LILYDALE AND UPPER YARRA   
EDUCATION PLAN

2018

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# Acknowledgment of country

The Victorian State Government, Department of Education and Training, acknowledges the Wurundjeri People, Traditional Owners of the lands of Lilydale and Upper Yarra, and pays its respects to their Elders past, present and future.

The Department of Education and Training is committed to honouring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ unique cultural and spiritual relationships to the land, waters and seas and their rich contribution to society.

# Executive summary

In April 2017, the Victorian Government committed to transforming secondary education in the Lilydale and Upper Yarra area through the development of the Lilydale and Upper Yarra Education Plan (the Plan).

The Lilydale and Upper Yarra Education Plan seeks to boost educational outcomes and equalise enrolment numbers to ensure financial sustainability and an environment where resources are shared equally between three secondary schools in the area (Lilydale High School, Lilydale Heights College and Upper Yarra Secondary College).

For school communities in the Lilydale District and Yarra Valley Networks, achievement, engagement and wellbeing outcomes for young people are well below expected levels, and the challenges to achieving equity and excellence are particularly complex and multi-faceted.

This Plan provides the momentum to develop and implement strategies for the transformation of secondary education provision informed by community consultation. Current educational outcomes will be used as the baseline to determine the success of this Plan. The Plan will focus on opportunities to enhance student education and engagement through improved excellence in teaching and learning, creating positive climates for learning, better community engagement in learning and developing professional leadership which are the cornerstones of the Framework for Improving Student Outcomes (FISO).

The Lilydale and Upper Yarra Education Plan harnesses our collective responsibility for transforming education in a way that is guided by the needs and aspirations of the community. It will help to inspire a commitment to government education by repositioning learning and development at the heart of the community and building the community’s expectations about educational outcomes for children and young people in the area.

**How the Lilydale and Upper Yarra Education Plan was developed**

Since the announcement of the Lilydale and Upper Yarra Education Plan, the Department of Education and Training (DET) has sought feedback from community stakeholders to inform the vision of the Plan. The three secondary schools involved in the Plan are Lilydale Heights College, Lilydale High School and Upper Yarra Secondary College. The Plan currently includes partnerships with the three neighbouring secondary schools (Mooroolbark College, Yarra Hills Secondary College and Healesville High School), Box Hill Institute, (Lilydale Campus), Shire of Yarra Ranges, Outer East Local Learning and Employment Network (OELLEN) and relevant community organisations.

Governance arrangements for the Plan include a Strategic Advisory Committee with broad membership that provides knowledge, understanding and strategic thinking with regard to the future of education in the Yarra Ranges. An extensive community consultation process that took place between July and September of 2017 further informed the development of the Plan. Key stakeholders shared ideas and insights on the changes they desire for education provision in the Yarra Ranges.

The community clearly values the range of choice of schools in the local area and agrees that all secondary schools should be retained. However, there is an overwhelming consensus that secondary education provision necessitates transformation. There is agreement that strategies and initiatives are required to improve student achievement, engagement and wellbeing outcomes.

## The case for change

The Lilydale and Upper Yarra areas are located in the Shire of Yarra Ranges on metropolitan Melbourne’s eastern fringe. The Shire is one of Victoria’s main, most varied and scenic municipalities, and is the largest area of any metropolitan council. The number of children and young adults has been growing over the past 10 years and the total population is forecast to increase by 12 per cent over the next 14 years, to more than 178,000 residents by 2036 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016, Yarra Ranges Council, 2017).

Operating in the Yarra Ranges are:

* 67 funded kindergarten services;
* 48 government primary schools;,
* 8 Catholic primary schools;
* 2 independent primary schools;
* 1 Prep - Year 12 government school;
* 8 independent Prep – Year 12 schools;
* 8 government secondary schools;
* 2 Catholic secondary schools;
* 3 special schools; and
* 1 TAFE.

The area has a current overall unemployment rate of approximately five per cent, and a youth unemployment rate of almost double that, at nine and a half per cent. On a number of different metrics, the Lilydale and Upper Yarra areas of the Yarra Ranges experience poorer learning, employment, health, economic and social outcomes compared to the rest of Victoria.

**Challenges and opportunities for improved outcomes**

Data demonstrates that achievement, engagement and wellbeing outcomes across the three identified schools are below expected levels and that the imbalance of enrolments is affecting the viable and sustainable provision of a high quality secondary education, particularly in the two smaller schools.

The outcomes of the community consultation, highlighted further issues, as well as opportunities for the Plan, and the existing challenges to realising these.

Opportunities for the Plan include improved student achievement, engagement and wellbeing outcomes; building contemporary teaching and learning spaces; and enhancing workforce capability.

Challenges to realising these opportunities include: current instructional practice; student and community engagement levels; sustainability of current secondary education provision; the state of school infrastructure; and difficulties in attracting and developing a high quality workforce.

## A shared vision

**The vision for the Lilydale and Upper Yarra Education Plan is to transform local secondary education to provide every secondary student with the knowledge, capabilities and attributes that will see them thrive throughout their lives; they will have the skills that industry needs, and that employers expect.**

The Plan has the following aims that will progress the statewide FISO priorities:

Excellence in teaching and learning

* Enhance and fully embed evidence based school improvement initiatives

Professional leadership

* Build strong leadership teams

Community engagement in learning

* Strengthen collaboration between schools and build relationships with external stakeholders
* Enhance school themes, vision and culture through new school ‘identities’

Positive climate for learning

* Rejuvenate spaces for contemporary learning that support and foster intellectual engagement
* Provide viable and sustainable secondary education across all schools
* Improve student engagement and wellbeing

## Realising the vision

Community feedback clearly identified secondary education provision as the key driver to transforming the current level of student achievement levels across the three schools.

The Lilydale and Upper Yarra Education Plan will help the system to build on its strengths and emphasise continuous improvements in line with the aims outlined above. The three schools will continue to implement the Key Improvement Strategies identified in their Annual Implementation Plans (AIPs) to achieve their four-year School Strategic Plan (SSP) Goals. There will be a strong focus on assessment and feedback, with data informing practice and the measuring of outcomes.

