interim period.

On reflection, while this was difficult at the time, the College was glad to be in the position to be able to accommodate these additional students on the school site, and avoid a repeat of the events of the previous year where all students had commenced their schooling year on a different campus as a result of building delays.

The final building construction was complete in April 2013, resulting in Doveton College having some of the best state of the art facilities a school can have. Performing Arts Centre, a magnificent competition size Gymnasium as well as a Fitness Centre, an A grade competition soccer pitch and athletic training track, a high end Multi Media Laboratory, a Music Studio and fully equipped Recording Studio.

## More space = more students and greater opportunities

### *Student base*

Taking into account the children attending the Early Learning Centre, the number of students carrying over from 2012 and the new senior students, Doveton College found itself providing education and care for more than 800 children and young people from within the Doveton community during 2013, almost 200 more than in the previous year.

Enrolment data for 2013 indicated that Doveton College supported around 660 students from Prep to Year 9 and a further 145 children in the Early Learning Centre. At the Learning House level, around 100 prep students were enrolled in Doveton in 2013, with more than 30% of these students having attended the Early Learning Centre in the previous year.

---

*"What is exciting about this is that we have always envisaged these facilities as belonging to the community; they are not just school facilities. While our children and young people will have priority access during the school day we will know that Doveton College is achieving its mission when these state of the art facilities are being used from early morning until late into the evening, 7 days a week, by our community."*

**Bretton New** | Executive Principal

Around 200 students were enrolled in each of the Year 1-3 and Year 4-6 Learning Houses, with a further 200 students in the Year 7-9 Learning House. The majority of the Year 8 and 9 students enrolled in 2013 came from Endeavour Hills Secondary College (which closed at the end of 2012).

Consistent with the nature of families in the area, the student population base in Doveton College can be transient, with overlapping numbers of students enrolling and exiting the school. Despite this, the general utilisation rate remains fairly static and it is expected to do so in the future.

### Program opportunities

The additional school facilities and opening of new spaces and buildings, further development of curriculum to support learning and the entry of new senior school students to the College in 2013 has not only increased the number of students in the College, but also expanded the breath of program opportunities available to students in a very positive way.

For example, students have access to state of the art multimedia facilities through *Doveton Live* and teaching staff. Students can 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.

The performing arts and music studio provide the opportunity for specialised classes in a range of instruments and the chance to be involved in programs such as *Full-On Theatre*, with the assistance of Family Life. Many see great benefits and opportunities stemming from the College's capacity to support learning in musical and theatrical performance. Several musical performances occurred in 2013 and it is believed that these have resulted in many students "becoming fully absorbed" and open to opportunities that many may not have ever have thought possible.

## Program example: Full-On Theatre

In 2013 some 30 students from Year 7-9 were able to participate in the Full-On Theatre program at Doveton College. This program, supported by Family Life, allows students to participate in a health promotion program for young people through theatre production. This program requires students to write a play and then produce it in theatrical form, allowing the matching of literacy and oral language skills with the development of skills in theatrical production, stage lighting and dramatic form. For many students this provides an opportunity to express elements of their own struggles in life and hence build resilience in a safe and respectful environment, learning new skills and utilising high quality equipment.

*"challenging because we have been working in a system where they haven't quite worked out the system yet!"*

**Diane Ashcroft | Prep Teacher**

The school also boasts a selection of in school sport programs using the facilities onsite, providing the opportunity for students to participate in interschool sport days as well as school based athletics and swimming carnivals at the adjoining City of Casey Swimming Pool. There is a desire to see future usage of the sports and physical education facilities in the coming years, both by the College students, and the families and the broader community, with some teacher's suggesting that there may be several talented rugby and union players amidst the student population base waiting to be realised.

These additional programs are not what some might perceive as "messaging around". The capacity to work in teams and an awareness of self and space in an exciting and engaging way is integral to engaging young people. It is hoped that these programs, in the words of Julius Colman, "create a desire in students to see the bigger picture and want to learn numeracy and literacy skills too".

## Building an effective staffing culture

### Securing and growing the best staff

To enable the College to operate from the ELC through to Year 9 and provide wrap-around services at the current level requires a considerable investment in and from high quality, passionate and dedicated leaders, educators, community development and family support workers and administrative staff.

In 2013 more than 120 teaching and Education Support staff were employed to run the Early Learning Centre and the school programs at Doveton College. At any one time up to 20 individuals from the partnering agencies are on site delivering programs and services from the College. Of this group around 10 have a permanent home at the College in existing office spaces.

*"You can feel the enthusiasm [in music and theatre] and what this provides to students"*

**Simon Sherlock | Assistant Principal Year 4-9**



## What attracted staff to Doveton College?

*"I was excited about the opportunity and entirety that this new College was to offer...to be part of something amazing"*

**Year 1-3 Teacher**

*"The opportunity came up and it [the school model] struck a cord"*

**Year 4-6 Teacher**

*"The concept of being a P-9 school that structures learning across the year levels in multi-age classrooms appealed to me...I love children, love teaching... love the job"* **Prep Teacher**

These staff have been recruited over different points in time and have come from more than 80 different locations. Some were employed during the early building phase and were heavily involved in the early planning and pedagogy setup, while the majority of teaching staff were employed as the gates opened and came on board along with the student population.

Yet while the staffing base is new and has indeed attracted educators far and wide, there are many staff working within the College's boundaries who have worked (and even lived) in the Doveton community for many years; either at neighbouring, former schools, child care services and kindergartens or family support roles. Some of these staff have a deep understanding of the complexities faced by children and families in this community and have a keen passion for supporting them into the future. They see that Doveton College offers a strong opportunity to make a difference and realise that their experience in the local community provides a valuable link to and credibility with parents who have seen the College being built, come in to visit or are using the College and its many support services.

Overall, the staff of Doveton College possess a wealth of experience and educational qualifications, reflecting the College's interest in investing in the best quality staff to ensure children receive the best possible learning experience. For example, the qualification of the staff within the Early Learning Centre are at or above the required standard with many Certificate III staff currently completing Diploma level studies, raising the skills level of staff charged with supporting children's learning and development.

Teaching staff across the traditional schooling years also bring exceptional skills and experiences of working across a number of different teaching environments both nationally and internationally, as do the Leadership Team.

There is incredible respect for the staff on board at Doveton College and the expertise and commitment they offer. Many staff comment that working at Doveton College had offered them opportunity to work with "inspirational people" who have great knowledge, challenge past practice and encourage staff to reflect on learnings about their own ways of teaching and to grow and develop with the College.

### **Foundations and relationship building**

For the majority of 2012 and 2013, the focus for the **Leadership Team** has been on fundamentally establishing Doveton College - developing policies and practices, drafting curriculum and teaching approaches, employing and engaging staff, and recruiting and managing the student population.

For the core **Teaching Team** responsible for delivering the curriculum, programs and supports, the first two years have been a whirlwind of learning, unlearning and learning all over again. It has been a roller-coaster of movement forward and back: of grappling with different learning approaches in teaching spaces new to many, of creating relationships with children, young people and their families, with other staff and partner agencies, of managing the everyday behavioural challenges presented by the students of Doveton College and of supporting them to grow and develop as individuals.

---

*"Getting to know people has been difficult... things are only now starting to calm so you get a chance to stop managing and start leading - plan and act in a forward fashion, rather than reactionary"*

**Vicki Miles | Associate Principal**

*"This rating has come at a really important time for us. It gives clear recognition for all the hard work the team has done in striving to deliver quality programs for our children... it tells us we are on the right track, and shows us what we need to continue to do, and other areas we might need to focus on"*

**June McLoughlin | Director, Family and Children's Services**

### **Supporting engagement and wellbeing**

The engagement, wellbeing and safety of Doveton College children and young people is at the forefront of staff's mind each and every day. There is a strong awareness that many children come from families with complex social and emotional needs, many are vulnerable and in need of a safe, secure and nurturing environment in which they can grow.

Staff have reported that of the school-aged children attending the College, on average four to five calls are made per day to child protection and three to four calls to the Department of Human Services (DHS) seeking advice and care for children in need of support beyond that possible by the College. In response, the College has created an **Engagement and Wellbeing Team**, supported by a detailed *Engagement and Wellbeing Plan* to ensure the needs of such children are continually monitored and supported in an efficient and timely manner, and that they have access to services and supports from partner agencies and beyond. A database has been developed to complement this, providing a detailed picture of the support being provided and accessed to each child at any point in time.

