



ALPHINGTON PRIMARY SCHOOL



Engagement Report

The Victorian Government has invested a record \$3.8 billion to build 70 new schools, and upgrade more than 1,300 existing schools across the state. Expanding and modernising our schools will ensure all Victorian students have access to high quality education as the population continues to grow.

We want children growing up in the Alphington area to be part of a rich, vibrant and supportive community. With the Alphington community continuing to grow, the current Alphington Primary School site on Yarralea Street is also growing.

The Department of Education and Training is looking into a number of options to increase student enrolment capacity in the area, to ensure every young person in Alphington has access to a great local school.

We are considering the best way to build capacity at Alphington Primary School and have been looking at two options:

Option 1:

Upgrading the current campus

This would mean modernising Alphington Primary School's existing facilities. It could involve building a new vertical building but, due to site constraints, that may reduce existing open space.

Option 2:

Building a new senior primary campus for Years 5 & 6

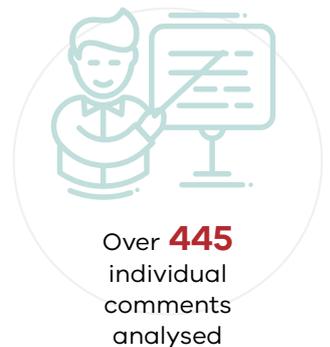
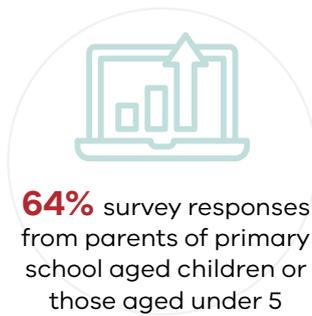
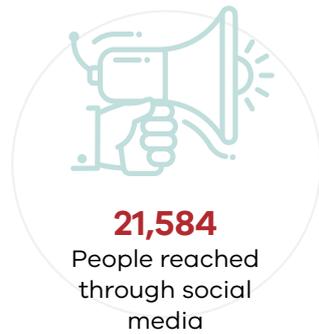
This could be possible on the old Amcor Paper Mill site on Heidelberg Road. The site is opposite a proposed council-owned multipurpose court that could be shared between the community and the school. There would be limited open space in this arrangement.

About the engagement

To help inform these considerations, we engaged with people in the Alphington community from 8 to 29 October 2018 to hear their views. We held a community drop-in session on Thursday 11 October and ran an online survey. We also received feedback directly from the Alphington Primary School Council parent representatives.

We wanted to understand community views on the proposed options and to hear any others that they think should be considered to provide a quality primary education for Alphington students. We were also keen to understand what local residents thought was special about their community that they would like to see reflected in any new campus or upgraded primary school.

Engagement snapshot



What the community wants for the Alphington area

Across all options explored, we heard consistently that the community values, a strong community connection, access to the school, open space and safety.

We heard that there was minimal support for Option 1 due to concerns this would not maintain enough open space, and very little support for Option 2 with a range of concerns raised about student wellbeing, access, outdoor space and cohesion in the school community. Alternative options such as acquiring land at a different site were repeated in feedback.

"Both options have severe deficiencies, but option 2 has many more (and many more serious). Other potential alternatives include a different site, a complete new school rather than a senior campus, or spreading the additional students across the network."

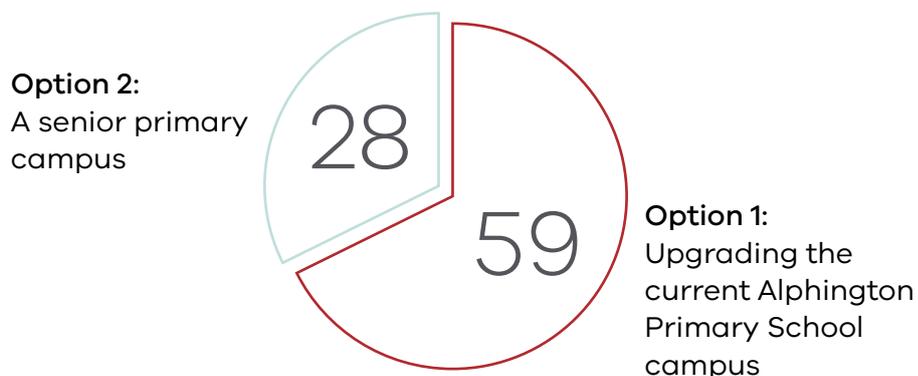
Online survey respondent

"These options do not provide acceptable quality educational outcomes for current and future children and we ask that another solution be sought"

