DUBBO COLLEGE COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

Report

In 2010, the NSW Department of Education and Training contracted Smart Outcomes Educational Consultancy to lead a community consultation process to look into and make recommendations about the future of the Dubbo Secondary College. This Report outlines the methodology, findings and recommendations of the consultation process.
Acknowledgements
The author acknowledges the invaluable support and advice of Mr Chris Carroll, Director Outlook Educational Consultancy, in the preparation of this Report and as a partner in the research. Ms Debbie Hockings, representing the Office of Schools, provided effective liaison within and across DET portfolios and high level support throughout the process.

The excellent support of the acting College principal Mr Barry Foster, and campus principals, Mr Richard Skinner, Mr Mel Johnston and Mr Peter Bray and their school staffs is also acknowledged and appreciated. This consultation caused inevitable disruption and inconvenience which was accepted with good grace and willing assistance.

This research would not have been possible without the assistance of many individuals who contributed in a range of ways in all phases of the process. In particular my sincere thanks to Ms Holly Jones, Dr Daryl Healey, Mr Darren Hope, Ms Katie Stoddart, Ms Bev Winters, Mr Bryan Jeffress, Ms Lucy Lu, Ms Celia May, Ms Kate O’Donnell, Mr Paul Lennox, Mr Peter Johnson and Ms Margaret Milne.

And finally, to all members of the Dubbo College Community Consultation Committee my congratulations and thanks for their commitment, hard work and expertise throughout the entire process.
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DUBBO COLLEGE COMMUNITY
CONSULTATION

Report

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background
The Dubbo College Community Consultation Committee was formed by the NSW Department of Education and Training in 2010 to undertake a community consultation process to look into and make recommendations about the future of the Dubbo Secondary College. The formation of the Committee followed an extended period of industrial unrest within Dubbo College concerning the operation of the College. The Committee was chaired by an independent consultant, Graeham Kennedy, Director of Smart Outcomes Educational Consulting.

Purpose
The objective of the Consultation process was to develop a proposed future structure and/or operation for Dubbo College, in consultation with the key stakeholders, which responds to any identified concerns. A key consideration was to ensure that any proposed structure maintains or enhances the learning outcomes for students at the College.

Methodology
The consultation involved four major research strategies – a survey, focus groups, written submissions and targeted interviews.

Participation rates in these strategies are summarized below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus Groups</th>
<th>Surveys</th>
<th>Submissions</th>
<th>Interviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>Students</td>
<td>Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delroy</td>
<td>4/25</td>
<td>21/30</td>
<td>21/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>9/30</td>
<td>29/36</td>
<td>20/18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>10/30</td>
<td>21/36</td>
<td>19/18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td>52</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td></td>
<td>64</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>154</td>
<td>528</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the analysis of focus groups, interviews and submission responses the commentary was converted to a series of statements and categorised as positives, negatives or future directions for College Operations or College Structure.

In total 828 statements were recorded from the focus groups and 455 statements were recorded from the submissions. The Survey contained a free response question from which 232 statements were recorded.

In addition the research has included document analysis, site visits to College campuses and observations of programs and facilities. There were four meetings with the Consultation Committee.

**Major themes:**

The themes that emerged from the research consultation are summarized below. These are perceptions and beliefs that may not be supported by the data. This is discussed in greater detail in the report. The following represent the data arising from the survey, submissions and focus groups.

**Positives:**

- There was broad agreement that whatever decisions are made, they should reflect what is best for student learning
- The Senior campus is, by most measures a success
  - Adult learning environment; high levels of motivation of staff and students; excellent resources; broad, inclusive curriculum; strong connections with University and TAFE
  - The Careers Centre, Aboriginal Learning Centre (available to all students) and special education provision are seen as major advantages
- The College model has allowed for junior campuses that have a wide curriculum choice, smaller class sizes, and enhanced opportunities for individual attention/support for students
- The aggregation of resources across campuses allows for critical support
- Aboriginal student retention Years 9-12 and outcomes in Dubbo have improved
- The more homogenous groups in special education classes significantly enhance special education provision.

> My daughter has come here from X High School in the Blue Mountains. I had no idea how far behind she was. The Senior College is amazing – she has caught up, is motivated and doing really well [Aboriginal Parent, Focus Group]
Issues requiring resolution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>STAFF</strong></th>
<th><strong>STUDENTS</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Staff morale/satisfaction</td>
<td>• Issues and perceptions of discipline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Formal and informal access to full curriculum</td>
<td>• Student leadership, role models</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Staffing procedures/practices</td>
<td>• Consistency – common expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Staff turnover</td>
<td>• Student outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Relationships – valuing the contribution of all staff across the College</td>
<td>• Extra-curricula provision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Support for early career teachers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>COLLEGE IDENTITY</strong></th>
<th><strong>QUALITY TEACHING</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Leadership, executive role clarification, line management</td>
<td>• Middle years pedagogy and ideology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Development of consistent policies and procedures including faculty operation</td>
<td>• Student engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Transition of students</td>
<td>• Effective use of technology in classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Communication and marketing</td>
<td>• Flexible approaches to organisation and management of teaching and learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Transparency, consistency and communication of executive decision making</td>
<td>• Mentoring of new scheme teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Inclusive relationships and culture – staff, students, parents (including Indigenous)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• One college – in reality and culturally</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The report also provides detailed discussion of a range of data relevant to the perceptions and beliefs revealed by the research.

**Future Directions:**

It is the view of the author of this report that any decisions regarding the future of the College should be formed within the following parameters:

- Benefits of senior campus should be maintained
- Issues affecting the junior campuses need to be addressed
- Teacher professional issues need to be addressed
- Middle schooling must be the focus of junior campuses if they remain
- There must be a whole college philosophy and approach embedded in the day to day and long term operation of the College
- Some consideration to changes in the current staffing policy area may be necessary to address staffing issues at the junior campuses, for example, incentive appointments,

**We moved here for better education opportunities, now wonder why we did. Really concerned about quality of educational outcomes.** [Parent – Survey general comment]
priority transfers and a revision of the transfer points for teachers appointed to the junior campus

A variety of alternative models could be considered in order to address the current shortcomings of the college operation and student outcomes. These could include: changes from minor tinkering to a reversion to the previous three independent 7-12 high schools (the NSWTF preferred model). Indeed such action would be seen to be a symbolic response to the identified issues.

However, the underlying issues identified in this (and previous) analysis and research into the college operation will not be resolved by structural reform on its own. Structural reform, per se, could deny the Dubbo community the significant benefits afforded by the senior campus with no guarantee that the issues in junior secondary education and staff dissatisfaction would be addressed.

Appropriate action may include the need to move teachers and school leaders, to implement strategies to build staff self esteem, morale and trust and to implement a program of staffing and professional development to increase the value of middle schooling in the Dubbo context.

In the junior campuses, in particular, there is an immediate need to address student engagement and teaching quality and to establish middle schooling and effective relationships with primary partners in the quest for the legitimate and critical action to improve student engagement.

Recommendations

The Committee was able to agree on a number of key considerations that should form the basis of decisions regarding the future of the College. These are provided in Committee Recommendations (page 38). Some of these form the basis of recommendations, others, implementation strategies. The following Recommendations incorporate the Committee recommendations as appropriate.

The research leads to a number of key recommendations outlined in this report (p. 41). The key recommendations are:

1. That the relocation process at Dubbo Senior College is discontinued and staff movement between the campuses is by transfer. That this transfer process is initially managed by state Staffing Services during a 12 month transition period.

2. That the issue of access to Years 11 and 12 teaching for teachers on the junior campuses is resolved. Resolutions could include
   - Restructure the College to provide access to Year 11 and 12 for all teachers
   - Provide a transfer for all current staff who do not wish to teach on the junior campuses and then reappoint staff specifically as middle school teachers
• Develop new processes by which cross campus teaching and access to Years 11 and 12 through distance education are actively encouraged, facilitated and resourced

3. That a strategic, focused and well resourced teacher training program in middle schooling strategies is implemented for all staff on Dubbo College junior campuses

4. That staff selection for executive and teaching staff on junior campuses includes a criterion based on middle schooling interest and expertise

5. That strategies are implemented to ensure the learning outcomes in the junior campus are well defined, communicated, rigorously assessed and achievements formally acknowledged including a Certificate of Attainment or similar credential presented at a formal college graduation.

6. That the transfer points for the junior campuses be reviewed in light of the difficulty in attracting experienced staff.

7. That the College Principal position is advertised as a special fitness position on contract for three years to work within the following parameters
   ○ Report to the Regional Director through SED
   ○ Be remunerated at PH1 salary with allowance and payment of incentive performance bonus at end of contract period on achievement of Key Result Areas (as below)
   ○ Have line management responsibility of campus principals
   ○ Have clearly defined responsibilities for developing whole of campus co-ordination, cultural renewal and long term vision
   ○ Be required to identify and respond to issues of staff morale, school culture and public image
   ○ Be required to develop and make accessible structures through IT to facilitate communication at all levels and across all campuses
   ○ Be required to lead and resource development of strategies to address student performance and engagement, particularly on junior campuses, based on researched principles of middle schooling

8. That campus principals are accountable to the College Principal in all issues related to the overall operation, coordination and management of the College while maintaining full responsibility for the day to day and educational and operational leadership of their own campus within the context of the College. Whole of College operation could include timetabling, curriculum, assessment, marketing, professional learning, vision and strategic planning.

