



CLIFTON CREEK PRIMARY SCHOOL

Community Engagement Report

The Victorian Government has committed to rebuilding Clifton Creek Primary School. Every Victorian student deserves facilities that are accessible, safe and modern.

In December 2019, the devastating East Gippsland bushfires significantly damaged Clifton Creek Primary School.

Students were relocated to nearby Nicholson Primary School while we installed temporary buildings at the Clifton Creek Primary School site. Students can now return to those temporary buildings, subject to coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions, while we plan the rebuild of their school.

As part of this planning, we asked the community for their views to help shape the designs.

ABOUT THE ENGAGEMENT

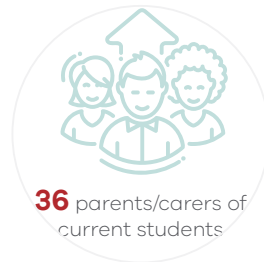
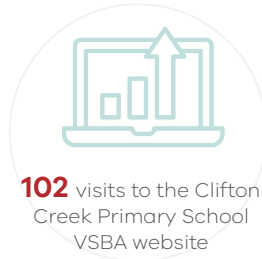
We engaged with teachers, parents and community members from Clifton Creek Primary School from 4 to 25 March 2020, via an online survey and a community engagement workshop designed specifically for the school community.

We designed the engagement to help acknowledge the community’s trauma and grief, as well as provide them an opportunity to move forward. In particular, we wanted to know what the school community’s favourite spaces are at the school, what they would like to see in the rebuilt school and any other roles they felt the school could serve for the wider community.

This report summarises what we heard from your community during this engagement.

ENGAGEMENT SNAPSHOT

We heard from:



Via:



WHAT WE HEARD

We heard very strong and consistent feedback focused around five key themes:

- Providing lots of outdoor multi-use spaces
- Desire for an environmentally sustainable design
- Reflecting the local environment and heritage
- Designing for bushfire and weather protection
- Highlighting potential future uses and opportunities

Providing lots of outdoor multi-use spaces

The community value the many **outdoor multi-use spaces** at Clifton Creek Primary School and would like these to be a key focus of the new design. We heard that interesting spaces where students can have a hands-on learning experience are very important to the community, with the **kitchen garden, mudbrick art and music room** and **school library** all highlighted many times throughout the engagement. It is also clear that the **chook and peacock pavilion** and **secret garden** are much loved features of the school.

The community also feel it is important for the school to provide a variety of **shaded and sheltered outdoor spaces** that can be used for multiple purposes. They would like to see improved **sport facilities** and an **oval** for students to run around and play games. Other suggestions were to include a **bike track, climbing structures** and **nature-based play areas** in the new design. We also heard about the importance of **quiet, relaxed places** where students can wind down.

"The garden and the kitchen because it provides students with the skills to grow and cook their own food and provides the exposure to fresh healthy fruit and vegetables in a positive environment."

– online survey respondent

"The secret garden was definitely unique and won a national prize in 1994. This was built by the students and families at the school at the time and designed by the kids."

– online survey respondent

"Better sports facilities/play areas. There isn't a great deal of flat ground, so sports areas need to be flexible and multi-purpose."

– online survey respondent

"Kitchen cooking - teaching life skills."

– school community drop-in session participant

Desire for an environmentally sustainable design

The community highlighted the need for **environmentally sustainable design principles** to be considered as part of the school rebuild. They value a number of sustainability initiatives that are in place at Clifton Creek Primary School, including the **frog bog**, which supports increased biodiversity, the **recycling station** and **rainwater collection tanks**.

The community feel it is important for the design of the new school to have a strong sustainability focus, so it can meet the needs of future generations and respond to our changing climate. This includes improving energy and water efficiency and consumption by incorporating systems such as **solar panels, LED lighting, passive solar design** and **rainwater harvesting** into the design. Other suggestions were to install **sustainable waste solutions, eco-friendly toilets** and **electric vehicle charging points** at the new school.

"This school is for the future generations and therefore needs to have waste systems built in. It needs to be self-sufficient in its energy production and consumption and teach the children why."

