



Strengthening the future provision of public secondary education in the inner Sydney area

Newsletter 2, 20 June 2014

With just one week left of the community consultation on the provision of public secondary education in the inner Sydney area, the Department of Education and Communities and Straight Talk have been extremely busy preparing for and facilitating additional consultation activities.

Workshops

In addition to the ten workshops already undertaken, the Department and Straight Talk are holding workshops with representatives from the City of Sydney, City of Botany Bay, Marrickville and Leichhardt councils and the Aboriginal Education Consultative Group.

Focus groups

The last few weeks of the consultation will see Straight Talk facilitate a number of small focus groups to gather feedback from members of the community that are traditionally hard to reach. These include:

- 3 x focus groups with parents of children aged 11 or under;
- 3 x focus groups with parents of primary and secondary aged school children from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds; and
- 4 x focus groups with primary and secondary school students.

Straight Talk is also facilitating two focus groups with members of the wider community that do not have secondary aged school children or a specific interest in secondary education to explore their perspectives on how to address the short term imbalance in enrolments and the longer term shortage of teaching and learning spaces to meet projected demand.

Focus groups have been designed to allow for in-depth discussions on the three consultation discussion areas:

1. Options for managing public secondary educational needs in the short term (1-4 years).
2. Options for managing public secondary educational needs in the medium to long term (5-10 years).
3. The best way to create public secondary schools that meet current and future educational demands in a highly urbanised environment with finite resources.

Online forum

Over 500 comments have been posted on the online forum in response to the consultation discussion areas. The online forum, accessible via the Department and Communities website www.dec.nsw.gov.au/sydneyhsconsultation, has received visits by over 3,000 community users who are observing and participating in the online discussion.

Some more feedback

In addition to the solutions mentioned in Newsletter 1, analysis has identified the following solutions should be considered:

- Whether demountable classrooms at fully selective or specialist schools closer to student homes are a better short term solution than increased public transport services to schools further afield?
- Should the Department's non-school assets be repurposed or existing schools built upward to provide additional teaching spaces?
- How can the Department attract and maintain the best quality teachers in our public school system – should new methods be introduced to review and evaluate teacher performance?



- Can schools partner with Universities to share the use of their space for Year 11 and 12 students?
- Should online teaching, lecture style teaching or other teaching models be used to reduce the need for teaching space in public secondary schools?
- Can existing inner city buildings be converted into smaller school campuses – with different subjects or year groups in different buildings?
- Should teaching staff move between schools to increase the educational offerings available at existing public secondary schools?

These findings are based on discussions and comments received to date and are by no means an extensive summary of all of the valuable ideas we have heard.

Don't worry if your feedback is not included in this newsletter. Straight Talk will produce a series of publicly available issues summaries. These issues summaries will be posted on the online forum.

Have your say

There is one week left for you to provide your feedback. The community consultation is open until Friday 27 June 2014!

Visit the online forum at

<http://dec.engagementhq.com> to:

- Participate in the online discussion forum.
- Find out more about the consultation.
- View and download information and resources.

Host a Kitchen Table Discussion

Invite your friends or colleagues to attend a Kitchen Table Discussion – this is a self-directed opportunity to discuss the complex issues surrounding the provision of public secondary school education in the inner Sydney area.

We have developed a guide to help you plan for and host your discussion. The guide can be downloaded via the online forum at <http://dec.engagementhq.com>.

Straight Talk has heard that lots of people have already hosted a Kitchen Table Discussion. Please ensure your feedback has been sent to Straight Talk using the reply paid form provided. Alternatively, your Kitchen Table Discussion feedback can be scanned and emailed to events@straight-talk.com.au. All feedback must be received by Friday 27 June 2014.

Community newsletter

The Department of Education and Communities will release the third newsletter the week commencing 14 July 2014, the first week after the NSW school vacation period.

To receive this newsletter and further community updates by email please email events@straight-talk.com.au with the subject 'Public Secondary Education database'.

Next steps

The Department of Education and Communities will consider the outcomes of the community consultation, along with the needs and capacity analyses, to help shape its recommendations.

For more information visit

www.dec.nsw.gov.au/sydneyhsconsultation

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