

Flat Bush

Provision for Projected Increases in Numbers of School-Age Students

February 2007

What is an Area Strategy?

An area strategy is a strategic plan to ensure that the school-age population - within a defined geographic area and over a specified time period - is catered for effectively. In areas of projected population growth, the development of an area strategy ensures there is enough schooling provision in key locations to cater for the forecast number of students in the area.

An area strategy provides for strategic planning across a network of schools, rather than planning for individual new schools on an ad-hoc basis, and is an opportunity for innovative school network design. It ensures that any decisions reflect local community expectations as consultation is a key part of the development of a strategy, particularly with existing schools and community.

The final strategy is approved by the Minister of Education, with the Ministry of Education responsible for its implementation.

Why was a Flat Bush Strategy developed?

Flat Bush, located between Howick and Chapel Downs in Manukau City, is a new area being developed over the next 15 years, with an expected population of approximately 40,000 people by 2021.

One new primary school (Baverstock Oaks School) has already opened in the area, and it was clear that further primary and secondary facilities would be needed. As the process of land purchase, planning and construction for each school can take many years, the Flat Bush Strategy was developed to ensure that key decisions about the types of schools needed and the shape of the network were made well in advance.

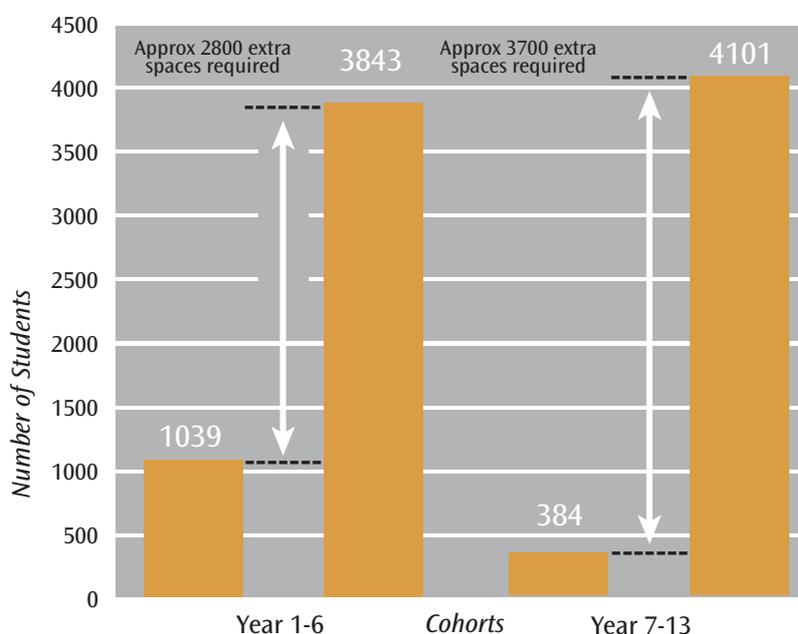
What are the demographic projections for the area?

The Auckland region is experiencing significant population growth, with projections suggesting that by 2021 the population will increase by between 336,000 and 571,000 people, to a total population of 1.55-1.79 million people. These projections are based on the 2005 intercensal projections from Statistics New Zealand. Beyond 2021, further growth is projected, with the Auckland Regional Growth Forum planning for a population of more than two million by 2050.

This growth will generally occur in specific areas (growth nodes) identified in the Auckland Regional Growth Strategy and the subsequent Southern Sector Agreement 2001. Flat Bush has been identified as an area of significant growth, and Manukau City Council has been leading the planning for the area.

Within Flat Bush, there is projected to be a school-age population of approximately 8,500 by 2021, made up of about 4,000 5-10 year olds and 4,500 11-17 year olds. Of these, 8000 are expected to access some form of state education.

As illustrated by the graph, based on the current capacity of existing schools, there is a projected need for approximately 2,800 additional places for primary-age students and 3700 additional places for secondary-age students by 2021.



What did the consultation process involve?

The purpose of the consultation was to provide an opportunity for all stakeholders and interested people to consider a series of questions and themes, make written submissions on them, and propose any additional options to be considered.

Any individual or group was welcome to take part in the consultation, with the following stakeholder groups specifically invited to provide feedback:

- Boards of Trustees of local schools
- Otara Boards Forum
- Local Iwi
- Teacher Unions
- Manukau Institute of Technology
- Local Community Groups
- Parents of students (both current and future) in the local area
- Manukau City Council
- City of Manukau Education Trust
- Early Childhood Groups
- Catholic Diocese of Auckland

To facilitate the process, the Ministry engaged an independent consultant, Alan Burton of Opus International Consultants, to meet with the stakeholders. The facilitator convened a Reference Group that was representative of stakeholders to advise on effective consultation methods and to assist in communicating with stakeholders.

A report summarising the consultation and its findings was presented to the Ministry. The report is available at www.flatbushstrategy.co.nz

What proposal did the Ministry consult on?