– online survey respondent

"Water saving and recycling for the garden and to keep the frog bog filled. E.g. water captured from drinking troughs could run to the frog bog, and/or with a water tap nearby for manual top-ups."

– online survey respondent

"Make our new school an exemplary model for a changing climate."

– school community drop-in session participant

"Sustainable technology - lots of solar panels, LED lighting, energy efficient appliances, high COP (coefficient of performance) air con, well insulated and sealed."

– online survey respondent

"Environmental friendliness of the infrastructure. We cannot build a school that does not align with the zero-carbon economy that we need to transition to."

– online survey respondent

Reflecting the local environment and heritage

It is clear that the community want the rebuild design to reflect the **local environment and heritage** of the area. The community highly value how Clifton Creek Primary School is integrated with the **surrounding natural environment**, and feel it is important for the school to retain its **rural feel** and maintain access to the **picturesque views** of nearby farmland and forests.

We heard about how much you loved the pieces of **local artwork and murals** that have been contributed over time by the school community, and how you would like to see **local art** incorporated into the new design. You also told us about the importance of highlighting **local indigenous culture** through the inclusion of **Aboriginal artwork**, to help facilitate awareness and learning opportunities.

"Connection to the natural environment, surrounding forest and farmland."

– online survey respondent

"I loved the variety of artwork in public spaces that different members of the community had contributed over the years - the big peacock, the tree of school life, and especially the Koori art on the poles at the covered way entrance to the school."

– online survey respondent

"I would like to see the heritage preserved. I would not like to see a modern structure, but rather a school that blended into and complemented the surrounding natural environment."

– online survey respondent

"More focus on local indigenous culture."

– online survey respondent

Designing for bushfire and weather protection

The community feel strongly that the new school design must be **resilient to the changing climate** and have measures in place to protect against **potential bushfire events** all year round. They would like a state-of-the-art **fire protection system** to be put in place, with suggestions to incorporate **sprinklers, fire safety screens, fire-resistant plants** and **fire breaks** into the rebuild design. It is also important that the new school meets all **bushfire management planning requirements**.

We heard that **weather protection** is a key issue for Clifton Creek Primary School, as it can get very windy at the school site. To help mitigate this, some community members suggested installing **shelter screens** and **undercover walkways** to ensure outdoor areas are shielded from the elements. Other suggestions to support weather protection included installing **double-glazed windows** and **insulating** the school buildings.

"I would like to see a system that will protect against future bushfires and a program that will maintain this system in place even during holiday periods."

– online survey respondent

"Good fire protection."

– school community drop-in session participant

"Fire-resistant and fire-retardant plants so that we can still have gardens in and around the buildings."

– online survey respondent

"Shelter screens from prevailing wind."

– online survey respondent

Highlighting potential future uses and opportunities

A school building is a vital part of any local community, so we asked you what **other roles** you see this new school being able to serve, both now and in the future.

After the bushfire crisis, the community feel it is important to have a safe space where they can **come together, reconnect and engage** with one another. There is a view that the school could act as a **hub for the community**, with suggestions to use the space for **meetings, playgroups, adult education, workshops, markets, fetes** and **other community events**. There was also interest in opening up the **library** and **garden** for the wider community to use.

"Multi-purpose space for community meetings, fetes and fairs with a decent kitchen and good acoustics. Perhaps space for activities outside of school hours to draw people out to Clifton Creek i.e. adult art classes, workshops etc."

– online survey respondent

"Be great if the school library could be open at times for community."

– online survey respondent

"Meeting place for community groups."

– school community drop-in session participant

"It can bring together families and the community and a place where they can use what the school has to offer."

– online survey respondent

"Playgroup, public meeting space, adult education, library, community garden."

– online survey respondent



Photography: Alex Coppel

Next steps

We wish to thank the Clifton Creek Primary School community for their thoughtful feedback and suggestions during this difficult time. We have provided your community's ideas and feedback to the architects to consider while designing the rebuilt school.

To stay up to date with the progress of schools in your area, visit [schoolbuildings.vic.gov.au](https://www.schoolbuildings.vic.gov.au)

You can contact us:

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