

## Background

In October 2013, the Minister of Education announced that Shirley Boys' High School and Avonside Girls' High School would relocate and be co-located on a new site. In February 2015, Queen Elizabeth II Park (QEII) was announced as the site for the rebuild. It was chosen as the preferred site because of the size of the available land, access for transport and design potential. Design on both schools will start in 2016, and the new schools will be completed during 2018.

In order for the schools to enter the design process, they will need to have considered how their visions for their students and their communities can be supported and strengthened through the opportunities and benefits offered by co-location. There are not many examples of co-located schools operating within the New Zealand secondary system, and no examples of two single-sex secondary schools. The schools have therefore asked the Ministry to provide its vision for co-location.

## Vision for Co-location

The Ministry recognises that every school's vision should be based upon the values and aspirations of its community. Shirley Boys' High School and Avonside Girls' High School have visions based in their long held traditions, and built upon the desire of their communities for high quality single-sex education.

This document captures a number of concepts and values that could be strengthened through a co-location model, and suggests practical ways that these could be operationalised in a design and build process.

It is intended as a starting point for discussions with the schools, so that the schools can discuss the theoretical benefits of co-location, and then consider how these might be operationalised in a way that supports their individual visions and the aspirations of their communities.

## Kaitiakitanga

### *What does it mean?*

Environmental sustainability is a critical issue for New Zealand, and a key component of future focused teaching and learning. An important feature of modern learning environments is that they take a sustainable approach to the use of resources, including energy efficient heating and lighting systems, water saving techniques, and alternative energy sources. Sustainability involves minimising the use of consumables and making considered use of other resources. Spaces should be designed so that they can be utilised effectively, which includes both the full space being used, and the space being used for greater amounts of time.

Sustainability also involves planning for the future, and sustainable designs are those that can be adapted to meet the needs of future students. This may be through buildings and spaces that are able to be divided and reconfigured internally, such as through the use of temporary walls or mobile dividers and furniture.

**Ka mate te kāinga tahi, ka ora te kāinga rua.**

With one cultivation a man will die, with two he will flourish.

### ***What could it look like?***

At a minimum, the Ministry would expect all horizontal infrastructure to be shared, including heating, drainage, electricity, water supply and network cables. There would also be sustainability benefits of sharing other resources and consumables, such as a common IT provider, shared library resources, and joint purchasing of resources like hardware or communications systems.

It would be possible to have improved sustainability through the sharing of human resources such as reception, administration or finance functions. Additionally, there would be efficiencies in sharing operating costs such as facilities management, cleaning and caretaking services.

The sustainable use of financial resources in this way means that, under the current funding model, decreased costs in the areas listed results in more funds available for supporting the schools' visions of high quality teaching and learning.

These visions for teaching and learning are not static, and it is important that the design and configuration of buildings, as well as their location on the site is considered with a view to flexibility and adaptability. This will involve both schools developing a vision that not only captures their aspirations for the current generation of learners, but how teaching and learning may change for future generations. This should include evolving technology, professional networks, and increasing opportunities for collaboration.

## **Kotahitanga**

### ***What does it mean?***

Kotahitanga is unity or oneness, and conveys the idea of working together to achieve better outcomes. The Ministry considers kotahitanga to be a key value of the learning community clusters, as multiple education settings collaborating can result in better outcomes than any would have achieved individually. In a co-located setting collaboration is more geographically convenient than for standalone school sites, and shared spaces, projects or initiatives can be more easily implemented and sustained.

### ***What could it look like?***

With a unified approach, the schools could offer a wider range of subjects than either could offer individually, and could benefit from the flexibility in employment that this creates. For example, schools often employ language teachers either part-time, or make up a full-time position with classes in other subjects (often at the junior level). Being able to offer a full-time language position would likely yield a larger number of higher quality applicants, leading to improved student outcomes and more seamless provision across year levels and across the two schools.

Possibilities that could be explored would be pooling staffing to employ teachers who teach across both schools, and shared classes with students from both schools learning together. There could be a combination of approaches, with shared classes used at a senior level for specialist subjects with low uptake, and shared staff at lower levels for additional curriculum offerings where student numbers at either school would not support that level of staffing.

This would be physically operationalised through learning spaces and configurations that supported this model of teaching. If certain subjects would be taught across both schools, then the learning spaces for that subject should be situated so they can be easily accessed by all students. If senior students may share classes for a specialist subject, a grouping of teaching spaces for senior students could be situated for convenient access.