9. That an alternative structure for the Dubbo College is negotiated and implemented as a matter of urgency. A proposed new model is as follows:
   • Maintain the Dubbo Secondary College Senior Campus on the current site
   • Establish a new Years 7 to 12 specialist high school in performing arts at Dubbo South Campus
• Maintain Delroy Campus as a junior Year 7 to 9 school catering for the special demographic of Dubbo West. The campus will need to be resourced, staffed and managed as a school serving a dominantly low socio-economic demographic with high ATSI enrolment.

• Move the secondary component of Dubbo School of Distance Education to Delroy Campus under the principalship of the campus principal. All Delroy campus staff should have access to teach Years 11 and 12 through distance mode, if they are qualified and wish to do so, on a rotation basis.

• Spill all College positions and fill through merit selection with current staff having automatic appointment if they meet criteria

The suggested future model for the College (Recommendation 9) is considered to address all of the significant issues without losing the current advantages of the College model. While it would inevitably be contentious and would receive some opposition from all parties, it is considered to be a viable and practical circuit breaker to the ongoing and highly dysfunctional split that has developed between members of the Dubbo public education community.

The model has not been discussed with the Committee.

The situation in Dubbo is strongly polarized resulting in a fundamental break down in relationships between key partners in the education of public education students. It has reached a level where it is difficult to see a way forward without major intervention. The significant strengths and achievements of the College and of public education in the town are being compromised and degraded by the very public dispute led by the NSW Teachers Federation.

Public education cannot afford to have this situation continue.
BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH

Dubbo Secondary College

Dubbo Secondary College is a public secondary school located in Dubbo in the NSW Department of Education and Training (DET) Western Region. The College began its three year establishment period in 2000.

The College structure comprises two Years 7 to 9 campuses, Dubbo South Campus and Delroy Campus, and one Years 10 to 12 campus, the Senior Campus. The previous Dubbo High School facilities required major upgrading and as part of the College strategy this site was closed. The Senior Campus was established on a new purpose built site in close proximity to the Charles Sturt University.

At the College’s inception a decision was made to transfer all Dubbo High School staff to the Senior Campus. In retrospect this was culturally an unfortunate decision. Not only did it essentially ensure the old Dubbo High School culture was transferred to the new Senior Campus en masse, but it also created a “them and us” culture that persists to this day. Essentially it has meant that the three campuses have each maintained their old cultures and identities at the expense of a new identity as one Dubbo Secondary College.

The College structure is unusual in dividing the campuses in the middle of Stage 5 (Years 9 and 10). This has been, and remains a matter of contention within the school community.

The Dubbo College Community Consultation Committee

The Dubbo College Community Consultation Committee (the Committee) was established in February 2010 comprising representatives as follows:

- Senior Departmental Representative
- Senior NSW Teachers Federation representative
- Director of Staffing Services (DET)
- Campus and College principals
- One representative from each campus of
  - Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG)
  - Parents and Citizens Association
  - NSW Teachers Federation (NSWTF)
- Local Federation Organiser
- Independent Chair

This composition was extended at the first meeting of the committee to include additional ex-officio members including additional representatives from the Teachers Federation and the AECG. The Committee was also expanded to include two students as full members of the Committee.
The purpose and operation of the Committee are set out in the Terms of Reference. The Committee’s primary purpose was to act as a representative consultative group to consider the available data and to develop advice and recommendations on possible future directions for the College.
THE TERMS OF REFERENCE
The following Terms of Reference were adopted, as amended at the second meeting of the Committee on 1 March 2010

Purpose:
The purpose of this document is to set out the terms of reference, composition and operating arrangements of the Dubbo College Community Consultation Committee

Responsibility:
The Dubbo College Community Consultation Committee will be established to provide advice to the Director-General of the NSW Department of Education and Training (DET) in respect of the structure and operation of the Dubbo College

Composition:
The Committee will comprise:

- Senior DET representative (Regional Director (Western Region) or nominee)
- Senior NSW Teachers Federation (NSWTF) representative
- Director Staffing Services (DET)
- Campus and College principals
- One representative from each campus of
  - Aboriginal Education Consultative Group
  - Parents and Citizens Association
- Federation Representative from each campus
- Local Federation organizer

[Note: the composition of the Committee was amended to include two senior students of Dubbo Secondary College and also to include additional ex-officio members representing the AECG and the Teachers Federation]

Chair:
The Committee will be chaired by Graeham Kennedy, Director, Smart Outcomes Educational Consultancy.

Background:
Dubbo College was established in 2000 as a three campus secondary college within DET. The College comprises two junior (Years 7 – 9) campuses and one senior (Years 10 – 12) campus.

A School Review was undertaken in 2008 in response to concerns raised in relation to staffing appointments and, in particular, cross campus teaching opportunities.

In response to further correspondence between the NSWTF and DET, it was agreed that a community consultation process would be established in 2010 “to address any issues and concerns regarding the structure and operation of the Dubbo College” [P Riordan, 11 November 2009].
Objective:
The objective of the Consultation process is to develop a proposed future structure and/or operation for Dubbo College, in consultation with the key stakeholders, which responds to any identified concerns. A key consideration will be to ensure that any proposed structure maintains or enhances the learning outcomes for students at the College.

Scope:
The scope of this consultation is defined by the following elements.

- Identify and clarify any current concerns with the organisational and operational practices, within and across the college, as they relate to the appointment, placement and movement of staff members
- Collect and consider available data and information corroborating issues and concerns and the need for change
- Critically analyse student performance data as it relates to the pre- and post-College structure in Dubbo where appropriate
- Undertake a consultation process with the key stakeholders on the Committee concerning proposed future structures and/or operation.

Methodology:
Information will be collected from the sources including:

- Existing school data and information
- Review Report and recommendations 2008
- Focus groups with members of the Dubbo public education community including school leaders and executive, teachers, students, and parents
- Survey and other techniques to gather information from the Dubbo public education community

The Committee will consider the available data and information and collaboratively develop proposals in relation to College organisation and practices to address any areas of concern. Where a broad consensus can be reached the proposals will be put forward as Committee recommendations in the Chair’s Report.

The Chair will develop and submit the final Report.

Duration:
The consultation process is to occur during term 1 and 2, 2010.

The Committee will meet at a frequency and at times to be negotiated with the Committee. An initial meeting has been scheduled for 10 February 2010.

A report will be submitted to the Director-General of Education and Training by the Committee Chair early June, 2010.
THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To inform discussions and decision making by the Committee the following sources of information were identified.

1. Data Sources – a range of existing data was collected including, but not limited to:
   a. Student performance data – where possible pre- and post-college data was provided. Data included academic performance, student attendance and retention, suspension, participation by identified groups (Aboriginal, gender, special needs)
   b. Staff appointment, retention, placement, movement statistics
   c. Annual School Reports
   e. Previous survey data – held by region and the NSW Federation

2. Research techniques – it was agreed that the participants in the research methodologies were the Dubbo public education community and, in particular current students, staff and parents of the Dubbo College. Also to be included were parents of Years 4 and 6 students in the College partner primary schools. It was also agreed that the broader Dubbo community, including past parents, students and teachers be provided an opportunity to contribute through written submission.

The techniques for acquiring information from these stakeholders included:

   a. Survey: A survey instrument was developed and approved by the Committee for administration to all current students, staff and parents of Dubbo College and parents of Years 4 and 6 students in the feeder primary schools. Surveys were sent home to parents by schools and returned to the Consultant. The survey was administered to staff and students on-line through SurveyMonkey. Parents received the survey by mail. Anonymity was a priority. The completed surveys were analysed external to the school and a detailed report provided to the Committee by the Chair.

   b. Focus Groups: The Chair, assisted by officers external to the Region, conducted focus groups with parents, students and staff. The literature recommends focus groups of around 6 participants. Participants were a stratified random sample of students, staff and parents identified by reliable and valid sampling techniques. Initially, focus groups were conducted as follows:
      i. Five staff focus groups from each campus
      ii. Six student focus groups from each campus
      iii. Five parent focus groups from each campus

   c. Written Submissions: Written submissions were invited from the Dubbo public education community through advertisement and articles in the local media. Those making submissions were required to identify themselves by name and contact details and sign their submission. All submissions were treated in confidence and the identity of any individual making a submission
remains confidential. Data from written submissions was collated separately from the data obtained through the random sampling process.

The timeframe for submissions and completion of surveys was four weeks from the commencement of the formal community consultation process.

Following completion of the data collection the Committee attended a two day Workshop on 29 and 30 April 2010 at which school performance data and a full analysis of the research findings were presented. The Committee then identified major themes and developed actions to address areas of concern. These actions were ranked by the Committee in terms of their priority.
THE FINDINGS

An overview of the main elements of the research will be provided and then the detailed research findings will be discussed under the items of Scope identified in the Terms of Reference.

Scope Item 1:
Identify and clarify any current concerns with the organisational and operational practices, within and across the college, as they relate to the appointment, placement and movement of staff members

While the initial focus of this research was to clarify issues and identify solutions for significant and ongoing industrial unrest at the Dubbo College, the Committee sought to ensure that other aspects of the College operation were also examined by the research. In particular, student outcomes and satisfaction were of specific relevance. The Research Methodology therefore allowed for the collection of a broader data base of information than specified by this item of Scope as reflected in Scope items 2 and 3.