### **Enhancing pedagogy and program quality**

Alongside the completion of the building works and welcoming of new students into the College came a significant focus on further developing the learning program and curriculum and ensuring that quality approaches to teaching and learning were upheld. And indeed they were!

### **Supporting quality in the Early Learning Centre**

The Early Learning Centre underwent a concentrated and intense process during 2013 to prepare itself for the assessment of the service against the *National Quality Standard* and the requirements of the *Education and Care Services National Regulations* and the *Education and Care Services National Law*. Despite the infancy in the Centre's establishment, staff were striving for a rating of Exceeding the *National Quality Standard* and agreed to intensely self-examine their practice and look for opportunity for improvement.

This investment, intensive level of self reflection and the response to it by educators in the ELC proved worthwhile, with the Centre receiving an overall rating of **Exceeding National Quality Standard**. Four of the quality areas were rated as operating at exceeding the standard, with the other three rated as meeting the standard.

The assessment report gave recognition and praise for the efforts in the provision of quality service for children and families in Doveton:

*"The service performed strongly in Children's health and safety, Collaborative partnerships with families and communities and Leadership and service management.*

*A strength of the service was its provision of a range of on-site services for families and children, and its access to a broad range of 'critical friends'.*

*Given the recent establishment of the service, the leadership team is to be commended for its commitment to quality improvement across all areas at the service.*

*The service is acknowledged for its positive participation in the assessment and rating process."*

(Source: Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority ACECQA, October 2013)

*"Play, investigation and immersion in literacy, combined with explicit teaching is offered in prep and this will continue to be a focus in coming years"*

**Susan McDonald | Assistant Principal, Literacy**



*“Collaboration [around teaching] is the key... being fluid...we target the needs of the individuals and therefore the group is always changing and evolving quite regularly”*

**Mark Duncan | Year 4-6 Teacher**

For a service in such early phases of establishment, this rating is a true reflection of the massive achievement Doveton College has made in providing high quality teaching and learning to the community. The Leadership Team and Early Learning Centre educators will continue to strive for such high ratings in the future, focusing on improving ratings around the quality areas of educational program and practice, physical environments and staffing arrangements into 2014.

### ***Developing the framework to support multi-age personalised learning***

Within the school programs, a consolidated focus in 2013 was on strengthening and implementing a curriculum framework to support the delivery of the multi-age approach to teaching and learning that Doveton College has at its core.

The *Charter for Personalised Learning for Doveton College* released in 2013 is based on the mission that all children have the potential to succeed. It states that learning practice is embedded in the “Stage not Age” concept and rationalises the multi-aging approach, professing that it is the “*level of personal progression that determines each individual learners’ educational experience, not the historical school structure or outmoded model of cognitive development*” (Doveton College, 2013).

It refers to research exemplifying that the multi-aging model in the education setting encourages, as it does in life, the development of the whole child: in terms of academic performance together with social and emotional capabilities.

The *Charter* documents how the requirements of the Aus VELS are to be adhered to and outlines how the concept of personalised learning is to be implemented within a common core curriculum program. It details how the approach to personalised learning is to be driven by:

- deep learning (by flexible curriculum, high quality teaching and learning and assessment opportunities)
- deep support (within the environments provided and the relationships developed)
- deep experiences (by children and young people having ‘a voice’ and allowing for learning beyond the classroom)
- deep leadership (by design and within school organisation and by operating in a family-centre way)

The program for Years Prep to 3 reflects an integrated approach to learning designed by teachers that still retains the importance of play as a key focus, as it is in the early childhood years. Play is valued by many as a critical approach in bringing out “the value of creative little souls”. In Years 4 to 9 the innovative curriculum focuses on student interest and need, building on the early years program and into inquiry based learning and problem solving.

Overall, it is acknowledged that the multi-age, personalised learning approach being implemented at Doveton College can be difficult for many educators to “get their head around”. Together with modern learning spaces, this approach presents a different way of thinking about teaching and learning. It can take time to put all the pieces together. In 2014, the push for consistency in instruction across all year levels will be key.

Importantly, the true value of the approach, at an outcomes level, is something that Doveton College is monitoring. The academic performance and social and emotional development of children and young people within the learning houses, and indeed the extent to which educators are teaching at the level required by individual children (rather than across the average year level) will come under scrutiny as the evaluation of Doveton College progresses.

## **Growing wrap-around services and supports**

### ***Growing the support base***

While a clear focus was on getting the College up and running during 2012, significant efforts were also placed on developing relationships and partnering with leading community agencies who could offer much needed services and supports for families and children in line with the integrated community model. As the Early Learning Centre and the adjoining community space opened prior to the school buildings, the first year of operation of Doveton College allowed a wealth of relationships to be created with many programs and supports made available to the community.

*“The reward is the kids...the time invested and help provided...that we have made a difference”*

**Justin Thompson | Assistant Principal, Prep-Year 3**

To facilitate the commitment and provision of these services, Doveton College has established a **Family and Community Team**. This team of three comprises a *Community Engagement Coordinator*, a *Volunteer Coordinator* and a *Work and Learn Coordinator*, who work in sync to ensure parents and carers in particular feel safe, secure and connected to the College and in the longer term, the community more broadly.

The growth in the family and community sector has continued and grown further in 2013, with many steps taken to increase the level and options of support available to families and children of Doveton. Each week within the College community space, children and parents have access to an abundance of regular programs opportunities and supports from MCH visits, playgroup activities, sewing and craft groups to men's health groups, adult English and refugee support; to name a few.

By way of example, and noting that further reference is given to many of these programs in latter sections of this report, in excess of fifteen partner agencies offer services and supports on a regular basis at the College and work in collaboration with the Family and Community Team, the Engagement and Wellbeing Team and the College more broadly. Some of these programs and services seek to engage and support families as they raise children and young people, others engage families into the College and community in a volunteering capacity, while others extend the support to parents and carers to re-enter training, education and employment; to ultimately succeed in their endeavours.

**Good Beginnings Australia**, who have been active in the community prior to the College's evolution, provide a range of structured playgroups (including *Play2Learn* and *Sing and Play*), parenting outreach programs and school transition assistance.

*"Monster of red tape around how a school should run, and a lot of people trying to make it work... some try but find it difficult. It is a challenge for them; it is different to the traditional school concept... and it is difficult to break down... compromise can be hard"*

**Mark Roberts** | *Community Engagement Coordinator*

**Southern Health Community** provides a range of healthy eating, oral health, speech therapy and nutrition programs and supports several refugee health programs in partnership with the **Southern Migrant Refugee Centre**, who also facilitate several adult training programs, weekly craft and sewing sessions, conversational English classes, an Afghan playgroup and provide access to settlement workers for families who need such assistance.

**Family Life** provides access to their family mental health support program (SHINE) and have been instrumental in delivering the **Creating Capable Community Leaders** program at Doveton College in 2013, developing the leadership and volunteering skills of more than 20 parents this year alone.

The **City of Casey** provides Maternal and Child Health (MCH) services, with several MCH nurses working out of Doveton College and available for appointments each week and also offer regular immunisation programs.

The **Parenting Research Centre (PRC)** has been working to support both staff and parents of the College since its development, providing programs and services to support parents in their parenting roles and to manage difficult behaviours and by supporting the growth of more effective working relationships and interactions between educators and children and young people.

**Monash Children's Hospital** now supports the presence of a paediatrician once a week for children, whilst **Medicare Local** supports the provision of a Koorie Family Support psychologist for families to access each week.

**The Smith Family** provides the *Learning for Life, Each One Teach One* programs and the **Brotherhood of St. Lawrence** provides support via the *Lasting Gifts* program to support parent's career development and educational support.

Further promoting activity and health, the **Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency** supports Doveton College by providing the *Boys on the Bounce*, *Girls on the Go* programs, whilst the **Victorian Rugby Union** and the **Doveton Cricket Club** each provide access to coaching and sports clinic programs.

In addition to these regular services and supports, Doveton College has attracted the support of the **University of Ontario** as a sounding board providing assistance in practical elements of the College's evaluation and achievement of service integration.



Along the way, many visitors to the College have been curious as to how the creation of such active and flexible partnerships have evolved. Strategic decisions have and continue to be made to ensure there is a strong focus on the role of wrap-around services offered by the College itself and the many committed partner agencies. This means giving time, effort and focus on building relationships with partners, exploring flexible ways of working and solidifying partnership arrangements. It means stopping and exploring how services can be delivered "a little more flexibly" and to meet the needs of parent and services providers at the same time, for the good of children and families.

## Appreciating the importance of space

### Limitations of space

The prominence of Doveton College, its large site located high on the hill overlooking the very community it seeks to serve is fast becoming too small.

