Working together to plan for our new high school in Ballina
Community update, 16 September 2015

Background information

The Department of Education (the Department) is responsible for planning public education so it meets the needs of students now and in the future. The Department has decided to build a new school on the site of Ballina High School to combine students in years 7 to 12 from Ballina High School (Ballina High) and Southern Cross School K-12 (Southern Cross) in one location. This school will open in term one, 2019. Southern Cross will continue to cater for students in years K to 6 and will be the site for all distance education in Ballina.

There are several reasons why the Department has decided to build a new high school in Ballina.

1. Ballina High School requires extensive upgrade and refurbishment. It is more cost effective to demolish the existing buildings and build new buildings.

2. Enrollment numbers for distance education and year K to 6 at Southern Cross are predicted to continue to increase over the next ten years. Moving year 7 to 12 students from Southern Cross to the new school will free up space at Southern Cross to cater for this growth.

3. The combined year 7 to 12 enrolments at Ballina High and Southern Cross show no significant change over the next ten years. Combining these students in one location, to create a student population of 1000 students, provides a student base to support a greater range of secondary subjects, than would be available at two separate schools.

4. A new school environment will include classrooms and specialised facilities that support best practice teaching and learning methods. This will include flexible, open and modern learning spaces that are suitable for a range of teaching and learning methods.

Consultation overview

Planning for the new school is still in the early stages. The Department understand the importance of involving stakeholders and the community in the planning for, design of and creation of the new school.

To start planning for the new school Ballina High and Southern Cross have formed a Combined Schools Working Party which includes Executive staff from both schools. The Working Party will play an important role in planning for the educational and student offerings at the new school.

The Department is soon to commence a broader consultation process to gain feedback on a number of important topics that need to be considered in planning for the new high school:

- Topic 1: Teaching and learning methods to be used at the new high school.
- Topic 2: Features and facilities at the new high school.
Topic 3: Transitioning our students and staff to the new school.
Topic 4: Developing our new school’s identity and culture.
Topic 5: Opportunities for community partnerships and shared use of our school facilities.
Topic 6: The future of Southern Cross School K-6 and Distance Education Centre.

Further background information on these topics will be provided during the consultation to help anyone with an interest in public education in Ballina to join the conversation.

The feedback received during this consultation will help shape the ongoing work of the Combined Schools Working Party and the Draft Concept Plans for the new high school – to be displayed to the community for comment in 2016.

How to participate

The Department encourage all those with an interest in the new high school in Ballina to participate by:

1. Attending a workshop.
2. Participating online.

Attend a workshop

Workshops will be held for various groups in the community. Select the most appropriate workshop for you to attend from the list below.

Ballina High and Southern Cross staff (combined) – Tuesday 13 October, 3.45pm – 5.30pm at Southern Cross School K-12, Chickiba Drive.

Ballina High and Southern Cross P&C groups (combined) – Tuesday 13 October, 6pm – 8.30pm at Southern Cross School K-12, Chickiba Drive.

Southern Cross parents/carers – Wednesday 14 October, 6pm – 8.30pm at Southern Cross School K-12, Chickiba Drive.

Ballina High parents/carers – Thursday 15 October, 6pm – 8.30pm at Ballina High School, Burnett Street.

Community workshop – Monday 19 October, 6pm – 8.30pm at Southern Cross School K-12, Chickiba Drive.

Who should attend the community workshop?

- Pre-school, primary and tertiary educational organisations – staff and parents/carers.
- Local businesses.
- Residents.
- Disability or special educational needs advocacy organisations.

Future parents/carers (parents with children in preschool and primary school across Ballina and surrounds) – Tuesday 20 October, 6pm to 8.30pm at Ballina High, Ballina High School, Burnett Street.

Ballina Yarn Up – Monday 26 October, 5pm – 6.30pm at Ballina Aboriginal Child and Family Centre, 10 Hayman Street. There will be a free barbeque at 6.30pm for people who attend the Yarn Up.

Cabbage Tree Island Yarn Up – Tuesday 27 October, 5pm – 6.30pm at Cabbage Tree Island Primary School, Cabbage Tree Island Road. There will be a free barbeque at 6.30pm for people who attend the Yarn Up.

So that we can best plan for the workshops please register your interest in attending the workshops by emailing Lismore.office@det.nsw.edu.au. Please give your full name and the date of the workshop you’d like to attend.

Ballina High and Southern Cross will also be hosting focus groups with students, to best understand their ideas, issues and concerns.

Participate online

Further details of how to participate online will be provided in early October 2015.

Further information visit


© 2015 NSW Department of Education and Communities