This section of the report will outline all current concerns with the broader organizational and operational practices across the College. It will also report on strengths and achievements.

The Survey

The Survey and the detailed results from the survey analysed by staff, parent and student responses are included at Appendix I

The survey was distributed to:

- All parents of the College by mail
- All students of the College on-line through SurveyMonkey
- All staff of the College on-line through SurveyMonkey
- All parents of Years 4 and 6 students at each of the local partner primary schools.

I have always been an advocate for public education and attended a public school myself. My son is in Year 6 and unfortunately he will be leaving the public system as I will not have him attend a Junior Campus in Dubbo. I do not have the confidence he will receive quality teaching at either junior site ... [Parent Survey general comment]
Survey Participation

Table 1 – Survey response rate by interest group and campus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Parents</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Staff</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Delroy</td>
<td>11/448</td>
<td>29/448</td>
<td>25/60</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>34/656</td>
<td>21/656</td>
<td>30/64</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>42/921</td>
<td>150/921</td>
<td>46/90</td>
<td>238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>64</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>203 (4%)</td>
<td>214 (10%)</td>
<td>111 (51%)</td>
<td>528</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary of major trends in Survey

**Overall satisfaction**

71.8% strongly agree or agree that College provides good education for students (91% students; 72% parents; 46% staff; 55% primary parents (23% not sure))

**Structure and Organisation of the College**

- Parents and students agree or strongly agree with the division of the College into junior and senior campuses, staff disagree or strongly disagree
- Students support the current structure but teachers do not and parents are divided with more opposed
- Staff, parents and students think the College works well but there is less support, particularly from staff, regarding coordination across campuses

**Subject Choices**

This question had five parts which asked respondents to rank the College on (i) subject choices meeting student needs, (ii) wide subject choice at senior campus (iii) wide subject choice at junior campus (iv) achievement of good student outcomes and (v) extra-curricula activities.

- There was a majority of respondents (70%+) who agreed or strongly agreed with all aspects of this question, except student outcomes where the response was more distributed
- Generally it can be said that people are happy with subject choice and curriculum diversity at all campuses
Student welfare
This was one of two questions on student welfare and addressed issues of students feeling safe, secure and happy at school.

- The majority of respondents believe students felt safe and were happy at school.
- More staff and parents disagreed that students felt safe and secure at school than students

Teacher support
This question had six parts and asked respondents to rank whether teachers (i) were happy in their jobs, (ii) felt well supported, (iii) were valued and encouraged to express views (iv) had adequate professional development. It also asked whether respondents were (v) happy with cross campus teaching and (vi) happy with the teacher relocation process.

- Staff generally disagreed or strongly disagreed with these statements with the exception of opportunities for professional development
- Many parents indicated they were not sure
- Students generally agreed or strongly agreed with these statements while significant numbers were not sure or considered it not applicable

Communication

- A large majority of respondents (70%) indicated a response of Almost always or Usually to 9.1 (good communication between students, staff and parents)
- A smaller majority (56%) responded positively regarding cross campus communication
- Responses were similar for all groups

Student welfare (2)
This is the second question relating to student welfare and concentrated on relationships. In particular (i) effective transition processes, (ii) teachers knowing their students well and (iii) strength of support for students to stay at school.

- Responses were generally (70%+) Almost always or usually for these three statements

Subjects
Question 11 asked whether (i) students could study subjects they were interested in, (ii) appropriately qualified teachers being allocated and (iii) whether students can extend their learning.

- The majority of respondents (75%+) responded as Almost always or Usually to these three statements
- Parents and students supported the statements strongly
**Priority improvements**
This question asked respondents to identify three improvements they would like to see implemented at the College and to rank them from first to third priority.

The following is a summary of responses in order of frequency of response. That is, in the first priority “change to Year 7 – 12 campuses” was the most frequent choice as a first priority and “maintain the existing junior/senior campus structure” was the second most frequent response as a first priority.

Only improvements that were identified by several respondents are included here. For a full set of responses see Appendix II.

- **First priority**
  - Year 7 – 12 campus (in some form)
  - Maintain existing junior/senior campus structure
  - Remove stage 5 split
  - Improve teaching quality
  - Improve discipline
  - Resolve teacher satisfaction/morale issues
  - Improve communication and coordination across college

- **Second priority**
  - Improve discipline
  - Address issues of staff satisfaction/morale
  - Improve communication and coordination across college
  - Improve teaching quality
  - Have 7-12 campuses (in some form)
  - Maintain junior/senior campus

- **Third priority**
  - Improve discipline
  - Improve staff satisfaction/morale
  - Improve communication /coordination across college

**Preferred structure**
This question asked respondents to rank four possible future models for the College:

- Maintain existing College structure of two Years 7 to 9 Junior Campuses and one Years 10 to 12 Senior Campus
- Change College structure to two Years 7 to 10 Junior Campuses and one Senior Years 11 to 12 Campus
- Change College structure to two Years 7 to 12 comprehensive high schools and one Senior Years 11 to 12 Campus
- Establish separate Years 7 to 12 Comprehensive High Schools

The overall response would see preferences distributed fairly evenly across all models with the third option being the model least ranked number one. However, when results are analysed on the basis of stakeholder groups a much more polarised response is evident.
• Staff are strongly opposed to current model and strongly support a return to Years 7 – 12 comprehensive high schools
• Students strongly support current model and are strongly opposed to returning to Years 7-12 high schools
• Parents are more divided in their views but in general support a college structure involving a senior campus
• Primary parents are distributed across options but have a preference for Years 7-12 comprehensive high schools in the mix.

General comments
Respondents were invited to add general comments. A full list of all comments can be found at Appendix III. In summary the general comments reflected the comments received in the focus groups and written submissions which are summarised in the next sections.

The Focus Groups
Focus groups are typically small discussion groups of five to six people who come from a similar interest or background. The group has an open and free flowing discussion focusing on a specific topic.

In this research separate focus groups were formed for parents, students, teachers and support staff. Participants were a stratified random sample to ensure representation from males and females, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, student year groups and years of staff experience. For teaching staff, separate focus groups were formed for class room teachers and executive staff. In addition a separate focus group comprised deputy principals from across all campuses.

Focus Group Participation

Table 2 – Total number of participants in focus groups by interest group and campus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Parents</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Delroy</td>
<td>4/25 *</td>
<td>21/30</td>
<td>21/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>9/30</td>
<td>29/36</td>
<td>20/18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>10/30</td>
<td>21/36</td>
<td>19/18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>23 (27%)</td>
<td>71 (70%)</td>
<td>60 (117%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand total</td>
<td>154</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 4/25 indicates 4 parents attended focus groups at Delroy out of 25 invited participants

Junior campus is just something kids “get through” before the “real” education starts at senior college. Kids seem to leave junior campus with no sense of commitment or pride in their education. [Survey General Comment]
Randomly selected students and staff received a personal letter from the researcher inviting them to participate in the focus group. Times were then organised by each school to fit in with school organisation and participant availability.

An administrative officer was employed at each Campus to telephone randomly selected parents to invite them to participate in the focus groups. Each parent was offered a number of different times to attend focus groups.

In order to maximise the engagement of Aboriginal parents in the process a meeting was organised on each Campus by the Aboriginal Education Officer to which Aboriginal parents were personally invited. These meetings allowed an additional 20 Aboriginal parents to participate.

Notes were recorded by the researchers during the focus group. At the end of the focus group the notes were read back to the group to confirm that the record was accurate and complete. Additions, amendments or clarifications were recorded.

Following the focus group the notes were converted to statements and categorised as positives, negative or future directions for College Operations or College Structure (see below).

**Public Submissions and Interviews**

The wider Dubbo community, including current staff, students and parents, were invited to make a written submission to the consultation process. Written submissions needed to carry the name of the author and a contact telephone number. Submissions were invited through the information letter to parents, students and staff and an advertisement in the local papers. In addition there was significant media coverage of the process and most media outlets carried details of the submission process on their websites.

Interviews were conducted with selected people who had made submissions and with other individuals who had indicated an interest in or who could provide a particular contribution to the research. These included the local Aboriginal Education Consultation Group (AECG), principals, and the local Member of Parliament.

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**How can a town with a population of 42,000 people only have one choice for public secondary education?** [Parent – Focus Group]

We feel privileged to have our three children in the present structure and would be very disappointed to see it change. They have been given every opportunity by caring and most professional teachers [Survey General Comment]
Submission and Interview Participation

Table 3 – Interview and Submission participation by interest group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Submissions</th>
<th>Parents</th>
<th>Ex-students</th>
<th>students</th>
<th>Ex-teachers</th>
<th>teachers</th>
<th>other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>98</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary of Responses from Survey Free Response, Focus Groups, Submissions and Interviews

Comments collected from all phases of the research were summarised into single theme statements and recorded in a spreadsheet. They were then categorised on the basis of College Operation or College Structure and then further classified as Positives, Negatives or Future Directions.

This allowed the comments to be sorted along major emerging and recurring themes. Stand alone and low frequency comments are in the full data set at Appendix IV but have been excluded from the summary of major themes below. The themes are not in order of priority.

