



*Victorian Public  
Sector Specialists*

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development  
Feasibility Study into secondary education in the broader Sandringham area  
Summary Report  
April 2013

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## Introduction

During the past two years Sandringham Secondary College, in consultation with the school community, has been exploring options for the future direction of the College, which includes the current proposal to the Minister for Education for the possible disaggregation of the current College into two new schools.

In light of this proposal, and to ensure that all other possible options are understood, explored and considered, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) has initiated a Feasibility Study (Study).

### Project Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this project is to undertake a Study to identify and assess the viability and sustainability for secondary education provision in the broader Sandringham catchment area.

The objectives of the project are to:

- Identify and assess options for secondary education provision for Sandringham Secondary College that will be sustainable and improve student outcomes;
- Provide an analysis of curriculum provision and enrolments and identify implications for the broader network of neighbouring schools;
- Identify community interest, long term support and concerns; and
- Identify opportunities for any partnering opportunities with other community, sporting, education and health facilities.

### Project Governance

The project is being sponsored by the Deputy Secretary, Regional Services Group, DEECD.

The project is being overseen by a Joint Management Reference Group (JMRG) comprising:

- Regional Director, South-Eastern Victoria Region (Chair)
- Principal, Sandringham College
- President, Sandringham College Council
- Executive Director, System Design and Integration Division
- Acting Manager, Resources Strategy Division

DEECD has engaged Cube Management Solutions (Cube) to undertake the feasibility study to identify and assess the viability, sustainability and implications for the broader network of local schools in relation to options that best meet the secondary education provision needs of the broader Sandringham catchment area.

As part of this Study, DEECD has separately engaged rfk Consulting to provide expert advice and input into curriculum provision, educational models and learning outcomes which has been incorporated in this Report.

### Project Timelines

The Study was undertaken over a six week period concluding at the end of March 2013.

# Feasibility Study Approach

## Study Approach

The Study involved:

- Conducting a review of background information, demographic data, policies and planning documents relevant to the Study;
- Reviewing data on the existing and future demand for government secondary education within the broader Sandringham catchment area;
- Undertaking targeted face-to-face and telephone interviews with a range of stakeholders, including:
  - DEECD personnel;
  - Principal of Sandringham College;
  - Other government school principals within the Sandringham area;
  - President of the Sandringham College Council;
  - Bayside City Council;
  - Kingston City Council; and
  - Other key stakeholders as determined in conjunction with the Project Sponsor and JMRG.
- Conducting a public survey to gauge the views of primary and secondary school parents and interested community members in the Sandringham catchment area. A total of 2,970 responses were received over a two week period;
- Consideration of provision of secondary education in the Sandringham catchment area;
- Consideration of viability, long-term sustainability, ability to support current and future learning outcomes, impacts on surrounding schools, and impact on community; and
- Preparing a final Report for the Project Sponsor.

# Feasibility Study Context

## Sandringham Catchment Area

Sandringham is a bayside suburb in the City of Bayside, approximately 16 kilometres south-east of the Melbourne city centre.

Sandringham College provides secondary education in the area and operates across three campuses:

- Sandringham Senior Campus (Holloway Rd) for years 11-12;
- Sandringham Junior Campus (Bluff Rd) for years 7-10; and
- Beaumaris Campus for years (Reserve Rd) 7-10.

Surrounding government colleges in the area include:

- Bentleigh Secondary College;
- Brighton Secondary College;
- Cheltenham Secondary College;
- Mentone Girls Secondary College;
- Mordialloc Secondary College; and
- Parkdale Secondary College.

There are also many government primary schools within the broader Sandringham catchment area, including:

- Beaumaris Primary School;
- Beaumaris North Primary School;
- Bentleigh West Primary School;
- Black Rock Primary School;
- Brighton Primary School;
- Brighton Beach Primary School;
- Cheltenham Primary School;
- Cheltenham East Primary School;
- Hampton Primary School;
- Kingston Heath Primary School;
- Le Page Primary School;
- Mentone Primary School;
- Mentone Park Primary School;
- Moorabbin Primary School;
- Parkdale Primary School;
- Parktone Primary School;
- Sandringham East Primary School;
- Sandringham Primary School;
- Southmoor Primary School; and
- Tucker Road Primary School.

The broader Sandringham catchment area also has a number of non-government primary and secondary schools, including:

- Brighton Grammar School;
- Firbank Grammar;
- Haileybury Independent School (Brighton Campus);
- Kilbreda College;
- Mentone Grammar School;
- Mentone Girls' Grammar School;
- Our Lady of Assumption Parish Primary School;
- Sacred Heart Parish School;

- St Bede's College Mentone;
- St Joseph's Primary School Black Rock;
- St Leonard's College;
- St Mary's Catholic Primary School;
- Star of the Sea College; and
- Stella Maris School.

### Secondary Enrolments in the Sandringham catchment area

The broader Sandringham catchment area includes six other secondary colleges in addition to Sandringham Secondary College. The 2013 indicative enrolments for each of these colleges are outlined in Table 1 below.