The Plan will also invest in infrastructure projects as part of the Education State reform agenda, with a focus on cutting‑edge school design and innovative school settings.

Opportunities for collaboration between schools may extend beyond sharing good practice to more formalised arrangements for shared provision, workforce and facilities. Partnerships will also be harnessed across education providers, and other community and industry stakeholders. The schools will collaborate with stakeholders and effectively use school, system and community expertise and resources to meet the identified learning and development needs of all students.

## Implementation

A comprehensive action plan will be developed and implemented over a three-year period. Primarily, the respective principals and their leadership teams will be responsible for transforming secondary education in the Lilydale and Upper Yarra area, with the Outer East Area Executive Director responsible for documenting the specific roles and responsibilities for implementation of the Plan, including the level of support available from the regional office. The Plan will evolve over time to reflect the changing contexts and DET funded programs and priorities.

Strategies developed and implemented to achieve the aims of the Plan will align with the schools’ individual Annual Implementation Plans (AIP) and School Strategic Plans (SSP). As part of the schools’ AIPs, aligned to their SSPs, they have developed detailed plans encompassing actions, roles, responsibilities, timelines and success criteria for the next 12 months, which comprise incremental steps towards the achievement of the four-year SSP goals.

Significant school improvement work is already underway and will continue with the support of the Outer-East Area team. The Strategic Advisory Committee will be re-convened to guide the establishment of an implementation phase of the Plan, in close consultation with the school principals. DET will develop a statewide monitoring and evaluation framework to measure the success of Place-Based Education Plans. The schools will use their AIPs to measure relevant aspects of school performance in working towards their four year SSP goals.

# Introduction

The Victorian Government has invested more than $5 billion to make Victoria the Education State, improving outcomes for every student, in every classroom, in every school, and for all communities. The Education State is building a system that provides every student with the knowledge, capabilities and attributes that will see them thrive throughout their lives, to have the skills that industry needs, and that employers expect.

The ambitious Education State targets focus our efforts on the things that promote excellence across the curriculum, the health and wellbeing of students and breaking the link between disadvantage and student outcomes.

These targets reflect our ambition to improve outcomes for children and young people:

* **Learning for Life**
  + More students achieving excellence in reading, maths, science, critical and creative thinking and the arts.
* **Happy, Healthy and Resilient Kids**
  + Building the resilience of our children, and encouraging them to be more physically active.
* **Breaking the Link**
  + Ensuring more students stay in school and breaking the link between disadvantage and outcomes for students.
* **Pride and Confidence in our Schools​**
  + Making sure every community has access to excellence, in every government school and classroom.

The Framework for Improving Student Outcomes (FISO) has been developed to help us work together to dramatically increase the focus on student learning in schools. It helps schools and education partners to focus their efforts on key areas that are known to have the greatest impact on school improvement, enabling principals, school leaders, teachers, students, parents, regional staff and policy-makers to work together to create better outcomes for our students.

The development of the Lilydale and Upper Yarra Education Plan was funded as part of the $7 million 2017-18 Victorian State Budget Planning initiative and includes Lilydale High School, Lilydale Heights Secondary College and Upper Yarra Secondary College. The Lilydale and Upper Yarra Education Plan aims to transform and invigorate the provision of secondary education in the Lilydale and Upper Yarra areas by providing a holistic and systemic response to challenges faced by the secondary schools. The Plan will also assist in realigning the imbalance of enrolments between the schools and will set a collective vision to improve education provision and outcomes in the area.

The Lilydale and Upper Yarra Education Plan will guide schools and education partners to focus their efforts on what matters the most aligned with the FISO priority areas of:

* achieving excellence in teaching and learning
* professional leadership
* community engagement in learning and
* creating a positive climate for learning.

## **Why have a Plan?**

The Education State reforms are driving improvements at all levels of the system to help education providers of early childhood services through to post-secondary services achieve equity and excellence for our children and young people. However, for school communities in the Lilydale District and Yarra Valley Networks, achievement, engagement and wellbeing outcomes for young people are well below expected levels, and the challenges to achieving equity and excellence are particularly complex and multi-faceted. These challenges are beyond the reach of a single school or service, as they stem from geographic, social and demographic factors.

With strong new leadership in place, it is timely to implement a Plan that focuses on harnessing collective responsibility for transforming education in the community, with a focus on improving learner achievement, engagement and wellbeing outcomes. The key characteristic of this Place-Based Education Plan is that the needs and aspirations of the community have guided its development. Local community stakeholders collaborated to identify the strategies necessary to improve these outcomes, and contribute to the development of a holistic, comprehensive place based response.

The process of developing a Place-Based Education Plan can forge strong, ongoing connections between these local stakeholders – including education providers (early years, primary and secondary, post-secondary), families, and community, industry, government and support services. It can inspire engagement and commitment to successful educational outcomes by repositioning lifelong learning and development at the heart of the community.

## How the Lilydale and Upper Yarra Education Plan was developed

**Governance arrangements**  
The Strategic Advisory Committee, which includes a cross-section of government, community leaders, educational providers and other relevant stakeholders (see Appendix 1), has provided advice to DET regarding the development of the Plan. In doing so, the Strategic Advisory Committee has taken into account the various outputs of the community consultation and considered the educational opportunities of the project. The Strategic Advisory Committee has participated in discussions to identify innovative approaches and strategies to meet the strategic outcomes of this project. The Committee will be reconvened to advise on the implementation of the Plan with membership revised as necessary.

