

Doveton College

Doveton is located in the City of Casey, which is about 30 kilometres south-east of the central business district of Melbourne. Community data for the area in 2009 indicated that key barriers to learning existed that needed to be addressed. These included: poor health and well being; low parenting skills; a lack of safe and secure home environments; child protection issues; drug, alcohol, family violence, mental health issues within the family; intergenerational poverty; lack of resources and role models; lack of stable housing; unemployment; disability or developmental delay; and an education program that was not addressing need. In 2009, as part of the then state government's Building Futures education initiative, four Doveton schools signed up to the Doveton Regeneration Project to establish the Doveton Learning Centre: a birth to Year 9 community learning centre. In 2012, an Early Childhood and Prep to Year 6 centre opened. In 2013, the College expanded its enrollments to Year 8 and 9. A total of \$A32 million, from state, federal and philanthropic funding (from the Colman Foundation) was provided for the build. To learn more, see the *Sydney Morning Herald* article 'Primary care? At Doveton that comes in spades', 29 January 2012.



Learning at Doveton College

Governance

Doveton College Council sets the strategic intent of its Early Learning Centre and school. It decides on key partners for the College and undertakes joint planning. Overall, it is responsible for developing a shared and unifying vision and underpinning values for the College. The membership of the Council is perhaps what sets it apart from many other schools while adhering to all regulations pertaining to school governance under the Act. Members include four parents, four members of the College's philanthropic partner, the Colman Foundation, the College's Executive Principal, the College's Director of Family

and Children's Services and two co-opted members, currently including the Director of Community Services for the City of Casey.

Beyond the Council, a Local Agencies Advisory Group provides opportunities for all the main local agencies and services to come together and meet, share information and undertake professional development to better co-ordinate local responses for identified local need. A Parent Advisory Group (PAG) has also been set up. This offers a way for families to partner with the College through participation on the PAG, as well as formal representation on committees to seek and receive feedback with regard to ongoing planning and development of activities.

Innovation

Doveton College is the first social-government partnership of its type in Victoria. This means it embeds educational and family and children's services both conceptually and through its service model. Its aims are to: serve and engage the entire neighbourhood; create a network of support in which the school partners with local services to provide uninterrupted support for children and their families; work to build community among residents, institutions and stakeholders; evaluate program outcomes; and develop and support a culture of success.

The College's major on site partner is Good Beginnings Australia, a national not for profit

organisation that focuses its work on 'disadvantaged' children. Good Beginnings provides all structured playgroups and related activities and programs. Other philanthropic foundations partner with the College in the area of parent and community liaison programs,

The Doveton project is unique and considering the significant government and philanthropic investment, the responsibility to deliver for the children and families of Doveton is somewhat daunting. (Bretton New, Executive Principal, Doveton College)

Through Memorandums of Understanding the College also partners with leading agencies such as the Smith Family, the Brotherhood of St Laurence and Family Life to provide federal government funded programs in areas such as child and family mental health and adult education and training.

Model

In addition to the unique feature of integrating family and children's services and learning, what also stands out in the Doveton College

model is the active engagement of philanthropy and formal partnerships with major service providers.

Factors for effective engagement

(see all 10 factors on p. 22)

LLEAP research has identified 10 factors for effective engagement of philanthropy and education: a 'good fit'; building capacity, informed decision making, having the appropriate knowledge; a commitment to the allocation of appropriate resources; role clarity; reciprocity; relationships based on trust; good communications and impact focused.

The Doveton project is in its very early stages after two years of planning and the building of infrastructure and 12 months as an operating entity. Early evaluations would indicate that the LLEAP research does in fact reflect the key factors that must be in place if a project such as ours is to have any chance of success. The factors are closely inter-related and need to be

Models over time	Guiding principles and practices used in Doveton model for effective engagement of philanthropy and education ...
<p>First wave</p>   <p>(Colman Foundation approached state government in 2009 wanting to become directly involved in the education of disadvantaged children in an area with a large migrant and refugee population)</p>	<p><i>Be clear about the roles and contribution of partners:</i> The Colman Foundation has been involved in the establishment and development of Doveton College through a Memorandum of Understanding and a Deed of Agreement with the state government. The Colman Foundation's funding contribution does not replace government funding but rather enhances current services or provides for new services.</p> <p><i>Significant change takes time:</i> The MOU agreements are in place for 10 years. This has allowed for sustained strategic planning beyond what is usually possible in the context of a school. The formal agreement between the state government and the philanthropic foundation from the initial discussion of the concept to making the 10 year commitment is of great significance and one that sets the Doveton College project apart.</p>
<p>Second wave</p>  <p>(Colman Foundation, state and Federal government funding contribute to the build of the school. The relationship with the Foundation allows for new partnerships to develop as part of the model)</p>	<p><i>Think about what types of relationships with community are needed:</i> The contribution to the initial planning and research by the Colman Foundation was significant in the development of the model. The relationship with the Foundation also, for example, allows for a partnership with the Parent Research Centre, a preeminent research body on parent engagement and child development. A Volunteer Co-ordination Officer and program is similarly funded as are senior staff in the early childhood education program.</p> <p><i>School-community engagement is essential from the outset:</i> Involvement of foundations, agencies and service providers from the very beginning of planning has been critical to the work of Doveton.</p>

seen as such. None are more important than the other or can stand alone. In saying this however, the importance of timely, informed and effective communication is essential both within each factor and across the 10. For example, as Bretton New (Executive Principal, Doveton College) recognises:

A huge challenge is how to best embed the philosophy through Doveton College. The College is a learning community of 1600 people. It is as important that the approach and relationships within our Maternal Child Health are consistent with the approach and relationships within a year 9 math's class. This is a new journey for all staff, children and young people and their families.

Impact

What are the main outcomes?

The overarching objective from implementing Doveton's service model is to achieve the following outcomes:

- **Children:** Our children are ready and able to benefit from age-appropriate learning and social opportunities
- **Families:** Our families are able to meet the health, social, emotional and learning needs of all family members
- **Services:** Our child and family services actively support families and children in an integrated fashion, deliver high quality evidence based programs and are ready for children and families
- **Community:** Our community members are connected to local services and facilities that meet their diverse needs

How is information gathered?

The project is data driven and the evidential base is essential for decision making and ongoing evaluation. In the planning stages the project commissioned four pieces of research from the Centre for Community Child Health, Murdoch Children's Research Centre, Royal Children's Hospital: literature review, demographic mapping, an outcomes framework and a study on how agencies, children and families experience service delivery in Doveton. The traditional DEECD data was used to provide an overview of student achievement and student and parent perceptions of educational provision.

A longitudinal study of the project is a key objective. The College has recently entered into an agreement with the University of Ontario, Toronto, Canada to undertake this study. The University of Ontario is one of the few centres internationally who have the tools to evaluate a project such as ours. The University has been engaged in the 12 year evaluation of Toronto First Duty, a model that has informed the Doveton model. The College has employed a researcher to co-ordinate this study and to collect all data in partnership with the DEECD.

How do you share the information gathered and with whom?

The information is disseminated through current DEECD reports. Additionally the College is completing the draft of our first publication, the narrative of the project to date. The University of Ontario evaluation will be available annually. The College is also currently developing, in consultation with the University of California Los Angeles, the framework for a monthly dashboard to report on progress against our major indicators.