Another example of kotahitanga could be shared facilities that give both schools access to facilities that are larger or more specialised than what either could provide in isolation. This could include sports and performance facilities as well as teaching spaces and teacher support spaces. A shared gymnasium or sports facility, for example, could use temporary dividers to create smaller internal spaces when required, but would give both schools access to a facility larger than either's individual entitlement.

Shared facilities would also give better effect to the principle of kaitiakitanga (sustainability) through more effective asset utilisation, and the Ministry expects that serious consideration is given to, at a minimum, the hall and gymnasium being shared facilities.

## **Ako**

### ***What does it mean?***

Ako views teaching and learning as reciprocal, with the teacher as a reflective practitioner who also learns from the students and others around them. Learning community clusters create opportunities for ako when education settings can share best practice with other schools and early childhood centres. This sharing of knowledge and expertise increases capability and capacity, and has benefits for both teachers and their students.

### ***What could it look like?***

Different schools develop their focuses and areas of expertise in response to many different variables, including leadership, community aspirations, history and tradition, and the availability of staff and resources. There will be some areas in which one of the two schools has a higher level of knowledge than the other, and can share this knowledge for the benefit of all.

Within the curriculum areas, there are advantages to pooling and sharing expertise. This could involve formal or informal professional learning groups, and the sharing of curriculum, planning or other resources. It could particularly increase professional development and networking opportunities for teachers in smaller departments. In addition to curriculum, one school may have strengths in other areas, such as behaviour management or community engagement, from which the other school could benefit.

Consideration could be given to physical design and layout that supported this vision of collaboration and professional learning communities. This could include shared teaching spaces, shared teacher workspaces, and having access to shared breakout facilities where staff from both schools can plan and collaborate. One model that would fit with previous literature on modern learning environments would be a 'learning street', which groups teaching and other support spaces around larger shared spaces that are themselves able to be divided, such as for socialising or holding larger meetings.

## **Whānaungatanga**

### ***What does it mean?***

Whānau and community are important influences on student achievement and engagement, and evidence demonstrates the positive influence that strong family and school relationships have on student outcomes. Many families who choose single-sex education options for their children do so for both their sons and daughters, and so may have children attending both schools. The Ministry believes that the home-school relationship will be strengthened if families and whānau can engage with the school site in a way that makes them feel connected with both schools.

The Ministry also believes in the importance of schools being designed and physically situated to be inclusive and welcoming, so that they are easy for visitors and the community to access and navigate around.

### ***What could it look like?***

A welcoming co-located site would be physically open and inclusive, and the design would suggest that visitors were able to access and build connections with either school. The location and orientation of the schools on the site would make it clear where access points were intended to be, where both formal and informal events or ceremonies would be held, and pathways and other outdoor layouts would make navigation straightforward and not unnecessarily divisive. For example, the schools could share an entry point and reception area, and could use pathways, signage and plantings to direct students and visitors around the shared site.

## **Manaakitanga**

### ***What does it mean?***

Although usually connected with how we care for visitors, manaakitanga in an education setting also involves how we care for students and their whānau. While the Ministry wants all learners to achieve to their full potential, priority learners are groups of students who have been identified as historically not experiencing success in the New Zealand schooling system.

These include many Māori and Pacific learners, those from low socio-economic backgrounds, and students with special education needs. The requirements of these learners must be specifically considered in the planning and design phases of any education facility, as must the use of culturally appropriate teaching and learning pedagogies.

### ***What could it look like?***

The involvement of family and whānau is particularly important for Māori and Pasifika learners, and shared whānau spaces will assist families to build a strong relationship with the schools, and to feel connected with the school site. Extensive consultation would be required with both school communities, but the schools may find it appropriate to include a whare or fale on the shared site.

The sharing of teaching spaces and staffing could provide opportunities for offering Te Reo Māori or Pasifika languages. Schools frequently struggle to find and retain teachers of these subjects, so combining staffing would assist in attracting teachers, and in being able to offer language provision at higher levels of immersion than may otherwise be possible.

The site could also host co-educational secondary satellite provision, and findings demonstrate the importance of physical design in creating an inclusive learning environment. For example, satellite spaces should be situated so that they share an entrance with their partner schools, which demonstrates that students in the satellite teaching spaces are welcomed and included to the same extent as students attending the partner schools.