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Towards 2020: Renewing Our Schools Submission Cover Sheet

Please complete and submit this form with your submission to:

Towards 2020 Submissions

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Organisation: Kaleen High School Board

Submission subject/issues: Revitalisation of Kaleen High School

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Towards 2020 : Renewing our schools

**A submission from the
School Board**

Kaleen High School

December 2006



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An opportunity for Kaleen High School

The Kaleen High School Board approaches the proposed revitalisation of Kaleen High School as an opportunity to develop, and properly implement, an enhanced model of education which better suits the diverse needs of young people facing a fast developing yet uncertain future economic and social environment.

Government commitment

For the proposals contained in *Towards 2020* for a revitalised Kaleen High School to be successful a significant commitment of resources will be required. The Kaleen High School Board anticipates that the Government, as the proponent of those changes, will commit adequate resources to every stage of the change process, ie to planning, consulting, developing and implementing programs, reviewing and fine tuning. It is only in this way that the benefits of the change proposals can be realised and appropriately assessed.

Priority Enrolment Areas

Kaleen High School Board **recommends** immediate changes to the Priority Enrolment Area arrangements for Kaleen High School, in order to support revitalisation of Kaleen High and ensure a sustainable school. In addition, the Board suggests more stringent application of the enrolment policy requiring schools to provide for each and every student from within their priority enrolment area before making enrolment available to out of area or interstate students, whether or not they will be enrolled in school-specific specialised programs. Schools must be required to limit their enrolments to the agreed capacity of the school so as not to disadvantage students in their own or other schools. For further details, see attachment.

Middle Schooling

Middle Schooling at Kaleen High School must be evidence-based and have different characteristics from programs currently in operation in the ACT. At Kaleen High School there will be a focus on increasing student learning and relationships by using and developing synergies in the curriculum. There is a need to develop and document principles for the Kaleen High School Middle Schooling Program to enable and support widespread community understanding and commitment prior to implementation. Appropriate additional transitional resourcing will be required for this. (A middle schooling program was tried at Kaleen High School previously. Implementation of middle schooling at Kaleen High will need to take account the feedback from this previous experience.)

Information Technology

The proposed focus on Information Technology in years 9 and 10 will build on existing strengths at Kaleen High School. The school is in a strong position to implement an enhanced, high-end



focus on IT to meet an acknowledged skill shortage in the workforce. For this aspect of revitalisation to be successful the Government must commit to ongoing funding for specialised equipment and staff development and ensure that they reach and remain at the leading edge of this area. This funding need is additional to the existing ongoing funding for IT.

Vocational Education and Training

Kaleen High School has been investigating ways to implement VET courses and our aim is to provide a broader range of activities to cater for a wider range of students. Certificate 1 and 2 level courses in Information Technology, Hospitality, Community Services, and Building and Construction could be offered by appropriately qualified existing staff of the school, assuming of course that those staff members remain at the school. The Board wants to be able to offer such courses from the beginning of Semester 2, 2007 but the school requires a commercial grade kitchen and infrastructure as well as the development of a café area so that Certificate courses in Hospitality and Business can be delivered as an integrated package. The Board seeks a commitment that funding be made available this financial year for these and other upgrades.

Impact of *Towards 2020* consultation on the school community

The Kaleen High School Board supports the need for the ACT to examine the way public education is delivered and to move to a more productive and sustainable arrangement. However, there is significant concern that the Government's claims for *Towards 2020* may not be realised and that the proposals will not deliver measurable improvements in educational and social outcomes for students.

The Kaleen High School Board believes that the process of announcing the *Towards 2020* proposal in the Budget context has been unhelpful. This has pitted school communities against each other as well as creating friction within individual communities.

Building on the quality education provided by Kaleen High School

Kaleen High School Board seeks a firm and public commitment from the Government that the proposals for revitalisation of Kaleen High School will be appropriately and adequately resourced, so that Kaleen High School can build on the quality public education it now provides and deliver improved educational and social outcomes for each and every student in our school.

Revitalisation of Kaleen High School

An ongoing process

The changes proposed for Kaleen High School in *Toward 2020* are significant and provide an exciting opportunity for the school. These changes cannot be achieved by trying to change the way Kaleen High operates without also changing the infrastructure and resourcing arrangements.

Changing the internal operations of Kaleen High will not be sufficient – more is required. Every positive change at Kaleen needs to be actively shared with the whole school community and with all the communities in our school's Priority Enrolment Area, at the very least. It is highly desirable that they be shared with the whole Canberra community. Such awareness raising is a specialised task and requires an ongoing and sustained commitment in order to have a significant impact.

Kaleen High School has, in recent times, invested a lot of time and energy in beginning the long process of changing the broader community's perception of our school and we are starting to reap the results in a small but noticeable way. The school community does not have the specific skills or resources required for effective use of time and energy in a sustained manner for this purpose – it is essential that the revitalisation of Kaleen High includes a commitment to this important area. After all, perception is everything.

The impact of Priority Enrolment Areas

It is easy to see the impact of Priority Enrolment Area (PEA) arrangements on Kaleen High School.

At the present time, the PEA for Kaleen High School includes only the suburbs of Kaleen, Giralang and McKellar.

Primary School PEA 'splitting' into two High School PEAs

At the primary school level, McKellar is in the PEA for Evatt Primary. A large proportion of students from McKellar proceed to high school with their peers from Evatt Primary, rather than choosing to sever those relationships and attend Kaleen High.