In the early days, when the concept was evolving and building works underway, there were very real concerns around ensuring that sufficient student numbers were recruited, that families were attracted to the early learning centre and that quality staff could be secured to work at Doveton College have all but vanished. These concerns have been replaced with the irony of strong student utilisation rate and an absence of space.

Despite the transient nature of the families of Doveton College, thanks to positive word of mouth coupled with an influx of partner services operating on site and a steady increase in the number of new migrants to the area, the traffic entering the College doors is constant...bringing with it a new set of ever changing challenges.

### How has Doveton College changed since the gates opened in 2012?

*"Staff morale has changed...in the beginning staff had come from different schools, as had students. It took time for a sense of collegially to form"*  
**Renee Walker, Year 1-3 Teacher**

*"I like to think that we are much better than we were 12 months ago... as we have a lot of behaviour management processes in place now"*  
**Justin Thompson, Assistant Principal Prep to Year 3**

*"We are building a community through programs running at school...(The College) Doesn't feel like it just opened. It's on its way to becoming established..."*  
**Mark Duncan, Year 4-6 Teacher**

*"Incremental change...one tiny bit at a time"*  
**Marie Holmes, Work and Learning Coordinator**

Space is of such a premium that the College will need to look outside its current fence line and at opportunities to deliver some services within the broader community space (i.e. adjoining local houses and centres). While it is true that this removes the provision of services directly onsite, it does create the opportunity to take Doveton College vision into the local community and extend the reach of programs and services to the families in need and may be a favourable way of engaging families who may otherwise feel uncomfortable or threatened by the College building itself.

It needs to be remembered that, as a whole, Doveton College is still at a young phase of cultural development - both at the staffing level and in growing the student base and actioning the vision. It has taken time for a sense of collegially to form; for the foundations to be laid. Yet so much progress towards building relationships across a multitude of levels has occurred.

---

*"Sometimes there is frustration... because you can see that everyone wants it [Doveton College] to work in a particular way...good because people are passionate but it can be risky because it can circumvent collaboration when people's ideas clash".*

**Daniel Leach-McGill |**  
*Good Beginnings Australia*





### 3

#### **Growing the community: engaging children, young people, families and community members**

The challenges of supporting a  
community facing such adversity

Engaging children and young people

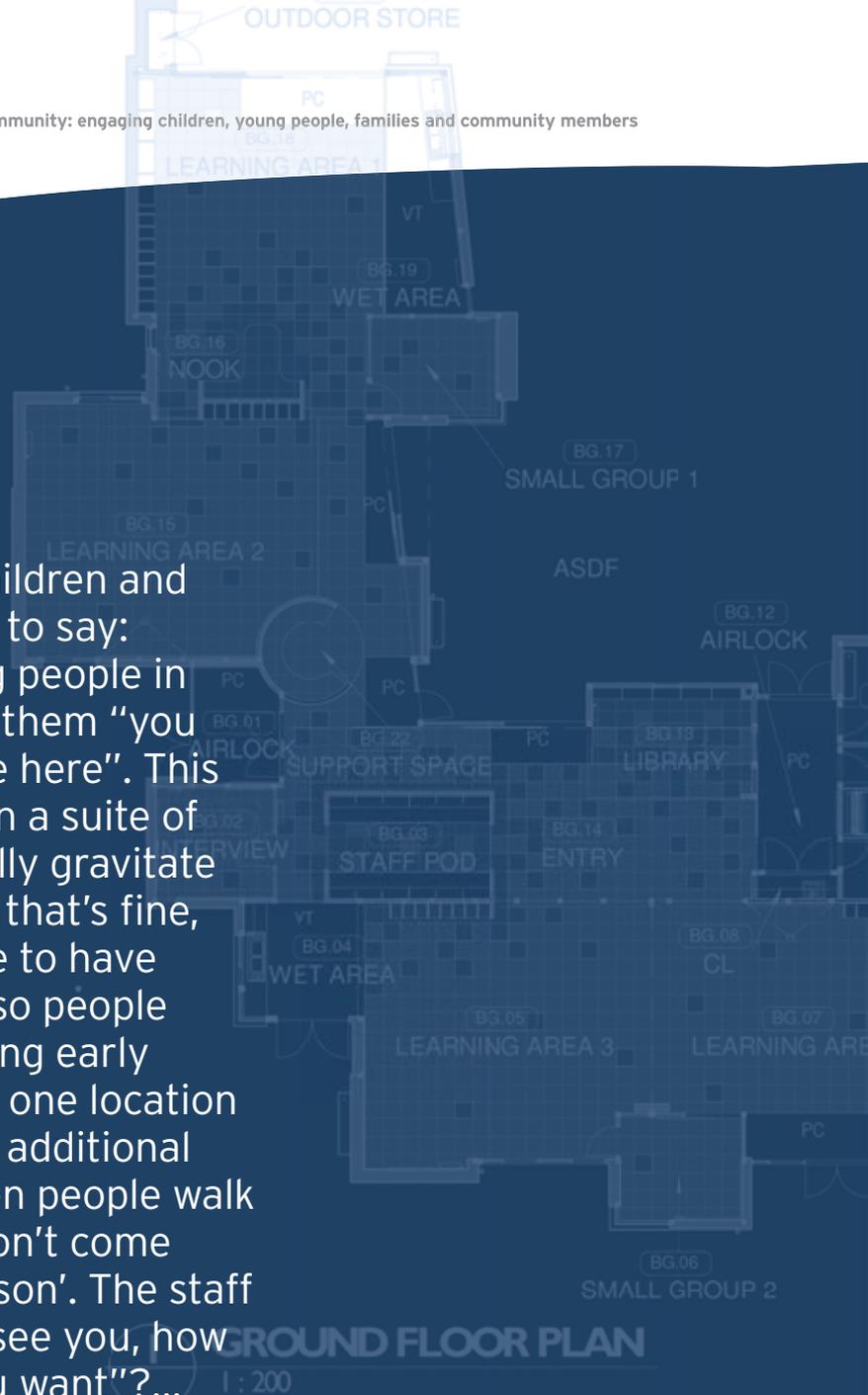
Engaging parents

Engaging community members

Case studies



The way we look at engaging children and families into Doveton College is to say: “What is the hook that will bring people in the gates” that does not say to them “you need help, so you’d better come here”. This is the bottom line. If you can run a suite of services that people will naturally gravitate to because everyone else does, that’s fine, but in order to do that you have to have universal services as the base, so people don’t feel stigmatised. Integrating early learning and school together in one location provides the platform on which additional services can be offered. So when people walk through our doors here, they don’t come because they’re a ‘problem person’. The staff response is “hello, it’s great to see you, how can we help?” not “what do you want”?...



**June McLoughlin** | *Director, Family and Children's Services*



## The challenges of supporting a community facing such adversity

From the onset, the intentions of Doveton College, as outlined in the mission statement, is to “do what it takes to improve the lives of the children of Doveton” and to help them to learn, to do their best and to achieve.

A considerable challenge given that many of the children and young people who the College seeks to support are, as illustrated by Census data, experiencing significant social and emotional disadvantage. They reflect a highly transient and culturally diverse population.

Many parents and children alike speak languages other than English at home, with the number of migrants settling in the area growing almost daily. This results in an increasing number of students presenting to school with limited or no English vocabulary.

Many children in the community struggle to keep up with peers in terms of health and development and have tended to perform significantly poorer on national reading and numeracy benchmarks relative to the Victorian average. Further, many children struggle with self-regulation and their capacity to manage their own behaviour; presenting at school far less ‘ready to learn’ than their peers.

Many of these families are recognised as “traditionally poor users of available services in general, they don’t find them friendly, they often don’t want to engage” [June McLoughlin, Director Family and Children’s Services]. Many have had poor experiences at school themselves and education is not something that they have necessarily valued in the past.

Whilst it is recognised that many of the above factors apply across the Doveton community and other areas in Victoria and indeed Australia, the layers of complexity in supporting the children at Doveton

*“Poverty is a big issue. Too many of our kids have never seen an adult go to work and so we’ve got some affirmative action around that with our Year 8s and 9s, to introduce them to the concept of work and what it means, get them to talk to employers, that really basic stuff...”*

**Bretton New | Executive Principal**

College are further compounded when you consider that these issues are being addressed by a school in its infancy: one that is grappling with a new integrated service model, a new open-plan school build with a new way of teaching, a new staffing base and a cohort of students who have come from different and varied learning environments. It is perhaps no surprise therefore, that many of the children at Doveton College are challenged by the school’s mission and present with challenging behaviour on a daily basis.

