



The Hon. Michael O'Brien MP
Treasurer of Victoria
Level 4, 1 Treasury Place
Victoria 3000

Thursday, 1 May 2014

Dear Treasurer,

Re: Budget Submission Calling for a New High School in the Inner West

I write to you to propose an investment of \$20 million to create a new high school option for local children.

SKY High was formed in 2003 in response to concerns held by local parents that there was no local high school in our area. We now have more than 3000 members who are actively campaigning for a local high school option.

As you may be aware the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood conducted an analysis of the need for a new high school in the area in 2012. We have significant reservations about the quality of that review but since that analysis was completed your government has given planning approval for an additional 1500 additional families to move in to the former Bradmill Textiles site. It is now very clear that our area will need a local high school to help accommodate this growing local population.

You may not be aware but the demand for high school places in suburbs near ours is growing quickly while supply is limited, with Williamstown High School being zoned, Maribyrnong Secondary College being zoned and Footscray Secondary College nearing capacity.

It is easy to see that there already exists sufficient demand for a local high school option given that there are more than 2000 children already enrolled in our local primary schools and our research has shown that 78 per cent of these children will attend a public high school. This means that by 2021 at least 1650 local children will be attending a local high school and there is no reason why they should not have the option of attending a school in their own community.

We also note with interest that you have recently announced funding of \$19.4 million for Sunshine Secondary College redevelopment which will be of significant benefit to the community in Sunshine, but will have no impact on SKY students because the school is at least 10km away. Whilst this is one public secondary school that is receiving funding in the west, it does nothing to ameliorate the issues being faced by our families.

The lack of a local high school option is already having an impact on our local community with our surveys showing 10 per cent of local families deciding to leave the local area due to a lack of a public high school for their kids.

The issue is no longer whether to build a new high school option for the kids of the inner west but when to build it and in what form.

As your recently released Budget Update outlines you are predicting general government surpluses of \$0.91 billion, \$2.05 billion and \$2.72 billion over the next three years. It is clear that your

government has more than enough financial ability to build a new high school option over the forward estimates period if it chose to do so.

We propose a capital investment of \$20 million to acquire land and commence building a new school in the Seddon, Kingsville and Yarraville area. This costing is based your government's recent \$20 million announcement to build a new school in the Prahran area.

If a suitable site could not be found we propose extending one of the many educational facilities in our local area to include a significant high school intake for each year group from Year 7 to Year 12.

Just like Prahran, Yarraville's local high school was closed by the previous Kennett Government and just like Prahran our kids must travel significant distances to attend a public high school.

The parents of school aged children of the inner west call on your government to invest in a local high school and give our kids the same opportunity to attend a local public high school as the children of Prahran.

I look forward to your response and I await your budget announcements with interest.

Yours sincerely,

Melissa Horne

President, SKY High Working Group.

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