### Community engagement

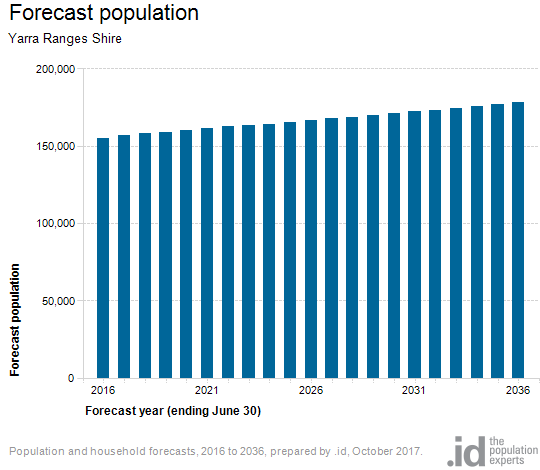
Community members and stakeholders in the Lilydale and Upper Yarra areas were consulted between July and September 2017 to inform the development of the Plan. During two engagement phases, local residents, workers, community groups, business, government and industry stakeholders shared ideas and insights on the changes they desire for educational provision in the Yarra Ranges. In total: 85 community members and service providers participated in the engagement; 21 school teachers completed an online survey; and 57 school community members participated in workshops, including principals, vice-principals, school council members, teachers and students. More than 1,920 individual comments across these engagement activities were collated and analysed. The consultation highlighted multiple priority areas for improvement; these have informed the development and direction of the Plan.

## The community

**Overview**  
Lilydale and Upper Yarra are located in the Shire of Yarra Ranges on metropolitan Melbourne’s eastern fringe. Yarra Ranges is one of Victoria’s most varied municipalities, and is the largest area of any metropolitan council. There are more than 55 suburbs, townships, small communities and rural areas in the Ranges. Early industries in the area focused on timber, quarrying, farming and viticulture, but today tourism is the municipality's foundation, with more than three million people visiting the Yarra Valley's flourishing wineries and stunning landscapes each year (Yarra Ranges Council, 2016).

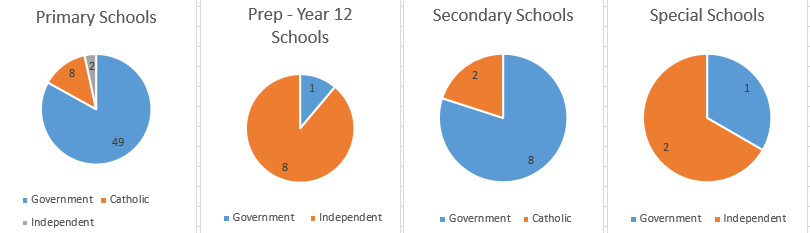
**Socio-economic disadvantage**  
In 2011, Yarra Ranges Council area scored 1,037.1 on the Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas(SEIFA), Index of Disadvantage. Yarra Junction scored 977 (compared to Lilydale, which scored 1037). The Student Family Occupation Education (SFOE) across the Yarra Ranges schools ranges from average to well below average.

**Local population growth**  
Yarra Ranges has a relatively high birth rate and is expected to have relatively high population growth (see below). The 15 to 20-year masterplan to redevelop the Lilydale quarry site may bring in up to 2,500 new dwellings, shops and community facilities to the area (Plan Cave Hill, 2013).



Yarra Ranges Shire: Forecast population

**School enrolment demand**  
In 2017, Yarra Ranges had: 10,509 students attending government primary schools and 6,513 student attending government secondary schools. Overall, 25 per cent of Yarra Ranges primary school students and 40 per cent of secondary school students attend Catholic or Independent schools.



Schools by sector

**Higher education**  
A lower percentage of the Yarra Ranges population engages in tertiary education, as compared to the population in Greater Melbourne (Australian Census, 2016). A very low level of the population attends university (10.9 per cent of residents compared to 17.8 per cent of residents across Victoria), but a slightly above average level of residents attend TAFE or equivalents (7.2 per cent of residents compared to 5.7 per cent of residents across Victoria) (Yarra Ranges Council, 2016). In 2017, the percentage of students across Lilydale and Upper Yarra Schools applying for tertiary places ranged from 54 per cent to 93 per cent.

Vocational and higher education in the Yarra Valley was revived in 2015, when Box Hill Institute (BHI) – in partnership with Deakin University and William Angliss, opened a Lilydale campus. This is the only higher education institution in the area and offers Graduate Diplomas, Bachelor Degrees, Associate Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates (all levels).

**Industry**   
The largest industries in the Yarra Ranges offering the highest number of jobs include retail trade, manufacturing, and education and training. Construction, healthcare and social assistance, and tourism are also significant industry areas (Yarra Ranges Council, 2017). Manufacturing, one of the area’s main industries, is likely to decrease in the coming years as a result of productivity increases and international competition, particularly in labour intensive industries (Outer East Local Learning and Employment Network, 2017). Still, the manufacturing sector may be able to develop in line with the area’s food and fibre industries, and the Yarra Ranges’ significant agriculture activities, especially given their visibility in the physical landscape and role as a tourism attractor for visitors to Melbourne’s east.