*Table 1: 2013 Indicative Secondary Enrolments in the Sandringham catchment area*

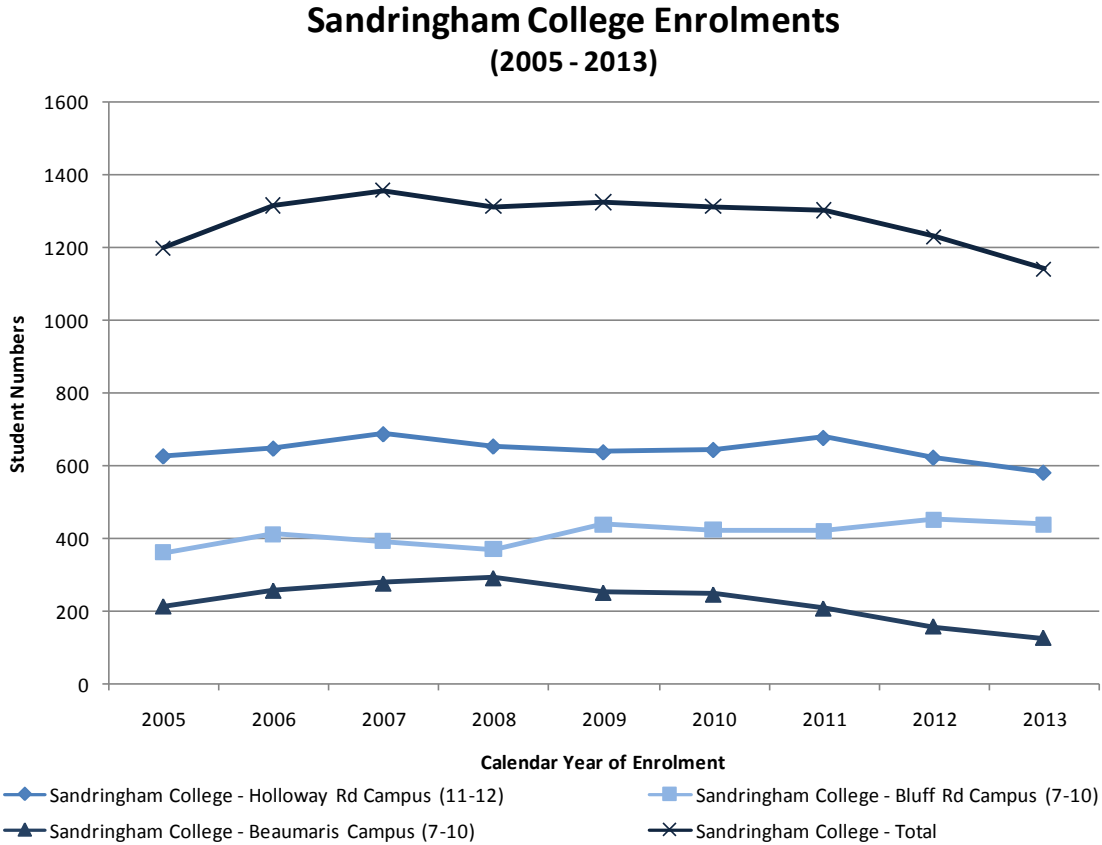
	2013 Indicative Enrolments
Bentleigh Secondary College	876
Brighton Secondary College	1,116
Cheltenham Secondary College	1,042
Mentone Girls Secondary College	1,075
Mordialloc Secondary College	600
Parkdale Secondary College	1,272
<b>Sandringham Secondary College</b>	<b>1,143</b>

Four of the above colleges have Neighbourhood Boundaries, indicating that they are at optimal enrolment levels. These schools are Brighton Secondary College, Cheltenham Secondary College, Mentone Girls Secondary College and Parkdale Secondary College.

Sandringham College Enrolments

Figure 1 (below) shows the student enrolment numbers for Sandringham College for the period 2005 through to 2013.

Figure 1: Student enrolment numbers for Sandringham College for the period 2005 through to 2013



Over this period, total enrolments at the College have ranged from 1,200 up to 1,325, with an average of 1,278. In 2013, enrolments have fallen below 1,200 to 1,143, with reductions in enrolments across all three of its campuses.

Table 2: Sandringham College Total Enrolments – 2005-2013

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Senior Campus (Yrs 11-12)	626	647	687	653	637	644	677	622	580
Junior Campus (Bluff Rd 7-10)	362	413	393	369	437	424	420	452	438
Beaumaris Campus (7-10)	213	257	277	292	251	246	207	157	125
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,201</b>	<b>1,317</b>	<b>1,357</b>	<b>1,314</b>	<b>1,325</b>	<b>1,314</b>	<b>1,304</b>	<b>1,231</b>	<b>1,143</b>

*In 2013, enrolments have fallen below 1,200, with reductions in enrolments across all three campuses.*

While enrolments at the Senior Campus (Holloway Rd) and Junior Campus have remained reasonably stable over the period 2005-2013, there has been a steady and ongoing decline in enrolment numbers at the Beaumaris campus (See Table 2). Total current year enrolments at Beaumaris Campus are at 125 students across the four year groups, this is less than half of the most recent peak in enrolments of 292 in 2008. Current enrolments are also well below the average of 225 students for the period 2005-2008.

Contemporary thinking and advice provided by the Study's curriculum consultant indicates that, on average, a preferred enrolment for a secondary college in the metropolitan area is for at least 100 students per year group for the 7-10 years. This would imply a preferred enrolment long-term average enrolment for the Beaumaris campus of at least 400 students, which would be more closely aligned with enrolments at the Bluff Rd (Junior) Campus.

*Low enrolments at the Beaumaris Campus have been a long-term issue.*

Enrolment numbers at the Beaumaris campus even with the most recent peak in enrolments in 2008 of 292 students are well below the preferred enrolment average of 400 students, with enrolment at 27% below the preferred long-term average. It should be noted that DEECD's preferred enrolment for new secondary colleges is around 1,100 enrolments.