**College Operation Positives**
- Advantages of smaller class sizes on junior campuses
- Breadth of curriculum provision – junior and senior campuses
- Positive school culture
- Positive advances in cross-campus coordination 2010
- Organised transition programs Years 6 to 7 and Years 9 to 10
- Successful school programs – particularly Aboriginal education and special education
- Affirmation of school leadership – statements supporting current leadership strengths and initiatives
- Effective level of resourcing – ability to share across campuses (the economy of scale argument)

**College Operation Negatives**
- Lack of student role models on junior campuses – lack of moderating influence of senior students leading to higher levels of misbehaviour, Year 9 seen as too immature to be effective leaders
- Need for middle school ideology including expectations of students
- Issues associated with cross-campus coordination including special needs students
- Limited extra-curriculum provision on junior and senior campuses (including sport, performance, languages, cultural)
- Issues associated with cross-campus communication and coordination
• Issues associated with discipline and consistency of discipline
• No concept or operation as one college
• Difficulty in catering for needs of early years teachers
• Calls for clarification of executive structure and role definition – leadership issues, particularly role and purpose of college principal
• Accessibility, visibility, presence of college principal position
• Physical and OH&S issues
• Not addressing the needs of Indigenous students
• 6-7 transition issues – a lack of relationship between the College and its partner primary schools particularly in relation to learning and curriculum continuity

College Operation Future Directions
• Emphasis on middle schooling
• Wider curriculum provision for junior campuses
• Physical and OH&S suggestions

College Structure Positives
• Wide curriculum choices at senior campus (including TAFE options and proximity to CSU)
• Strong support for Careers Centre, Learning Centre, Programs for Aboriginal students, mentor programs – in particular the capacity of the Careers Centre and Learning Centre to provide high level, personal, client focused support for students was highly regarded
• Organisation and options in special education, for example, smaller class sizes, smaller cohort range, better on-campus co-ordination
• Adult learning environment at senior campus (Y10 transition, client focus, culture of learning, high level of organisation, good role modelling, meeting needs of Indigenous students)
• High level of staff satisfaction particularly on senior campus
• Positive recent moves to coordinate and operate as one college
• Model is working and working well
• Students feel safe, well looked after, and get better attention at junior campuses

College Structure Negatives
• Years 9/10 (Stage 5) split unsound and unsettling - role models, behaviour, school culture issues, expectations
• Structure is professionally limiting for teachers
• Teachers find the relocation process distressing and stressful and teachers generally do not trust the process or see it as transparent
• Issues re cross-campus teaching – it is difficult for teachers to participate, teachers feel unsupported and not welcomed on senior campus, practicalities are difficult (travel, time on class, student relationships and follow-up etc)
• Teacher turnover / leaving is a major issue leading to higher percentage of inexperienced teachers and executive on junior campuses
• Transition needs for special education students and Year 9 students – an argument that the transition is difficult and disruptive for many Year 9 students and causes a dysfunctional interruption to their learning
• No sense of one college – either culturally or operationally
• Need to recognise special provisions for Aboriginal students
• School Administrative and Support Staff feel disadvantaged working on junior campus through lack of exposure to senior students and challenges of senior curriculum
• Staffing issues and ownership of students on junior campus, teacher culture
• No public education alternative for senior secondary education in Dubbo
• Density of behaviour issues on junior campuses and density of assessment and reporting issues on senior campus for staff

College Structure Future Directions
• Choice in Years 7-12 options and return to 7-12 high schools
• Alternative structure incorporating TAFE and specialisation of campuses, for example Sports or Performing Arts Years 7 to 12 high school
• Return Year 10 to junior campus
• Exploring and implementing middle schooling ideology
• Maintain existing structure
• Caveat of returning to 3 x 7-12 schools – a number of comments that you cannot “go back to the past” and that some people’s view of the past was through “rose coloured glasses”
• A need to implement changes to staffing operation to address concerns with staff morale and professional satisfaction – cross campus teaching, staff mobility/stability, staff relocation issues, balance of experience on junior campuses
• Address needs of early years teachers – mentoring, role modelling, adequate support from experienced teachers/executive
• Adopt a structure that is "what is best for kids" on the basis of evidence
Analysis of Data

Scope Item 2: Collect and consider available data and information corroborating issues and concerns and the need for change
Scope Item 3: Critically analyse student performance data as it relates to the pre- and post-College structure in Dubbo where appropriate

Please note: Some data included in this report were provided specifically to inform the research and may be sensitive and potentially contentious. Elements of the data have not previously been released in the public domain. Caution should be exercised in reviewing the data if the report is to be made public.

In addition to the data gathered through the research instruments summarized above, a range of data from the College itself and from external sources, including the Department of Education and Training State Office was analysed as part of the research. This is summarized below and provided in full in Appendices V to VIII.

Government Vs Non-Government Enrolment Trends
There is a perception among some within the school and broader Dubbo community that the government secondary sector has lost market share of enrolments since the inception of the College. The graphs in this section detail school enrolment patterns in the period 1996 to 2009. (Data Source – NSW Department of Education and Training (2010) and ABS)

The research concludes that there has been a loss of secondary students to the non-government sector. In 1996 enrolment share for the government secondary school in Dubbo was 2 percentage points higher than the state average. In 2001 with the creation of the College, government secondary schools held 0.4 percentage points below the state average. In 2009 this figure was 4.8% below the state average. The difference to state average peaked in 2006, the year the first cohort of College students reached Year 12 (5.3% below) and has steadied a little since.

These data need to be interpreted in the context of overall demographic trends in Dubbo’s school age population shown in the following table.

Table 4 - Estimated Dubbo population 2003 - 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ASGC SLA</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dubbo (C) - Pt A</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>2846</td>
<td>2956</td>
<td>2874</td>
<td>2644</td>
<td>2311</td>
<td>2321</td>
<td>2513</td>
<td>2466</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>2554</td>
<td>2746</td>
<td>2917</td>
<td>2770</td>
<td>2544</td>
<td>2487</td>
<td>2352</td>
<td>2577</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth</td>
<td>-10.3</td>
<td>-7.1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>-6.4</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3235.0 Population by Age and Sex, Regions of Australia
Estimated Resident Population by Age, New South Wales, Persons - 30 June 2008
For further information on the inherent limitations of ERP data see the ABS website www.abs.gov.au
The Senior campus and South Campus have shown modest growth since the inception of the College whereas there has been a continual loss of students from Delroy Campus. This is against an overall growth in school age students in the 10 to 19 age group. In particular a growth of 4.8% in 15 to 19 year olds is not reflected in the enrolment trend at the Senior Campus.

As enrolments decline at Delroy Campus and Aboriginal student enrolments increase, the relative proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander to non-Aboriginal students at Delroy Campus has continued to increase.

This decline in market share may, in part, be explained by Graph 2 which shows a significant and continual growth in enrolments at St John’s College, an Anglican secondary school in Dubbo, during the same period.

Graph 2 – Enrolments Dubbo non-government secondary schools 1996-2010
Consideration must also be given to the potential loss of school age students to regional or metropolitan boarding schools which traditionally attract a percentage of rural students.

Graph 3 shows that, with the exception of Dubbo Public School, government primary schools in Dubbo have also shown declining enrolments over the period of interest.

Government enrolment share among primary students is now 10.4% below the state average.

Graph 3 – Enrolments Dubbo government primary schools 1996-2009

By comparison, a number of non-government primary schools (Graph 4) have shown growth during the period and there has been a substantial net increase in non-government primary enrolments since 1996.

This is against an overall decline in school age students in the age range of 5 to 9 years of age.

It has been suggested that parents may move their children to the preferred non-government sector as early as Year 3 or 4 to guarantee a place for their child in that system’s secondary school.

There is also evidence from the Dubbo College Senior Campus that there is a drift back to the government system in Year 10 so that students can access the much wider subject choice available at the Senior Campus compared to other secondary schools in Dubbo. This was supported anecdotally by comments made by parents, students and some teachers during this research.
Conclusion
The research concludes that there has been a loss of secondary students in Dubbo to the non-government sector and that Dubbo public school market share is significantly below the state average.

Student Retention
The above discussion on enrolment trends can be extended to examine retention trends in Dubbo schools. (Data Source – NSW Department of Education and Training 2010)

Conclusion
The evidence (see Appendix V) demonstrates that:

- Retention Years 6 to 7 is substantially higher in the non-government sector than the government sector. The non-government sector typically runs above 110% (and as high as 140%) compared to 90% (and as low as 80%) for the government sector.
- Years 7 to 10 retention is substantially higher (and improving) for the government sector than for the non-government sector. Since 2003 the government sector Years 7-10 retention has climbed from about 78% to 96% and is now comparable to state retention and exceeds the retention rate at the time of the creation of the College. For the same period the non-government Years 7-10 retention has hovered around 82% and is declining.
- Years 10 to 12 retention is generally higher for the non-government sector than the government sector although quite volatile. In 2008 both sectors had similar retention whereas in 2007 the government sector lagged behind the non-government sector by...
about 30%. Dubbo College retention rates for Years 10 to 12 are 10% below the state average.

- Aboriginal student retention is undoubtedly a success story for the College and public education. While the Years 7 to 10 ATSI retention has fluctuated from the mid 70% to the mid 80%, it was close to the state average in 2009. However, the Years 10 to 12 ATSI retention has improved from below 20% to 50.7% in 2008 and 44.3% in 2009, both significantly above state average for this group.