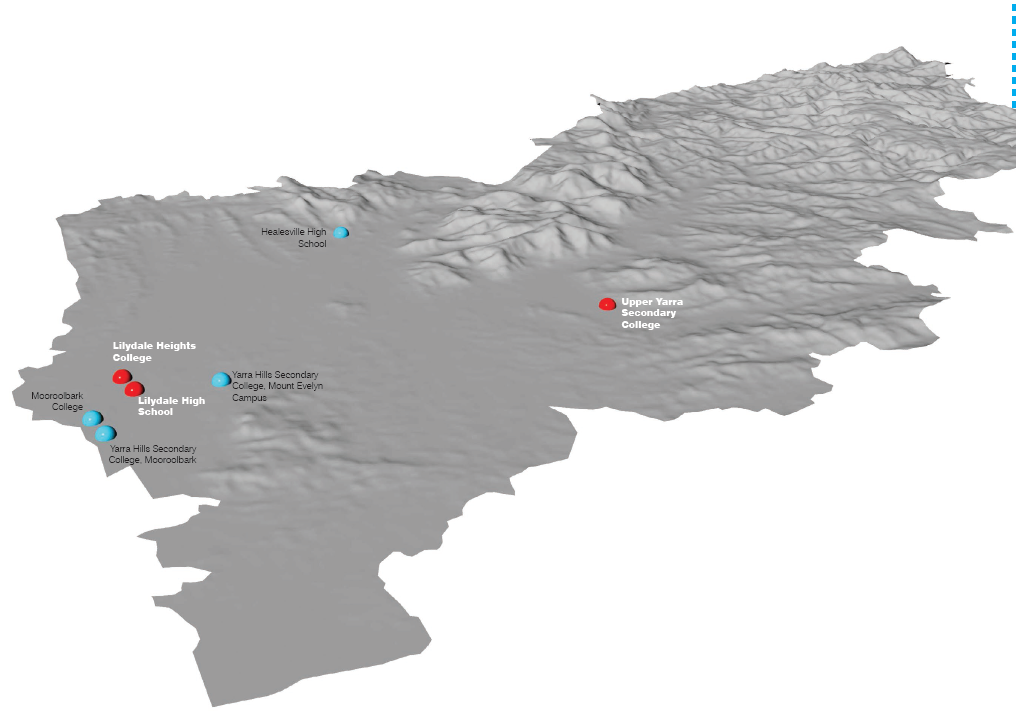
**Employment**   
Employment varies immensely within Yarra Ranges. In December 2016, Yarra Ranges’ unemployment rate was approximately five per cent, below the Victorian average of six per cent. The youth unemployment rate was more than double, at nine and a half per cent (Australian Bureau of Statistics Labour Data, 2016). Unemployment is much higher in the Upper Yarra Valley compared to the whole of Yarra Ranges. Yarra Ranges offers approximately 36,000 jobs across the municipality. The main issue facing Yarra Ranges is underemployment where highly skilled people are working in low skill jobs. This is caused by a number of factors including access to transport, isolation and suitable locally based jobs.

## Education providers and partners

**Secondary Schools**The following table provides a profile of the secondary schools directly involved in the Plan:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Education Plan Schools | Lilydale Heights College | Lilydale High School | Upper Yarra Secondary College |
| Total Students | 470 | 1,811 | 525 |
| Total FTE teaching staff | 36.8 | 136.1 | 40.5 |
| SFOE Index | 0.4926 | 0.4179 | 0.5768 |
| School ‘Identity’ | Sustainability | Zoology | Outdoor Environment |

While this Plan is primarily focused on three local secondary schools, there are another three local secondary schools that also stand to benefit from the development of the Plan. They are Healesville High School, Mooroolbark Secondary College and Yarra Hills Secondary College. There is an existing strong culture of partnership and co-operation between these six secondary schools; they are already collaborating on VCE teacher networks and the Yarra Valley VET Cluster, and are all partners of the Yarra Ranges Tech School. In addition, the schools are participating in the Professional Learning Communities (PLC) initiative in 2018 and have been working together as part of a secondary school literacy network for over two years. The following map is a context analysis of the environment in which the six secondary schools operate.



**Primary Schools**The local primary schools have much to benefit from the development of the Plan, even though the focus is on transforming secondary education.

In particular, an early focus in the Plan about ‘high expectations’ will be the catalyst for primary schools to adopt a similar ideal as students begin their formal schooling. This will forge stronger links between primary and secondary schools, support seamless transitions, ensure consistency of curriculum and pedagogy and lead to the retention of students in local schools.

Already the local primary schools have demonstrated their willingness to align themselves with the Plan. They are represented on the Strategic Advisory Committee, have participated in joint professional learning and will collaborate with some secondary schools in the Professional Learning Communitie initiative.

**Early Childhood Services**

While this Plan is primarily focused on secondary school aged students, there is significant evidence to support the inclusion of early childhood services in various joint initiatives. Opportunities to engage the early childhood services will be explored in the future as the Plan is implemented.

**Box Hill Institute**Given the resurgence of higher education in Lilydale as a result of the opening of the Lilydale campus of BHI, in partnership with Deakin University and William Angliss, there is a significant opportunity to build stronger pathways for students to higher education and employment. BHI already provides a comprehensive suite of VET subjects on site, complementing those offered at the schools themselves, and the Yarra Ranges Tech School is exposing students to high tech responses to real world problems.

BHI also provides employment opportunities for the local community in the fields of education, hospitality, disability services and early childhood (currently under construction), and may be able to provide work experience and work placements for local students. The BHI partnership with Deakin University and William Angliss provide further opportunities for students seeking these respective pathways.

**Yarra Ranges** **Shire Council**  
Yarra Ranges Shire Council, including their elected officials and senior executive staff, has taken an active interest in the development of the Plan. Having high quality education provision in the Shire is important to the Council and it has contributed to the development of this Plan through the provision of data, identifying community need, providing links to industry, exploring infrastructure partnerships for joint use and active participation in the community engagement process. The Plan provides a platform to strengthen and increase the collaboration between schools and the Shire over time.

**Industry and Community Partners**

The secondary schools are all in the process of developing links to industry and community partners. These partnerships align with the unique school ‘identities’ being embraced by the schools.

*Lilydale Heights College* – Sustainability Victoria and CERES have been engaged by Lilydale Heights to assist them to conceptualise how to bring their sustainability identity to life through the infrastructure master plan and curriculum.

*Lilydale High School* – Initial discussions have be held with Zoos Victoria to establish education programs that can be translated into the school setting at all levels, with an preliminary focus on the junior years of secondary school. In addition, the school is exploring ways in which a connection can be made between their highly regarded and unique reptile program and local veterinary services.

*Upper Yarra Secondary College* –The College is forging relationships with outdoor learning specialists to benefit from already established outdoor learning programs. Rubicon, the outdoor secondary school operated by the Department of Education of Training will assist Upper Yarra Secondary College to enhance the provisioning of outdoor learning pedagogies and practices that allow students to develop an enhanced understanding of themselves and their community, in line with the strong local connection to the outdoor environment.

In addition, a partnership between the school and the Institute for Drone Technology is already paying dividends with the delivery of a nationally certified Certificate III in Aviation – Remote Drone Piloting course running from 2018. The use of this technology already exists in many industries related to the outdoor environment including aerial photography, fire-fighting, emergency and other surveillance, real estate, mining and engineering, construction, and agriculture.