Low enrolments at the Beaumaris campus have been a long term issue, and have been exacerbated in recent years by further declines in student numbers.

A lower than optimal enrolment level has implications on the ability of the College as a whole to support the breadth and diversity of curriculum expected of a secondary school. Lower than optimal enrolments have also resulted in a significant financial drain on the College as a whole, limiting its overall ability to deliver change and improvements across all three of its campuses.

The catchment area for Beaumaris Campus forms part of the Neighbourhood Boundary for Mentone Girls Secondary College. This has an impact on the ratio of boy to girl students at Beaumaris Campus.

As outlined in the Marshall Report<sup>1</sup>, over the last 11 years the number of girls at the Beaumaris Campus has never reached 25% of the total enrolment and has been as low as 13%. Currently there are no girls enrolled in Years 7 or 8 at Beaumaris Campus.

It should be noted that the impact of a single gender girls' only secondary college in the broader Sandringham catchment area is not isolated to the Beaumaris Campus of Sandringham College. In 2012, more than half (52%) of enrolments at Mentone Girls Secondary College where drawn from residents outside its Neighbourhood Boundary. Other colleges impacted by this include Brighton Secondary College, Bentleigh

<sup>1</sup> Marshall, Graham; February 2012; *Report on Resourcing and Provision Issues at Sandringham College*.



Secondary College, Mordialloc Secondary College, and Parkdale Secondary College.

#### Previous Consultation with school communities in the Sandringham catchment area

During the past two years, Sandringham College has been engaged in a consultation process with school communities in the broader Sandringham catchment area. The consultation process informed the deliberations of the Sandringham College Council which culminated in the Council presenting a proposal to the Minister for Education for the possible disaggregation of the current College into two schools.

The consultation process with the Sandringham College and neighbouring school communities encompassed a range of engagement activities, including the use of surveys, workshops and community meetings.

The consultation process included gauging community views on a range of propositions. These propositions included the following:

- In the long-term, what is the best use of this (Beaumaris) campus? Is it best as a co-educational school, a single sex boys' school? Are there other uses?
- When it comes to governance, is it best to continue as a part of the overall Sandringham College, or is it best to be a standalone school?
- Looking at the whole Sandringham College, are there thoughts you have about the relationships, use of sites, future that you want to mention?
- What are people's views on switching the two (Bluff Rd and Holloway Rd) Sandringham sites in order to facilitate greater links with primary schools?
- If Beaumaris becomes a standalone school what should both Sandringham campuses do?
- Should the Beaumaris Campus remain part of the Sandringham College or become a standalone school?
- If it (Beaumaris Campus) is to be a standalone school, should it cater for years 7-10 or years 7-12?
- Should it (Beaumaris Campus) be a single sex school or remain a co-educational institution?

The responses to these propositions and minutes from community sessions undertaken by the College are all published on the College website.

The framing of these propositions influenced the responses received. Some of the themes arising out of the process include:

- Desire for specialisation including – academic excellence, science, sports, trades, music, environment, marine science;
- Perceptions of school and quality of facilities;
- Need to have a greater understanding of demographics and demand for enrolments;
- Campus to offer 7-12 curriculum;
- Need improved connectedness of the school with the local community;
- Consideration of partnerships with local schools (primary and secondary), other bodies and organisations;
- Mixed views on co-education versus single gender;
- Public transport limitations and logistics issues including between campuses; and
- A number of factors influencing secondary education decisions.

The findings from this consultation process were utilised in developing the survey component of this Study.

## Demographic Data

This section of the study draws upon demographic data from a number of sources, namely:

- Spatial Vision – Demographic Study Sandringham College;
- Australian Bureau of Statistics – Census Data;
- City of Bayside – forecast id;
- Kingston City Council – forecast id; and
- Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD)

## Population

The following section represents data which is purely statistical in nature and has been gleaned specifically from the *Demographic Study: Sandringham College* prepared by Spatial Vision in December of 2012 (based on data sets from the 2011 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD), and DEECD) and data provided directly by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

### Historical

*Over the last ten years, population growth in the Sandringham catchment area has been lower than the Melbourne and State averages.*

Victorian population growth in the ten years from 2001 to 2011 has increased by 8.5%, with Melbourne's population increasing by 9.7%<sup>2</sup> Population growth in the Sandringham catchment area<sup>3</sup> over this ten year period shows a total increase of 7.2% (3,957 people). Table 3 below shows the actual numbers by suburb and the five and ten year percentage increases<sup>4</sup>.

*Table 3: Data Source Demographic Study: Sandringham College, Spatial Vision, September 2012*

Total Population	Beaumaris	Black Rock	Cheltenham	Hampton	Hampton East	Highbett	Mentone	Sandringham	Total
2001	12,260	5,599	3,555	8,015	4,389	7,192	5,389	8,295	54,694
2006	12,432	5,786	3,662	8,203	4,466	7,235	5,512	8,687	55,983
2011	12,790	6,051	3,717	8,537	4,788	7,796	5,700	9,272	58,651
Growth 2001 to 2006	1.4%	3.3%	3.0%	2.3%	1.8%	0.6%	2.3%	4.7%	2.4%
Growth 2001 - 2011	4.3%	8.1%	4.6%	6.5%	9.1%	8.4%	5.8%	11.8%	7.2%

The 2016 forecast population for the Sandringham catchment area is predicted to be much the same as the 2011 (58,621). In 2021 it is anticipated to have risen by 5.69% (61,956) and at 2026 it is expected to have risen by 7.6% over the base year<sup>5</sup> (63,086).

