

East Launceston Primary School Parents and Friends Association Inc.

Minutes of the Special General Meeting held at East Launceston Primary School on the 30th of November 2016.

Meeting opened at 7:40

1. **Present/Apologies:**

a) **Present:**

Jess Downie (President), Sarah Foster (Vice-President), Ross Smith (Treasurer), Paul Vandenberg (Secretary), Angela Phyland (Executive), Claire Robertson (Executive), Lionel Morrell, Alvaro Ascui, Paul DeRuyter, Suzie Sommann-Crawford, Sanja Ambrose, Julianne Stevens, Ian Cameron, Raelene Cameron, Felicia Butler, Jeanette Banner, Toby Gardner, Tammie Gardner, Pat Rathore, Pip Glover, Sophie Flanagan, Shannon Matthewson, Emma Morgan, Krista Preece, Ross Sommann-Crawford, David Preece, Michael Douglas, Rob Watson, Kristy Fairbairn, Anna Hills, Lea Watson, Mayie Caldwell, Angela Rose-Eadie, Hugh Christie, George Hyde, Julie Heggarty, Alicia Bushby, Michael Bernachi, Nick Allen, Julie Brown, Iziar Irondo, Julia Hoffner, Jennifer Lerner, Tenille Nolan, Michael Lowe, Brian Grant, Sue Patterson, Maria Mischis, Jane Gaetani-Black, Rachel Brown, Emmy Brient, Lucy Robbins, Paula Huett, Hayley Luttrell, Julie Briggs, Necia Ruthven, Michael Brain, Rosemary Brain, Keith Ellis, Rowan Willis, Jenny Creswell, Sarah Stagg.

b) **Apologies:**

Libby Glover (Executive), Clare Mawdesley, Robyn Russell, Nigel Donachie, Elizabeth Thrush, Sam Bucknell, John Maclaine, Tiffany Hardwick, Paul Hunt, Meg Anderson, Patricia Rathore, Tim Whiteley, Audrey Warren, Jodie Lowe, Mandy Gutwien, Michael Seward, James Fell, Derek LeMerchant,

2. **Introduction to the proposal:**

Jess Downie introduced the land swap proposal. She stated that at the beginning of year the P&F had been asked the question of considering a land contribution for the upcoming Capital Works Programme. Since then, the P&F has defined their membership and made changes to the constitution. Jess continued to say that the proposal for a land exchange has gone to DoE. Jess stated that the P&F Executive have adopted the land swap proposal as the preferred option. Jess said that the Executive were working for the betterment of the school and for doing the best for the children. Jess outlined that the proposal was for an exchange of land on the Oxford Street bank to the DoE in return for flat open space currently owned by the DoE. Jess stated there is currently no agreement, and that the DoE may decide to build on land they own. She stated that the proposal protects green space.

Lionel Morrell asked for proof of communication with the DoE. Jess responded that it was coming.

Ross Somman-Crawford asked about other proposals. He stated that building (on the Oxford Street bank) could be not appropriate.

Emmy Brient spoke on behalf of the school. Emmy stated that there is a genuine need for building and that building on the Oxford Street site would relieve congestion on the Abbott Street site. Emmy stated that the school is currently running on reduced facilities and there are reciprocal benefits in the land swap. She stated that the Oxford Street bank is largely underutilised and that building on that area gives maximum gain for the minimal impact. Emmy stated that the land swap maintains use of the green space used by the community.

Emmy stated that the school does have out of area enrolments. She stated the school has 156 students from out of area and that there are 173 students living in the school's catchment that go out of area to other schools.

Lionel Morrell asked how many of the 173 students going out of area were going to a private school, and how many to a government school. Emmy responded that the 173 students were government school only. Lionel asked how many students are in child protection. Emmy responded that she was not at liberty to say.

Michael Lowe suggested that ELPS should be closed to out of area enrolments. Emmy responded that she can't close the school for existing out of area enrolments and that there have been no out of area enrolments for 2 years.

Hugh Christie how realistic it was that a decision could be made to not have out of area enrolments? Emmy Responded that parents can insist that the school takes their children. Hugh stated that there needed to be a general rule across Tasmania, not just for ELPS.

