

SUBMISSION ON *TOWARDS 2020* PROPOSAL

This submission opposes the *Towards 2020* proposal to close Dickson College.

This submission addresses two areas:

➤ **Location of Dickson College.**

Maps are presented illustrating that Dickson College is:

- The college most separated from other colleges
- The only convenient college for North Canberra students
- Conveniently located for students also attending ANU College
- In an area of high demand for secondary education

➤ The **incorrect and inappropriate statistics** presented in the *Towards 2020* proposal regarding Dickson College.

The correct statistics are:

DICKSON COLLEGE ENROLMENT FEBRUARY 2006 CENSUS: 634

DICKSON COLLEGE CAPACITY: 916

DICKSON COLLEGE CAPACITY UTILISED: 69%

2010 PROJECTED ENROLMENT FOR DICKSON COLLEGE: 678

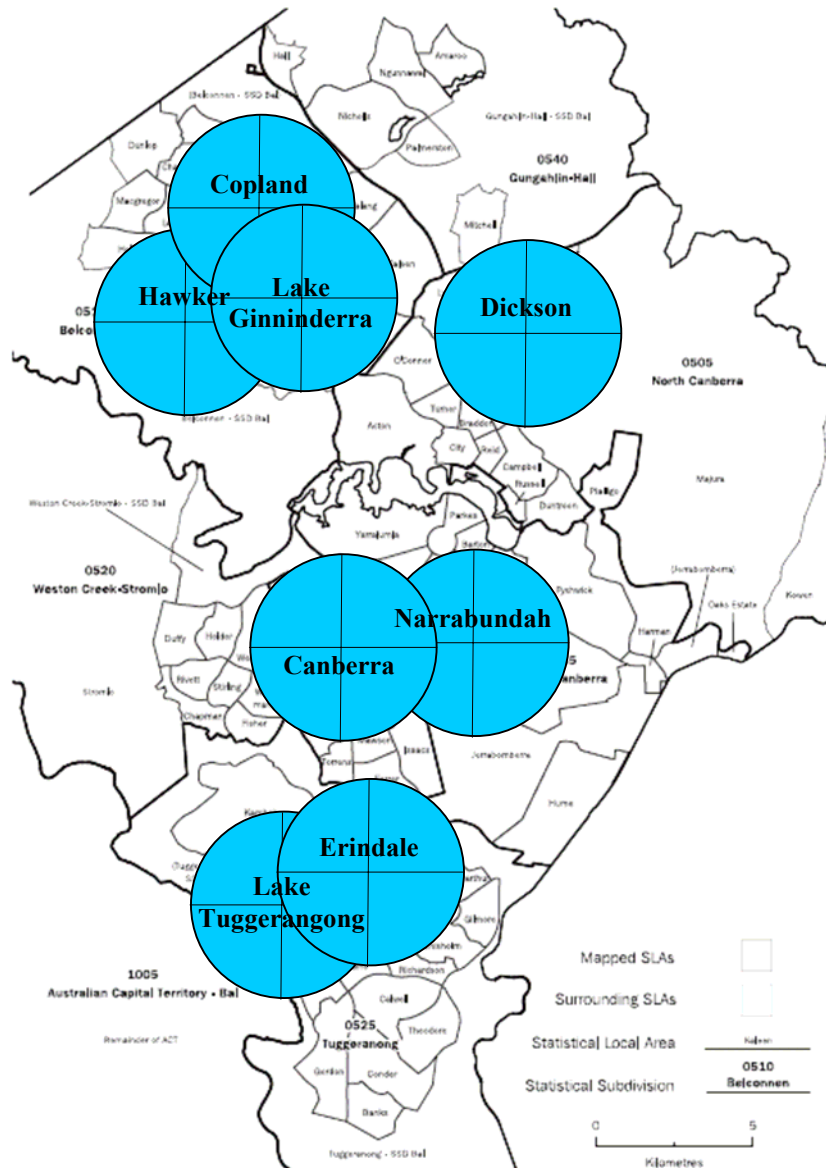
THE GOVERNMENT PROJECTION IS THAT

ENROLMENTS FOR DICKSON COLLEGE WILL INCREASE

Cost per Mainstream Student at Dickson College: \$12,834

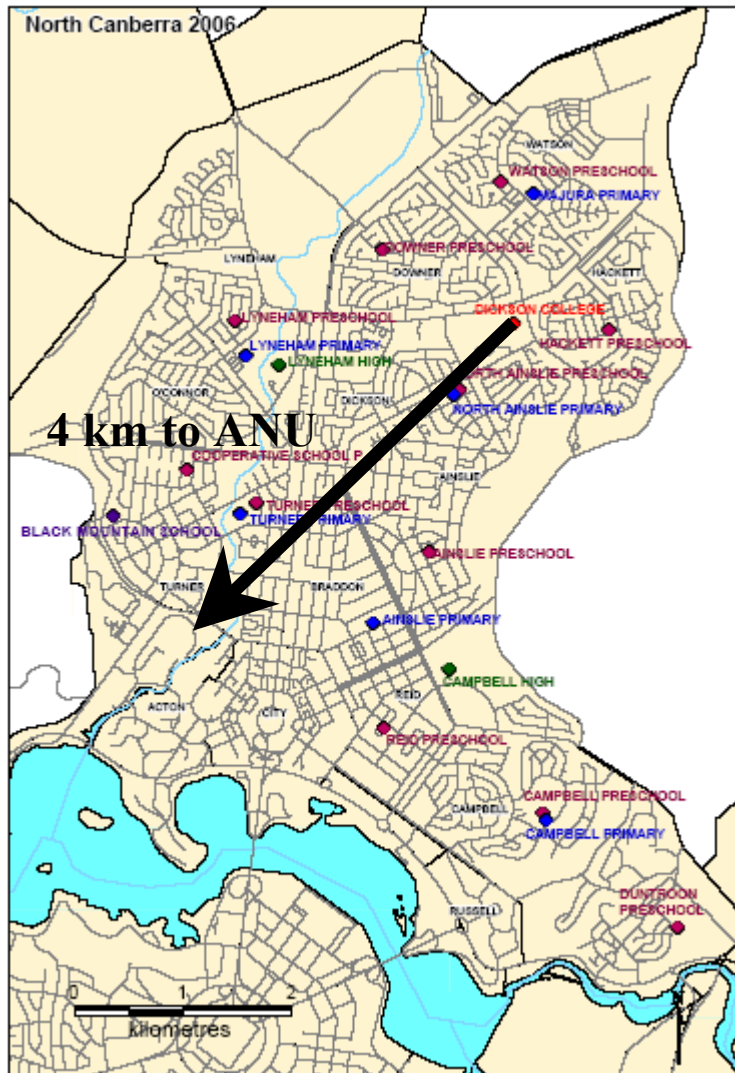
Location of Dickson College

The following map shows the location of all current ACT colleges, each surrounded by a 3 km radius circle to help illustrate proximity and their local area.