<sup>2</sup><http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/censushome.nsf/home/data?opendocument&navpos=200>

<sup>3</sup> Sandringham area is defined as Beaumaris, Black Rock, Cheltenham, Hampton, Hampton East, Highbett, Mentone and Sandringham.

<sup>4</sup> P24 Demographic Study: Sandringham College, Spatial Vision, September 2012

<sup>5</sup> Base year of 2011

In 2011, the primary and secondary school age children represent approximately 19% of this total population<sup>6</sup>. Unfortunately, ABS data by age cohort does not align neatly with the primary and secondary school age break points of 5 – 12 for primary school and 12 – 18 for secondary.

Using the two age cohorts of 5 – 14 and 15 – 19 as proxies for school age children, Table 4 below shows there are 11,157 school age children in the broader Sandringham catchment area.

*Table 4: Data Source Demographic Study: Sandringham College, Spatial Vision, September 2012*

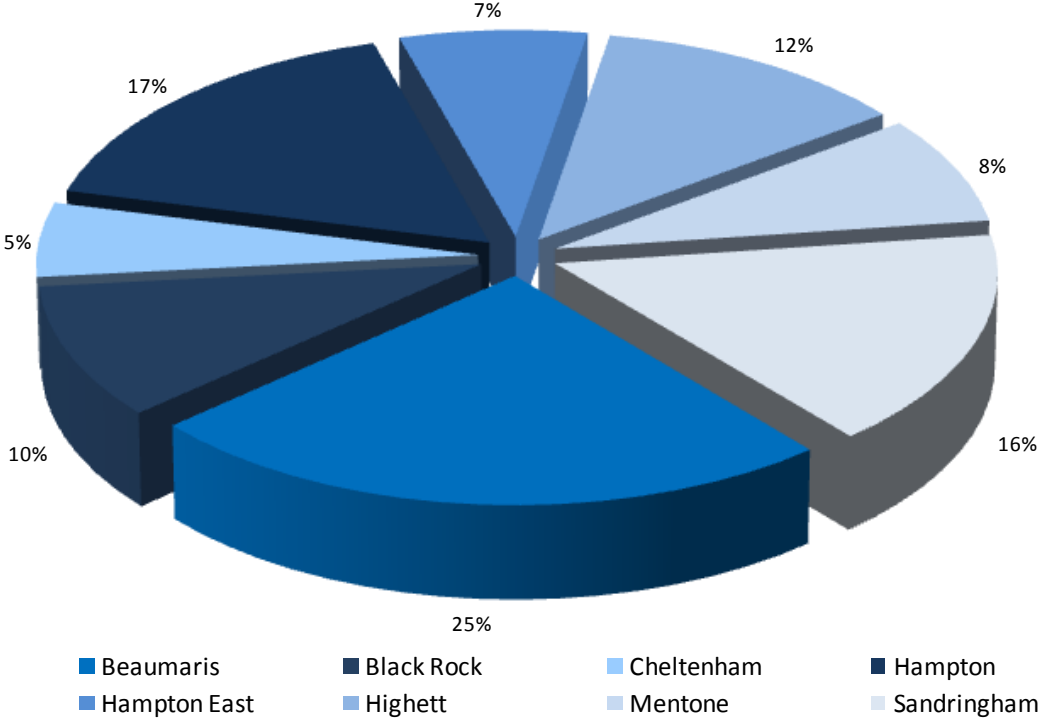
Population Cohort 2011	Beaumaris	Black Rock	Cheltenham	Hampton	Hampton East	Highbett	Mentone	Sandringham	Total
0-4 year olds	676	309	232	556	375	641	239	600	3,628
5-14 year olds	1,834	770	396	1,333	562	969	558	1,245	7,667
15-19 year olds	909	334	221	524	240	384	339	539	3,490
Total School Age (5 – 19)	2,743	1,140	617	1,857	802	1,353	897	1,784	11,157
Total School Age (5-19) as a % of Total Population	21.4%	18.2%	16.6%	21.8%	16.8%	17.4%	15.7%	19.3%	19.0%

The largest proportion of these children 2,713 (25%) live in the suburb of Beaumaris as shown in Figure 2 below.

<sup>6</sup> ABS data as presented by Spatial Vision (school age population divided by total catchment population)

Figure 2: Percentage of School Age Children by Suburb

### Percentage of School Age Children by Suburb



### Forecast

Table 5 below depicts primary and secondary age forecast figures by suburb.<sup>7</sup> Note that the figures for Cheltenham, Highett and Mentone only include the proportion of these suburbs that sit within the Sandringham catchment area.

The figures highlight that Beaumaris has the largest number of school age children, and this is also supported by data provided by the Bayside City Council.

*Table 5: Data Source Demographic Study: Sandringham College, Spatial Vision, September 2012*

School Age Forecast (5-19 years old)	Beaumaris	Black Rock	Cheltenham	Hampton	Hampton East	Highett	Mentone	Sandringham	Total
<b>Primary</b>									
2016	1,445	626	320	1,060	442	857	513	1035	6,298
2021	1,425	605	325	1,043	441	904	523	1030	6,296
2026	1,434	604	347	1,052	448	925	534	1037	6,381
<b>Secondary</b>									
2016	1,257	476	312	806	599	599	456	789	5,294
2021	1,250	473	336	785	617	617	473	787	5,338
2026	1,236	461	333	782	619	619	487	792	5,329

Table 6 below show forecasts by suburb, based on data provided by Bayside City Council. It is important to understand that this data set utilises the ABS forecast population as its base and not the pure Census data as used in the previous tables which draw from the Spatial Vision Demographic Study. Also, note that Mentone is part of the City of Kingston and is excluded from the Table below.