To focus discussion, consultation was carried out around a proposed option. This was based on anticipated school-age populations at the various age levels, and school development trends throughout New Zealand and overseas. The Ministry's proposal was to:

- establish four contributing schools (year 1-6)
- establish two junior high schools (year 7-10)
- establish one senior high school (year 11-13), and to
- change Baverstock Oaks School from years 1-8 to years 1-6.

Community members were encouraged to consider and provide feedback on broader educational issues including what the Ministry should take into account in planning for new schools in Flat Bush, what the opportunities and priorities are for Flat Bush, and any other issues that they felt should be taken into account for schooling in Flat Bush.

As well as responding to the overall strategy, they were also asked to provide feedback on the specific proposal including:

- the proposed structure
- the concept of two schools at Jeffs Road and three schools at Ormiston Road
- the likely school rolls
- the governance structure, eg separate/combined boards of trustees for schools on adjacent/shared sites
- locating an early childhood facility on each site.

What were the findings of the consultation?

The consultation process clearly established that there was an urgent need for schooling to be available locally at all levels from years 1-13, and especially beyond year 8. There was less agreement about the structure beyond year 6, with the following two additional options emerging during the consultation phase:

A second option was to:

- establish five full primary schools (year 1-8)
- establish two secondary schools (year 9-13), and to
- leave Baverstock Oaks School as a full primary school (year 1-8).

A third option was to:

- establish four contributing schools (year 1-6)
- establish two secondary schools (year 7-13), and to
- change Baverstock Oaks School from years 1-8 to years 1-6.

These options were considered by the Ministry and submitted to the Minister for consideration. However, generally the majority favoured the Ministry's proposal, with feedback emphasising the importance of the middle years of schooling and support for minimising the number of transitions between schools.

The community's expectation was for innovative and high quality schools to meet the needs of all students. It was expected that the schools would be suited to the community's character and particular needs. The community was also keen for provision to be made for early childhood, special education, tertiary and alternative education facilities.

How were the three different options analysed?

Each of the options was assessed by the Ministry of Education according to the following considerations:

- Improving achievement of students through providing opportunities for co-operation between schools at all levels in Flat Bush
- Educationally effective year-level groupings
- Educational benefits gained through responding to the diverse needs of Flat Bush's multi-cultural community and promoting community involvement in the schools
- School size
- Site availability
- Impact on existing schools
- Estimated capital costs
- Implications for local transport planning.

What were the strategic decisions?

After being presented with the results of consultation and analysis of the options, the Minister of Education, Hon. Steve Maharey, considered that the most effective solution to meet the projected growth in the numbers of school age students in Flat Bush would be to establish:

- four contributing schools (year 1-6) – one on the Jeffs Road campus, one on the Ormiston Road campus, and one in each of the south west and the south east areas of Flat Bush (see map)
- two junior high schools (year 7-10) – one on the Jeffs Road campus and one on the Ormiston Road campus
- one senior high school (year 11-13) on the Ormiston Road campus.

The Minister also agreed that Baverstock Oaks School would change from a year 1-8 school to a year 1-6 school.

The following diagram shows the structure, along with planning dates for opening, and indicates which primary schools will feed into which junior high school. Both junior high schools would feed into the senior high school.



The decision took into account the Catholic Diocese of Auckland's plans to establish a contributing primary school which will also assist in meeting future demand for primary schooling. It was noted that the peak roll numbers shown in the structure diagram may need adjustment upon the establishment of the proposed Catholic primary school.

In addition, during the implementation process for the Flat Bush Area Strategy other key issues raised during the consultation process will be addressed by:

- Encouraging a high degree of collaboration between the individual boards of trustees to facilitate the:
 - sharing of specialist resources and facilities
 - development of a professional learning community of teachers (including early childhood education teachers) across the Flat Bush network
 - necessity for the Flat Bush network as a whole to provide effectively for students with special needs
 - objective that transitions for students between different providers are as seamless as possible.
- Providing for early childhood education on all sites.
- Locating the schools on generously-sized sites to ensure all children have access to playing fields.
- Encouraging the schools to develop joint-use facilities with Manukau City Council and to develop appropriate links with government agencies and community-based providers.
- Developing strategies to ensure that Flat Bush will be a welcoming place for all students from all cultural backgrounds, including the provision of appropriate support for students for whom English is not their first language.

How and when will the strategy be implemented?

Over the next ten years the Ministry will build seven new schools in Flat Bush. The Ministry will monitor the population growth in the area as the exact timing for the establishment of the new schools depends on factors relating to the actual rate and timing of growth. Jeffs Road Primary School and Jeffs Road Junior High School have now been established and will open for instruction at all year levels at the beginning of 2009.

A significant feature of the implementation process is the establishment of an Advisory Group, comprising local community representatives from Manukau City Council, Botany Community Board, local iwi, residents, local boards of trustees, local principals, and Ministry of Education staff. The Advisory Group will provide important guidance to the Ministry and boards of trustees during the implementation phase.

East Tamaki/Flat Bush School Network

