

Miles Franklin Primary School
Alderman Street
EVATT ACT 2617

Community Consultation Process
ACT Department of Education and Training
Towards 2020
P O Box 1584
TUGGERANONG ACT 2901

SUBMISSION TO THE ACT GOVERNMENT'S *TOWARDS 2020 RENEWING OUR SCHOOLS* COMMUNITY CONSULTATION PROCESS

Please find attached a submission to the above consultation process from the Miles Franklin Primary School.

This submission has been prepared by the School Board in consultation with the school Parents and Community Committee (P&C) and direct consultation with the school parent community.

Miles Franklin Primary School is not marked for closure in the ACT Government's *Toward 2020* document. The comments in this submission relate to potential impacts that may arise as a result of the proposed school closures in the North West Belconnen area as outlined in the *Toward 2020* plan. The main areas of concern that emerged from school community consultation (addressed in detail in the attachment) include:

- ensuring that adequate time is made available for implementing and administering potential change in the interests of existing and new students as well as staff;
- that the school is consulted in a timely manner with regards to accommodation, infrastructure and refurbishment requirements in response to any changes to surrounding schools; and
- that Miles Franklin Primary is not extended beyond the capacity to offer and deliver quality education programs.

The Board looks forward to your acknowledgement of the receipt of this submission and requests that a response is provided to the questions raised in the submission.

Please do not hesitate to contact Ms Claire Brady, School Board Representative on (02) 6259 2111 if you wish to discuss aspects of this submission.

Yours sincerely

Michelle McLaughlin
Chair
School Board
1 November 2006

SUBMISSION TO THE ACT GOVERNMENT'S TOWARDS 2020 RENEWING OUR SCHOOLS COMMUNITY CONSULTATION PROCESS

Miles Franklin Primary School

Introduction

Miles Franklin Primary School is not marked for closure in the ACT Government's *Toward 2020* document. The main comments in this submission relate to potential impacts that may arise as a result of the proposed school closures in the North West Belconnen area as outlined in the *Toward 2020* plan.

Comments

1. OPERATING CAPACITY

Correction to Figures: Table Page 16. The enrolment and capacity figures for Miles Franklin Primary School in the *Toward 2020* document are incorrect. The correct capacity for Miles Franklin Primary is 400 students. This was agreed with the ACT Department of Education in 2006.

| Agreed Capacity 2006 | Actual Enrolments 2006 | Current Capacity |
|----------------------|------------------------|------------------|
| 400 | 380 | 96% |

Miles Franklin Primary P-6

- Integration of the Preschool into Miles Franklin Primary in 2007 would result in enrolments at the school being 'beyond the stated capacity' by 2008, without potential school closures impacting on the school. Enrolments for the Preschool for 2007 have increased from 75 to 100 students. In accordance with current practice, Miles Franklin Primary is required to make space available for Preschoolers entering the school, even if they are 'out-of-area'.
- This situation in itself, potentially **exceeds the existing capacity of 400 students for 2008**, thus the school is already faced with the need for expanding space, classrooms and staffing.

Proposed School Closures

- The school closures and realignments proposed in the north-west Belconnen area may result in an increase in enrolments for Miles Franklin Primary. Since the announcement of the '*Toward 2020*' proposal, Miles Franklin Primary has received many out-of-area enquiries (from families attending schools earmarked to close).
 - The ACT Minister for Education has indicated publicly that "students who are affected by school closures would be permitted to attend any school of their choice in their region". (Community Consultation meeting, Copeland College, 2006)

In response to this statement and situation, the following issues are of notable concern:

- How is this to be implemented if the Miles Franklin Primary is full?

- This situation is potentially inequitable for families who have already been turned away from the school due to capacity enrolments.
- It is also of concern that out-of-area families with siblings already in attendance at Miles Franklin and enrolling a child for Kindergarten in years 2008 and 2009 may miss out on enrolments due to the school operating at full capacity.

QUESTION:

In response to the Minister's statement, the Parent Community requests a formal response from the Department as to how the enrolment procedure for Miles Franklin Primary should be undertaken if enrolments exceed capacity.

2. ACCOMMODATION

Based on current enrolment numbers for 2006 and anticipated enrolments in 2007, teaching space is already limited. Should the school be expanded to take enrolments beyond the current carrying capacity of 400 students (as a result of school closures and realignments), it is imperative that adequate accommodation with supporting infrastructure be provided to reflect the number of students. Accommodation refers to teaching space, learning space, outdoor space, library and computing and areas for programs such as English as a Second Language (ESL), reading recovery, music, art, drama and Language other than English (LOTE).

Space requirements and licensing arrangements of services such as the Canteen and After School Care will also need to be assessed as a result of potential change and realignment, in particular if these services will be made available to the Preschool in the future.

RECOMMENDATION:

Prior to schools being closed and or realigned in the area, it is proposed that a meeting with remaining schools take place to accurately determine accommodation and refurbishment requirements.

In event that our school capacity is increased, and demountable classrooms are provided, the school's administrative budget should be increased accordingly to facilitate additional maintenance and governance to meet amongst other things, occupational health and safety and fire safety standards.

3. TIMING

There is extreme community concern as to whether the Government will allow acceptable and adequate time to implement change. Concerns surrounding this issue are as follows:

- The need for managed assimilation of new students to the school across all years. A smooth transition from a closed school to Miles Franklin will involve:
 - o Planning to ensure gangs/groups are not formed;
 - o Assessment and integration of LOTE and other programs that may be different from what has been offered at other schools (i.e. New students may have learnt different languages as part of the LOTE program of their old school and will need to be taught in a managed manner); and
 - o Recognition of specific cultural change (i.e. those things unique to Miles Franklin).

- ensuring that any changes to staff numbers are timely and planned in the interests of both students and existing staff.

RECOMMENDATION:

The successful management of any proposed changes to ACT Schools will be dependent on adequate timing of changes to be implemented.

4. CREATION OF MIDDLE SCHOOLS

Impact of Melba High becoming a 'middle school'

The possible impact of an 'optional' arrangement for a 'Middle School' may result in smaller numbers of year 5/6 students attending Miles Franklin Primary. While it is acknowledged that this may potentially assist in the overall number of students in the school, current trends and community attitude (from survey results) indicate that the number of students leaving or potentially leaving the school in year 5/6 each year (approx. 45 students) would not provide the space required in managing the predicted overflow for the next three years.

Reduced 5/6 student numbers at Miles Franklin Primary as a result of the creation of an 'optional middle school at Melba High' may compromise the quality and viability of senior programs offered at the school. Concern is that these programs will no longer be viable and that these opportunities will not be available for the remainder of students. Leadership programs offered in 5/6 such as the Active Australia; Australian Citizens and Buddy System provide the opportunity for the senior children to be mentors and leaders to the younger children. An additional loss will be for the active music program and awareness of music at the school as 5/6 students are band members, and play at every assembly and other events.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the government consider the impact on existing schools with regard to the proposal of creating 'optional middle schools'.

5. SAFETY

The existing car park and drop off zone for Miles Franklin Primary and Preschool areas are currently at crisis point and have been for some years, with 23 car spaces offered for all staff and parent parking. The school boundary is surrounded by residential houses and thus does not offer perimeter parking as with other schools. Any increase in school numbers in particular the predicted increase in Preschool enrolments, where parents are required by law to accompany their children to and from the premises, will dramatically increase the safety risk in this area.

RECOMMENDATION:

Funding for the ACT Government has been earmarked for the redesign of the car park area. It will be imperative that this process take into account any proposed changes to the school's current student capacity.