*Table 6: School age population data - Source Bayside City Council (Forecast ID)*

Bayside City Council Forecast	Beaumaris	Black Rock	Cheltenham	Hampton	Hampton East	Highett	Sandringham	Total
<b>5-9 Year Olds</b>								
2011	914	421	221	1,024	303	454	628	3,965
2016	823	387	239	946	341	485	743	3,964
2021	791	361	209	939	294	458	837	3,889
<b>10-14 Year Olds</b>								
2011	894	358	146	973	267	396	604	3,638
2016	958	436	222	1,006	279	413	677	3,991

<sup>7</sup> P57 Demographic Study: Sandringham College, Spatial Vision, September 2012

2021	898	407	245	931	300	420	802	4,003
15-19 Year Olds								
2011	923	347	222	831	259	338	578	3,498
2016	882	380	148	918	253	384	577	3,542
2021	922	426	217	920	267	387	669	3,808

Forecast data supplied by the City of Kingston is outlined below for Mentone which includes Moorabbin Airport and the proportion of the Cheltenham and Highett suburbs which sit within the City of Kingston. Whilst these suburbs are outside of the catchment area they are still potential (and actual) areas for attendees at the Beaumaris campus.

Table 7: School age population data - Data Source City of Kingston (Forecast ID)

City of Kingston Forecast	Cheltenham	Highett	Mentone / Moorabbin Airport
5-9 Year Olds			
2011	976	174	666
2016	1,069	243	631
2021	1,080	323	662
10-14 Year Olds			
2011	863	124	573
2016	1,018	204	756
2021	1,056	274	714
15-19 Year Olds			
2011	947	156	719
2016	1,025	195	728
2021	1,114	265	834

*The number of school age children is forecast to remain fairly stable between 2011 and 2026.*

The conclusion to be drawn from this data is that the growth rate of the school age student population is not predicted to grow dramatically between 2011 and 2026, at 4.6%. Nonetheless, forecasts to 2026 predict a population of 11,675 school age students residing in the Sandringham catchment area with 2,670 of that number in Beaumaris specifically.

#### Enrolment Rates

The proportion of children attending Victorian government secondary schools has decreased between 2006 and 2011. The enrolment rate (or yield) in 2006 was 46.97%<sup>8</sup> of all secondary school age (12 – 18 year olds) students attending a government school, whilst in 2011 the yield was 46.19%<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>8</sup> P45 Demographic Study: Sandringham College, Spatial Vision, September 2012

<sup>9</sup> P51 Demographic Study: Sandringham College, Spatial Vision, September 2012

*The proportion of children attending government secondary schools in the Sandringham area is lower than the Melbourne metropolitan and State averages.*

In the Sandringham catchment area this yield is lower than the State average, where the 2006 yield was 34.35% and in 2011, at 31%. During this time the actual population of secondary school age students within the catchment fell by 2% (5,044 students in 2006 and 4,941 in 2011) representing a greater movement than the pure percentage yield drop of 3.35%.

Historical yield rates within individual suburbs across the Sandringham catchment area vary significantly with no correlation or pattern to be drawn.

Factors affecting yield within a suburb or catchment area include the number of families, household earnings, mortgage repayments etc. It is interesting to note that between 2006 and 2011 the number of families living in Beaumaris has trebled, whilst average house hold earnings have halved.

It should also be noted that not all 5 to 12 year olds attend a primary school and that some 5 year olds may not have commenced at a primary school at the time of the Census. Students may also begin leaving secondary school from around 16 years of age with many transitioning to another form of education (e.g. TAFE).

Sandringham Secondary College continues to attract a large number of its enrolments from outside its immediate catchment, and in 2011 this represented 61%<sup>10</sup> of its student population. However, analysis of student addresses undertaken by Spatial Vision for the Department in August 2012 shows this to be 73.9%. On an individual campus basis 89.7% of Holloway Rd (Senior School) enrolments are from addresses outside of the catchment, with 50.9% of the Bluff Rd (7 – 10) and 68.8% of the Beaumaris student population residing outside of the catchment. Table 8 below shows this in more detail.

*Table 8: Data Source Spatial Vision Distribution of Population August 2012*

Location of Student Enrolment Addresses	Inside Catchment		Outside Catchment		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Campus						
Beaumaris (7-10)	41	31.5	89	68.8	130	100
Bluff Rd (7-10)	200	49.1	207	50.9	407	100
Holloway Rd (11-12)	65	10.3	569	89.7	634	100
Total	306	26.1	865	73.9	1171	100

In 2010, of the 947 students graduating from primary schools within the Beachside Region<sup>11</sup> 87 (9.1%) transitioned to Sandringham Secondary College. In 2012, 1,016 students graduated with only 68 (6.69%) transitioning to Sandringham Secondary College, and 45.47% of graduating students enrolling in non government schools.

The number of students transitioning to the Beaumaris campus from its neighbouring government primary schools<sup>12</sup> in 2012 was 27 or 13.9% of graduating students and in 2009 it was 21 students (11.8%). The majority of students transitioned to Brighton Secondary College, Cheltenham Secondary College or Mentone Girls Secondary College.