*Outer East Local Learning and Employment Network* (OELLEN) - The OELLEN has been proactive in getting behind this Plan. It is represented on the Strategic Advisory Committee and is already identifying how its existing activities and strategic partnerships can support the goals of the Plan. In addition, the OELLEN will align its resources to work on an industry engagement plan that reflects the goals of this Plan for the benefit of all secondary schools in the Yarra Ranges.

## Previous initiatives to improve education outcomes

While no strategic community wide interventions have previously been established or trialled in the Lilydale or Upper Yarra areas, steps have been progressively implemented in recent times to improve the educational outcomes for students.

Over the past 2-3 years, new capable and competent leadership has been recruited. The development of the leadership teams at all three schools is building momentum and starting to show signs of improvement, so that the schools are on a trajectory to excellence in a system that embeds a continuous improvement culture. Effective new leadership and leadership development opportunities are enabling the schools to drive their school improvement agenda with confidence and commitment.

***School Reviews*** - Following the finalisation of a school review in 2016, Upper Yarra Secondary College has developed a four-year strategic plan that establishes its future vision and directions. Both Lilydale High School and Lilydale Heights Colleges are scheduled for a Review in 2018. The timing of these school reviews aligns well with the aims of the Plan, as the outcomes of the Reviews will directly inform the Schools’ Strategic Plans.

***School networks*** *-* The re-invigoration of School Networks has enabled the schools to seize local opportunities to collaborate, and share knowledge and resources to support achievement, wellbeing and engagement of all students.

In addition, various Communities of Practice have been established (Secondary Literacy FISO Groups, PLCs, Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE), Respectful Relationships Networks and a focus on attendance).

***The Yarra Ranges Tech School*** – All three schools are active participants, which provides further opportunities to collaborate with industry partners, higher education providers and other stakeholders in the area.

***Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL)*** - Lilydale High School is offering VCAL for the first time in 2018, which will likely increase the retention rates of students in Lilydale and increase the number of students receiving an accredited secondary certificate. Lilydale Heights College and Upper Yarra Secondary College already offer VCAL and have done so for many years.

# **The case for change**

Complex and multi-faceted challenges have resulted in learning outcomes for secondary students that are lower than expected across the secondary schools in the Lilydale District and Yarra Valley School Networks.

In addition, there is a significant imbalance of student enrolments across the three secondary schools, with many students opting to attend the largest school in the district for reasons including community perception, access to a higher quality education and/or availability of a broader range of subject choices.

The infrastructure needs at the two smaller schools also impact on the decisions that parents make about their children’s schooling. While the larger school, Lilydale High School, has had significant capital investment over the past 10 years, the smaller schools have only had limited investment and do not have access to contemporary fit for purpose modern teaching facilities.

Lack of opportunities for high-quality secondary education means that students have limited chances to develop the skills required to transition into successful higher education and career pathways. The transformation of secondary education in the area will see more secondary students excel in life and become successful citizens.

## Challenges and opportunities for improved outcomes

Between July and September of 2017, an extensive community consultation process on the Plan took place. During two engagement phases, students, teachers, school communities and school councils, local residents, workers, community groups, business, government and industry stakeholders shared ideas and insight and provided feedback on the changes they desire for secondary school education provision in the Yarra Ranges. In total: 85 community members and service providers participated in the engagement, 21 school teachers completed an online survey and 57 school community members participated in workshops (including principals, vice principals, school council members, teachers and students). More than 1,920 individual comments across these engagements were collected and analysed. The outcomes of the Engagement Report (summarised below) have helped inform the development of the Plan.

The community identified aspects of the local system that they considered were working well. However, there was an overwhelming consensus that the current secondary education provision requires transformation and that the Plan could assist in achieving this. The table below summarises the findings of the community engagement.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| What is Working Well | What Needs to be Improved | | | |
| Quality and contribution of teaching staff and leadership  Variety of subject choices and learning options available  Engagement and collaboration among schools and the broader community  Smooth transitions from primary to secondary school  Range of choice of schools in the area | **Learning for life** | **Happy, healthy and resilient kids** | **Breaking the link** | **Pride and confidence in our schools** |
| Subject choice and teaching skills for life  Engagement with community and parents  Collaboration among teachers and schools  Teaching and leadership development  Enhancing post-school pathways  Student engagement | Supporting student wellbeing and welfare needs  Transitions through the school years | Access and transport  Removing financial barriers to learning | Modernise buildings, facilities and learning environments  Raising the reputation and profile of schools |

It is important to note that while there was general consensus amongst those involved in the community consultations, there were some differences of opinion in what people thought was working well, and what could be improved. For example, ‘variety of subject choice’ was identified as working well, whereas ‘subject choice and teaching skills for life’ was considered an area for improvement.

These differences might simply reflect the breadth of views canvassed during the consultations and the differing levels of knowledge, understanding and personal experience of those consulted.

The following are opportunities and challenges for the Lilydale and Upper Yarra Education Plan, taking into account the data, the evidence base and community consultation.

There is a very clear rationale for why the opportunities identified have been highlighted as relevant for this Plan. The discussion below seeks to illustrate why these opportunities are important, and how they may contribute to the transformation of secondary education in Lilydale and Upper Yarra. This is then followed by the aims of the Plan, which articulate the specific actions that will be taken to achieve these opportunities in alignment with the secondary school transformation approach.

### Improved student achievement, engagement and wellbeing outcomes

A key opportunity identified for the Lilydale and Upper Yarra Education Plan is the facilitation of a collaborative approach to improve student achievement, engagement and wellbeing outcomes, which are currently below expected levels.

Current instructional practice is not delivering the outcomes needed for students to reach their potential. Secondary school performance in the National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) ranges from close to the national average in all 10 areas (reading, writing, spelling, grammar and punctuation, and numeracy) to below or substantially below average. NAPLAN data demonstrates the extent of literacy and numeracy challenges faced by the schools. The schools have low relative growth rates across reading, writing and numeracy in Years 5 to 7 and Years 7 to 9, and a low percentage of students that are achieving high relative growth compared to state averages.

