

TAMWORTH LEARNING 2020

REGIONAL RESPONSE - ACTIONS



The Elton Consulting Group was engaged by the Department of Education and Training to carry out an extensive public consultation process and prepare a report on The Future of Public Education in Tamworth.

A discussion paper that formed the basis of the consultation was released in June 2006. This paper contained demographic information, as well as a set of possible scenarios.

The Tamworth Learning 2020 Project was initiated as a result of a number of issues being raised by schools within the Tamworth area over a number of years. These issues included an uneven spread of enrolments, as well as perceptions about the physical appearance and/or suitability of a number of schools.



The final report prepared by Elton Consulting contains 58 recommendations under 15 key themes. These themes are:

1. Curriculum
2. Models of schooling and teaching delivery
3. Aboriginal education
4. Supported learning programs
5. Transition into primary school
6. Transition into secondary school
7. Tertiary and employment outcomes
8. Vocational education and training
9. School-community partnerships
10. Competition, collaboration and equity
11. Teachers, teaching and support
12. Facilities and grounds
13. Student health and welfare
14. Zoning and public transport
15. Funding



The first set of actions all come under the banner of **Tamworth 2020 Vision**. The New England Region will now commence strategic planning for, and establishment of, this collaborative. **Tamworth 2020 Vision** brings together the public schools of Tamworth and those organisations involved in education in and around Tamworth.

This list includes those high priority actions that have the overwhelming support of the community and will be included as part of the operations and deliberations of this proposed collaborative.

A1 The Establishment of the Tamworth Learning Community



We will commence the establishment of the Tamworth 2020 Vision, which will involve schools working together to identify the best way in which to support each other in providing optimum teaching and learning outcomes for all students in Tamworth by 2020, and the promotion of Tamworth public schools as a whole, rather than as individual schools.

This approach is predicated on 'students and their learning come first' and 'public schools in Tamworth are committed to cooperating in creating a learning community'.

The four high schools will work together to identify areas of duplication and specialisation and respond accordingly.

In looking at curriculum and facilities, we trust that schools agree on areas of specialisation for each high school and work towards synchronising both timetables and curriculum so that students across Tamworth can access specialist teaching in academic, vocational and cultural pursuits.

The aim of this recommendation is to eliminate duplication of resources and

A2 Collaboration of High School/ TAFE Curriculum Delivery

teaching and to identify and promote areas of expertise and speciality for each school.

The four secondary schools will work together, with TAFE as a partner, on developing a coordinated timetable that allows and promotes access to VET and TAFE courses.



A3 Transition

It is important that secondary schools, working closely with partner primary schools, consider how classes and curriculum can be modified to provide

greater consistency and fluency across the end of Year 6 and beginning of Year 7.

This would include the opportunities for teachers to move across the sectors and campuses and to make greater use of interactive classroom technology.

A4 Tertiary and employment outcomes

We will encourage closer collaboration between TAFE, universities, business and schools, with community based 'mentors' available to provide advice,

support and information to students as they negotiate their choices for the future.

A5 Support for Teachers

We will explore, and implement practical measures to support young and new teachers in their first five

years to encourage teacher retention and the development of quality teaching across Tamworth.

A6 Student Well-Being Partnerships with Non-Government Organisations

We will explore whether closer partnerships with non-government organisations can result in a different approach to student welfare. The aim of this would be to provide a wider and stronger support network for

students and families, recognising that school is a central contact point for the identification of specific issues that are not necessarily best addressed by schools.



A7 Funding

Tamworth schools will be encouraged to work together to utilise staffing arrangements and resources more flexibly, in order to meet and support

individual school needs, while collaborating as part of the Tamworth Learning Community.

A8 Curriculum

Opportunities for students to learn languages will be explored, particularly Aboriginal languages appropriate to and reflective of the existing Aboriginal communities represented in

Tamworth schools. This would require schools working with the Aboriginal community to identify the most appropriate languages to be learnt.



The New England Regional Director will commence strategic planning and implementation of the following recommendations.

This list includes those high priority recommendations that have the support of the local Tamworth community.

B1 Aboriginal Education



A highly coordinated and integrated approach will be taken in implementing the recommendations of the 2004 Aboriginal Education Review, which are included in the Aboriginal Education & Training Strategy, in all Tamworth schools.

All Tamworth schools are encouraged to participate in cultural events, as well as exploring school specific activities and lessons that celebrate and promote pride in Tamworth's Aboriginal community and its heritage.

All teachers in Tamworth are strongly encouraged to participate in the DET Aboriginal Cultural Education training programs.