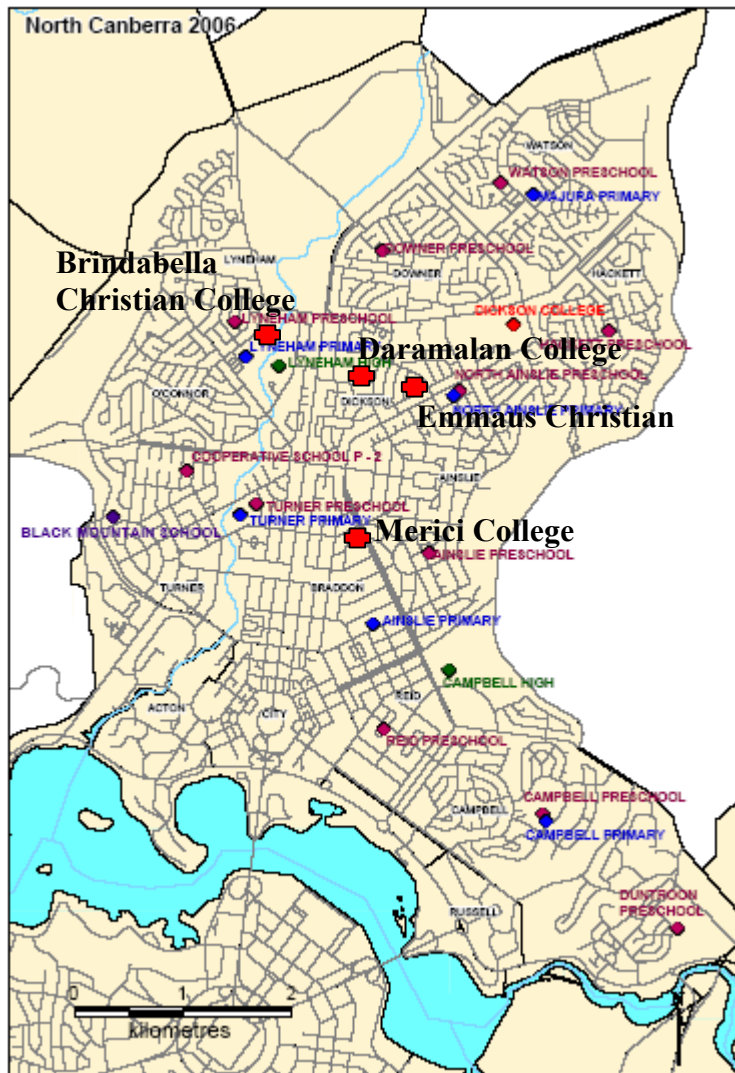


Dickson College is the only college whose 3 km circle does not overlap with the 3 km circle of another college. Dickson College is in fact 7 km away from the nearest college - Lake Ginninderra. This illustrates how Dickson College is the only college providing coverage of North Canberra. It also illustrates that students from North Canberra will have to travel further distances to attend a college if Dickson College is closed, compared to the impact of closing another college. Note that Mr Barr has already acknowledged that there is insufficient room at the proposed Campbell High School 11-12 for all North Canberra students.

The following map shows that Dickson College is only 4 km from the Australian National University. This illustrates how Dickson College is the most convenient College for students also attending the ANU College.



The following map shows the four non-government secondary schools in North Canberra, as well as the government schools.



Note the popularity of the Dickson/Lyneham area for the location of non-government secondary schools. Two non-government secondary schools are located in Dickson, one is located in Lyneham, and one is located nearby at the northern end of Braddon. Also note the popularity of Lyneham High School, which is enrolled to capacity. This area of Canberra is clearly a highly desirable location for secondary education. Closing Dickson College will mean removing the only government 11-12 college in this area of high demand, and will therefore significantly reduce the ability of the government education system to effectively compete with non-government schools.

Enrolment And Capacity

Towards 2020 states the 2006 enrolment at Dickson College as 582 students, and the capacity as 1045 students [*Towards 2020*, page 6]. These figures are incorrect.

2006 Enrolment

The February 2006 census indicates that at the 22 February 2006 reference date 634 students were enrolled at the Dickson College site. This comprised 558 mainstream students (including special education), 24 year 11-12 Secondary Introductory English Centre students, 40 year 7-10 Secondary Introductory English Centre students, and 12 year 10 Alternative Education Program students.

DICKSON COLLEGE ENROLMENT FEBRUARY 2006 CENSUS: 634
--

Therefore, the *Towards 2020* figure of 582 students excludes the year 7-10 component of the Secondary Introductory English Centre and the Alternative Education Program.

The exclusion of the year 7-10 component of the Secondary Introductory English Centre figures from calculations of capacity utilised is inconsistent with the consideration of these students elsewhere in the *Towards 2020* document.