Table 5 - Dubbo Government schools Aboriginal Student Retention (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6 to 7</td>
<td>114.4</td>
<td>112.5</td>
<td>104.2</td>
<td>97.7</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>93.6</td>
<td>92.2</td>
<td>105.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 to 10</td>
<td>87.1</td>
<td>67.1</td>
<td>79.7</td>
<td>77.7</td>
<td>69.7</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>67.1</td>
<td>83.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 to 12</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>33.8</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>47.1</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>32.5</td>
<td>50.7</td>
<td>44.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State 7-10</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>79.9</td>
<td>77.6</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80.5</td>
<td>81.4</td>
<td>84.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State 10-12</td>
<td>36.3</td>
<td>36.6</td>
<td>36.3</td>
<td>35.9</td>
<td>39.8</td>
<td>40.2</td>
<td>41.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student Attendance

Attendance trends across the College vary by both year group and campus. Overall, attendance at Dubbo South Campus has deteriorated and continues to decline. Delroy Campus has shown general improvement with strong performance in Year 7 attendance trends. The attendance at the Senior Campus is generally satisfactory with significant and ongoing improvement in Year 10 attendance. There is some evidence of a decline in Year 11 and 12 attendance since 2001. This would require further analysis but would appear to be an issue requiring attention.

The research cannot draw any connection between student attendance and the college structure. (Data source: Department of Education and Training)

Graph 5 – Attendance (%) by Year group Dubbo South Campus 1996-2009
Conclusion
Student attendance is an issue at Dubbo South Campus but there is no evidence that this is related to the College structure. On the contrary, trends at Delroy Campus and Years 10 and 11 at Senior Campus indicate that successful strategies have been implemented at these campuses to address student attendance.

Suspension
There is a view within the school community and some sections of the wider Dubbo community that student behavior on the junior campuses is of considerable concern. Observations during the research did not demonstrate dysfunctional behavior issues at either junior campus and students consistently indicated that while there were incidents, they were neither frequent nor generally major in nature. Some students indicated they had been victims of bullying but on a number of occasions also volunteered that once they had reported it, the situation had been dealt with by the school.

Nonetheless, there was a very consistent message from staff that student behavior was a constant irritant and disrupted effective teaching and learning. Teachers felt overwhelmed by the constancy of dealing with junior classes in which there were persistent behavior incidents. In addition, the higher number of inexperienced teachers were reported as finding this very challenging in their early years.

This perception is supported by suspension data, particularly at Delroy Campus and to a lesser extent at South Campus. Delroy Campus has an extremely high suspension rate and
both campuses exceed state averages. (Data source NSW Department of Education and Training)

**Graph 8 – Long suspensions Dubbo College as percentage of enrolment**

**Graph 9 – Short suspensions Dubbo College as a percentage of enrolments**

Note: State figures are not held for short suspensions

**Conclusion**
Suspension rates are high for the junior campuses of the College, particularly Delroy Campus, supporting the perception that student discipline is of concern on the junior campuses.

The negative effect of high suspension rates on learning continuity, student engagement and student outcomes makes these suspension rates problematic.
Student learning outcomes
The Department of Education and Training Educational Measurement and School Accountability Directorate (EMSAD) provided a detailed analysis of the academic performance of College students (see Appendix VI).

The NSWTF asked for comparison data for students’ performance prior to and after the inception of the College. EMSAD advised that such comparison was not possible because of the introduction of the New HSC in 2001, changes to the School Certificate in 2002, changes to the BST and then the introduction of NAPLAN (2008) and significant demographic changes within the Dubbo community. EMSAD advised that, given the statistical significance of these changes, any comparisons over time prior to and post the College formation would be unreliable and meaningless.

The NSWTF has continued to agitate to obtain this comparative data and so called “whistle blowers” made comment to the local Dubbo media that:

Whistleblowers have told WIN News the process has been derailed by the Education Department. Review members have revealed they’ve been unable to get the information they believe is vital to show whether or not the split campus structure has been successfully. [WIN News 7 May 2010]

This does not accurately reflect the process or the facts of the situation. EMSAD could respond further to these allegations if this continues to be a matter of contention. While the data required by the NSWTF could be sourced from the school or from the Board of Studies, the caveats identified by EMSAD would still apply.

Notwithstanding this issue, EMSAD did provide extensive data comparing the College with similar school groups using both the NSW “like school group” and the ICSEA data to determine the statistically similar school comparisons.

EMSAD also developed comparisons based on the schools nominated by the NSWTF for comparison, Wagga Wagga, Tamworth, Orange and Bathurst, even though statistically the comparison does not compare “similar” schools, and may, therefore, be considered an unfair comparison.

Conclusion
The conclusions drawn from the data provided by EMSAD were:

For Aboriginal students:

- Results for Aboriginal students in NAPLAN are on average lower than for all NSW DET Aboriginal students. Care should be taken in drawing conclusions from this comparison, because comparisons across all Aboriginal students assumes Aboriginal students across the State are a homogeneous group which is not true.
- SC results are also lower but close to the state (NSW DET) Aboriginal students results.
For School Certificate and Higher School Certificate

- There is a stable or positive trend in mean scores over time in SC results since 2000.
- The college HSC results for Standard English and General Mathematics show a moderate decline in mean scores but the results for Advanced English and Mathematics are fairly stable since 2001.
- In 2009 Dubbo Senior College had 10% of HSC results in Band 1 (Below minimum standard expected in non-extension courses) significantly above the state 4%. This is 7% higher than in 2004. In 2007 and 2008 there were slightly less than 7% in Band 1.

For comparison with statistically similar schools

- The college campuses are outperforming statistically similar schools in NAPLAN and SC, when combined as a college or when separated into 3 schools, both in mean scores and percentages in bands.
- Based on mean score comparisons, the college outperformed similar schools in the HSC in all subject areas in 2009.

Overall EMSAD concluded that there is no evidence of declining or underperformance in student outcomes for the Dubbo College students. In fact, in a range of areas the student performance exceeds expectations.

A valid issue raised during this discussion is that the changing demographics of the College student population (as measured on the ICSEA scale) does not reflect the demographics of the Dubbo population. In other words, the College has a skewed population of lower to middle socioeconomic status families and is not attracting families from the higher socioeconomic community.

This assertion may well be valid but further analysis is beyond the scope of this report. Certainly the ICSEA ranking of Dubbo College is significantly below that of geographically similar regional centres such as Orange, Bathurst and Tamworth.

Staffing

There is a perception that the rate of resignation and transfer of teachers from Dubbo secondary schools has increased since the inception of the College. Data provided by the NSW Department of Education and Training Staffing Services provides the following information. The data refers to public secondary schools in Dubbo in the period 1992 to 2009. The term “exit” refers to teacher transfer from the College to a different school as well as transfers between campuses.

- The number of teaching (including executive) staff that have exited the Dubbo campuses annually in the period 1992 to 2009 fluctuates significantly by year and by campus. The range varies between 15 (1997) and 25 (2009) with exceptional peaks in 2002 (73 departures) and 2003 (61 departures). These peaks coincided with the creation of the College when staff were given the opportunity to access priority...
transfer status if they wished to leave the College. Generally there have been more staff exiting the school annually since 2001 than prior to 2001.

- The most frequent reason for separation (from DET) in the same period has been resignation (195 total) followed by retirement (88). The highest number of resignations for the period occurred between 2001 and 2005 (78 resignations)

- Of the 807 teachers (including executive) appointed to the College 48% were in their first 3 years of teaching and almost 70% were in their first 10 years of teaching. When teachers only are considered the percentage of teachers appointed in their first 3 years of teaching increases to 58%. This figure is relatively constant across campuses.

- Staff sick leave at the College follows general trends for state secondary schools.

**Conclusion**

There is evidence for an increased rate of staff mobility out of Dubbo Secondary College than was the pattern prior to the formation of the College. The average number of staff leaving Dubbo secondary schools annually in the seven years prior to 2000 was 25 departures. The annual average for the seven year period after 2000 was 41.5 departures.

Resignation rates reached a peak of 78 in the period 2001 to 2005 but has dropped back to 27 in the period 2006 to 2010 (to date). The five year period 2006 to 2010 (to date) has had the lowest resignation rate of any five year period in the past 20 years.
The Consultation Process

Scope Item 4 - Undertake a consultation process with the key stakeholders on the Committee concerning proposed future structures and/or operation.

On 29 – 30 April 2010 the full Committee participated in a two day workshop at which the full data from the research and the statistical data were presented and analysed. The Committee then worked to identify major themes from the research and to develop actions to address areas of concern. These actions were then ranked by the Committee.

It must be noted that the focus of the consultation, as per Items 1 and 2 of the Terms of Reference, was to identify issues and concerns rather than the considerable strengths and achievements of the College also identified by the research. This section reflects that “issues” focus in order to identify futures directions for the College but should not be seen as a deficit approach. This section must be considered in the context of the College operational and structural positives recorded elsewhere in this report.

Major Themes

The major themes identified by the Committee were Staff, Students, College Identity and Quality Teaching. A number of sub-themes were identified within each Theme.