The percentage of students in all top two NAPLAN bands is significantly lower than other schools in the Outer East, North-Eastern Region and rest of the state, and outcomes do not improve as students’ progress towards studying for the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE). In 2016, 58 per cent of students from the three schools scored 20 to 28 in VCE English, compared to 43 per cent of students in the rest of the state. The percentage of students scoring above 37 for English decreased from six per cent in 2015 to three per cent in 2016. In 2017, the median VCE study scores for the schools ranged from 26-28, still below the state average.

Data indicates that students across the three schools are disengaged from education at various levels (with content, in class, with school, and/or with education as a whole). The 2016 Yarra Ranges Resilience Survey found that Yarra Ranges secondary school students, both male and female, are more likely to have low levels of educational engagement and are less likely to feel motivated to learn or be engaged in the learning process.

The Student Attitudes to School Surveys (2017) reinforces this, with only 42 to 49 per cent of students across the schools reporting a feeling of connectedness to school. Students who do not feel connected to their school are generally less engaged with education, and have lower wellbeing and achievement outcomes. This is further illustrated by the high levels of absenteeism and low rates of participation across the schools (there is almost 17 per cent of students with chronic absence). Student absence is a symptom of disengagement and is a major barrier to a successful education, as it affects students academically and socially.

Early school leaving is more often the end-point of extended disengagement from school. Across the three schools in 2015, there were 79 early school leavers (with Year 10 or higher completion). In 2017, there were non-completion rates for VCE of up to five per cent, and for the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL), of up to 32 per cent. These forms of disengagement (absence, poor school connectedness, poor motivation) are associated with lower achievement and have significant implications for students’ futures.

**Improved community engagement and expectations**Community expectations and lack of engagement with education are affecting student aspirations, transitions and pathways.

Parents:   
Student disengagement is strongly associated with the home and family context and the degree to which parents can economically, socially, and emotionally support children and young people to engage in education. The Student Family Occupation and Education Index (SFOE) at the three schools ranges from .4-.66, being well below average. Further, 40 per cent of students across the local schools feel that they do not have an adult that cares about them and the area has the second highest rate of family violence across the Eastern Region (Yarra Ranges Council, 2016).

Five per cent of students reportedly leave school early due to family issues (Yarra Ranges Council (Youth), 2016). These factors affect the ability of schools and parents to share responsibilities when it comes to education, and means that home learning is often disconnected from school learning. Schools are then limited in their ability to utilise interventions where parents and carers are partners, and to implement changes using a two-way exchange of information.

Industry:  
Research studies suggest that young people significantly value information regarding career pathways if obtained in real workplaces and through contacts with working people (CERI, 2008). Currently, the schools have limited networks with local industry partners, and most often only for students in a VCAL program. This inhibits students’ abilities to be equipped with the skills and attributes that are relevant for further education and employment. Without these connections, it is difficult for students to draw a connection between school and career, and to make informed decisions about their future pathways.

Viable and sustainable provision of secondary education  
The imbalance of enrolment patterns are likely impacting on the viable and sustainable provision of a high quality secondary education, particularly in the two smaller schools.

Many students are opting to attend the larger school in the district for reasons including; community perception, access to a higher quality education and/or availability of a broader range of subject choices.

This imbalance has also led to under-utilised educational assets in the area. Limited enrolments do not allow schools to offer a more diversified curriculum, or to access facilities for arts and physical education. This directly influences the schools’ climate for learning, and has implications for staff morale and schools’ abilities to offer students, and staff development opportunities.

**Contemporary teaching and learning spaces**A supporting investment in infrastructure at each of the three schools is required to achieve improved student achievement, engagement and wellbeing outcomes.

An upgrade in facilities to provide the schools with contemporary learning spaces, including flexible-use and indoor/outdoor spaces, will require a significant change in teaching and learning practice; this has been demonstrated to lead to improved student outcomes. Feedback from school staff, parents and students tells us that the current state, accessibility and configuration of physical infrastructure at Lilydale High School, Lilydale Heights College and Upper Yarra Secondary College restricts the provision of contemporary learning approaches. The schools have facilities that are ageing, not fit for purpose, un-occupiable and present some compliance challenges. The Architects’ Performance Assessment Reports (HAW-PARs) highlight the structural and functional facility issues at the schools and are inconsistent with the conclusions of ‘Condition Assessment Reports’ (CARs) completed in 2012. The architect findings indicate that many of the schools’ facilities are incongruous with achieving increased engagement, achievement and wellbeing outcomes.

**Enhanced workforce capability**The Plan will achieve pedagogical goals and quality improvements by enhancing the capability of the schools’ workforce.

Creating and promoting innovation and good practice in education will assist the schools to attract, develop and retain a high quality workforce. Quality of teachers is one of the main ‘in school’ impacts on student learning (Hattie, 2009). However, there are challenges in attracting, developing and retaining high quality educators in the Lilydale District and Yarra Valley Network schools.

Ongoing teacher vacancies across the schools, as well as lack of applicants for advertised positions have negative effects on students and staff alike. For more isolated schools, it is challenging to attract highly qualified teachers in key subject areas including Maths, Science and English, let alone more specialised subjects.

There is currently no workforce strategy in place for attracting and retaining high quality staff in these schools resulting in pressure to recruit an underqualified, or less experienced workforce. An established body of research demonstrates that poor staff attraction and retention is both a cause and outcome of ineffectiveness and low performance in schools; it affects the schools in multiple dimensions, including school climate, community aspirations, student achievement levels and professional community development (McCullough and Johnson, 2007).

**Joint-use opportunities**The Shire of Yarra Ranges has identified that there is significant demand for additional sporting facilities in the Lilydale area as a result of the growth of women in sport. Local sporting clubs have been responsive to possible opportunities to make use of indoor and outdoor sporting facilities on school sites. However, many of the schools’ current facilities do not meet the standards required for general sporting use. In addition, these community organisations are unable to commit capital or pay commercial rates of operational funding to support the joint use of the facilities.