The following pages provide examples of how, in response to these needs, Doveton College is engaging children, parents and the community, how integrative partnerships are occurring on the ground and how innovative learning practices are being explored to achieve this.

## Engaging children and young people

Doveton College’s evaluation plan outlines four key outcome areas focussing on children and young people. These areas focus on engaging children and young people of Doveton in age appropriate learning and social opportunities, ensuring they have well developed social and emotional skills, ensuring that they enjoy optimal health and wellbeing and supporting them to successfully transition into desired employment, education and training opportunities. Engagement is a critical aspect of each of these outcome areas.

With these focus areas in mind, what is it that Doveton College is doing that is different to other schools that seeks to create strong links and connections for children and young people both within classrooms and across the school? What specific efforts are in place, even in these early days, to engage children and young people within year levels or learning houses or the College more broadly and how are innovative teaching practices contributing to this? What type of integrative approaches are being trialled to support connections and relationships between children and young people, the staff and service providers working in the first of its kind, single-site community College.

*“What we are doing at Doveton College is taking into account, in every aspect of the program, what the current research tells us is the best way to provide children with a quality program that will form the basis for a life long love of learning.”*

**Lisa Dawes | Assistant Principal, Early Learning**

### **Examples of innovative teaching practices to engage children and young people**

#### **Early Learning Centre - Play-based philosophy**

The early learning program developed to guide teaching and learning of children in the Early Learning Centre reflects a play-based philosophy that is driven by the interests of children. Two multi-age rooms for children aged 3-5 years are offered, with a third room supporting children under 3 years of age. The Centre prides itself on the ability to offer integrated approaches to learning using indoor and outdoor play-spaces in a naturalistic environment.

#### **Piloting PRC's Making Moments Matter program**

During 2013, the Parenting Resource Centre (PRC) worked closely with the staff in the Early Learning Centre to develop, train and coach educators to use the engagement and relationship skills identified in the newly developed PRC program "Making Moments Matter". This program, rather than supporting the development of behaviour management at the individual child level, focuses on working with educators to support them in their work with all children in their care, offering specific support around: building relationships, promoting learning and providing guidance. This trial was reported to have been well received in the Early Learning Centre area, with internal interest at this stage to pilot a modified form of this program, or part therefore, into the early school year levels to support the ongoing behaviour management of students and support teachers in their capacity to engage and entice students to "be their best".

#### **'Circle time' - Early Years (Years 1-3)**

One teacher working in the Year 1-3 Learning House provided an example of her use of the circle time approach during Term 3 in 2012. This approach was used as a circuit breaker following a period of disruption in the classroom. The concept is that everyone sits in a circle and each

student is invited to comment on how they are feeling or issues that are bothering them, with the knowledge that others will listen attentively, show respect and support problem solving. This process allows students to feel angry but supports them to be controlled in expressing this feeling and working through it more effectively. Further, the teacher reported this was a successful means of supporting students by allowing for open communication and development of respect between students and with their educators.

#### **Value of inquiry based learning in the middle years (Year 4 to 6)**

In the Middle school years (Year 4-6), the curriculum is focused on inquiry-based learning and problem solving. While this focus is not necessarily different at Doveton College compared to other schools, there is a strong perception that the application of the inquiry-based approach, particularly across the multi-age structure, is having a significant contribution to the way children have and are developing at Doveton College. Extending on this, one teacher offered an internal, student-run market event as an example of how inquiry based learning had been "the best avenue for innovation and integration". This teacher stated that the market event had allowed numeracy skills to come into play in planning and budgeting, and literacy skills in terms of advertising and media promotion and so on.

#### **Exploring innovative teaching in the senior years (Years 7-9)**

At the senior level, the capacity to consider and attempt to implement innovative teaching approaches has been limited - with the introduction of the senior year levels to the College less than a year in. The management of student behaviour has required considerable time and effort from teachers and support staff for much of the first 12 months of operation.

The Year 7 Coordinator reported that as student behaviour had improved considerably in late 2013 several new teaching approaches were trialled. Maths was reorganised into smaller skills based groups and in Science an 'open' project called 'Water' (based on the No-Tosh method) was introduced. However, while little information on the success of this approach was offered, this teacher noted that "this was the first attempt at change and it appears to be a long way off before we will be ready to implement a secondary integrated curriculum".

### **Examples of approaches to integrate curriculum across year levels**

When you walk through the open learning spaces of Doveton College you are likely to see examples of integrative practice operating to different extents across different sections of the College.

---

*"We have spent the past 12 months designing a curriculum for the 7, 8 and 9 Year levels but have struggled with changing pedagogy to suit the style required. We have some 'traditional' teachers in a non-traditional environment. This will take time."*

**Tim Hannan | Year 7-9 Teacher**



## What do some of the children and young people say about Doveton College?

*"Doveton College is different...it's more a community centre than a school. Well, it is school but it's also a community centre. That's good. It's pretty cool seeing little kids, the teeny tiny ones"*

*"At breakfast club you get drinks and toast and cereal. Sometimes I don't have time for breakfast so I usually want to go there"*

*"I come to school because I want to become a doctor so I can help the community. I want to be a surgeon and start a hospital for free so people who don't have as much money can also come"*

*"There are kids in every school who will muck up. At the end of the day, you've just got to put your head down and do your best"*

*"The social, emotional and learning benefits that each [both students and the young children] get from this are terrific... it is more than just reading and play"*

**Lisa Dawes |**  
Assistant Principal, Early Learning

At Doveton College, while the shift in location is far less than many children might face elsewhere, the need for appropriate transition processes to see smooth and seamless steps for the children of the Early Learning Centre as they move into the Prep House is just as critical.

By the end of 2013 formal transition processes had been put in place, with children moving into the Prep Learning House in 2014 receiving a considerable amount of planned transition hours and ongoing contact opportunities with the staff in the Prep Learning House. Partner organisations have also played a role in integrating Early Learning and Prep, with Good Beginnings co-facilitating a successful pyjama day celebration across the two year levels, promoting the importance of reading and playing games at both school and at home to help children learn and grow.

With continued and improved efforts to integrate and support the transition of children from the Early Learning Centre into Prep, and other shared opportunities for learning and development across the two areas, the number of children coming to school "ready to learn", feeling familiar and safe, and knowing the routine and expectations that school requires of them will also increase.

*"[At Doveton College] educators have the freedom to bring new teaching and learning approaches into the classroom, provided that they can support these ideas with data and research"*

**Renee Walker | Year 1-3 Teacher**

The Early Learning Centre and Family and Children's Services (including both the Family and Community Team and the ever-growing partner services) have an already established history in collaborative efforts. By nature of their proximity in the buildings (relative to the school year levels), the creation of working relationships that are already two years in the making and the general role each plays in the lives of very young children and their parents necessitates the need for a visible presence and collaborative interactions; this is perhaps not surprising.

However, historically, integration across the early years and traditional schooling years crosses far more boundaries and efforts to embed integration between the two is often met with resistance. Not because the concept of integration is faulty, but because it can be hard to change thinking, and sometimes physically impractical.

Ways of working and, to some extent, regulatory environments can present road blocks. Integrative practice requires thinking outside the box, outside the ways things have worked before and requires some unlearning and re-learning or experimenting along the way. The dots may not always be joined.

Despite the difficulties, there are some examples of the way in which staff are incorporating integrative ways of working within Doveton College:

### **Transition opportunities for children moving into Prep in 2014**

The provision of structured opportunities to support children transitioning from early learning programs into their first year of traditional schooling (Prep) is well-understood.

*"All year levels make up the whole of Doveton College...I would like to see the senior school looking backwards towards the earlier year levels and consider ways of working with them to a greater extent".*

**Simon Sherlock** | Assistant Principal, Years 4-9

#### **Taking literacy down to the littlest level...**

During 2013, one of the Year 4-6 Learning House Teachers set about working with children and educators in the Early Learning Centre to support literacy development in an integrative way. By the end of the year these Home Group students were making regular, programmed weekly visits to the 0-3 year old room in the Early Learning Centre and completing reading and other literacy based activities with the young children. This started as a way of boosting the confidence of many students in the 4-6 Home Group who were struggling with reading, and this visit provided them with a regular opportunity to read aloud to young, eager-to-listen children in a safe environment.

