

# Hume Anglican Grammar's new campus in a growing north

*ET Staff*

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It's great to be a victim of one's own success – starting with a cohort of 36 students, Hume Anglican Grammar's on average 10 per cent year on year growth has seen the school come close to reaching capacity in the decade since the doors opened; the school celebrates its 10th anniversary this year.

That's the upside, for Principal Bill Sweeney; however, the downside has been informing dozens of disappointed, anxious parents that their child hasn't obtained a place at the Mt Ridley – north of Melbourne – based school.

"We are currently at over 80 per cent capacity and the projection is that by 2019 the school will be full. This year we have 1020 students, last year we had 920 students and the year before we had about 700."

"We have growing waiting lists for many year levels, in particular in the Primary School. For example, at Prep we have 84 places but

***"We have growing waiting lists for many year levels, in particular in the Primary School"***

have over 90 students on the waiting list. So for each student we have in the classroom we have another waiting to get in," Sweeney says.

There's been a combination of factors contributing to Hume Anglican Grammar's great success, not the least being that the northern region of Melbourne is one of the fastest growing areas in the country, that and the school's offering of a high-quality education at a very reasonable cost. Fees are consciously set to be as affordable as practicable to meet the needs of families.

Sweeney states, "Student wellbeing is at the core. We offer a values-based education focused on respect, integrity and resilience. We have a

strong pastoral care program which is delivered in a structured manner, but also we are very proud of the relationships that we develop with the children; our students are happy to come to school, who enjoy the experience."

"I read recently that South Morang and Craigieburn are two of the top fastest growing suburbs in the country and we are located within a few kilometres of both.

"We position ourselves as an affordable fee school, we work very hard to keep the expense for parents as low as possible, while providing a high-quality education. In this we have been very successful, and the federal government has been very helpful, much of the new building developments have come about through contribution by government grants.

"The funds received through government grants is money the school does not need to finance and pass to parents."



Principal Bill Sweeney

Hume Anglican Grammar has recently announced the opening of a new campus in 2019 located in the neighbouring suburb of Donnybrook, less than 10 minutes' drive north-east of the Mt Ridley site.

Donnybrook will be a sister campus to Hume Anglican Grammar, mirroring its approach and values and acting as a hub for the new Mirvac community development – 'Olivine'. The rising cost of housing in inner city Melbourne and the growing desire for young families seeking quality community living space has seen strong demand for houses in the development – projections are that a population into the hundreds of thousands will soon call the greater area home. It will largely be young families with children to educate.

"The Donnybrook campus will commence with the early years at Prep through to Year 4, and we will add additional year-levels as the school progresses. Our projection is that the new campus will reach its capacity of 1200 students in about 10 years after opening."

"We've worked very closely with Mirvac from the very beginning. We've been very fortunate in that they have allocated the school an excellent location in the centre of their development, which will also have a government primary school, a shopping centre and a community centre. There is no doubt the Donnybrook campus will be at the heart of the estate.

"We imagine that the bulk of our students will come from the immediate Olivine community but there's about a dozen other new developments opening on Donnybrook Road, I am sure there will be many in the surrounding areas who will wish an education at Hume Anglican Grammar."

Wisely, close attention has been given to building the kind of infrastructure that can be shared and it's expected that the new school will open its facilities to the larger community's use



Architectural plans for the new Hume Anglican Grammar at Donnybrook north of Melbourne, the facility was designed by Brand Architects



including the sporting fields, indoor recreational facilities and auditorium.

“We worked with Mirvac towards developing a close-knit community in which people living in the estate will have all they need without leaving. It is designed as a ‘20-minute neighbourhood’, where cycling and walking is encouraged and well supported through paths and trails.”

“Whittlesea Council has been very supportive of the project, we hope to be able to use the public ovals and adjacent recreation facilities for school sporting activities.”

Mirvac was very keen, as was the school, to provide an out-of-hours-care facility at the Donnybrook campus, the demographics of the community will be characterised by many young families who will create a strong demand for long day-care.

“That has already generated a great deal of interest from prospective parents. It will be run by the school and our staff and a director will be appointed. There’s also a school chapel planned which will also be used as a local parish church”, Sweeney says.

The land earmarked for school is currently farmland, “a true green-fields site”, as Sweeney describes it, but Brand Architects has developed a creative and contemporary plan for what will be a very open, aesthetically pleasing and

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environmentally friendly space.

The Donnybrook campus will be divided into senior and junior precincts spread over a spacious, 8-hectare area. The first to be built, prep and primary schools will occupy buildings in the north surrounded by nature play areas and an adventure playground.

Administration and reception will be located at the centre of the campus, with specialist performing and visual arts facilities to its east. The extensive indoor sport and auditorium will be in easy access to all year-levels, and in the south three major learning facilities will define a courtyard space for the secondary school. The EYC centre and STEM facilities will be located in the campus’ south-west corner.

“Every year will see new buildings added, the school will grow at a rate fitting the student population, so ensuring long-term viability. Being able to access some of the specialist facilities at Mt Ridley in the early years while those at Donnybrook are developed, is one of

the great advantages of a multi-campus school.

“The same goes with teachers, if there’s a shortfall of say an Art or PE teacher, it will be possible to commute from one site to the other, it’s about a ten-minute, 10 kilometre drive. One school - two campuses.

“We’re now able to offer a Hume education to more families than we could before, parents are devastated that they cannot find a place for their children and are regularly appealing to me to find a position. I am now able to offer an option that I know many will embrace – a high quality Christian education from Prep to Year 12 in an environment where they may achieve academic excellence, live our values and actively engage in life-long learning.

“And indeed some of the parents with children currently at Mt Ridley would be interested in moving them to the new campus. There is more development in the pipeline for industry in the area which will contribute to its strength,” Sweeney says.

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