Specifically:

- North Ainslie Primary School *capacity utilised* figure in *Towards 2020* includes the Introductory English Centre (IEC) enrolments [*Towards 2020*, page 6].
- Hughes Primary School *capacity utilised* figure in *Towards 2020* includes the Introductory English Centre (IEC) enrolments [*Towards 2020*, page 12].
- Village Creek Primary School *capacity utilised* figure in *Towards 2020* **does not** include the Introductory English Centre (IEC) enrolments [*Towards 2020*, page 14], and it is proposed to close the school.

The only consistency with these calculations is that the *Towards 2020* document includes IEC enrolments where the school is to remain open, and excludes the enrolments with the school is proposed to be closed. This inconsistent use of statistics to support the argument for school closures is unacceptable. Statistics must be used in a consistent manner, and calculations of the *capacity utilised* of schools must include **all** students attending that school. The disenfranchising of students is discriminatory.

Additionally, it makes even less sense that some of the students from the Secondary Introductory English Centre are included, and others are excluded.

With respect to the Alternative Education Program, the only other program in the ACT operates at Canberra College. The *Towards 2020* Canberra College enrolment figure of 779 bears no relationship to the February 2006 Census figure of 846 mainstream students and 23 Alternative Education Program students giving a total of 869 students [*Towards 2020*, page 12; February 2006 Census]. From this erroneous

figure it is not possible to say whether or not there was an intention for these students to be counted in the capacity utilised calculation for Canberra College.

The assertion remains however, that **all** students enrolled at a school site must be considered in calculations of the capacity utilised at the school site. This reflects the actual utilisation of the site.

Capacity

Towards 2020 stated a capacity for Dickson College of 1045 students [*Towards 2020*, page 6]. A reassessment of capacity was requested, and performed on 3 July 2006 by the Schools and Corporate Support section of the Department of Education and Training. The result of the reassessment was that the capacity of Dickson College was assessed as 916 students when the space requirements of the special programs (special education, Secondary Introductory English Centre and alternative education program) at Dickson College were taken into account.

DICKSON COLLEGE CAPACITY: 916

Mr Barr has however refused to acknowledge this figure [Community Forum Campbell Primary School 3 July 2006], and maintains that the capacity is still 1045. This erroneous figure remains in the Agreed Building Capacity document on the *Towards 2020* website [Agreed Building Capacity 15 August 2006]. This refusal to acknowledge the legitimate and recognized requirements of the special programs for Dickson College is considered to be discriminatory. Offence is also taken at the title of the "Agreed Building Capacity" document on the *Towards 2020* website, as there is no agreement on the 1045 capacity figure for Dickson College. This figure is clearly in dispute.

Corrected Capacity Utilised

As detailed above, the actual number of students enrolled at the Dickson College site at the February 2006 Census was 634. The reassessed capacity of Dickson College, taking into account the space requirements of special programs, is a total of 916 students. This gives a capacity utilisation figure of 69.2%.

DICKSON COLLEGE CAPACITY UTILISED: 69%

Enrolment Projections

Towards 2020 states the 2010 projected enrolment for Dickson College is 580 students [*Towards 2020*, page 6]. This figure is incorrect.

ACT Government Schools July 2005 Projected Enrolments 2006 to 2010 gives a total figure of projected enrolments at Dickson College for 2010 of 678 students. This comprises 580 mainstream students, 21 special education students, 28 year 11-12 Secondary Introductory English Centre students, 40 year 7-10 Secondary Introductory