According to the teacher who initiated this opportunity, the benefits were greater than the reading practice. This two-way practice connects the two age groups, allowing the younger children to be more comfortable with the older ones and the older students developing a greater understanding of what it means to be a teacher, to be patient and be resilient in a different way. Further,

this teacher recounted the experience of a student who demonstrated particularly challenging behaviours when working with his peers in the classroom, yet showed a different, gentle, caring and protective side when he visited the Early Learning Centre. By taking literacy and play down to the littlest people in the College, this teacher felt that beyond the shared outcomes for each, this integrative practice gave one particular young student his "moment to shine".

#### **Taking environmental issues to the top**

There is also evidence of efforts from some of the younger students working in an integrative way, with the support of teachers that are ready to tackle new ways of working, one Prep teacher offered the example of a cohort of 2013 Preps preparing and taking a school-based environmental issue to the Year 9 students to talk about how they could help to address it. This example was linked to work in the Prep area around the *Take 3 for the Sea* environmental program. The Prep students were discussing their concerns about older students in the College dropping rubbish in the school grounds, The Preps decided

that (with guided instruction from their teachers) they would like to visit some older students and talk about the ramifications of littering. A meeting was set up between the two age-groups to allow the Prep students to engage in a working discussion with some of the Year 9 students. The result was very successful, providing benefits for both the younger and older students. It is anticipated that such multi-teaching opportunities will be taken up in the coming year.

#### **Getting ready for top-down action**

As previously noted at the senior level, the capacity to consider and attempt to implement integrative practice and integrated curriculum in the older year levels is not without its difficulties - due in part to the limited amount of time senior students have been on board at Doveton College and in part to the difficulties in some teachers being 'ready' and prepared to change their thinking, and to experiment with integrated approaches. It is fair to surmise that some teachers, while genuinely committed to the vision of integration, are more ready for change than others. However, despite these limitations, towards the end of 2013 several staff reported that the College was reaching a new phase; perhaps moving out of the establishment phase and into a period of consolidation and growth in teaching and learning.

#### **Engaging parents and carers**

When Doveton College started, it did so with a skeleton crew of administrative staff, educators and family support staff. Yet since those early days, this crew has grown impressively with the school community coming along for the ride. The school population base is strong, the teaching team extraordinary and now, parents and carers are slowly but surely showing an increased presence in the College too.

*"We are building our students to be problem finders and problem solvers. Build not just on the academic aspects, but life learnings...being a difference maker - things we might take for granted..."*

**Mark Duncan** | Year 4-6 Teacher



*"I got my life back on track because of this group"*

**Parent Advisory Group member**

The evaluation plan developed for the College outlines two key outcomes that directly relate to parents and carers. One states that parents and carers of children and young people at Doveton College are actively involved in their children and young person's learning, while the second one states that families are able to meet the health, development and wellbeing needs of children and young people. These go hand in hand as the evidence suggests that the greater involvement parents and carers have in their children's learning, the greater the outcomes for children's learning and development.

Doveton College has and continues to implement a range of strategies to engage and grow the interest of parents with children attending the College, from the opportunity to provide input and involvement at the College Council level or the Parent Advisory Group, to becoming a trained volunteer supporting classroom and other Doveton College activities. Equally, the College offers a host of wrap-around programs and supports that seek to develop a family's capacity to grow healthy, happy and engaged children.

**The value of the Parent Advisory Group**

The **Parent Advisory Group (PAG)** comprises around ten interested parents of children across all age levels; some of whom had been involved in parent's association or similar groups in local schools prior to the mergers that occurred as part of the development of the College, whilst others have joined since the PAG commenced and are simply interested in being part of the school setting.

The group meet regularly and work with members of the Family and Community Team to discuss, debate and transform their ideas about supporting and attracting parents into the school into activities and action on the ground. These discussions allow the PAG members to talk about what is happening (or not happening) in the school, what they would like to see change or implemented and how they would like to contribute to that in a safe, engaging and often humorous environment.

*"Pretty dedicated group... things come up and they show interest. They have a can do attitude"*

**Parent Advisory Group member**

In late 2013 a meet and greet event was held as a way of encouraging parents to visit the dedicated parent room that Doveton College has created for parents, and to better understand what the PAG is about and how it might support the needs of parents into the future. Despite the relatively short period of time the group has been operating, they have vast plans for 2014; from clothing swap and market type events to exploring fundraising programs and future health and fitness opportunities for parents.

This is an active, enthusiastic group of parents who are growing their passion and excitement for doing great things for Doveton, developing faith in their own capabilities and slowly enticing other parents to get involved. It is hard not to be consumed by their friendliness, their humour and their strong desire to achieve what they set out to - connect parents to their children's learning.

*"Being part of the community of parents is important for me, and for my kids. To show them leadership, that they can be leaders"*

**Parent Advisory Group member**

**If working at Doveton College is so tricky at times, what is the attraction of coming to work each day?**

"Because I enjoy the challenge. Honestly...hand on heart, the relationships I have built with students are the most positive and mutual that I have built with students anywhere. They are willing to give me a go and so they get the best of me."

"Because your relationship with the students can be the only solid one they have in their life (at the time)...and even if it is one life [that you support], it is enough"

"This is the first school I've taught in. I love working here, It's been a great way to learn teaching in this kind of environment"

"Because the school's philosophy appeared to be somewhat in alignment with mine".

*“We are hoping to see an increase in volunteers supporting literacy across the school, particularly P-3”*

**Noeline Hosie |**  
Volunteer Coordinator

## Supporting parents to grow health, happy and engaged children

### A “face” to talk to...

The decision to have a Family and Community Team within Doveton College provides the opportunity for several staff to spend time talking to families, being with them, listening to their needs and working with them to access the supports and services that might assist them, albeit in a safe and respectful way. The Team is the “face” that links families and staff to the College. It is their job to play this piece in the puzzle that is Doveton College.

Since the early days of operation, engaging parents has involved many home visits, warm-handovers and cups of coffee; well-known approaches that families report allows them to feel safe, more connected and trusting of those offering to provide support. In turn, these positive feelings are shared by word of mouth. The visible presence and helpfulness of appropriate engagement workers in the community will hopefully increase access and engagement to the required support.

### Parenting outreach and structured playgroups

As a key community organisation that had been actively linked to supporting families through the Family Resource Centre at Doveton North Primary School prior to the development and opening of Doveton College, Good Beginnings Australia offers families access to a wealth of support via structured playgroups,

parent outreach and school transition assistance each and every week. Some of these programs have been operating since before the College gates opened and have transferred to the College location, attracting new families along the way.

Utilising the community space within the College and linking with the Family and Community Team as needed, Good Beginnings currently facilitates an early learning supported playgroup (called *Play 2 Learn*) twice a week. Good Beginnings also deliver *Learn2Grow*, a program with a school transition focus that comprises four components including: a *Sing and Play Group* each week; *Ready4School* sessions during Terms 3 and 4; *Let’s Talk* sessions with presenters and formal information sharing opportunities and the provision of literacy resource packages. Based on the survey’s collected by Good Beginnings across several of these programs, parents who attend overwhelmingly report feeling more connected to people, more confident in their ability to manage their child’s behaviour and periods of change in their child’s life. These programs are an ongoing and significant feature of the regular suite of services delivered in partnership at Doveton College to engage and support parents and carer’s.

### Signposts for building better behaviour

During term 2 and 3 of 2013 the Parenting Resource Centre supported the delivery of the *Signposts for Building Better Behaviour* program; a parenting program that seeks to help families prevent or manage difficult behaviour of children aged between 3-16 years who have a developmental delay or an intellectual disability. While only a small number of parents completed all sessions (due in part to specific issues facing some of these families), those who did reported feeling more confident in their parenting role and being able to share their skills with other parents as significant benefits from the program. Depending on the interest and need of families and children in 2014, it is possible that the Signpost program will run again.

## Evidence of a growing community

### In-class volunteering

A key hope for many parents and carer’s at Doveton College is that they can play a role in volunteering at different levels in the school. A great deal of groundwork has been required in the past two years to establish required practices and processes to ensure volunteers met required standards, that each hold a *Working with Children Check* and have the appropriate skill and training needed to volunteer in the way they seek to.

There has been positive response and a welcoming of many talented and willing volunteers across various programs in the College. More than 20 volunteers have been recruited and completed skills-based training since the College gates opened, with many matched to classroom based learning environments across each year level from early learning through to Year 6. Others support activities across various specialist areas and groups offered by partners agencies such as the Southern Migrant Refugee Centre.

The value of having a dedicated Volunteer Coordinator as part of the Family and Community Team has been a critical factor in the success of the recruitment, training and contribution of the many and varied volunteers Doveton College has enjoyed to date. It has also contributed to fostering relationships with teachers and staff to ensure the greatest gains as the experiences and skills of these volunteers are utilised across various areas within the College.

