

12. Schools in Port Phillip

Melbourne University Planning Professor Kevin O'Connor has said that:

'There's going to be a huge shortfall of schools in inner Melbourne. It's unlikely there is capacity for existing primary schools to grow much more ... We've been closing schools and selling school sites, and urban growth has gone on unabated without consideration for social infrastructure.'

Foolishly, successive governments have closed schools and sold the sites. Architect Charles Webb constructed the Dorcas Street Primary School in 1880. It was closed in 1996. The JH Boyd Girls School site was sold in 2005.

There are six government primary schools in Port Phillip. Population growth in the inner city is creating a critical shortage of school places. The 2011 census showed that the City of Port Phillip had 10,042 children under the age of 15 and 45 per cent of those were pre-schoolers, with Elwood-Ripponlea and Port Melbourne experiencing the greatest increase since the 2006 census. Those 4500 pre-schoolers from 2011 are now filling the area's kinders and primary schools and more of the older children are flowing on to local secondary schools.

For example the Port Melbourne Primary School has grown from 288 students in 2009 to 625 in 2031. There is no public school in South Melbourne. Planning and construction of new primary and secondary schools must commence immediately.

There have been significant steps taken by both parties. But these are the start not the end of the solution.

The state government has announced that there will be a new primary school in Ferrars St South Melbourne. This will be a 'vertical school'.

In July 2014 the Labor party promised to spend \$11.5 million to turn the present Parks Victoria site in Albert Park into a new primary school.

The two secondary schools in Port Phillip are Albert Park College and Elwood College.

Albert Park College has successfully opened. However there is a threat that its zone boundaries may be reduced. The government has promised to fund the purchase and refurbishment of the old Circus Oz site on Bay Rd to provide a year 9 campus for Albert Park College so that the school can grow by 200 places.

Elwood College has not adequately funded by state governments. The Elwood College Masterplan is the result of an extensive consultation process

with students, teachers and community members that began in 2010. This was supported by the Labor party in the 2010 election.

In Prahran, the Minister for Education announced in April 2014 that \$20 million will be available for the Prahran secondary education task force to formulate and commence construction of a new secondary school in Prahran.

unChain asks the candidates in Port Phillip: How can we ensure that our growing population in the seat of Albert Park has adequate schools and pre-schooling?