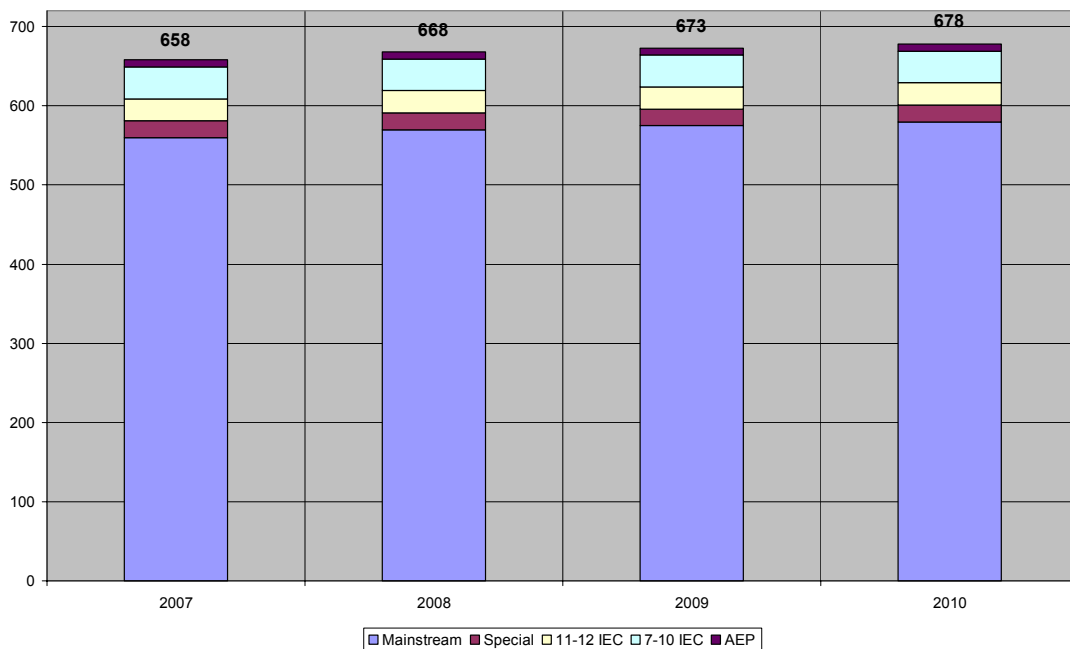
English Centre students and 9 Alternative Education Program students [Projected Enrolments 2006 to 2010].

The 2006 enrolment figure in *Towards 2020* of 582 (which does not include year 7-10 Secondary Introductory English Centre and Alternative Education Program students, as discussed above) does include special education and year 11-12 Secondary Introductory English Centre students. The equivalent 2010 projected enrolment including only these programs for Dickson College is 629 students.

The *Towards 2020* 2006 enrolment figure of 582 is however placed next to the 2010 projected enrolment figure of 580 in the table in the *Towards 2020* document [*Towards 2020*, page 6]. These two figures are counting different enrolments, but are misleading in that they give the impression that the enrolments for Dickson College are stable. Indeed, the detailed document for Dickson College from the *Towards 2020* website states that for Dickson College "enrolments are expected to remain stable" [Dickson College *Towards 2020* proposal].

The ACT Government Schools projection for Dickson College in fact shows that enrolments for Dickson College are expected to increase over the period 2006 to 2010, with the increase coming from mainstream enrolments [Projected Enrolments 2006 to 2010]. This increasing enrolment trend for Dickson College is shown graphically in the following diagram.

2010 PROJECTED ENROLMENT FOR DICKSON COLLEGE: 678
THE GOVERNMENT PROJECTION IS THAT
ENROLMENTS FOR DICKSON COLLEGE WILL INCREASE



Government Projections for Dickson College Enrolments 2007-2010

Cost per Student

Dickson College has a large number of special needs students. The calculation of cost per student quoted on the *Towards 2020* website for Dickson College of \$13,759 includes Special Education, Alternative Education Program and ESL students. The inclusion of these students in the cost per student figure does not provide a fair comparison with other colleges. The correct figure to use for comparison, as provided by the Department of Education and Training to the Board Chair of Dickson College, is \$12,834 per student. This is the cost per mainstream student at Dickson College.

Cost per Mainstream Student at Dickson College: \$12,834

Gary Bulluss *BSc, MSc*

3 November 2006