### Empowering the community

The total commitment and contribution of *Family Life* in partnership with Doveton College has ensured a strong focus on engaging and empowering families via the delivery of the *Family Support Mental Health Program* (SHINE), the *Creating Capable Leaders* program (see below) and volunteer-driven programs following on from this.



---

*"[Now I know that] I can be happy and strong in whatever I do when I leave here and go out into the community"*

### **Creating Capable Leaders participant**

#### **Creating Capable Leaders**

*Creating Capable Leaders* (CCL) is an 8-week program that seeks to support community participants to feel an increased connection to their community; have greater self-confidence and leadership skills; have an increased knowledge of community development; and have a greater motivation and confidence to seek further vocational, educational and/or volunteer pathways. This program was delivered by Family Life in Term 1 and 4 in 2013, supporting the development of leadership skills and hands on learning for more than 20 parents from Doveton College.

The Family and Community Team members have become trainers of the *Creating Capable Leaders* program to allow it to be available to parents and carers of the Doveton community into 2014 and beyond.

#### **Healthy Little Rainbows**

The *Healthy Little Rainbows* program operates as fruit and veggie co-op whereby an interested and committed group of seven volunteer parents visit the local market each Tuesday morning, buy bulk amounts of seasonal fruits and veggies and then share and repack a selection of these into jam-packed bags for collection by parents later that afternoon. The cost to parents is \$10 and for this they receive a variety of colourful, staple ingredients that helps feed their family in a cost-effective and nutritious manner. The feedback from families indicates that this is a really practical and valuable

support. It offers them access to fresher produce, at a better value and helps with transport as many can't get to the market.

The team of volunteers that coordinate this program come from within the school, with four volunteers having completed the *Creating Capable Leaders* training offered in early 2013. The *Healthy Little Rainbows* has been running since July 2013 and prepares anywhere between 25-35 bags per week. While there has been no significant increase in the parent take up of bags in 2013, the co-op team are keen to investigate this issue as part of their ongoing learning into 2014.

Beyond the benefit for families is the impact that being involved in a program like this has for those running it. One volunteer involved in *Healthy Little Rainbows* program indicated that she had never done anything like this or the *Creating Capable Leaders* training program before. The opportunity had not been there. Yet, she has found the journey both frightening and empowering... as it has allowed her to find her voice.

#### **Home-College Partnership Framework**

The *Parenting Research Centre* (PRC) have also been working closely with the Doveton College community to develop a Home-College Partnership Framework. The key outcomes of implementing this framework are that children are actively engaged in learning at school and at home. To do this, parents need to be engaged!

During 2013, the PRC has spent time meeting with and gathering the ideas of many people in the community around what the College can do to build better partnerships with parents. This has included meeting with parents, the College Leadership Team and many other members of staff. While there are many parts to a framework such as this, success will require a long-term commitment from the College community and a shared belief by families and those within the College that by working together the children of Doveton will have better long-term outcomes.

For this to happen, some staff may benefit from further training and support so that they are better at interacting with all members of the Doveton Community. It may also mean that the College implements strategies around engaging with local sporting and community groups so that families are more likely to engage with the College. The College has already made progress in forming partnerships with families by employing a Family and Community Team, opening the parent's room and supporting the work of the Parent Advisory Group. With the foundations clearly laid, it will be timely to focus on attracting more parents, from a variety of backgrounds, to partner with the College in the year ahead.

---

*"[Being involved in] Creating Capable Leaders, and now the Healthy Little Rainbows program, has taught me its ok to talk, to change and to adapt to it [life]...I started wanting the right people around me, to guide me, to support me..."*

### **Healthy Little Rainbows Volunteer**

## Case study

### **Supporting a family with limited service engagement**

Doveton College received a referral from Child Protection in regards to providing child care and kindergarten to a young couple who had not engaged previously with any family services. The family were considered high risk due to neglect and parenting issues. The Community Engagement Coordinator met with the child protection case worker and the family to have a look around the College and to see the early years area, to hear about the playgroup options, the MCH nurse service and the family support outreach.

Child Protection agreed to assist with the payment of the parent contribution to the Early Learning Centre. The children commenced in the early learning program. At first the mum was very hesitant to leave the children as the children became very upset and frightened when the mother went to leave. The educators and the community engagement coordinator worked with mum to put her at ease.

Over time the mum began to trust the staff and the children settled well into the early learning program. The Mum and a new baby started attending the playgroups twice a week. The family have now become regular attendees at the college and can be found most days participating in the various activities Doveton College offers.

Most recently, the early learning educators were invited to attend a family case meeting with the family and Child Protection to look at the future support plans for the family. Child Protection has since closed the case, due to the high quality wrap around support Doveton College has been able to provide this family.

## Engaging community members

Drawing in members of the broader community to the services and state of the art facilities has been a goal of the Doveton College model from the very beginning. The evaluation plan states that Doveton College seeks to engage community members in education and training opportunities that support life and employment, and that community members are connected to and supported by their community.

### **Work and Learn Programs**

In an effort to support parents and carer's of children and young people in Doveton to re-enter education training and the workforce, a range of continually evolving opportunities have been of focus.

Initially, a partnership agreement was negotiated with the Brotherhood of St Laurence (BoL) to deliver the *Lasting Gifts* Program; a parent/teenager career support workshop program that sits within the Brotherhood's broader *Work and Learning Program* at the College. The first program was delivered in Term

2 2013. However, it was agreed that the outcomes of *Lasting Gifts*, in its true form, were unachievable in the College for a number of reasons. As a result, the second program delivered in Term 3, was adjusted to reflect the needs of parents in terms of their own career development and the support they required to take new steps. This program morphed into a *Certificate I in Vocational Preparation*. A further *Certificate I in Vocational Preparation* was offered in fourth term, with plans for ongoing certificate level programs to be offered into 2014.

Due to the success of this approach and in response to community need, Doveton College appointed a Work and Learning Coordinator in mid-2013 to provide ongoing support and program opportunities to parents and community members seeking to re-enter education and the work force.

Whilst supporting children and families in the immediate Doveton College community is critical, the College shares a broader outcome of ensuring community members within Doveton (that do not necessarily have children attending the College), feel connected to and use the College to access services offered by or in collaboration with partner services agencies.

---

*"I'm not saying we've got all the answers, I'm saying this is what we've put together and this is where we're up to and we've got good engagement at this point in time, of our providers and supports, and families and community and that to me is a good start. Will we get the outcomes we want? We will have to wait and see. But engagement is an outcome, of course...I was terrified they [families] wouldn't come. But they come in and out all day long. That's what it's about".*

**June McLoughlin | Director, Family and Children's Services**



### Sewing groups

The Southern Migrant Refugee Centre support the delivery of craft and sewing classes each week during school terms, providing a great social activity for the community. These programs are well-attended and allow for local community members to bring young children with them while they meet and connect with others. Experienced volunteers support the groups and provide skill development at all levels. It is hoped that with successful grant funding Doveton College may be able to return to the position of having a paid teacher for each group (as was the case previously).

It is a wonderful thing to see this group in action. It's a hive of activity. On passing one day, a gentleman came in from the street and inquired about the sewing group. He wanted to learn to sew. It is that simple. He had a need and Doveton College could help him. He continues to come because his need is being met.

### Men's support groups

Doveton College has recently established a men's group in partnership with Monash Health. This group seeks to support refugee and migrant men who were presenting suffering chronic pain, and experiencing a high prevalence of depression and disconnection and difficulty in coping with the experience of shifting from their home country to Australia.

In response, Monash Health designed a 10 week program called *RENEW* which seeks to educate program participants about pain and pain management, and compliment this with appropriate exercise programs. This program ran as a pilot partnership program onsite at Doveton College in 2013, linking together the support of physiotherapists and general practitioners from Monash Health, in addition to support offered by the Community Engagement Coordinator and the facilities in the College's gymnasium.

*"These programs have helped them [participants] to find their voice and their feet...and manage the challenges that this brings".*

**Marie Holmes | Work and Learning Coordinator**

This approach has many benefits beyond supporting the chronic pain shared by these men. Whilst engaged in this program these men have the opportunity to see the other services and supports available at Doveton College, whether they apply to themselves or their families more generally, and allows the opportunity for reconnecting these families to other groups in the Doveton community in the future.

### Case study

#### **Connecting a new family... and re-connecting them when times get tough...**

At the beginning of 2012, a newly arrived CALD family moved into the Doveton area and wished to enrol their children into the Early Learning Centre program and the school.