Alphington Primary School Council parent representatives

Options 1 and 2 compared

The online survey asked the community for their preference between Options 1 and 2. Of the 147 survey respondents, 40% chose to skip this question and not select either of the two options presented. Of those who responded, most preferred Option 1.



Option 1

Upgrading the current alphington primary school campus

In the online survey and community drop in sessions, there was some support for upgrading the current school. However, the biggest concern expressed with Option 1 was **lack of space** (there is already concern about this for the school in its current state). Respondents who supported Option 1 indicated that they wanted aspects of the existing school protected, including open space, by **enforcing enrolment zones** and considering **alternative transport options and school operating hours**, and **using nearby facilities for outdoor activities**.

Option 2

A new senior primary campus

Feedback gathered through the online survey and community drop in session identified only a small amount of support for Option 2.

The biggest concern raised with this option across all of the engagement was **insufficient outdoor space** as well as the location of the proposed **open space on the rooftop**.

The community also raised concerns about **separating students** across the campuses. This relates to the **logistics of sibling pick-up and drop-off** at different locations, as well as the **lost connections between students**. Respondents were particularly concerned about **lost leadership opportunities** for the older students and not having **older role models for younger students** through approaches like the buddy program. Concerns about **potential impacts** of a two-campus model **on learning, community cohesion** and **school culture** were also raised.

A large number of concerns related to potential **environmental and health impacts** of the Amcor site, particularly air quality. Many people said they felt that a **commercial setting was inappropriate** for a school and that the distance between the two campuses was too great. Respondents also raised **safety concerns** relating to access to the senior campus, line of sight issues and traffic safety.

Alternative options

Overwhelmingly, we heard the community express a desire for an alternative option to be explored. A number of suggestions related to **building on the existing school site and acquiring adjacent land** to expand the current school. We also heard support for an **alternative site to be considered for a new separate primary school**. Alternative sites suggested included the Darebin Enterprise Zone at the corner of Yarralea Street and Wingrove Street, the VicTrack land at the corner of Heidelberg and Grange Roads, alternative locations within the Amcor site and existing open space areas within the suburb.



Next steps:

After receiving the community's views and the strengths and weaknesses of the considered options, the VSBA is looking at next steps for Alphington.

We have reviewed the community's suggestions of alternative school sites, noting that at this stage unfortunately none are able to be implemented in a timely or economical manner.

In response to community concern about losing open space, we are exploring ways to upgrade the current campus while valuing current open spaces as much as possible. This could include a new vertical building that has a similar footprint than the building it replaces. This option may also align with the community's wish to maintain the school culture, retain a single drop-off location, and facilitate junior/senior student mentoring.

In light of community concerns about maintaining Alphington as a "local" school, we are looking at how we might assist the school to create tighter adherence to the school zone for future enrolments.

The VSBA will keep the community informed as plans progress.

You can contact us:

Victorian School Building Authority



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For information in your language, please call the Victorian School Building Authority's translation service on 03 9280 0712.

In detail: your ideas

This section presents the detailed findings of the engagement including the hopes, concerns and general feedback from the community on the options and what is important to them.

- Option 1: Upgrading the current Alphington Primary School campus
- Option 2: A new senior primary campus
- Alternative options
- We want the new school campus to reflect the local community. What do you think makes your community special?

Option 1: upgrading the current Alphington Primary School campus

We heard that your community is keen to preserve the spirit of the current school and the connection students have with one another, even if this means having to knock down and re-build on the existing site.

Responses to online surveys and drop-in sessions favoured improvements being made to the existing school rather than expanding to a separate campus.

Some suggestions for how the existing space can be preserved, but continue to accommodate new enrolments, include:

- enforcement of enrolment zones
- using local parks for outdoor activities.

