

10<sup>th</sup> November 2022

Dear parents, carers and staff,

As you would be aware, part of our heritage Block A is being upgraded including modernising classrooms for students and delivering a new entry, reception and administration area for staff. The project will also install a passenger lift, build a new student toilet block, a covered walkway and a new outdoor gathering space to bring the community together.

In light of a recent petition circulated amongst our school community requesting further information on the upgrade project – I wanted to provide you with a recap of some recent movements on the project, and updates from the Victorian School Building Authority (VSBA) who is leading the project.

### **Online information session**

The VSBA ran an online information session on 12 October 2022 with the project's architects to inform our parent and local community of the upcoming upgrade, the scope of what is being delivered in stage 1, and the broader master plan of works should our school receive future funding.

An online session was chosen to allow as many participants to attend as possible. 50 people registered for the session, and 30 persons attended the session. Over half an hour was dedicated at the end of the session to answer participants' questions via the chat function.

If you haven't had a chance to review, please find attached the Frequently Asked Questions developed following the session which include more information on what is being delivered to Kensington Primary School as part of Stage 1. The FAQs also have further details on the master plan, the master planning process, landscaping, location of buildings, potential construction impacts, as well as how the community will be notified of updates on the project moving forward.

### **Kitchen garden**

As many of you would know, the cooking program at Kensington Primary School was paused in response to the restrictions set out in the DET Operations Guide to minimise any risks associated with Covid-19. The emphasis throughout 2021 and 2022 has been on gardening.

The current kitchen will be available for use as per normal over the next 12 months, which will help to support the reintroduction of the cooking component of the cooking and gardening program.

Prior to Covid-19, students have participated in two sessions of cooking and gardening throughout the year one per semester. The class undertaking cooking and gardening was divided into two groups which participated in gardening with the classroom teacher and parent volunteers, while the other half prepared for the cooking with the teacher responsible for cooking and gardening again supported by parent volunteers. The children would participate in sharing the food in a communal area.

As a community, we look forward to continued parent involvement and support of the program, assisting with the preparation, lesson and following cleaning up.

We have been working with the VSBA and South West Regional Office to reclassify the disused toilet block (currently used for storage) as a school owned and managed facility. The goal is for us to ultimately convert this space into a kitchen in the future – to ensure the cooking program can continue for all students.

Members of school council are exploring how we can manage the existing disused toilet block situated next to the current garden and chicken coop as a space for a refurbished kitchen. An email has been sent to our community asking for expressions of interest from parents/ carers who have any relevant skills in design and construction and would like to be involved in this project.

I have also met with parents and carers to discuss collaborating to develop a 12-month plan to organise potential school events, tending the gardens and caring for our chickens. The school looks forward to collaborating with parents to plan for future school community events, support of the cooking and gardening program and possible ideas for a kitchen space.

The VSBA are currently investigating whether elements of the existing pizza oven can be retained for reuse as part of the new landscaping works for Stage 1. Demolition of the toilet block and creation of the new open space is amongst the last construction activities of the project, and the working group is a great forum for us to have these conversations.

### **Project update**

The VSBA are currently undertaking the tender process to secure a builder to complete our school upgrades. A builder is forecast to be appointed in the first quarter of 2023. A letter, which will include detailed landscape and construction information will be sent out to our local and school communities via myself and the VSBA once the builder is appointed.

### **Landscaping and outdoor gathering**

I would like to reiterate that landscaping is currently included in the plans for our current project. We have discussed a proposed landscaping plan during regular design meetings, however, as we are currently in the process of appointing a builder, we are not able to guarantee exact plans for the design. Once more information is available to us following builder appointed, we look forward to engaging our students and school community in the landscaping plans. We will also update you on plans for the new outdoor gathering space.

A new gathering space will be built to replace the existing gathering space. There will be new landscaping works around the southern portion of Block A to provide a new outdoor gathering space or yarnning circle that can be used for outdoor learning and community gatherings.

As part of early consultation with our community, we heard that retaining more open space was important and so the toilet was positioned to provide the maximum space possible.

As part of the works and preserving our school's heritage building, three trees need to be removed which are currently causing structural damage to the heritage building.

The VSBA plans to plant at least two trees of a comparable species for every tree removed, in line with their tree removal and replacement policy.

I look forward to sharing more exciting updates and details with you as our project progresses.

If you have any further questions about the works at Kensington Primary School, you can phone the VSBA on **1800 896 950**, email [vsba@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:vsba@education.vic.gov.au) or visit the website: <https://www.schoolbuildings.vic.gov.au/kensington-primary-school>

Kind regards,



Bridget McLaughlin  
Principal