<sup>10</sup> Sandringham College Catchment Map, DEECD, June 2011

<sup>11</sup> Beachside Region consists of Albert Park PS, Beaumaris North PS, Beaumaris PS, Black Rock PS, Brighton Beach PS, Brighton PS, Cheltenham PS, Elsternwick PS, Elwood PS, Gardenvale PS, Hampton PS, Middle Park PS, Port Melbourne PS, Sandringham East PS, Sandringham PS, St Kilda PS and St Kilda Park PS.

<sup>12</sup> Beaumaris North PS, Beaumaris PS and Black Rock PS

Clearly, many Beaumaris parents are not choosing the nearest secondary education campus for their children.

### Government Secondary School Attendance

Table 9 below shows the calculation of likely yield across the Sandringham catchment area for Government schools based on secondary school age student population, and comparing the 2011 Sandringham yield (31%) with the Melbourne metropolitan average yield (45%).

*Table 9: Projected Student Enrolments at Government Secondary Schools. Yield rate is constant across these forecasts.*

*Data Source Distribution of Population August 2012 by Yield and Demographic Study: Sandringham College, September 2012 (Spatial Vision). Yield rates provided by DEECD*

Secondary School Age Forecast	Beaumaris	Black Rock	Cheltenham	Hampton	Hampton East	Highbett	Mentone	Sandringham	Total
<b>2016 Enrolments</b>									
Sandringham Area Yield	390	148	97	250	118	186	141	245	1,573
Melbourne Metro Average	566	214	140	363	171	270	205	355	2,284
<b>2021 Enrolments</b>									
Sandringham Area Yield	388	147	104	243	117	191	147	244	1,581
Melbourne Metro Average	563	213	151	353	171	278	213	354	2,295
<b>2026 Enrolments</b>									
Sandringham Area Yield	383	143	103	242	117	192	151	246	1,578
Melbourne Metro Average	556	207	150	352	171	279	219	356	2,290

*Based on the 2016 forecast, it can be expected that 1,573 students in the Sandringham catchment area would attend a government secondary college.*

Using the 2016 forecast, the above indicates that a range between 1,573 to 2,284 students would attend a government secondary college. Note that these figures only include the school age students which reside in the Sandringham catchment area.



## Stakeholder Consultation – Issues and Themes

### Secondary Principals

Principals from the following government Secondary Colleges were consulted as part of the Study:

- Bentleigh Secondary College;
- Brighton Secondary College;
- Cheltenham Secondary College;
- Mentone Girls Secondary College;
- Mordialloc Secondary College;
- Parkdale Secondary College; and
- Sandringham College.

The key themes and issues arising out the consultations with these principals include:

- *Choice of secondary schooling* – there is a perception that there is a reasonable level of choice of non-government and government secondary education in the broader Sandringham area, most notably in the vicinity of Mentone and Brighton, however all principals do not necessarily share this perception. For residents of the suburbs of Beaumaris and Black Rock, because of their geographic location, Sandringham College represents their ‘local’ secondary college, with other secondary education choices available in suburbs located to the north, north-east and east. Some schools indicated that at the end of Year 10 small numbers of students move to Sandringham Senior Campus to access subjects not offered at their school.
- *Capacity* – while there is a perception that there is a reasonable level of choice of secondary schooling in the broader Sandringham catchment area, this needs to be in the context of capacity for enrolments. Of the seven government secondary schools in the broader Sandringham area, three of these schools are not ‘zoned’ (Bentleigh Secondary College, Mordialloc Secondary College, and Sandringham College), while the others have formal Neighbourhood Boundaries. Based on current enrolments, Bentleigh, Mordialloc and Sandringham have capacity for further enrolments, while some capacity exists at Cheltenham.
- *Zoning / Neighbourhood Boundaries* – as noted above, three of the government secondary colleges in the broader Sandringham area have formal Neighbourhood Boundaries. Neighbourhood Boundaries are primarily designed to ensure enrolment numbers are kept within the built capacity of the relevant secondary college. However, there is often a public perception that a school with a Neighbourhood Boundary is somehow better or more exclusive, which may not be a fair comparison to the schools that do not have a Neighbourhood Boundary.
- *Impact on enrolments* – there were mixed views on the extent to which a new standalone school at Beaumaris would impact on enrolments at other schools. This would be influenced by current enrolment numbers at schools and their proximity to the Beaumaris campus. Secondary schools that are located in close proximity to the Beaumaris Campus, including those with Neighbourhood Boundaries may experience a reduction in enrolments if students choose to transfer to a new secondary college. These neighbouring secondary colleges may then actively seek to replace lost enrolments which may have an impact on outer lying secondary colleges. It is also possible that enrolments could be drawn from non-government secondary schools in the area. However it was indicated that this would depend on the nature of the programs to be offered at a new college, whether

or not new, attractive facilities would be built on site and the type and quality of any specialisations.

- *Curriculum provision* – Enrolment levels in all secondary colleges, with the exception of the Beaumaris campus, enable the provision of core curriculum programs plus electives for Years 7-10 students. In all colleges many students at year 10 are engaged in either VCE or VET programs. Most colleges have sufficient numbers of years 11/12 students to allow for comprehensive, senior secondary curriculum provision. Some colleges though, focus primarily on the VCE and limit VET provision. In a number of colleges there are some students who leave at the end of year 10 to take up VET/apprenticeship pathways offered by other providers including Sandringham senior campus. Timetables in all colleges are organised to enable students to study VET/VCAL subjects in TAFE colleges or other schools on a Wednesday. Most indicated that relationships with TAFE institutes are positive and focused on providing more options for students. Not all colleges offer VCAL.

All colleges indicate that support is provided to students to assist in the design of programs to meet students' academic and pathway needs. In general, the colleges devote time to professional learning activities designed to develop teachers' understanding and skills.