A key concern raised was whether the limited space available at the current site could adequately cater for the projected growth in population and demand.

"Prioritise green space. Continue to leverage Alphington Park."

Community drop-in session

"Strongly favour upgrading current school to keep students and siblings and community connected."

Community drop-in session

"Hard to see how the land can accommodate vertical classrooms and hundreds more students. Kids already lack open space and playgrounds."

Community drop-in session

"Insufficient rooms, parking, play area at the current campus. As it is the Alphington oval has to be used at lunch time."

Online survey

Option 2: a new senior primary campus

We heard several concerns about the option of establishing a new senior primary campus, including:

- separating siblings across campuses, segregating peers and limiting leadership and mentoring opportunities for senior students. The lost relationships, including having good role models and buddies for junior students was felt to be a problem.
- operating two campuses and the logistics of maintaining curriculum, school culture and community connection across the sites
- environmental, health and safety concerns about a commercial site near a main road, such as air quality, traffic impacts and safe access and road crossings
- lack of outdoor space at the new campus and the proposed open space being located on the rooftop.

There were suggestions that if two primary school campuses are required that they should be located within closer proximity to one another.

"We have a number of special needs students and siblings. Access through a public car park and a non-gated release area is not safe or appropriate. Also concerned re: lack of natural play area - air quality, bike access particularly for parcel bikes/passenger bikes. Also, don't want a space that is in shade from surrounded high rises."

Community drop-in session

"I hope the school can remain on one campus. I am concerned about a school being placed on Heidelberg Rd with all the car fumes and lack of ground level outdoor space."

Online survey

"Environment is important. Many of us live here because we value open spaces and trees. These things are very important for children. A sense of community and unity is also important and at risk from 2 campuses."

Online survey

"Minimise the distance between the 2 primary school campuses. Develop a safe travel route between the 2 campuses. Develop timetables that allow parents to drop children off at the 2 campuses. Improve walking access to an oval and sporting venues."

Online survey

"We have considerable concerns about the safe movement of students between the two campuses and arrival and dismissal of children in a space shared with community and commercial users"

Alphington Primary School Council parent representatives

Alternative options

Your community supported alternative options being explored including different sites. A number of specific suggestions were provided:

- Acquire land adjacent to the existing primary school site and redevelop the current school. Options suggested included the Gibson Street units and Como Street empty block.
- Build an entirely new school in a new location. Alternative sites suggested included the Darebin Enterprise Zone at the corner of Yarralea Street and Wingrove Street, the VicTrack land at the corner of Heidelberg and Grange Roads, alternative locations within the Amcor site and existing open space areas within the suburb.
- Consider alternative arrangements such as locating specialist subjects or sporting facilities on a separate campus.

"Neither is acceptable. We need serious consideration of other options that will allow the school to continue to grow sustainably and still provide enough outdoor space for students to play and learn outdoors. 'Green space' in a vertical building is a joke."

Online survey

"A new location, acquiring the blocks of flats at the back of APS & moving these residents into the new development (possibly cheaper than buying airspace), zone the school and restrict enrolments."

Online survey

"Option 3. Acquire Darebin Ent. C. for a whole new school. Large site, clean air, existing parks and sports fields nearby, public transport, in public hands now, existing commercial activities easily relocatable. School to be an environmental showpiece."

Online survey

"Two separate schools both P-6. Two school councils if a new campus is built"

Community drop-in session

We want the new school campus to reflect the local community. What do you think makes your community special?

We heard that your community is culturally diverse, welcoming, friendly, supportive and involved.

You told us that that the environment is very important and that you value green open space. The walkability of your suburb and maintaining safe walking access is vital.

"The Alphington community is a great place for kids to grow up. People are friendly, inclusive and genuinely care about the community. There is also an emphasis on sustainability. We value our fantastic access to green spaces, creeks and the bush."

Online survey

"Walking to school in the morning - two campus drop-offs would make that impossible and we would have to drive. I assume that would be the same with other families - Yarralea St would become even more difficult to navigate for school drop-off."

Online survey

"Tight-knit, local community situated in a small neighbourhood area. People are community-minded and willing to help out. Value is placed on environmental issues, green space, equality, a safe environment. There are close bonds between families."

Online survey