



DE LA SALLE
COLLEGE

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6 September 2018

Dear Members of the De La Salle Community,

This is a very exciting week in the history of De La Salle College. After more than a full year's negotiations, planning and preparations, I am now - as of yesterday afternoon - in a position to formally announce De La Salle College has taken over the lease of the former Holy Eucharist Primary School, Malvern East. In January this will become our Year 9 Campus.

With a raft of innovative plans and programs coming to fruition, the current climate is one of progression, development, innovation and working towards excellence in all areas of the College. Our goal, our vision, is to build on our traditions and all the strengths which have made De La Salle a great school for 106 years. We work with our families and our Lasallian community to achieve this and provide a unique education which suits *our* young men.

As negotiations between the various stakeholders became increasingly positive in recent months, raising the likelihood of our proposal coming to fruition, our preparations have been developing. This has included:

- assembling a team of teachers committed to the new venture;
- building a leadership team for the campus;
- planning a new and innovative curriculum; and
- arranging refurbishment works to reimagine Holy Eucharist as an exciting and engaging, contemporary space for our Year 9s.

Industry is increasingly requiring employees who demonstrate new skills such as critical thinking, creativity, metacognition, problem solving, collaboration, motivation, self-efficacy, and perseverance. We are committed to the design and delivery of education programs, including assessment regimes that address the development of such skills in young people. These programs must acknowledge and support the various stages of social, emotional and physiological development of young men moving through adolescence.

In 2014, De La Salle College convened a Working Group of interested staff to review the arrangements at Year 9. Over four years the group has undertaken extensive research of the current academic literature as well as conducted visits to a range of schools with successful Year 9 programs. What the group concluded was that Year 9 at De La Salle College would benefit greatly from change, supported by the many anecdotal reports from staff about issues with student engagement at that year level. A proposal emerged from this work, detailing the introduction of new elements to Year 9. A Mission Statement for Year 9 was crafted:

The Year 9 program at De La Salle College is designed to be authentic, meaningful, purposeful and distinctive to Year 9 students. Through collaboration and inquiry, they lead their own learning.

The Working Group also formulated six proposals for the shaping of a new Year 9 program, to be progressively implemented over the following three years. At this point in time, Stages 1, 2 and 3 of the DLS "In9uiry" Program have been successfully implemented. The sixth and final stage articulated the need for the acquisition of a site dedicated to Year 9, something that has been woven into the subsequent design of the College's Master Plan.

It had become clear in investigations of other schools' Year 9 programs that sites that have some operational autonomy are most successful in providing a customised program for Year 9s. Two key factors contribute to this - a site that is staffed by teachers committed to Year 9 and a timetable that is unconstrained by the limitations necessarily imposed by a timetable requiring integration with a Year 7-12 timetable.

The College has been active in investigating possible locations, with the Holy Eucharist site emerging as the most attractive among several other identified locations. Important considerations in assessing possible Year 9 sites have been proximity to the main sites in Malvern, accessibility to public transport, suitability of building stock, recreation space and scope for improvement works, among others.

There is very strong stakeholder support and indeed, excitement about the prospect of this proposal coming to fruition. This belief has been formed through consultation with staff, parents and students. These stakeholders conveyed via a recent survey that a bold step such as the creation of a new site for the College's Year 9 students represents a necessary step in the further improvement and competitiveness of the College moving into the future.

Significant works are beginning next week to bring the property up to the standard expected and required for a contemporary 21st century learning environment. It is imperative for our students, staff and parents the proposed Year 9 Campus presents as a clean, bright, inviting, modern and engaging learning environment. It will be fitted out via the planned refurbishment works to represent a contemporary image, equipped with the facilities and resources to support our innovative curriculum.

All College staff and Board Directors are thrilled that the research, planning, hard work and negotiations have paid off with this announcement. This initiative has always been about providing an enhanced experience for our Year 9s and now we are in a position to deliver. Depending on the refurbishment project's timeline, we hope to invite Year 9 families to an Open Evening at a renovated Holy Eucharist site in late November. This move will also enable us to create more space on the Tiverton site, which we will now plan in more detail.

I would also like to convey my heartfelt thanks to all those individuals and teams who have invested so much time, strategy and energy into this exciting initiative. I look forward to working with all in our community on this terrific project, as the vision for De La Salle College – Holy Eucharist Campus becomes a reality.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Houlihan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Peter Houlihan
Principal