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Sent: Tuesday, 18 October 2016 4:46 PM**To:** pre@bcs.asn.au; srednuas@hotmail.com; ianoloughlin@optusnet.com.au

Subject: Vegetation replacement at Beaumaris Secondary College

Hi Greg, Ian and Rob,

Thank you for your questions and for attending our meeting.

The Victorian School Building Authority (VSBA) is pleased to be able inform and seek feedback from you and the Convenors of the Friends of Long Hollow Heathland and Balcombe Park Reserve, who we had met with before and spoken with several times previously.

We were pleased to hear about the positive support for the new Beaumaris Secondary College, which will be a standalone co-educational 7-12 school for the Beaumaris community. It will be built for 650 students and will be open in Term 1, 2018.

At our meeting, we provided an overview of the role and process taken by the Project Architect, Landscape Architects, Arborist and the Hydrology and Civil Engineers. Following initial feedback from the groups at the meeting and we agreed to investigate the following:

- The potential to select planting that will support animal habitat / wildlife corridor on the northern boundary to assist movement between the Long Hollow Heathland and Balcombe Park Reserve
- Explore changes to the drainage proposal to direct additional water to the wet area of Long Hollow Heathland, rather than across the whole heathland.
- Explore possible learning opportunities for students to be involved and the Wetlands – further discussion once the Principal is appointed in 2017
- Investigate Melbourne Cricket Club maintenance programs for the two cricket ovals – report back to the group
- Seek feedback about the types of plants, shrubs and trees to be replanted

Additional information about numbers as requested is provided below – please note this information will also be placed on our website:

How will the development impact local vegetation and fauna?

The Authority has worked closely with the architect and an arborist to retain as much current vegetation as possible. However, to deliver new facilities for the school and the Beaumaris community, the redevelopment of the site will require some of the existing vegetation to be cleared. We are committed to replacing any removed vegetation with a minimum of two to one. The site has been designed to feature landscaped gardens and grounds that will provide future educational opportunities for students .

Trees to be replaced

- 229 trees that are 2 metres or higher have been recommended for removal by an independent arborist. These trees will be replaced as part of the redevelopment of the school site.
- The reasons for removing the trees are:

87 trees due to poor health or structure or both
142 trees are either within the footprint of the facilities or they are close enough that their root structure is likely to be impacted. Do to student safety concerns these also need to be removed.

The number of trees being removed also reflects that underutilisation in recent years, has resulted in encroachment of vegetation onto the school site, affecting facilities including the existing ovals and hard courts. These facilities are being entirely rebuilt as part of the redevelopment.

Why can’t the design of the site include the retention of more trees?

The school is designed to deliver education facilities that meet the requirements of the education specification set out for the school by the New School Planning Group. The three storey design has reduced the building footprint while still including modern learning environments such as flexible learning spaces, specialist facilities, outdoor learning and sports facilities. The relationship and placement of each of these facilities has been robustly tested by the architect and an educational reference group. The design has also been endorsed by the Department’s regional office who have confirmed that the design will meet educational demands now and into the future.

The positioning of the main school buildings close to the corner of Reserve and Balcombe roads has been carefully thought out during masterplanning. Locating them at this position ensures that the school is able to increase its capacity from 650 to 1100 students to accommodate future population growth. It also ensures that the school has a strong street presence to encourage a strong connection to the local community and allow easy access to community facing facilities such as the Library.

The site will also feature world class sporting facilities that will be utilised by the school and community. The site has been masterplanned to ensure that the relationship between all facilities on site best utilises every square meter to deliver educational, sporting and community opportunities.

Vegetation is an important part of the site plan and there has been every effort made to retain as much vegetation as possible. However where vegetation sits within the building footprint or is located too close to new facilities it is required to be removed.

Replacing Planting and Landscape design

The Landscape Design includes a variety of outdoor learning settings, situated in landscaped grounds. A total of 4997 new plants are included in the planting schedule; there are 297 trees, which will be 5 metres high and above when mature and 231 large shrubs, which will be 2-5 metres high when mature.

The development will also feature a Wetland. Wetlands are a significant component of Australia’s storm management regime. They can provide benefits including storm water treatment, promoting biodiversity and habitat, and provide opportunities for teaching, learning and environmental education. Additional water planting is proposed for the wetland.

Species Selection

The plant list is made up of many species indigenous to the local area in a concerted effort to extend the habitat offered to native birds and fauna by providing a green link between Long Hollow Heathland and Balcombe Park Reserve. All plants have been chosen for their ability to grow and thrive in the local sandy soils, their drought tolerance and ability to withstand the tough environment that is a secondary school. Red River Gums are not included in new planting for schools due to safety concerns with dropping branches.

Some examples of species included in the schedule are:

Botanical Name	Common Name	Reasoning
Corymbia maculata	Spotted Gum	An alternate to the Red River Gum with similar qualities
Eucalyptus radiata	Narrow-leaved Peppermint	An indigenous tree with a compact crown, dense canopy and excellent form.
Eucalyptus pryoriana	Gippsland Manna Gum or Coast Manna Gum	Another tree indigenous to the area, that will develop a broad, weeping canopy that is attractive not only to koalas, but many native animals.
Banksia integrifolia and Banksia marginata		Indigenous species with interesting foliage and seed heads which are quite ornamental.
Acacia implexa	Lightwood	A fast growing local that will provide a wind break to the multi-purpose pitch.
Tristaniopsis laurina	Water Gum	Observed growing very successfully in the area and has been used to provide a slightly more formal, green appearance in some areas of the school.
Quercus palustris	Pin Oak	Will provide shade in Summer and light in Winter to the viewing area alongside the Senior Oval.

Plants such as *Acacia paradoxa, Banksia marginata, Bursaria spinose, Kunzea ericoides, Pomaderris racemosa and Prostanthera rotundifolia* will form the backbone of the wildlife link along the schools western boundary.

Community concern about the tree removal

The Victorian School Building Authority acknowledges the communities concern over the loss of trees and that the bushland setting of Beaumaris is unique and valuable. All effort has been made to retain as many trees as

possible while delivering a viable school and the reinvigoration of an dilapidated school site.

The Authority will continue to seek input from the Friends of Balcombe Park Reserve and the Friends of Long Hollow Heathland about how to minimise any impact of the local vegetation and fauna.

The Authority has also been talking with these groups about the landscape design and types of plants and trees to be replanted.

Thanks,
Dean

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