**Kyneton Primary School – community consultation findings & recommendation to Government**

In April this year, the Victorian Government announced $3.5 million of funding to either refurbish buildings at Baynton Street or relocate to Edgecombe Street and build a new primary school.

The Government announcement was subject to community consultation to decide the future location of Kyneton Primary School. Therefore, to accurately reflect the views of the school and broader community, the School Council initiated an independent consultation process that included a public forum and community survey.

## Community consultation process

In May 2014, the School Council engaged Miriam O'Brien Consulting to facilitate the community consultation process.

The main purpose of the consultation process was to determine the level of support for each of the two options:

1. Relocating Kyneton Primary School and build a new school on a greenfield site in Edgecombe Street; and
2. Refurbish Kyneton Primary School on its current site in Baynton Street.

A public forum was held on 16 June with approximately 80 people representing many sections of the community attending. Focus sessions were also conducted with staff and students; and a comprehensive survey on *The Future of Kyneton Primary School* was available for community members to complete.

Following the consultation process, a final report — *Our School: Options for Kyneton Primary School —* was presented to the School Council.

This report is available to download at **www.sites.google.com/site/KynetonPrimarySchool** or copies can be viewed at the school office.

## Report findings

The *Our School: Options for Kyneton Primary School* report showed an overwhelming majority of respondents indicated that positive educational and learning outcomes for students was essential. Strong school spirit and a warm and friendly atmosphere were likewise rated highly. The history of the school, including the bluestone building also rated as very important by survey respondents.

As well as the above the report found:

* 64% of adult survey respondents supported a move to the Edgecombe Street site.
* For parents who will be enrolling a student in the next six years, this figure was 72%.
* 93% of respondents rated a large outdoor recreation area as essential or important.
* Energy efficiency and environmental sustainability were important considerations
* An ability to add more classrooms when required
* Lower ongoing maintenance costs, allowing funds to be redirected to student related initiatives.

Likely growth in student numbers and the subsequent need for more space were the two most expressed reasons for a preference to relocate. Other factors supporting relocation to Edgecombe Street included a desire to modernise the school, and an opportunity to reduce ongoing maintenance costs when compared to Baynton Street.

The main reasons for those preferring to remain at Baynton Street included the school’s heritage/history, parking concerns and the proximity of Kyneton Secondary College to the new site.

## School Council recommendation to Government

School Council met on 23 June, 21 July and 4 August to consider and discuss the information collated from the consultation process and the future educational direction of our school.

Considering the majority support by the survey participants to relocate to Edgecombe Street, the following motion was endorsed on 4 August by the School Council:

*“School Council agrees to write to the Minister providing the final report of the Community Consultation and School Council’s decision to support relocation to Edgecombe Street…. ”*

While supporting the relocation to Edgecombe Street, the School Council will actively pursue positive outcomes for key concerns such as preserving the school history, potential parking issues within the scoping and planning of the new facility, and integration with neighbouring schools.

## Next steps

The School Council has written to the State Government, advising them of the community’s majority support to allocate funding towards relocating to Edgecombe Street. The Government has also received a copy of the final report.

The School Council has asked the Government for a firm commitment by outlining further details such as total funding and development timelines. This commitment and information will provide the school community greater certainty, allowing us to make informed decisions, and plan the next stage of our development that ultimately benefits the educational needs and well-being of our students.

Kyneton Primary School looks forward to updating you on the proposal to relocate the school to Edgecombe Street as information from the Government is made available.