

## Response to Tasmania Tomorrow from ELIZABETH COLLEGE STAFF

### What we value and want to retain in the new institutions:

Focus on Students	Focus on Staff	Developing Tolerance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Flexibility in Learning and Teaching program</li> <li>▪ Broad varied curriculum</li> <li>▪ Individual learning styles</li> <li>▪ Critical thinking</li> <li>▪ Catering for all abilities</li> <li>▪ Pursuit of excellence</li> <li>▪ Specialist knowledge</li> <li>▪ Academic excellence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Time for marking and preparation</li> <li>▪ Adequate provision of resources</li> <li>▪ Specialist knowledge</li> <li>▪ Quality teaching</li> <li>▪ Collegiality and staff relationships</li> <li>▪ A safe working environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Developing tolerance</li> <li>▪ Global Awareness</li> <li>▪ Ethnic diversity</li> <li>▪ Recognising and embracing diversity in all its guises</li> <li>▪ Democracy in our whole community</li> </ul>
Personal Responsibility	Facing the future	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Valuing individuals</li> <li>▪ Having a strong sense of self worth</li> <li>▪ Building relationships based on trust</li> <li>▪ Developing self reliance</li> <li>▪ Accepting personal responsibility</li> <li>▪ Building communities</li> <li>▪ Independence</li> <li>▪ Social conscience</li> <li>▪ Valuing achievements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Preparation for future choice</li> <li>▪ Developing resilience</li> <li>▪ Transition to adult relationships</li> <li>▪ Education for change</li> <li>▪ Flexibility/adaptability</li> <li>▪ Future and on-going learning or life-long learning</li> </ul>	

- We value the holistic education we offer with a broad range of programs on offer providing a general education and enrichment programs including college production, sports, art, work placements, excursions etc. We enable students to experience and develop new interests that allow for them to move between courses and reconsider pathways.
- Elizabeth College prides itself on its safe supportive environment and the pastoral care program provided to **all** students. Below outlines some of the services currently provided and it is imperative that these services continue to be provided in the new institutions.

**Home Group:** Student welfare is a part of every teacher's day-to-day contact with students, but Elizabeth College also runs a formal programme called Home Group (HG). Every student (whether full or part-time) is placed in a small group with one of their subject teachers. This teacher takes a special interest in the student's progress and in most cases is the first contact for parents if the student has any problems. The main emphasis is on individual contact between students and their home group teacher, and a record is kept of interviews in relation to such matters as pathway planning, examining reports and general wellbeing and academic progress.

**Student Counsellors:** The Student Counsellors are able to provide student with help about their courses or give assistance in making decisions in order to overcome personal difficulties. The College Counsellors can also address the full range of student needs including accommodation, housing and allowances.

**Guidance Officer:** The guidance officer is available for additional support in counselling of students and their families.

**Youth Worker:** Elizabeth College offers the services of a Youth Worker who can:

- assist students with financial and legal and housing issues
- liaise and provide support in negotiations with government agencies
- provide links to other community agencies.

**Counsellor for Country Students:** The Country Students' Counsellor has the special responsibility of providing information and assistance to students from rural areas and their parents on a wide range of matters relating to personal goals, career opportunities, choice of courses, allowances, and adjustment to study and living away from home.

**Case Managers:** Case Managers provide extra support and assistance to those students who have either not made a successful transition to Elizabeth College or require extra support in reaching their academic potential.

**Medical Practitioner:** The College has a doctor in residence one day per week. All accounts are bulk billed.

**College Chaplain:** The chaplain has three main roles:

- to encourage students to continue to explore their spirituality and ask questions about life and faith
- as a youth worker to the wider College population, to provide students with an opportunity to discuss any matters of concern to them
- to support Christian students at the College.

**College Police Officer:** The College Police Officer and security personnel are at the College to provide a safe working environment for both students and teachers. It is the role of the police officer to run a Police Awareness class that allows students to see first hand the many different tasks police have in the community. The officer can be seen mixing with students in a variety of activities both in and out of the classroom, or giving advice to students.

**Careers/Vocational Counsellors:** If you are seeking advice on careers, entry requirements for particular occupations or further education institutions, or advice on University admission, you can consult one of the College Careers Counsellors.

**Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islanders' Counsellor:** This counsellor has responsibility for providing information and support for these students and their parents and guardians.

**Assistance for Students of Non English Speaking Backgrounds:** The College has students from over thirty different countries and ethnic backgrounds. They include migrant, exchange, and international students. English as a Second Language classes are available from beginner to pre-tertiary levels. A comprehensive support program is provided for classes and individual assistance with English for subjects being studied.

- There are 5 mainstream ESL language classes plus 7 mainstream classes for ESL students in Science, Maths etc
- The ESL Careers Counsellor who works for one line on career pathway planning and organises work experience.
- 4 FTE of the New Resident teacher support staff support mainstream classes, run tutorial and attend to student issues, liaising with mainstream EC teacher and with community organisation.
- A wide ranging program of activities and speakers from community agencies is provided.
- Teachers attend ESL meetings aimed at keeping teachers skilled and aware of ESL issues in the broader context.