Sandringham senior campus provides broad, comprehensive offerings for students who are able, with appropriate support, to access customised programs. Timetabling arrangements allow students to choose programs that reflect their interests and pathway aspirations.

- *Partnerships* – there was some agreement in-principle to the concept of partnership arrangements between secondary colleges in the area, particularly in the area of curriculum provision and shared use of facilities. Nevertheless, while there was some support for the concept the successful implementation of these arrangements is seen to be very much reliant on the extent to which school leaders are prepared to cooperate and collaborate, whether or not formal agreements are struck, the alignment of timetables and co-ordination of transport arrangements.

Some principals expressed reservations about the feasibility or practicality of formal partnerships as they were more focused on their own schools and their sustainability in an increasingly competitive market. Some also expressed the view that at present, there was minimal cooperation and collaboration among the secondary colleges in the area and that considerable effort, commitment and agreement on purpose would be required to enable successful partnerships. An audit of curriculum programs and pedagogical practices in all colleges could be a useful starting point.

The Principal of Sandringham College indicated that if a new Beaumaris 7-12 college were established then a formal partnership between the two colleges should be entered into to ensure the best possible educational options for students. Essentially this would enable sharing of resources and the broadening of specialised programs.

- *Specialisation* – offering a specialisation, in addition to a core focus on academic achievement, was seen as a key success factor for a new standalone secondary college. There was a common view that a specialisation of some sort would enhance the ability of a proposed secondary college to draw enrolments from a broad catchment area. Many schools in the Sandringham area and in neighbouring catchments use specialisations or niche offerings as a means of encouraging students to their school, examples include:
  - Bentleigh Secondary College – Environmental Sustainability (International Award Winner)

- Brighton Secondary College – Science, Select Entry Accelerated Learning (SEAL) program
- John Monash Science School – Science
- McKinnon Secondary College – Music
- Mentone Girls Secondary College – Single gender school for girls
- Mordialloc Secondary College – SEAL program
- Parkdale Secondary College – Elite Sports Pathway

Specialisation or niche offerings have the potential to draw enrolments from the non-government sector. Possible specialisations for a new secondary college at Beaumaris could include sports (due to the expansive grounds and open spaces, community involvement in a broad range of sporting/recreational activities, Port Phillip Bay, nearby golf courses), environmental science (heath lands) and marine science (proximity to Port Phillip Bay). It was noted that some of the suggested specialisations may generate competition with other secondary colleges in the area.

Specialisation could also take the form of a specialised campus (attached to Sandringham College) offering either a ‘vertical’ curriculum stream through years 7 to 12, or catering for a particular student cohort e.g. Year 9 or 10. It was suggested that this could be a facility that is utilised by all government secondary colleges in the area in partnership with Sandringham College.

- *Facilities* – appearance is a factor in the choice of secondary education and would be a success factor in the establishment of a new secondary college on the Beaumaris campus. A new secondary college could not rely upon re-branding and re-naming only. Targeted investment would be required to provide upgraded, modern and contemporary facilities in order to present a genuinely ‘new’ school. This investment could be staged over a number of years to match enrolment trends. Some principals indicated that if this were to happen then the impact on enrolments might be greater.
- *Co-education* – although not raised by all principals, it was noted that there is currently an all girls government secondary college in the area, but not a similar option for boys. Principals noted that a number of non-government secondary schools no longer provided single gender education for boys and were now moving to co-education. This appears to be a market driven response, and to offer single sex education would reduce the potential enrolment base of a new standalone secondary college.

### Primary Principals

Principals (or Assistant Principals) from the following government Primary Schools were consulted as part of the Study:

- Beaumaris Primary School;
- Beaumaris North Primary School;
- Black Rock Primary School;
- Brighton Primary School;
- Brighton Beach Primary School;
- Cheltenham Primary School;
- Cheltenham East Primary School;
- Hampton Primary School;
- Kingston Heath Primary School;
- Le Page Primary School;
- Mentone Primary School;
- Mentone Park Primary School;

- Moorabbin Primary School;
- Parkdale Primary School;
- Parktone Primary School;
- Sandringham East Primary School;
- Sandringham Primary School;
- Southmoor Primary School; and
- Tucker Road Primary School.

The key themes and issues arising out of consultation with these principals include:

- *Distance to school* – the proximity of the secondary school to home is a factor influencing choice of secondary schooling, but not the sole factor. Parents will generally opt for their local secondary school if it meets their expected standards of academic achievement, facilities, behaviour expectations of students, and quality of teaching staff.
- *Transport options* – it was noted by some principals that transport options are limited in the Beaumaris and Black Rock area, which would need to be considered if a new standalone secondary college was to be established. Public transport is limited to buses and many students would need to utilise one or more modes of public transport to attend school in the area.
- *Choices in local area* – a number of primary principals included in the consultation process are zoned schools and are located some distance from the Beaumaris campus of Sandringham College. The residential address of the parents at their school influences the choice of secondary college. If the local secondary college meets their requirements and they are in the Neighbourhood Boundary for their preferred secondary school they will send their children there. In some instances, parents have a number of choices of secondary college in their area, both government and non-government. A number of principals noted that because of Neighbourhood Boundaries more parents are willing to move house in order for their child to attend the preferred secondary college for their child.
- *Specialisation* – specialisation provides the opportunity for secondary colleges to offer a niche to encourage enrolments. However, specialisations or niche offerings should be in addition to a broad based core curriculum centred on good academic achievement. Primary principals, like their secondary college counterparts, identified a range of specialisations that could leverage the geographic location, extensive grounds and open space available at the Beaumaris campus. These specialisations included sport (golf, sailing), International Baccalaureate, select entry accelerated learning (SEAL), marine science and environmental science.
- *Standards and culture of school* – all parents want a good education for their children. The general culture and standards of a school are important determinants of the choice of secondary school. Many principals in the area indicated that most parents are seeking schools that exhibit high standards, strive for strong academic achievement, have good facilities and set clear expectations for the behaviour of their students.
- *Facilities* – the quality and appearance of facilities are a key factor in the choice of secondary education. Principals noted that some secondary schools in the area (e.g. Brighton Secondary College, Parkdale Secondary College) have recently been upgraded or had new facilities added. By comparison Sandringham College is perceived as outdated and run down. The quality of facilities is seen as a success factor for schools. The option of establishing a standalone secondary college would require investment in upgraded and new facilities to encourage enrolments. This investment could be