Table 6 – Major Themes and Sub-themes requiring action

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STAFF</th>
<th>STUDENTS</th>
<th>QUALITY TEACHING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Staff morale/satisfaction</td>
<td>• Issues and perceptions of discipline</td>
<td>• Middle years pedagogy and ideology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Formal and informal access to full curriculum</td>
<td>• Student leadership, role models</td>
<td>• Student engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Staffing procedures/practices</td>
<td>• Consistency – common expectations</td>
<td>• Effective use of technology in classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Staff turnover</td>
<td>• Student outcomes</td>
<td>• Flexible approaches to organisation and management of teaching and learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Relationships – valuing the contribution of all staff across the College</td>
<td>• Extra-curricula</td>
<td>• Mentoring of new scheme teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Support for early career teachers</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Each of these subthemes was considered to be an area which needed to be addressed in any future model for the operation of the College. The approach taken was:

> Whatever decision the Minister may make about the future of Dubbo College, what issues will need to be addressed?

The above list reflects the Committee’s view in response to this challenge.

**Priority Actions**
The Committee then developed actions to address these issues. A full list of actions is provided at Appendix VII. The priority actions identified by the Committee are as follows:

**Staff**

**7 – 12 Access**
- Increase the number of campuses that comprise Dubbo College to include Dubbo School of Distance Education, Mian and Lincoln
- Consult with staff to determine agreed staffing procedures within the College
- Establish procedures for head teachers to be involved in planning future staffing needs across the College

**Staffing Practices**
- Where vacancies exist following agreed College staffing procedures having been applied, principals are able to merit select staff
- Develop an induction process for newly appointed staff to Dubbo College that explains the history, values and priorities for the College (NB local campus inductions would still occur)
- Review the current use of the College staffing supplement to ensure “agreed staffing” procedures within College are supported
- Support participation in the AECG delivered cultural immersion program

**Staff Perceptions/Being Valued**
- Introduce annual College teacher awards, in consultation with SRC, AECG and P&C, for teachers at each campus
- Establish explicit exit standards, recognised by a Certificate of Attainment, for students prior to moving to Senior Campus
- Introduce new language when referring to campuses
  - Campus/Middle School NOT Junior Campus
  - Across/within, NOT up/down
  - Remove “them and us”
- Continue support for professional learning to be organized on a whole of College basis

**Quality Teaching**

**Effective use of technology in classroom**
- Ensure there is consistency of software technology across the College
  - In teaching and learning
  - In reporting, student welfare and roll marking
• Establish virtual classrooms in KLAs and extra-curricula areas as in XSEL (Western Region virtual specialist high school)

Flexible approaches to organisation and management of teaching and learning
• Overcome barriers from College, and from DET constraints to facilitate greater flexibility in middle school operations and practices
• Include Aboriginal communities when building the platform for future directions. These directions should include post-school outcomes – AECG/DET partnership – use local AECG as first point of contact.

Mentoring of New Scheme teachers
• Provide AECG/DET (Cultural Immersion Package) training for all new teachers
• Develop effective links with partner schools to aid relationship building, coaching and mentoring

Middle years pedagogy and ideology
• Encourage flexibility of state level staffing operations to meet the needs of the college structure:
  o Aptitude for work in middle years setting as a criteria in appointing staff
  o Capping Year 7, 8 and 9 classes at 22 students
  o Ensuring new scheme teachers establish confident expertise in their own subject discipline before teaching outside their KLA
• Build teams of teachers for classes / Build cross-subject units in teams

Student engagement
• Ensure that teacher/student/parent relationships are valued across the College
• Implement a common timetable for subjects between schools [like the e2 program in Orange]

Students
Issues and perceptions of discipline
• Obtain consistency – common expectations
• Strengthen the culture of PB4L (behavior management program) across college
• College community (teachers, parents, students) to develop a common code of conduct and consistent application of policy across the College

Student outcomes
• Alternative modes of teaching and learning such as on-line learning

Student leadership
• Appropriate leadership focus/opportunity from Year 7 through to Year 12 including junior AECG

Cross campus curriculum
• Extra-curricula – support for staff to implement additional sport and cultural aspects of curriculum across the college
College Identity

- College principal - to be connected to College – resolve issues, be located within campuses, provide vision, continuity, exercise line management
- One college (not three separate schools) – quality lessons across College, cross-campus activities for students and SRC, language to be inclusive (eg across not up/down)
- Professional learning – subject based sessions, early career teacher support
- Ongoing relationships – assemblies for teachers and students, events at Senior Campus for Year 9, use every opportunity to develop relationships across whole college – marking and assessment, sporting teams
- Policies and procedures audit and then implement recommendations - shared responsibility between SED and College principal
- Years 9 to 10 communication between teachers, shared school development day, “teacher exchange” to ensure junior campus teachers stay in touch with students beyond Year 9
- Marketing
  - Media – implement strategies to change the negative image of school in community
  - Use other strategies – radio, link to Dubbo festival, community profile, placing College at centre of community, already have supportive parents

Committee Recommendations

At its meeting of 21 May 2010 the Committee worked co-operatively to identify areas in which there was a general consensus concerning recommendations for the future of the College. The Committee expressed a view that, whatever decisions the Minister makes concerning the future of Dubbo Secondary College, these should be priority considerations. Some form the basis for Recommendations while others are more appropriate as implementation strategies.

The Committee recommends that the following be priority considerations:

- There was support for the continuation of a College structure in Dubbo
- If the College continues then it must operate as a College with strong across campus coordination, an overseeing principal with line management and common approaches to key policy on teaching and learning, student welfare/discipline and timetabling
- That relationships must be a focus of College operation with an emphasis on strong relationships between teachers and parents (including the AECG), enhanced relationships between staff and College leadership and effective partnerships with primary schools
- A marketing campaign needs to be implemented to manage expectations and perceptions of parents and community and to clearly communicate to current and new teachers the nature and of the College and the expectations of its staff
- Resources must be seen from a whole College perspective so that they are allocated fairly, transparently, flexibly and equitably. Staffing supplements need to be used to enhance flexibility, and facilitate staff development including team teaching and support for beginning teachers.
- There must be a focus on middle schooling. Resources and training should be allocated to empower teachers to be effective.
- The issues of relocation and access to Years 7 - 12 teaching need to be resolved
Specific proposals included:

1. College Co-ordination and Leadership:
   a. The position of college principal must be clarified and formalised through a Statement of Duties that includes line management of the full College, co-location of the position on each campus, and a strengthened role in whole of college management and co-ordination. The position should be advertised at an enhanced salary scale for a contracted period with clear Key Result Areas. Consideration should be given to a name change while maintaining a background in educational leadership as pre-requisite.
   b. The appointment of a bursar position should be considered with responsibility for strategic co-ordination, resource management, budget advice, operationalising collaborative decision making.
   c. Review allocation and use of all College resources on a whole of college basis to ensure equitable and shared approach to all resource allocation
   d. Following an audit of current communication, policy and operational structures, implement changes to ensure alignment in all areas of College operation.
   e. Establish a College Structures Planning Group to oversee and monitor coordination across campuses
   f. Implement a common timetable to facilitate cross campus teaching opportunities

2. Middle Schooling
   a. Ensure the full implementation of middle schooling practices in the middle school campuses including links with primary schools
   b. Ensure DET staffing operations include a middle schooling criteria for selection of staff
   c. Develop, implement and maintain ongoing support and training for teachers in middle schooling including the strengthening of links with the primary partner schools
   d. Ensure teachers appointed to middle school campuses of the College know and understand the structure of the College and have a commitment to middle schooling
   e. Review staffing supplement and cross campus teaching allocation to identify ways in which these resources might be best used to support teacher development, team teaching and support for new scheme teachers

3. Staff - In consultation with staff,
   a. Change staffing processes to remove the current relocation (forced transfer) process between campuses
   b. Change procedures to allow vacancies to be filled by merit selection processes once the agreed College staffing procedures have been applied
   c. Review staffing practices to involve head teachers in planning for future staffing needs across College
   d. Provide for all staff equitable access to Year 7 to 12 teaching
4. Marketing
   a. Develop an information package for current and intending staff concerning the nature, operation and vision of Dubbo Secondary College
   b. Develop and implement a concerted campaign to promote the College and redress previous negative media

5. Relationships
   a. Ensure that the College establishes better relationships between staff and parents; with primary schools; and with the school community including AECG and P&C
Conclusions and Recommendations

Staff
There is unquestionably a history of staff unrest and dissatisfaction, particularly among teaching staff on the junior campuses. This arises from a number of issues, some of which are perceptions supported by the evidence and others are not. Irrespective of the veracity of some claims, they are strongly held by staff and will not dissipate simply as a result of contradictory evidence.

Staff are almost universally opposed to the current structure and the vast majority support the NSWTF position to re-establish three Year 7 – 12 comprehensive high schools as the only way forward to address identified issues.

There is no doubt that the industrial campaign by the NSWTF, including extensive media coverage, has impacted negatively on the community perception of the Dubbo Secondary College. It has also influenced the young, early career teachers at the College. During focus groups and interviews the researchers noted that many of these teachers articulated the “campaign mantra” and seemed uncharacteristically negative for this stage of their career.

The major issues are:

1. Access to Years 7 to 12 teaching experience

   Staff on either the junior or senior campuses are restricted in the range of year groups they can teach. This raises a number of issues including their “professional right” to teach across the full secondary curriculum; the issue of deskilling by which teachers lose familiarity, confidence and competence in teaching aspects of the curriculum for which they are trained; the fact that teachers cease to be competitive in transfer or promotion through a lack of recent experience in the full curriculum (particularly senior curriculum for teachers on the junior campuses); a lack of professional satisfaction through not being able to see students move through their secondary school years to a reasonable end point.