With the assistance of the Community Engagement Coordinator, the parents, who spoke little English were helped to enrol the three children, as well as linking the mum and dad and their 1 year old into the Good Beginnings Australia facilitated playgroups. The family became engaged on a weekly basis at Doveton College, and were also regularly accessing the MCH service.

During Term 2, the three year old ceased attending the Early Learning Centre. The parents informed the playgroup facilitator that the father had lost his job and they could not afford to pay the early learning fees.

In response, a meeting was set up by the Community Engagement Coordinator, with the parents and the playgroup facilitator, the Assistant Principal, Early Learning and the Access to Early Learning (AEL) Coordinator. With AEL funding assistance the 3 year old was able to return to the Early Learning Centre. Over time the parents and children became a familiar site around the college engaging with several programs and building relationships with a number of College staff.

A few weeks later health issues arose which resulted in the family becoming increasingly in debt and ended up homeless and living in their car, and then in a caravan park outside of the Doveton area. This led to the children's non-attendance at school and the families' absence from the programs for a second time.

Because of the wrap-around support services at Doveton College and the relationships developed between the family and the Family and Community Team, the College continued to support the family and through working with a number of other partner agencies, assisted the family to become rehoused in the area and re-engage in the community.

As a result, the family continues to be involved in the range of supports offered at Doveton College and the children regularly attend school. This is what sets Doveton College apart - to be able to engage families and then, when significant challenges arise, have the support base and skill to re-engage and support families to get back on track and remain connected.





# 4

## Reflecting on achievements: “Doveton College... more than a school”

Documenting the evidence  
of a changing community

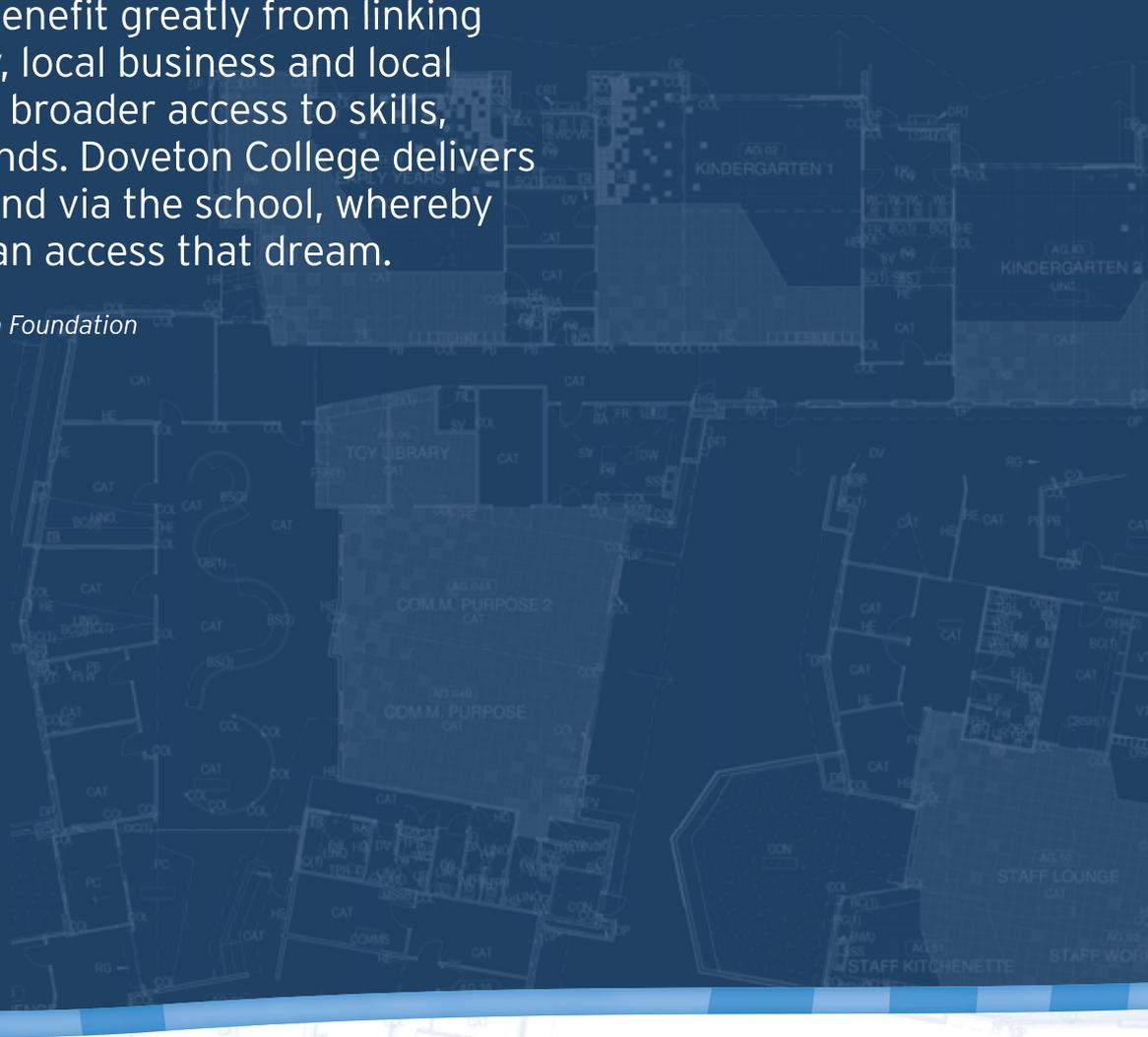
Reflecting on the challenges  
of integration and innovation

Supporting Doveton College  
into the future



As a society we are in danger of creating areas of growing disadvantage, with families who struggle, children who fall way behind in their education and parents who find it difficult to connect. One way of making a real difference is to have a central place in areas where the local community has access to a broad range of services (education, health, child safety, family service, etc.), where early assessment, intervention and prevention is available. A school can be such a place. It will benefit greatly from linking to philanthropy, local business and local citizens to gain broader access to skills, support and funds. Doveton College delivers the means, in and via the school, whereby local citizens can access that dream.

**Julius Colman** | *Colman Foundation*



## Documenting the evidence of a changing community

### *Building the evidence base*

Doveton College is a long-term strategy. The vision of providing a fully integrated model of education and community support with the specific aim of nurturing children from pre-natal to early adulthood is ambitious. The results will take time.

Yet, while indeed it is early days, the progress in creating Doveton College, from concept through to build and to an operational hub of education and community support is, without question, truly outstanding: with in excess of 1,600 individuals of all ages passing through the doors weekly.

The stories, examples and anecdotes in this journey report go some way to exemplifying the changes and learnings that have and are occurring and the benefits Doveton College seeks to provide for children, young people and their families, and the community of Doveton. Alongside these stories, and as alluded to in this report, a considered approach to evaluating and monitoring the success and changes the College brings to the Doveton community is also underway.

---

*"It's very early days... this is a long-term investment and it's going to be 5-8 years down the track before you see any definitive outcomes"*

**June McLoughlin** | Director,  
Family and Children's Services

### *Embedding evaluation into the everyday*

Doveton College has many systems and functions in place to assess the school at an operational or process level, to monitor the creation of the College against its intended vision and to explore whether core services are being delivered in the way that they were intended. These systems allow for reflection to support improved quality practice and to monitor the challenges of integrated governance arrangements.

Further, a five-year outcomes-based evaluation framework has been devised that allows for the measurement of both immediate and long-term impact level change over time for the outcome focus areas around children, families and community. This framework depicts the data required to support various impact indicators, the source and frequency of such data if it is available, evidence of who collects the raw data (i.e. teacher-reported, child-reported, parent-reported, etc.), and how, where and when such data can be accessed has been identified. Many quantitative data sets already exist or can be developed, along with qualitative data to support these indicators. Gaps in required data are accepted as just that; with a commitment to work in partnership with government and researchers, both nationally and internationally, to explore how data gaps may be addressed into the future.

Data against many indicators has been collected throughout 2013 and is currently being examined. A Baseline Evaluation Report is in development that will provide a picture of how children and young people are faring against a set of agreed outcomes and performance indicators at the end of the first complete year of the College's operation. It will report aspects including: the engagement of children and young people, families and the community into the College; the take-up and value of the wrap-around child and family services and supports; and the academic, social and emotional development of students against known benchmarks. It will guide decisions going forward and allow for the comparison of data collected in future years to evidence



how successful the integrated model is in improving outcomes for children, families and the broader Doveton community.