Notwithstanding this, multiple organisations have committed to entering into joint use agreements with the schools pending availability of resources and facilities. Establishing additional sporting hubs on school sites in Lilydale and Upper Yarra would promote physical activity and social inclusion across the community leading to more efficient use of assets, other environmental benefits and reduced operating costs of the facilities. These sporting hubs directly align to the Education State Target of ‘happy, healthy, resilient kids’ and would provide a nurturing environment for students to develop confidence, social skills and healthy life habits.

# A shared vision

**The vision for the Lilydale and Upper Yarra Education Plan is to transform local secondary education to provide every secondary student with the knowledge, capabilities and attributes that will see them thrive throughout their lives; they will have the skills that industry needs, and that employers expect.**

**This will be achieved by creating the conditions that are necessary for successful organisational change and increasing student agency, voice and choice in all strategies.**

## Aims of the plan

### Priority area 1: Excellence in teaching and learning

The Lilydale and Upper Yarra Education Plan aims to**: enhance and fully embed evidence based school improvement initiatives** through a strong focus on assessment and feedback, with data informing all practice and the measuring of outcomes.

### Priority area 2: Professional leadership

The Lilydale and Upper Yarra Education Plan aims to: **build strong leadership teams** through fostering a culture of high expectations and growth mind sets, resilience, respectful relationships and expectations. A shared vision underscored by a culture of accountability and school targets will be established.

### Priority area 3: Community engagement in learning

The Lilydale and Upper Yarra Education Plan aims to:

**Strengthen collaboration between schools and build relationships with external stakeholders** through effective school networks. Relationships with local industry will assist students to be equipped with the necessary skills to pursue successful post-school pathways.

**Enhance school themes, vision and culture through new school ‘identities’** with the three schools’ choosing to focus on unique school visions and strategies that have practical relevance to their school community, as well as the wider community.

### Priority area 4: Creating a positive climate for learning

The Lilydale and Upper Yarra Education Plan aims to:

**Rejuvenate spaces for contemporary learning** that support and foster intellectual engagement through investment in infrastructure projects as part of the Education State reform agenda, with a focus on cutting‑edge school design and innovative school settings.

**Provide viable and sustainable secondary education across all schools** through provision of high quality programs, which will result in more balanced student enrolments across the schools and ensure that students attend their local school. This will achieve a more equitable allocation of resources across the schools.

**Improve student engagement and wellbeing** through a more engaging curriculum built around the school identity, resulting in reduced rates of student absenteeism and a decrease in early school exits.

# Realising the vision

Community feedback clearly identified secondary education provision as the key driver to transforming the current level of student achievement levels across the three schools. Education provision will be improved through the development and implementation of the Plan that will take a review and improvement approach, aligning the evidence, community priorities, schools’ review outcomes and strategic and annual planning. The Lilydale and Upper Yarra Education Plan will help the system to build on its strengths and emphasise continuous improvement. The more detailed outline of the aims identified above provide a greater understanding of how the vision of the Plan will be realised

## **Enhance and fully embed evidence based school improvement initiatives**

Subsequent to the completion of the three school reviews by the end of 2018, the schools will continue to implement the Key Improvement Strategies identified in their AIPs to achieve their four-year School Strategic Plan (SSP) Goals.

There will be a strong focus on assessment and feedback, with data informing practice and the measuring of outcomes. This may include use of student-led assessment, more formative diagnostic assessments and feedback by teachers, as well as data underscoring whole-school actions and decisions.

In order to enhance and fully embed evidence based school improvement initiatives, the Lilydale and Upper Yarra Education Plan will:

* identify key improvement strategies that will be embedded in the schools’ SSPs and AIPs
* ensure the three schools focus on two FISO improvement initiatives known to have the greatest impact on student outcomes

This aspect of the Plan will be measured through the FISO continuum and the improvement initiatives as reflected in each schools’ SSP and AIP.

## **Build strong leadership teams**

A culture of high expectations will be fostered by the development of growth mind sets, resilience, respectful relationships and expectations, as well as through establishing a shared vision underscored by accountability and school targets.

In order to build strong leadership teams, the Lilydale and Upper Yarra Education Plan will:

* support schools to use their own data and available research to implement proven techniques and strategies to build whole school culture and capability
* build strong leadership teams as defined in the FISO framework
* ensure schools have strong School Improvement Teams in place with a professional learning plan that aligns with the schools’ priorities.

This aspect of the Plan will be measured through the FISO continuum.

## Strengthen collaboration between schools and build relationships with external stakeholders

Effective school networks are a key element to implementing FISO. The six secondary schools in the Lilydale District and Yarra Valley School Networks will strengthen their Communities of Practice (CoP) approach to collaboration by working together on identified priorities.

Opportunities for collaboration may extend beyond sharing good practice to more formalised arrangements for shared provision, workforce and facilities, some of which already occurs, but only to a limited extent.

Partnerships will also be harnessed across education providers, and other community and industry stakeholders. The schools will collaborate with stakeholders and effectively use school, system and community expertise and resources to meet the identified learning and development needs of all students.

In order to strengthen collaboration between schools and build relationships with external stakeholders, the Lilydale and Upper Yarra Education Plan will:

* ensure the three secondary schools collaborate with each other and other schools in their networks to achieve mutual priorities
* support secondary schools to create effective PLCs as part of their participation in the PLC initiative, and continue existing COPs, while developing new collaborations as appropriate
* work with OELLEN to align its work with industry to equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary for successful post-school transitions.

This aspect of the Plan will be measured through the FISO continuum and formulated PLC measures.

## Enhance school themes, vision and culture through new school ‘identities’

As part of the Plan, each school will embrace an “identity” that they will seek to develop over time.

* Sustainability - Lilydale Heights College
* Zoology - Lilydale High School
* Outdoor Environment - Upper Yarra Secondary College

Whereas traditional school specialisations such as art, music or sport provide a stream of learning and excellence for a cohort of students in a school, it is intended that new school ‘identities’ at the three schools will permeate school culture and curriculum, inform the master planning of the sites, and provide significant links to local industry and community partners.