   Although the opportunity for cross-campus teaching exists it is difficult to access, poses significant logistical problems and is not perceived to be “valued” by the College management. Few teachers are involved and those spoken to in the research indicated it was challenging from a practical point of view.

   The research revealed that access to Years 7 to 12 teaching, for all staff who want it, is a major source of staff dissatisfaction and low morale. The current structure is not able to resolve this issue easily.

2. Teacher turnover

   While staffing on the senior campus has been relatively stable there is evidence of higher staff mobility on the junior campuses.
A feature of the original Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for colleges was the concept of relocation in which teachers could be relocated between campuses on a three yearly cycle. This was to ensure equitable access to the full range of curriculum for all staff. This principle has been implemented differentially across the various colleges with some not having any relocation and others, as in the case of Dubbo College, implementing it in line with the MOU. When, in about 2006 to 2007, the first set of relocations occurred at Dubbo there was a very significant negative response from staff affected which can be seen as the genesis of much of the current industrial unrest. Of the three teachers relocated, one accepted the position at another campus, one left the system and one transferred to another school after major local agitation.

Since then, many of the teachers who are “tapped on the shoulder” (the local term for relocation) to transfer from the senior campus to a junior campus do not accept the relocation, either leaving the College or the system.

The consequence is that the junior campuses lose more experienced staff who are relocated to the senior campus or seek transfer from the college, and many of the resultant vacancies at the junior campuses are filled on appointment by inexperienced staff. The staff demographic at the junior campuses has a high percentage of inexperienced teachers and middle executive.

This situation is not uncommon in rural areas, especially in Western Region. Nonetheless, the comparative seniority of senior campus staff to that of the junior campuses makes this a local issue the perception of which would be hard to change.

The other related factor is that the density of early career teachers on the junior campuses means that there is a limited number of experienced staff to mentor, support and professionally develop the inexperienced staff. The results are a lack of support for early career teachers and a heavy load on those experienced staff who seek to provide them with support.

3. Staff movement

There is no doubt that the process of teacher relocation is a vexed and contentious issue for the College. Teachers at the senior campus talked of “living in fear” of getting “tapped on the shoulder”.

While there is good evidence that teachers on the junior campus are likely to be able to move to the senior campus after three to four years on the junior campus, teachers expressed a sense of guilt and frustration that their movement to the senior campus meant a colleague at the senior campus had to be relocated.

There are high levels of fear, suspicion, lack of trust and stress among staff directly as a result of the relocation process. Some staff believe it is tainted with nepotism and favoritism and that the process is both unclear and open to abuse.
Recommendations:

That the relocation process at Dubbo Senior College is discontinued and staff movement between the campuses is by transfer. That this transfer process is managed by state Staffing Services during a 12 month transition period.

That the issue of access to Years 11 and 12 teaching for teachers on the junior campuses is resolved. Resolutions could include

- Restructure the College to provide access to Year 11 and 12 for all teachers
- Provide a transfer for all current staff who do not wish to teach on the junior campuses and then reappoint staff specifically as middle school teachers
- Develop new processes by which cross campus teaching and access to Years 11 and 12 through distance education are actively encouraged, facilitated and resourced

Students

The vast majority of students who participated in the research were happy with their schooling at Dubbo College and strongly supported the current structure of the College.

Issues for students came from teachers and parents rather than from the students themselves although some students did corroborate some of those issues. The main issues were:

1. Student discipline on the junior campuses

There is a perception among staff, parents, the wider community and some students that student discipline is a major concern on the junior campuses. Teachers complained of the constancy and intensity of managing student behavior and its dysfunctional impact on teaching and learning as well as staff welfare on junior campuses.

Many parents see the junior campuses as being “out of control” with in-class disruption and violence as major issues.

Students generally did not report high levels of misbehavior or violence and tended to see incidents as infrequent and usually minor.

The most compelling evidence of discipline issues is the suspension data which does indicate high and increasing levels of both short and long suspensions, particularly at Delroy Campus.

There is evidence of a lack of consistency across the College in relation to both policy and practice in student welfare and behavior. It is interesting and of concern that the College does not have a common technology system in relation to student records. The recent moves to introduce Positive Behaviour For Learning (PB4L) is a step in the right direction and appears to be having a positive impact. This level of co-operation and co-ordination across campuses needs to continue.
2. Student outcomes

The data does not support the perception that Dubbo College students are underperforming compared to statistically similar schools. The evidence suggests that in a number of areas Dubbo College students outperform their counterparts in the comparison schools.

However, there is a current malaise in the junior arms of the college operation. The work on these campuses needs to be valued by the college and be seen to be critical to the overall outcomes of the college. Notwithstanding that, in the junior campuses, in particular, there is an immediate need to address student engagement and teaching quality, to establish quality middle schooling and effective relationships with primary partners in the quest for the legitimate and critical action to improve student engagement.

The students at both junior campuses indicated that “the real work starts at Senior” and that they do not feel motivated for work in Year 9. Senior campus teachers were critical of the standard of learning for students entering the Campus at Year 10 saying that they lacked significant skills for that stage of learning and had not mastered the curriculum. Some primary principals also indicated concern about the expectations in the junior campuses compared to those in their primary schools.

Parents in their survey responses and focus groups also raised questions about the level of expectations and work ethic in the junior campuses.

There is little evidence of a middle schooling approach despite the rhetoric that the junior campuses use to describe their teaching. Certainly the junior campus teachers feel that their work with students and their assessment of Year 9 graduates are not valued by their senior campus colleagues.

So, while the student performance data does not raise alarm signals in terms of student outcomes, the anecdotal and observational evidence does. The comment that the proposed “statistically similar schools” may not be a valid benchmark against which to compare the Dubbo schools may deserve further scrutiny.

This is in stark contrast to the senior campus where there is clear evidence of high expectations and a focus on student achievement. The structure of the curriculum, the attitude of teachers and students, the school documentation, and the support structures for students at risk are of a high standard and facilitate student engagement.
A major achievement has been in Aboriginal student HSC completion. Forty six Aboriginal students sat for the HSC at the College in 2009, an outstanding result by any measure.

3. Student leadership and role models
There is a strong view among many respondents that Year 9 are not suitable or appropriate role models for other students in Years 7 and 8. Staff in particular blamed a lack of older, more mature role models for the poor behavior of students on the junior campuses.

It is interesting to compare the attitude of the primary principals and staff towards their Year 6 students who are seen as reliable and confident leaders who do set appropriate standards of behavior for their younger students.

Given the experience in other schools where middle age students are the seniors (Years 7 – 10 central schools, other colleges), it is difficult to believe that Year 9 students are inherently unable to develop and maintain appropriate standards of self discipline. It is possible that this is more an issue of expectations and training than a fundamental flaw in the model.

There was also a perception that the division into junior and senior campuses limits opportunity for student leadership in the junior campuses. The alternative view that it in fact enhances leadership opportunities and that Year 8 and 9 students get leadership opportunities they would be unlikely to get in a Year 7 to 12 school seems more plausible and is supported by evidence in this research.

4. The Stage 5 split
The split between campuses at the end of Year 9 is seen as problematic not only because the middle of a stage of learning is a strange place to disrupt teaching and learning (and relationships), but also because it requires high levels of curriculum cooperation, planning and communication which are not evident at Dubbo College.

However, with the introduction of the National Curriculum in 2013 this ceases to be an issue and should not be seen as a factor to influence the future structure of the College.

While an alternative structure of Years 7 to 10 junior campuses has been suggested, it is the view of the researcher that such a change would do nothing to address the issues of significance in this situation and would create further difficulties.

If the transition to the senior college is seen as disruptive, and results in a significant period of adjustment for students (and the evidence does not strongly support this) then there could be a strong argument not to move this into Year 11 which is the preliminary HSC year. It could be argued that this adjustment is best to occur in Year 10 so that students are fully settled and familiar with the expectations and learning environment at the senior college well in advance of starting their HSC.
Recommendations:

*That a strategic, focused and well resourced teacher training program in middle schooling strategies is implemented for all staff on Dubbo College junior campuses*

*That staff selection for executive and teaching staff on junior campuses includes a criterion based on middle schooling interest and expertise*

*That strategies are implemented to ensure the learning outcomes in the junior campus are well defined, communicated, rigorously assessed and achievements formally acknowledged including a Certificate of Attainment or similar credential presented at a formal college graduation.*

*That the transfer points for the junior campuses be reviewed in light of the difficulty in attracting experienced staff.*

College identity

The way in which the Dubbo Secondary College commenced and the subsequent leadership structure appears to have mitigated against the development of a corporate College philosophy and culture. Almost everyone who contributed to this research described the College as three separate, independent campuses which share little in common.

Until recently there has been no shared curriculum, timetable or educational philosophy. The limited ability of the College Principal to exercise any direction or decision making about the operation of each campus has contributed to this issue of separate identity. Different uniforms; different technology systems; different approaches to school operation, policy and leadership; different newsletters and no common College communication; different scope and sequence in relation to stages of learning are just some examples of this lack of College identity.

The consequence of this is unnecessary stress and complexity in the normal day to day operation of the College and this provides opportunity and reason for staff and the wider school community to be offended – “we weren’t invited”; “we never know what’s going on”; “how would we know, no-one ever tells us”.