### *Considerable improvement in such a short space of time...*

Naturally, there is much speculation around what these outcomes will show over time, and given the evaluation is underway, there is keen interest in seeing what the quantitative data is showing and what direction it provides. As the Baseline Evaluation Report is finalised, Doveton College will identify the best means of sharing these findings with the community and more broadly.

In brief, for a school community that feared students would not actually enrol and attend, this is not the case. The data shows that the community are coming. Both the early learning program and the traditional school years are attracting children and young people, with parents slowly but surely making their presence felt and enjoying the ever-growing array of services, programs and supports available to them.

The Early Learning Centre has continued to experience high utilisation amongst a population that are not historically good users of fee paying services such as early learning and has successfully achieved an Exceeding National Standard rating in its very first assessment against National Standards.

Heading into 2014, for many students this marks the start of the third year of learning at Doveton College. For the majority of the Prep students commencing in 2014, they have had the opportunity to attend the Early Learning Centre for two years prior to the traditional years of schooling. There are strong views that these children will commence formal years of education far ahead of those before them - with the expectation that in time the data will show that in terms of academic, social and emotional skill children that have transitioned from the early learning program into Prep and onwards within Doveton College, will have developed further than children who did not attend the Early Learning Centre.

Further, as each year passes and children move up to the next year level, they are doing so in an environment that is considerably more stable and cohesive than the previous one. Therefore, the expectations are that the evaluation data will demonstrate improvement for each year level cohort over time.

## Reflecting on the challenges of integration and innovation

*It is hard...but challenge drives success...*

By nature the drive to embed integration and multi-aging vision for Doveton College, challenges are bountiful. Yet it is in striving to overcome and succeed such challenges that helps cement College practices and paves a way for the future.

*"There has been a tipping point [in late 2013] with movement forward in the way people are thinking and working"...*

**Vicki Miles | Associate Principal**

Some of these challenges are reflective of the disadvantaged and fragmented community in which this new service model is being implemented. While students and families are attending, staff have spent considerable time over the first two years 'establishing' policy and practice to manage significant student behaviour issues and ensure Doveton College reflects a safe and respectful learning environment for all that enter its gates. This has limited the ability to move past managing the everyday and focus on integrative practice.

*"The evidence from Toronto First Duty (TFD) points to the value of the "school as hub model" as one type of integrative platform for a range of preschool services ranging from quality child care to family supports... Converging evidence from the Better Beginnings, Better Futures and Toronto First Duty demonstration projects shows the promise of community level partnerships and integration for improving the lives of families and outcomes for children. Putting the design principles into scaled up programs will require broad system level support with policy integration across, and within, different levels of government and service organizations."*

Source: Corter, C., Peters, R. (2011), *Integrated Early Childhood Services in Canada: Evidence from the Better Beginnings, Better Futures (BBBF) and Toronto First Duty (TFD) Projects*, Encyclopaedia on Early Childhood Development, Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood Development.

Other challenges are around the building of a culture reflective of the physical environment and acknowledging the experiences of over 100 staff who have not previously worked together before.

Staff have been building relationships with each other and students, alongside the development of a new school facility and a new, integrated way of working.

For the above reasons, and the nature of layers of management that are required in complex organisations such as Doveton, communication in and of itself has presented limitations to working in an integrative fashion. Communication is vital.

However, perhaps the hardest challenge of all is mind-set. There is no question that the staff at Doveton College are highly committed and their intentions honourable. However, not everyone is on the same page yet. This will take time.

Doveton College, with all its complexities, can be an overwhelming place for some staff. For many the very fact that it is difficult and presents such challenges on a daily basis but with the opportunity for growth and community change are the very reasons they come to work each day.

### **Successful steps towards integration are visible**

The intention of an integrated model such as Doveton College was to take the existing child and family services, early learning and education in a community to a single-site, integrated community service model providing children and families with streamlined access to a comprehensive range of services not typically available in disadvantaged communities. Despite the many challenges, and along with the build of a new community-focused school, it is fair to say that the foundations of integration have been laid.



A single vision has been created and common goals have been agreed. The majority of staff share the passion and capabilities to drive change, as per the College's mission. However, some may not necessarily have the skills to do this.

Equally, some staff may not fully understand what the vision of Doveton College is and therefore find it difficult to contribute to change. They are not yet on the same page and getting there is recognised by some as a considerable hurdle.

A single governance structure is operating effectively and partnership agreements have been established to support linkages between the early years, school year levels and partner services.

High quality personalised learning practices are being embedded and innovative teaching approaches encouraged and attempted.

Attempts to implement an integrated curriculum across multi-age setting and in state of the art facilities across the early years and the school setting are underway. There is evidence of integration occurring: certainly between Family and Children's Services and the Early Learning Centre, and to a lesser extent, between the Early Learning Centre and select school year levels. Other examples no doubt exist and further efforts will be made in the drive for integration across the College.

**The perception is that with two years of building and operational teething behind them, the College is more ready than ever before to forge ahead with the intention to operate in a truly integrated way. The value of the outcome evaluation will help to define the extent to which Doveton College is operating in an integrated manner - beyond being collocated and working in collaboration.**

## Supporting Doveton College into the future

Into the future Doveton College will explore how communication between staff and extending to parents and students can be continually improved and be reflective of the social media climate in which we live.

At a staff level, such communications may include opportunities for staff to attend and speak at briefings, partnership meetings and student assemblies, and through continued internal professional development opportunities. The creation of the best working relationships possible and a better awareness of who staff are, their strengths and skills base, what they do and can offer will be critical for building staff's capacity to operate in an integrative way and allow innovation and good practice to grow. Given the vast range of students at Doveton College - from the languages spoken, to academic performance and social and emotional development - the stronger the relationships between staff and partners, the greater the support and opportunity a child will receive, when they need it most.

Continued engagement of vulnerable families will remain a challenge for the College, however, continuous improvements in communicating with those already within its reach will support this. The recent launch of the College's website offers a powerful medium to transfer knowledge about the College's happenings and success to parents and the broader community. A range of other communication approaches, and continued outreach and in-home support opportunities have and will continue to be explored.

## Sharing learnings to inform policy and practice

Over the years of its evolution, there has been a steady stream of policy makers, government representatives, researchers and invited guests entering the grounds. These visitors are welcome and have a place in ensuring the learnings of the College are shared, both at the policy level and in practice.

Further, the discussions and debates that occur when such visitors come offer a critical opportunity for the College to talk about specific challenges faced in implementing this new approach. Challenges around specific funding models, eligibility criteria for different program and supports and realities of delivering services in areas of such disadvantaged (where user's ability to pay is severely compromised to pay) can be debated and opportunities for flexibility and potential long-term changes in departmental practices discussed.

Initially, when visitors attended, perhaps they were questioning whether Doveton College was at all possible and how it would be funded. Some years later, when visitors tour the College and explore the facilities, you can see them reflect at the student base attending and perhaps even smile in spite of themselves, quietly wondering how such a model has actually succeeded - even in these early days.

The worst case scenario for many involved in the Doveton journey is that Doveton College is seen as a one-off demonstration project. However, as listed in the evaluation framework, beyond the outcomes intended for children, families and community, the College also seeks to influence broad policy change as a result of their successful implementation of this new community-focussed, integrated model of service delivery. Efforts to continue to document practice, to share learnings and debate ways of seeking the adjustment to government policy to translate the Doveton College model will continue to be a focus.

*"It would be a good one-off, but it would be a big shame if we can't influence broad policy change"*

**June McLoughlin | Director, Family and Children's Services**



**2** GROUND FLOOR PLAN  
A602 1 : 200

Doveton College is a unique educational project, not only in Victoria but within Australia. Much has been achieved since 2010, especially in the last two years since we opened our doors. I recognise though that there is much more to be undertaken. That is what excites me. As Director of the Doveton Project from the beginning of planning in February 2010 and later as Executive Principal of Doveton College I have seen the College emerge from a concept and architectural drawings to the vibrant community it is today. In moments of reflection it amazes me what has been achieved and to be truthful at times I'm also a little daunted at what still needs to happen. Building and establishing Doveton College has provided all the individuals involved with the unique opportunity to help shape the programs, the culture, the relationships and everything else that goes with providing the children and families of Doveton with the educational and community facility and the programs and services they so richly deserve. How lucky are we to have been, and continue to be, in that situation. As the Executive Principal of Doveton College I feel enormously privileged to be in the role I am in."

**Bretton New** | *Executive Principal*





2  
A602 / 1 : 200  
GROUND FLOOR PLAN

This report *Doveton College: The Journey Continues* was produced and written by Doveton College, February 2014