The intention of new identities is to deliver engaging curriculum that is relevant for all students in the local area and provide students with a vision for future pathways irrespective of academic achievement. As these identities are practically relevant to the community, it is also anticipated that they will build pride in schools.

Work around embedding the identities will be used to inspire improvements in teaching and learning practice to be more active, relevant and engaging. This will include curriculum design and pedagogy being driven by student agency and voice. Strategies will also have a higher focus on the development of general capabilities and more contemporary skills, including student collaboration, communication, personal growth, and critical and creative thinking. These approaches will be developed parallel to improving teacher capability and confidence.

In order to enhance school themes, vision and culture through new school ‘identities’ the Lilydale and Upper Yarra Education Plan will:

* develop teaching and learning practices that are more active and engaging by collaborating with relevant partners to provide further opportunities for students and their learnings
* strengthen community engagement in learning, as well as the practical relevance of school visions and culture to the local community through having the engagement and involvement of school partners and communities embedded in school cultures
* continue to support the schools to offer a full curriculum from Years 7-12, as endorsed by the community consultations.

This aspect of the Plan will be measured through the FISO Continuum, partnerships being developed and maintained, and student engagement levels.

## Rejuvenate spaces for contemporary learning

In order to rejuvenate spaces for contemporary learning the Lilydale and Upper Yarra Education Plan will:

* invest in infrastructure projects as part of the Education State reform agenda, with a focus on cutting‑edge school design and innovative school settings
* complete a Capital Master Plan at each school that is consistent with the strategic direction of each school and community feedback

This aspect of the Plan will be measured by capital projects being completed on time.

## **Provide viable and sustainable secondary education**

Provision of high quality programs in all three schools will result in more balanced student enrolments across the schools. New programs will help ensure that students attend their local school and accordingly, that there is a more equitable allocation of resources across the schools.

In order to provide viable and sustainable secondary education the Lilydale and Upper Yarra Education Plan will implement high quality programs in all three schools. This will assist to increase enrolment numbers at Lilydale Heights College and Upper Yarra Secondary College, and stabilise enrolments at Lilydale High School. Other interventions to balance student enrolments may be considered over time, if necessary.

This aspect of the Plan will be measured by student enrolment numbers.

## **Improve student engagement and wellbeing**

The Plan will lead to reduced rates of student absenteeism and a decrease in early school exits as a result of data informing practice and a more engaging curriculum.

In order to improve student engagement and wellbeing the Lilydale and Upper Yarra Education Plan will adopt a whole school approach to health and wellbeing at all levels to ensure a reduction in chronic attendance and a decrease in early school exits.

This aspect of the Plan will be measured by improved absence data, improved student engagement data and a decrease in early school exits.

# Implementation

A comprehensive action plan will be developed and implemented over a three-year period. The action plan will evolve over time to reflect the changing contexts and DET funded programs and priorities.

A Strategic Advisory Committee will continue to exist and will be reviewed periodically to ensure appropriate representation is available to guide and monitor implementation of the Plan.

## Roles and responsibilities

Primarily, the respective principals and their leadership teams will be responsible for transforming secondary education in the Lilydale and Upper Yarra area.

The Outer-East Area Executive Director will identify and document the specific roles and responsibilities for implementation of the Plan and will have ongoing responsibility for governance, monitoring and evaluation of the Plan.

## Timeframes, actions and next steps

Significant school improvement work is already underway in the three schools. The Outer East Area team will continue to work with the school leadership teams to further progress the aims of the Plan. Once the Plan is approved, the Strategic Advisory Committee will be re-convened to guide the establishment of an implementation phase of the plan, in close consultation with the school principals. This will also include evaluating next phases of the Plan and extending strategies to include primary schools and early childhood providers, where appropriate.

## Measuring success

DET is developing a framework to guide evaluation of Place-Based Education Plans, which will provide some tools to support local-level monitoring and review of the Lilydale and Upper Yarra Education Plan. As part of this, DET will identify relevant indicators (both lead and lag) so that we can know how implementation of the Plan is tracking and adapt implementation strategies accordingly. Specific indicators and targets included in the Plan will be used to monitor outcomes over time.

As part of the schools’ Annual Implementation Plans (AIPs) process, schools have developed metrics to measure all aspects of school performance and baseline data to provide authentic evidence of the improvements that are made. The Differentiated School Performance Method will be used to measure the schools’ levels of achievement as well as their trajectory over time – improving, static or declining. Additionally, further baseline data, including all applicable school data, school and community opinion surveys, post-building occupancy evaluations, and reductions in unfilled staff vacancies will be utilised as key performance indicators for the Plan’s success.

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# Appendices

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| --- | --- |
| **Title** | **Committee position** |
| Area Executive Director, Outer Eastern Melbourne Area, DET | Chair |
| Senior Education Improvement Leader, Lilydale Network Schools | Ordinary Member |
| Principal, Lilydale High School | Ordinary Member |
| Principal, Lilydale Heights College | Ordinary Member |
| Principal, Upper Yarra Secondary College | Ordinary Member |
| Victorian Schools Building Authority | Ordinary Member |
| Service Support Branch Manager, Outer East | Ordinary Member |
| Principal, Lilydale Primary School | Ordinary Member |
| Principal, Wesburn PS Primary School | Ordinary Member |
| Director Social and Economic Development, Yarra Ranges Council | Ordinary Member |
| Economic Development, Yarra Ranges Council | Ordinary Member |
| Chair, Eastern Local Aboriginal Education Advisory Group | Ordinary Member |
| Principal, Balwyn High School | Ordinary Member |
| Executive Director Academic Affairs (Vocational Education Training & Higher Education) Box Hill Institute | Ordinary Member |
| Outer East Local Learning and Employment Network | Ordinary Member |
| Director, Stakeholder Partnerships & Community Relations Advancement, Deakin University | Ordinary Member |
| Vice President Secondary, Australian Education Union, Victorian Branch | Ordinary Member |

## Appendix 1: Strategic Advisory Committee Members