Pat Rathore asked why hasn't there been consideration of a new greenfield site? Jess responded that she can't answer that. Pat asked if the land swap was necessary? Jess responded that it was not necessary and building can happen regardless on DoE owned land.

Hugh spoke on behalf of the School Association (SA) and Master Planning Group (MPG). Hugh stated that the SA is policy guiding body for the management of the school, and that the MPG is a sub-committee of the SA. Hugh stated that the SA has decided unanimously to support the P&F for the land swap proposal to have as much of the flat green area as possible owned by the P&F. Hugh continued to say that the MPG is clearly of view that building on the Abbott Street site will impact learning of student. The position provided to the DoE is that the first stage of any redevelopment should happen on the Oxford Street site. This position is not dependent on the land swap. Hugh stated that this maximises the educational outcomes of children while minimising the impact on children and broader community. Hugh noted that there have been a higher rates of playground injuries due to cramping. Hugh stated that the MPG and SA will still consult with broader community. Hugh stated that that the SA supports the proposal because all the oval goes to P&F, and the SA can see the benefits in the redevelopment of the Pavilion.

Pat Rathore asked how did the SA get this position? Hugh responded that it is not that there won't be building on the Abbott Street site. Building on Abbott Street would be part of a staged development, but the impact on starting the build on the Abbott Street site is too much.

Pat Rathore asked why weren't the basketball courts included, what assurance can be given that P&F land will not to be built on, and will the new buildings be locked up like a prison? Hugh Christie responded that the relative proportions of land were similar, hence why the basketball courts were not included. Jess Downie responded that the P&F won't consider giving up land, but will consider an equal swap. Jess noted that the P&F had to answer the question posed to it on a contribution, and are acting in best interest of association. Jess stated that the proposal

results in a refinement of the boundaries, but with a similar area. Jess stated that the P&F Executive had to balance the responsibility of acting in best interest of P&F and doing what is best for the school. Hugh responded about the locking up question. Hugh stated that vandalism was the reason for the current nature of the Abbott Street site. Hugh continued to say that access to oval would not to be removed and he was not supportive of the removal of access to facilities such as playground. He continued to say that he can't say it will never ever happen, but the land swap protects the open green space from development. Ross Smith stated that the SA and MPG have had considerable discussions and meetings with input by the DoE and the architect. They determined the best option, taking into account safety, future proofing etc., in determining the motion that went to the DoE. Ross stated that the SA and MPG had taken the task extremely seriously and that lots of work had occurred for the motion that went to the DoE.

Jane Gaetani Black asked what do we (the P&F Executive) mean by a swap. Paul Vandenberg responded that the two land portions involved were of approximate equal areas of 4,400m². Jess Downie also responded that the swap involves the transfer of title. Jane posed the question of the DoE owned portion being Crown Land, and what were the implications. Jess responded that this is why areas need to be about the same. Jane stated that the disposal of Crown Land is a difficult process. Jess responded that the proposal has not been accepted by the DoE, so process can't move forward until it is. Jess stated that the Executive have an indication of costs. Jane sought clarification that the proposal does not yet have approval by the DoE. Jess responded that this is correct.

Lionel Morrell asked if he could get access to the discussion paper between the DoE and SA/MPG? Hugh Christie replied that the DoE own the discussion paper. Emmy Brient indicated that the SA can talk to DoE to get access to discussion paper. Hugh Christie agreed and said that the SA should have an answer by end of week.

Krista Preece asked Hugh Christie what was his role on the SA? Hugh replied that he is Vice Chair of the SA and a member of the MPG. Krista asked Hugh to clarify his statement of safety in playground. Hugh responded that there is currently a higher rate of injuries on playground due to higher concentration of students, and this is noted in the discussion paper.

Ross Somann-Crawford asked who controls the land after the swap. Jess Downie responded that the P&F own the land and have control of that land. Hugh Christie responded that the SA sets policy and does not own land.

Lionel Morrell asked if the P&F is responsible for all the DoE land on the Oxford Street site? Paul Vandenberg responded that the P&F is responsible for maintenance (watering and mowing) of the open green space, but not for the tennis courts and playground. Lionel stated that this is not the website says. Paul responded that he would check the wording on the website.