staged over a number of years. A 're-branding' without the co-commitment of an investment in upgrades would not be sufficient to encourage enrolments and engender public perception of a 'new' secondary school.

- *Transition programs* – most primary schools have strong transition programs with their local neighbouring secondary colleges. Transition programs and linkages with neighbouring secondary colleges are considered an important success factor in encouraging enrolments. Transition programs enable parents and students to familiarise themselves with their local secondary college and what it has to offer. It was noted that although Sandringham College has strong transition programs with a number of its neighbouring primary schools, these do not in themselves result in enrolments at Sandringham College. While transition programs are an important factor it is not the only factor.
- *Competition for enrolments* – some primary principals indicated a trend for more parents to opt for non-government secondary schools. For some primary schools, there has been no change in the trend, some traditionally have a high proportion of students transitioning to non-government secondary schools, while other primary schools traditionally have a low proportion of students transitioning to non-government schools.

The trend to non-government schools is not restricted to students leaving primary school at the end of Year 6. In recent years, primary schools have been losing students at the end of Year 4 and Year 5. In recent years, non-government schools have been known to offer significantly reduced (50% discount) fees over a number of years as an incentive to parents to enrol their children earlier at a non-government school.

## Survey – Summary Findings

Over a two week period, 2,970 survey responses were collected representing the views of current parents of Sandringham College, parents of pre-school or primary aged children in the area, members of a school community in the neighbouring area, current students in the area and interested community members and staff.

Both the response rate and the results themselves illustrate a high level of interest in secondary education options for the Sandringham and Beaumaris area.

54.7% of respondents identified as a parent of pre-school or primary school aged children, and as such, survey analysis is well placed to discuss current decision-making intentions and factors which might influence secondary education decisions for a future student cohort.

Approximately 80% of respondents have a particular interest in Sandringham College's Beaumaris campus, and 940 respondents expect to make decisions on secondary education options for their family by 2015. The data highlight that there is also an increasing need to plan strategically for younger age groups in the area, with lower primary and pre-primary children well represented in survey analysis.

Factors which are important to respondents when considering secondary education include the quality of teaching, suitable curriculum and the general culture of the school. There are more divided views across the survey group on the importance of co-education versus single gender education, and on the need for years 7-12 education at a single location, however these still rate relatively highly overall as decision factors for parents.

On the subject of co-education versus single gender education, a view exists that a boys only school at Beaumaris would be ideal, however this

*2,970 survey responses were collected in a two week period illustrating a high level of interest in discussion about secondary education options in the Sandringham and Beaumaris area.*

is not a majority view. It was observed that 56% of respondents (not including current students and interested community members) believe that co-education is 'important' or 'very important' while 29% of respondents feel that single gender education is 'important' or 'very important'.

The suitability of the Beaumaris Campus in its current form is perceived as limited, with only 10% of respondents identifying as parents or members of a nearby school community believing that the campus meets their requirements for secondary education. Participants cite the poor quality of facilities, current reputation of the school, gender imbalance of enrolments, lack of academic strength, a need for 7-12 education and current uncertainty about the future of the campus as factors affecting their views.

When asked about their views on the establishment of a standalone Years 7-12 Beaumaris Secondary College, over 1,000 survey respondents believe that they would 'definitely' or 'likely' choose this option for secondary education. Looking in more detail, respondents that indicated that they have a child in Year 4 (often the decision point for secondary education), there were 97 respondents who believe that they would 'definitely' and 113 that would 'likely' choose this option for secondary education. Similarly, for respondents with a child in Year 6, there were 73 respondents who believe that they would 'definitely' and 59 that would 'likely' choose this option for secondary education.

In addition, views on alternative options highlight that 30% of respondents consider there to be no secondary education options meeting their requirements at present.

The need for local and accessible schooling is canvassed with 49% of respondents noting a reliance on public transport being available for their children to travel to secondary education and 63% of respondents indicating that their children would walk or ride a bike for at least a part of their journey.

Sandringham College campuses are also of value to the broader community, with 534 survey participants identifying most strongly as an 'interested community member or user of Sandringham College facilities, including current staff'. Over 1,200 respondents identified Sandringham College facilities as important to them for activities other than secondary education including basketball training, soccer, tennis, football, ballet concerts, calisthenics, walking the dog and general recreation and play.

Finally, student views round out the survey analysis, with the views of students generally aligning with those of parents and others. Students highlight good teachers, a good culture and friendliness, and choice of subjects as most important to them, while approximately 44% of this group also commented on the need to improve school facilities and buildings.