## Concerns:

---

- Lack of retention is an integral part of some social groups' culture. These issues need to be tackled through parenting programs and in the early years of schooling. Retention issues start and need to be dealt with earlier than PY10 because attitudes to school and attendance patterns are largely set by years 8 or 9.
- General perception that the restructure is too TAFE driven and **strengths of the college system will be lost**
- We are very aware that parents of prospective students have concerns about the proposed changes. Many of us have friends who are already **starting to look at the private system** as a real alternative to having their children used as guinea pigs in this new system (ELS is still very much in the psyche).
- Some parents are uncomfortable with the possibility that 16/17 year olds will be in classes and mixing all day with mature age students given the current age profile of students in the TAFE system.
- Will students remain "at the centre" of learning? Or will the emphasis move to the unit cost of statistical outcomes?
- The restructure has the potential to "split" up learning areas such as Performing Arts, Visual Arts, Health and Well Being, LOTE, eg. Pretertiary music(academic) / rock music (polytechnic), Pretertiary Art, Photography, Graphic Design vs non pretertiaries of these subjects. Many of these subjects are also currently run as combined pre-tertiary non pre-tertiary, splitting them between institutions may make some of the pre-tertiaries unviable and thus remove valuable course options for students.

## Recommendations for the Restructure:

---

- Over the past few years the college systems (both state and private) have been working on the PY10 Curriculum Review and its implementation. The outcomes from this review are the basis of all current curriculum development and the Values, Purposes and Outcomes must continue to underpin the implementation of Tasmania Tomorrow.

- Even under a Board of Management these institutions must be structured in such away as to allow for educators to play a dominant role in determining programs and policies.
- Programs that EC is well known for in the community that help make the College a highly regarded institution must be maintained. These include ESL support, International Students Program (ISP), Athlete Development, Elizabeth College Advanced Academic Diploma (ECAAD), Enrichment, Alt Ed etc.
- The new institutions must continue to provide flexible delivery options through open learning and online learning. These methods of curriculum delivery are key for increasing retention and providing second chance education for students who are at high risk of not continuing with an education.
- The new institutions must be responsive to local community needs and therefore a “one size fits all” approach will not be the most effective way.
- The current supportive school environment and pastoral care programs that exist at Elizabeth College and other Colleges must be provided to the same level in the new institutions.
- Teachers and not students should move between campuses. Experience in recent times at a number of places have indicated that students studying across campuses find it much more difficult to access assistance with subjects and support from other student services than do students studying on one campus. Unfortunately such students often “drop out”.
- The current timeframe does not acknowledge the practical issues involved in morphing two quite different cultures into one new culture focused on the needs of students. **Therefore the time frame for the change needs to be extended** if we want a successful transition into the new institutions and to ensure that we are able to take the community with us in a positive way.
- Anyone of compulsory education age should continue to receive a free education.
- Polytechnics must be structured to overcome the current problems with VET students missing classes to go on placement. i.e. a timetable such that classes are not on when students are on placements.
- Academies need to offer ‘interest’ subjects which are needed for /enjoyed by academically gifted students.

It is our view that a number of potential difficulties with the proposed three institution model could be alleviated if **polytechnics and academies were to coexist on the same campuses**.

For example:

- It would provide a making it easier to have parity of esteem between applied courses and academic courses
- It would recognize that many students can utilise more than one learning style and often wish to have variety across their subjects
- It would allow students to access the full range of subjects on the one campus without experiencing the difficulties inherent in studying on two campuses simultaneously. It would also make the transition from one institution to another at the end of a semester or a year easier than it would be with two institutions.

- It would mean that no student would have to travel further than they do now to access their chosen institution
- It would mean that the student population on any campus would be socially inclusive rather than have a segregation between campuses.
- Students would be able to remain with their peer group even when their friends were choosing different courses from different institutions.
- Economies of scale would make it possible to maintain a wide range of curriculum offerings for all students and remove the need to duplicate services such as student support, information services, ICTs etc in both the Polytechnic and the Academy.
- It would also remove the need to divide between the Polytechnic and the Academy many teaching areas which require the same teachers skill sets.
- It will also allow a balanced mix of teaching roles for teachers. For most teachers a mix of pre-tertiary and non- pre-tertiary classes is a much more balanced teaching load than four classes of one or the other. Four pre-tertiary classes can impose an enormous marking load, while four non pre-tertiary classes can impose a very large classroom management load.

## Other:

---

- Need option of apprenticeships/ traineeships/SBTs from age 14. This is when, traditionally, non-academic young people have left to enter work. It still needs to be a school integrated option.
- Ability to do programs such as “Start at TAFE” from yr 9 or 10 in conjunction with school subjects including maths and English.
- Transition between high school and the new PY10 institutions needs to be improved eg with taster courses.

## Summary:

---

The staff of Elizabeth College recognize that a high priority must be given to increasing the productivity of Tasmanians by increasing the skill level of our workforce and by increasing retention as outlined in the Tasmania Tomorrow reforms.

In summary from the discussion above we would want to see the following highly valued aspects of our current college system continue to be provided at the same level in the new institutions:

- Supportive school environment and pastoral care
- Diversity of students, programs and subjects
- Quality teaching and learning
- Flexibility in delivery and offerings
- Preparing students for adult life and career pathways
- Concept of a community within community

Also from the above discussion it is apparent that many of the concerns emanating from the restructure can be overcome by having the **polytechnic and the Academy combined into one institution**. If this structure was introduced it would also remove the competition for students which is inevitable with two institutions competing for students from the same market.