Secretary Note: The website states "Ownership of the open green space part of the DoE owned land including the cricket nets would transfer to the P&F. Currently the P&F maintain this part of the land DoE own, and are responsible for its maintenance as per the lease."

3. Speakers to the proposal

1. **Toby Gardner** – Spoke as a resident that borders on P&F land. Toby indicated that he felt blind-sided by the proposal. He noted that 3 months ago the vote was for a contribution of land. He indicated he was feeling bullied, but understands there is limited time for Government grants. Irreversible. Toby stated that educational outcomes are not dependent on bricks and mortar. Toby stated that his children don't go to ELPS, and go to Grammar. Toby questioned how much bigger can the school get? He stated that future proofing is preserving area. He noted that kids use the bank area lots for playing outside of school hours. He said he just wants this thought out as it is causing division and wants to see a collective resolution.
2. **George Hyde** – George spoke about mindsets, and how people can have a fixed or growth mindset. George indicated that a growth mindset involved listening, engaging and considering. He said that most of the discussions about the contribution of land have fixed mindsets. George said the proposal promotes growth for school, children and community. George said he agreed with Toby that the community is everyone and that we have been presented with a \$4.5M opportunity, and we should be excited about it. George asked that we do something good with it. He asked all members to have an open mind, stay engaged, stay involved and make considered decisions. He said that If we want a good outcome, then we need to work together.
3. **Alvaro Ascui** – Alvaro stated he was a parent and served 3 years as treasurer on P&F. He stated that the current Executive is the latest batch of custodians for 80 years. He agreed that the school is designed for 450 and is over-subscribed. He asked what planning has happened for the last 7 years to address this. Alvaro agreed that compromises have been made with the available space. Alvaro stated that we are taking a swathe to public open space and concreting it. He said that the Government is not taking responsibility. Alvaro stated that the P&F bought the land 80 years ago, and we need to respect the history. He asked what other solutions had been explored? He asked why land had not been bought from neighbouring houses. Alvaro questioned whether proper procedure had been followed, and that the Land Acquisition Act was the proper process. He stated that the Government could serve notice on P&F for acquisition. Alvaro stated that the proposal is lousy and was akin to swapping the front yard for the back yard. Alvaro stated that the process not as transparent and open as it should have been. He cited a lack of transparency from the P&F Executive and the school. He stated that children being lobbied by teachers. Alvaro stated that the Executive are valuing the Pavilion as zero. Alvaro stated that many people have contributed to its building and we must not give away because teachers say so.
4. **Lionel Morrell** – Lionel expressed disappointment that there were no P&F speakers. Lionel said that the more he listens and learns the more things that concern him. Lionel cited that there is no sharing of information. Lionel stated that Association members have been misled. Lionel cited a lack of the provision of designs and drawings. Lionel said that the question up to days ago, was for a contribution, but now is for a land swap. Lionel stated that options have not been explored or shown. Lionel stated that the vote

is grossly premature and lacks justification. Lionel stated that the P&F lawyer said out of meeting that it is not in the best interest of the P&F. He went on to say it is not in anyone's interest. Lionel raised a concern that the proposal involves giving the Pavilion away. Lionel asked If members say no, then what is the alternative doe plan. He expressed doubts that the DoE would consider building on the tennis courts. Lionel stated that the duty of the Executive is greater than if own land personally and the decision is greater than individual. He said that the SA hasn't given a coherent justification for decision. He stated that building on the Oxford Street site is not appropriate and dangerous. Lionel said that members are being conned and bullied by the Executive. Lionel said the Executive cannot provide consensus to answering questions. He said there should not be a vote on the 21st. and the decision should wait. Lionel said that information held by the Executive is not privileged and that the Executive refuses to meet with him.

4. Questions on the proposal.

Hugh Christie asked Lionel if Ross Hart (P&F layer) broke legal privilege? Lionel Morrell responded that he was a member of the association so should be able to access information.

Michael Douglas asked who are the key Stakeholders? He listed parents, teachers, residents, school community, students. Michael asked who is the highest stakeholder? Michael indicated the students are the highest stakeholder. Lionel Morrell responded that members of the P&F are the highest stakeholders.