There is an undeniable sense of “them and us” between the Senior Campus and the Junior Campuses, characterized by reference to moving “up” and “down”.

Particular issues are

1. An absence of College leadership

The issue arises because of the lack of clarity, line management responsibility and visibility of the College Principal’s role. The College Principal’s office is on a separate site to all campuses and the position has no formal or informal presence on any campus except as a visitor.

The campus principals generally run their own school independently without any real obligation to attend to or consider the impact on the other campuses or the College as a whole. Where such “corporate consideration” does happen, and it does, it is due to the
good will and competence of the individuals involved rather than any formal obligation or responsibility to do so.

In something as critical as the Stage 5 syllabus where students from two campuses come together to complete the second year of the program at the Senior Campus, there is still no guarantee that students will have studied the same component of the curriculum or will enter the senior college with the same expectations of achievement of syllabus outcomes.

We were told that meetings of the College principals or other executive are called but it cannot be assumed that all participants will attend. This was observed on more than one occasion during the research. When one faculty subject area tried to get consistency across the three campuses, one head teacher chose not to participate.

The College Management Group is intended to provide this corporate leadership for the College but, again, is dependent on personalities and personal skills of the leadership team. It also does not enjoy the trust or support of the rank and file teachers who see decision making as closed, lacking transparency and inconsistent.

2. The absence of any symbolic or practical College identity.

Many examples were provided to the research team of the absence of symbolic College identity. It was suggested that the College should have a common newsletter so all parents of children on any campus will know what is happening across the College and be familiar with the campus to which their child will transition. It was suggested that students from the junior campus should be able to see their senior campus fellow students compete in sporting competitions to build College spirit and a sense of expectation of what is ahead. Attempts to have a College musical production have been unsuccessful because of a lack of ability to facilitate the practicalities of such a venture. Junior campus teachers are not invited to the Year 12 graduation ceremony of the students they taught in junior years.

Recommendations:

*That the College Principal position is advertised as a special fitness position on contract for three years to work within the following parameters*

- Report to the Regional Director through SED
- Be remunerated at PH1 salary with allowance and payment of incentive performance bonus at end of contract period on achievement of Key Result Areas (as below)
- Have line management responsibility of campus principals
- Have clearly defined responsibilities for developing whole of campus co-ordination, cultural renewal and long term vision
- Be required to identify and respond to issues of staff morale, school culture and public image
- Be required to develop and make accessible structures through IT to facilitate communication at all levels and across all campuses
Be required to lead and resource development of strategies to address student performance and engagement, particularly on junior campuses, based on researched principles of middle schooling.

That campus principals are accountable to the College Principal in all issues related to the overall operation, coordination and management of the College while maintaining full responsibility for the day to day and educational and operational leadership of their own campus within the context of the College. Whole of College operation could include timetabling, curriculum, assessment, marketing, professional learning, vision and strategic planning.

Quality Teaching

This research was not intended to and did not provide an opportunity to examine teaching practice in the College. The available EMSAD data on school and student performance would indicate that students are learning and meeting syllabus outcomes as measured by external testing and comparative school performance.

Nonetheless, anecdotal data does indicate concern with student engagement, particularly on the junior campuses, a lack of evidence of implementation of quality middle schooling pedagogy and a lack of consistency within and across campuses in terms of expectations and standards of teaching and learning.

The junior campuses provide an outstanding opportunity for flexible approaches to middle schooling and student engagement to be implemented. The proximity of the partner primary schools, lack of the rigours of a school certificate year and the relatively small class sizes could spawn a whole range of innovative, flexible approaches to meeting the needs of and engaging adolescent learners through well researched and proven middle schooling strategies. If the junior campuses continue in any future model of schooling in Dubbo then this would be an important aspect of their success.

There was also concern expressed by teachers and executive about the quality and quantity of support available for new scheme teachers.

The College Structure

During the consultation process it has been reinforced time and again that the school community, and the wider Dubbo community, are critically polarized by this issue.

The school staff are almost universally opposed to the current structure and strongly supportive of a return to a comprehensive high school model.

At the first meeting of the Committee the senior vice president of the NSW Teachers Federation stated that there was only one outcome the NSWTF would accept and that was a return to Years 7 – 12 comprehensive high schools. He went on to say the consideration might be given to a Years 11 – 12 senior campus in the mix with the comprehensive high schools.

The students are almost universally supportive of the current model and strongly opposed to any return to a Years 7 – 12 high school model.
Parents and the wider community are divided. In the evidence gained in this research, parents are almost evenly divided between the two models.

The Aboriginal community is strongly supportive of the current model and, on good evidence, knows that it has improved outcomes for Aboriginal students dramatically.

The research has provided strong evidence that, in most ways, the senior campus is highly successful. In particular the curriculum choice, special programs such as the Careers and the Learning Centres, the adult learning environment, relationships with Charles Sturt University and the TAFE, the purpose built facilities and the academic focus are all achievements that the College can be proud of and are acknowledged by parents, students and many staff.

Delroy Campus is becoming increasingly an Aboriginal school. This is not necessarily a problem in the junior years where targeted, tailored programs meeting the needs of the students can be a whole school focus. However, if this was to become a Years 7 to 12 high school it would quickly become residualised and achievements in Aboriginal retention and student outcomes would be quickly lost.

The educational issues identified in Dubbo are not the result of a Senior Campus. They are in part historical, in part structural and in part the result of management and leadership issues.

There is now a pervasive, entrenched and totally counterproductive climate of mistrust, anger and resistance among a significant number of longer serving staff members and perpetuated by the Dubbo Teachers Association. The strongest opponents of the College will not let go and their influence infuses the school affecting relationships, decision making and school culture.

There is evidence that this climate has, in part, derived from genuine grievances and the research identified several examples of poorly managed situations which create or reinforce the negativity.

Any amended junior/senior campus model (such as returning Year 10 to the junior campuses) will not resolve the divisive issues at the centre of this dispute. A new model needs to be found that maintains the many positives of the current arrangement but provides a pressure release for the issues in dispute.

In simple terms the issues that need to be resolved are:

- Staff morale, career satisfaction, professional issues including access to the full secondary curriculum
- Relocation
- Choice in Dubbo of public secondary senior schooling
- College identity including role of college principal and cross campus coordination
- Student behavior on junior campuses

and the benefits that need to be maintained are:
• The success of the senior college including the ethos, subject choice, relationships with TAFE/university, advantages of size
• Aboriginal retention
• Opportunity for middle schooling.

Recommendations:

*That an alternative structure for the Dubbo College is negotiated and implemented as a matter of urgency. A proposed new model is as follows:*

- **Maintain the Dubbo Secondary College Senior Campus on the current site**
- **Establish a new Years 7 to 12 specialist high school in performing arts at Dubbo South Campus**
- **Maintain Delroy Campus as a junior Year 7 to 9 school catering for the special demographic of Dubbo West. The campus will need to be resourced, staffed and managed as a school serving a dominantly low socio-economic demographic with high ATSI enrolment.**
- **Move the secondary component of Dubbo School of Distance Education to Delroy Campus under the principalship of the campus principal. All Delroy campus staff should have access to teach Years 11 and 12 through distance mode, if they are qualified and wish to do so, on a rotation basis.**
- **Spill all College positions and fill through merit selection with current staff having automatic appointment if they meet criteria**

The advantages of this model are:

It maintains the very significant advantages of the senior college which, on the evidence of this research, will remain the preferred option for senior secondary schooling in Dubbo. While people have argued that three separate schools will be able to maintain the curriculum on offer at the senior campus, the reality is that this would be highly unlikely. The schools find it difficult to co-operate and collaborate now when they are part of one College. There is nothing to suggest that the separate high schools will put into place the significant organisational and personal commitment to make shared curriculum work across separate schools.

It resolves the issues of staff relocation, career development and morale

It provides choice to the Dubbo community in senior secondary public education

It ensures that on all campuses teachers have access to teaching Years 11 and 12 where they are qualified and wish to do so

It prevents Delroy becoming a residualised Years 7 – 12 school

It ensures Aboriginal students at Delroy Campus are “forced” to move into a new environment for their senior years and removes the likelihood of peer pressure or social relationships limiting their academic aspirations – Aboriginal retention and HSC completion must be seen as a major success of the current model
It provides an opportunity for a specialist high school to develop and to cater for what is considered to be a neglected area of the current model – the performing and creative arts. If it is successful then it will flourish in its own right. If not, then it will not attract sufficient students and natural selection will determine its long term future.

It provides a circuit breaker in what is currently a “no-win” scenario.

This model has not been discussed with the Committee. A decision was made not to raise it in that environment where the strong polarization would have most likely ensured it was rejected by both sides. The greatest chance for the acceptance of this or some alternative is through high level negotiation between senior officers of the NSWTF and DET state and regional personnel.

The following table compares the capacity of this model to achieve a desired outcome compared to other proposed models.

Table 7 – Comparison of ability of three models to address areas of concern

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Current model</th>
<th>Reinstate Y7-12 comprehensive HSS</th>
<th>Proposed new model</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide choice of senior secondary public education provision</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain benefits of broad subject selection at Senior College</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide Year 7 – 12 teaching for teachers</td>
<td>No (problematic)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain or enhance Aboriginal retention</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resolve relocation issue</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross campus coordination</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff morale</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Unclear</td>
<td>Likely</td>
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