Kaleen High has initiated engagement with Evatt Primary in relation to information and transition programs, but, to date, this engagement has resulted in minimal additional enrolments from Evatt Primary students.



The Kaleen High School Board **recommends** that Primary Schools which have more than one High School PEA covering the Primary School PEA:

1. Should provide information on all High Schools which have part of the Primary School's PEA in the High School PEA, including information on transition programs, information evenings etc; and
2. Should assist students and families to participate in information sessions and transition programs with the same degree of support, irrespective of which High School is being considered.

The Board also **recommends** that the Department of Education consider developing a mechanism for High Schools to mail out directly to all students in year 5 and 6, who are resident in the High School's PEA, information about their local high school, its transition programs and information sessions.

The Kaleen High School PEA in comparison to PEAs for other High Schools

In 2006, the PEA for Kaleen High School included approximately 4.3 % of the ACT populationⁱ in three suburbs. In contrast, Melba High PEA contains 7½ⁱⁱ suburbs and 8.8% of the ACT population and in the case of Belconnen High there are 8½ suburbs with 8.5% of the ACT population.

By 2010, assuming there is no change to PEA boundaries, Kaleen PEA will represent 4.1 % of the ACT population; Melba PEA will be 8.6% and Belconnen 8.0%. In 2014, the figures are Kaleen 3.9%, Melba 8.6% and Belconnen 7.6%.

Assuming that the new suburb of Lawson, which is to be built on the opposite side of Baldwin Drive from Kaleen High School, is included in the Kaleen High School PEA, the population of the PEA as a percentage of the ACT population would be 4.6% in 2010 and 5.0% in 2014. Clearly including the new suburb of Lawson in the PEA for Kaleen High School would increase the potential number of students who would attend Kaleen High.

Assume also, for a moment, that, in addition, the PEA for Evatt Primary is included in total in the PEA for Kaleen High School and that this represents the inclusion of 50%ⁱⁱⁱ of the Evatt population in the Kaleen High PEA. Immediately the population in the Kaleen High PEA increases to 5.2 % of the ACT population and this increases to 5.5% in 2010 and 5.7% in 2014.

The inclusion of the area of Bruce to the east of Haydon Drive would have additional impact. There is a pedestrian/cycle underpass under Ginninderra Drive which allows safe and easy access from this area to Kaleen High. The population in the Melba PEA would be 7.0%, 6.9% and 6.8% in the same years.

A PEA of reasonable size is required to sustain a high school population. The Board **recommends** immediate inclusion of:

- Evatt (east of Clancy Street) – which is the remainder of the PEA for Evatt Primary not currently in the Kaleen High PEA; and
- Bruce (east of Haydon Drive)

in the PEA for Kaleen High School.



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The Board also **recommends** that the new suburb of Lawson, in its entirety, be included in the Kaleen High School PEA as Lawson is to be developed immediately opposite Kaleen High School on Baldwin Drive.

Enrolment Policy

The current Enrolment Policy^{iv} states:

POLICY STATEMENT

3.1 Within practical limits, parents may choose the school and type of education best suited to the needs of their children.

3.2 Schools will be comprehensive in nature. They will neither select nor exclude students on the ability to make financial contributions, on intelligence, on religious affiliation, or on any basis that is likely to lead to intolerance or social divisiveness.

3.3 Schools may enrol students to the capacity determined by the department as appropriate to their accommodation.

3.4 Each school must provide for and accept the students in its own priority enrolment area. Schools can accept out of area enrolments if there is space available after catering for students from the priority enrolment area.

3.5 Students resident in the ACT have enrolment priority over non-ACT residents.

3.6 Children seeking to enter kindergarten should be five years of age on or before 30 April.

There is evidence in the Government's *Towards 2020* proposal which demonstrates that this policy is not being properly implemented, with some schools being enrolled above their capacity. The Government must act to review in 2007 the capacity of all schools where capacity has not been reviewed in 2006 and ensure that there are regular capacity reviews which take into account changes within a school. The Government must act to ensure that enrolment above the school's capacity does not occur, as over-enrolment is detrimental to the public education system as a whole.

Schools should be encouraged to have a small under-enrolment at the beginning of the school year to ensure that every student from the school's PEA can be accommodated.

Schools which enrol large numbers of students from outside their PEA because of specialised sporting, language or similar programs have a particular responsibility to public education across the ACT to ensure that they also cater for all students from their PEA.

There should also be a review of the formula for determining capacity. There is such diversity of programs in today's schools that a formula based, in the main, on average numbers of students per teaching space does not reflect the realities of our education system. For example, there are specific staffing arrangements for each Learning Support Unit, yet it appears that the formula for capacity determination does not recognise that there will be a smaller number of students in the teaching space provided for such a unit.

Changes to the PEA for Kaleen High School will play a part in ensuring growth of the school, but they will not be sufficient by themselves. Other changes discussed below are also required, in addition to the awareness raising referred to above.



Endnotes:

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ⁱ All population data in this submission is drawn from “Population projections for Canberra Suburbs and Districts, 2004 – 2014”, Chief Minister’s Department, August 2004

ⁱⁱ Florey is in the PEA for 2 high schools so 50% of population is included in these calculations.

ⁱⁱⁱ Evatt is divided into two area for primary school PEAs with part in the Evatt Primary PEA and part in the Miles Franklin PEA.

^{iv} “Enrolment in Government Primary and High Schools”. ACT Department of Education and Training, 2004, Identifier EGS200404