Jess Downie stated that the task the Executive have been given is to navigate the process. The question for the vote is if we will consider a land swap to protect the asset. Jess stated that the Executive are trying to be fair to all, and that all we can do is to go to a vote and abide by the outcome. Jess noted that the Executive don't know what will happen if we say no, and it is a gamble.

Ian Cameron spoke/ Ian stated he was President of the P&F in 1980's when the Pavilion was built. Ian spoke about the history of the land purchase. Ian stated that our forefathers never envisaged that the land would be given or swapped. He stated that we are foolish to give it away and we are custodians for generations to come. Ian stated that the highest stakeholders in the proposal are the future generations. Ian stated the area has an ageing population and can't see the school age population will grow in the future.

Sue Patterson asked what would the school like to put on the Oxford Street site. Emmy Brient responded that the school's preference is to relocate the kindergarten. This is currently 3 rooms. She noted they are a relatively autonomous as group and reasonably independent of the rest of the school. Sue noted that there is a lot of innuendo and suggestion and that people are ignorant of information on what is going on. Jess Downie responded that the Executive are communicating through multiple channels like Facebook, website, email and Skoolbag app.

Michael Lowe stated that the DoE should tell the P&F exactly what land it wants, and why. He said the DoE should supply detailed plans. Michael also asked why can't the DoE

build on land that it already has. He noted the staff carpark and building up on existing buildings. Michael also stated that members lacked information on the land swap proposal, such as the value of the land, dimensions and boundaries. Michael stated there was a conflict of interest with DoE staff voting on the proposal. He said that staff are paid by the DoE and there is pressure for staff to vote for what is in the best interest of the DoE not the P&F. He said that the pressure would be relieved by DoE staff not voting. Michael also noted that DoE staff have previously not voted on funding requests by the school and a precedent has been set.

George Hyde stated that the Pavilion is over 35 years old and needs work as it is not a new building.

Julie Briggs spoke to the proposal. She stated that she has been at the school for 8 years. She noted the huge growth in the school and the area. She noted that as the ageing population move away, young families move in, and there are lots of rental properties in the area. She said that out of area applications were done in consultation with learning services. Julie said staff live and breathe the lack of space and the number of students presenting at first aid was because of the lack of space. She noted the safe play area for students on the Oxford Street site is the oval, not the banks. She said the P&F won't get the money to renovate the Pavilion and wants to see an early learning centre on the Oxford Street site. She stated she wants to make the school the best it can be.

Hugh Christie stated that not all his children will see the benefits of the Capital Works Project, but he wants to see the best learning resources developed for future generations but minimise the impact on current students.

Anna Hills said that her child in the kinder playground is scared and often injured due to overcrowding and there is no separate area for kinder and prep students. She stated that a separate area will benefit children.

Pat Rathore stated that the school should not have more than 500 students. She said that solutions are impacting on community. She questioned whether building on the Oxford Street site is the best solution and said that more time needed to explore options.

Michael Bernachi spoke as a resident of Tasma Street. and an architect who works on school projects. Michael said that this was a fantastic opportunity. He indicated that the Oxford Street bank is not primary land, but the 'oval' is. He noted the beautiful views building on the bank could afford. He said the school needs re-organising. He said the proposal was making a positive contribution towards the community and that we needed to move with the times. He noted that the open conversation is great. He talked about buffer zones for buildings. He also noted that drawings can't be done until land is available. Michael stated that going up is costly and you can't have anyone below, so it requires decamping.

Suzie Sommann-Crawford asked what was the question that is being voted on. Jess Downie responded that the question is: That the ELPS P&F contribute to the Capital Works Development by facilitating an exchange of land with the DoE as set out broadly in the attached document.

Secretary Note: The question has since been amended to: Do you agree that the ELPS P&F negotiate an exchange of land (of approximate equal area) with the DoE as set out broadly in the land swap proposal.

Lionel Morrell questioned the lack of specificity in the question. Jess Downie responded to say that this was as specific as possible at this point in time. Significant discussion about the question to be put to the vote ensued.

A question was asked from the floor on why the Tasma Street entrance included in the proposal? Jess Downie responded that it doesn't need to be included, and that the Executive would consider its inclusion in negotiations with the DoE.

5. **Closure:** Meeting closed at 9:40pm