A review of student welfare and discipline policies and practices will be undertaken to assist all students to engage positively with their school, their teachers and their peers. One purpose of this review is to reduce the need for schools to suspend students for long periods of time or on more than one occasion.

B2 Transition to primary school

We will explore closer relationships with a range of agencies including early intervention diagnosis and therapies, with a view to co-location of services on primary school campuses.

Each primary school will continue to establish and foster close links between

existing pre-schools and long day care centres, with visits to schools for future students, review of records and discussions with carers/teachers about the needs of each student enrolling in the following year.



B3 Transition to secondary school

Primary and secondary schools will continue to work together on establishing and developing close and effective communication about students moving from one to another

and their needs, including students with special learning needs or gifted and talented students.

B4 Tertiary and employment outcomes



Students deemed at risk of leaving school early will be identified early. Working with TAFE and business, specific programs targeted to these students will be developed and made available to encourage the development of employment and living skills in a practical, relevant and flexible environment.

Trade and practical opportunities for employment and careers will be promoted actively through closer partnerships between business, TAFE and the four secondary schools.

B5 Competition, collaboration and equity

Tamworth public schools will work closely together to promote public education while ensuring that each school is provided with every opportunity to maintain a reasonable level of enrolments.

Schools at their capacity will be asked to redirect families to their neighbourhood schools. A climate of collaboration and equity will override any sense of competition for enrolments.

A detailed review of school enrolment arrangements (including school zoning) will be undertaken within the Tamworth area and surrounding townships.

B6 Zoning and public transport

Consultation will occur with the Road Transport Authority and local bus companies on local transport arrangements to ensure that schools are not disadvantaged by certain bus routes or schedules and student safety is not compromised.

B7 Facilities and grounds

Bullimbal SSP will be relocated to a new, purpose-built site on the corner of Kathleen and Degance streets, which currently forms part of the Tamworth High School site.

The department's excess land in Goonoo Goonoo Road in Tamworth will be sold and the balance of funding arising from this will be used to

update and renovate Tamworth High School, with a particular emphasis on developing flexible teaching spaces appropriate for changing technology and developing a high quality learning environment for students and staff.

Tamworth West Public School will continue to operate, in its own

right, as a K-6 school with future maintenance and capital works being provided in line with existing departmental guidelines.

A strategic planning project will be developed to explore the future relocation and expansion of Parry School for Specific Purposes.

The following possible actions have received 'in-principle' support from the community and the region but their implementation will be considered at a later date as further discussions and decisions are required.

C1 Curriculum

Earlier access to VET programs will be explored, in line with statewide guidelines, with TAFE with a view to offering these courses on site at schools as well as offsite at TAFE.



C2 Models of schooling and teaching delivery

All schools will be encouraged to collaborate closely with organisations like the Tamworth Conservatorium of Music and the Equine Centre to identify how they work together to enhance the learning opportunities and outcomes for students.



C3 Transition to primary school

The establishment of pre-schools on a number of primary school sites will be explored, in line with statewide direction, policy and resourcing and in close consultation with the existing pre-school services operating in Tamworth.



C4 Centres of Best Practice

That Bullimbal and Parry Schools for Specific Purposes be developed as

Centres of Best Practice available to provide specialist support and training

to Tamworth and the wider New England Region.

The following issues are those that will require further consideration prior to making any decisions about their implementation.

- The Region working with other agencies to expand early intervention services and the location of services on primary school campuses.
- The proposed establishment of a 'careers library' where information can be available about the full range of options, not just university, or TAFE.
- The Region exploring with other human services the possibility of developing a comprehensive planned approach to providing targeted support to families and children who may need it.
- The possible establishment of a professional resource centre for teachers in Tamworth, which would include counselling services.
- The expansion of the capacity of Parry SSP combined with and an extension of services and the possible option of some students boarding on campus.
- The provision of female student access to an academically selective stream.
- The flexibility that schools can exercise in their ability to spend their own allocated budgets.



Where to from here?

Plans for the construction of a new Bullimbal SSP are well underway. The Department's Assets Directorate will now be asked to oversee the sale of excess land in Tamworth and we will commence discussions with the Tamworth High School community about the future upgrade of facilities.

The Tamworth West Public School community can now plan for a more certain future which will give Tamworth West families confidence in continuing to support the school.

The next highest priority is to establish a very strong and futures-oriented Tamworth Learning Community which has the 'student' at its centre. Decisions will need to be made on the structure of the TLC, its coordination and resourcing, as well as its initial priorities, as we work towards implementing the vision captured by the Elton Report and by this response.

A copy of the final report can be found online at http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/regions/new_england/



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Des Gorman
Regional Director
New England Region
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Is this the end of it all then?

No – it is just the beginning!