

## **EEE - Equal Education in the East Presentation prepared for Shirley Boys' High School and Avonside Girls' High School May Board Meetings**

**Representative** - Margaret Stewart and Bebe Frayle

### **Background**

Equal Education in the East was formed from parent representatives, Dallington, St Albans and Richmond residents and resident associations, Avonside and Shirley residents plus elected members of the Papanui Innes and Burwood Pegasus Community Boards. The group want to ensure that the former zones of Shirley Boys' High School and Avonside Girls' High School are included permanently in the new zone.

The group has a mandate from the current residents of the suburbs to ensure this happens. This mandate has been secured by consultation through the residents' associations, a petition and feedback from various events and communications that have been held over the past 12 months.

### **Why we want a review**

Our communities have been deeply affected by the Canterbury Earthquake sequence, and the subsequent red-zoning of half our district. Since 2011, our residents have had to contend with:

- Damage to our houses (some houses have still not been fixed/ rebuilt)
- Ongoing issues with EQC and insurance companies
- The loss of community facilities
- Broken streets
- Years of roadworks and variable access
- Loss of friends, family and neighbours who have moved
- New rules and regulations being imposed on our properties
- Uncertainty around how our suburb is going to be "improved" and "regenerated"
- A sense of disempowerment as bureaucrats make decisions for us but not with us
- School closures - for example, Avondale Primary; Burwood Primary; Richmond Primary schools
- Movement of our major high schools from walking distance to multiple bus rides.

Our community has been resilient, patient, tolerant and understanding, but we do not accept this anymore. We have been taken advantage of. The Government does not have the right to compound the losses of our community under the banner of rebuilding and regeneration.

These suburbs are not a clean slate. They have over 150 years of social, cultural and generational history that needs to be respected and upheld. Transferring the facilities of one community to another and then excluding us from their use is neither fair, equitable or an improvement.

Using the The Education Act 1989 term “Reasonable Convenient School”, there is no justification for excluding our residents from the new school zone. For example the distance from the centre of Dallington to the following schools are:

- Dallington to QEII: 4.7 km
- Dallington to Haeata: 3.4 km
- Dallington to Mairehau: 3.8 km

The difference in distance to these schools is negligible. They all involve travel that cannot be reasonably achieved by walking - students will need to bike, drive or bus to whichever school they attend. The primary difference between them is that the new campus at QEII is historically the school that Dallington residents send their children to. We see no reason that this should be changed.

Comparatively the children of South Shore and South Brighton will have to travel double the distance of the Dallington example above, yet these children have been included in the new zone. How is this equitable?

Losing access to our schools will have a significant impact on the education our children receive. AGHS and SBHS have significantly larger rolls than Mairehau or Haeata. For our children, this means:

- A wider range of subject choices
- Greater opportunities to participate in cultural, social and sporting activities
- Access to excellent school facilities

Most concerning is that the rezoning removes the option for our residents to send their children to public single sex schools. This would be a huge, and unacceptable loss.

Although both schools are currently very full, enrolment statistics suggest that there would plenty of room to provide out-of-zone enrolment places to students at the new expanded campus, once the current out-of-zone enrolled students progress through school and graduate. If this is the case, why has the Ministry of Education not made room for our children? As out-of-zone enrolments, our children would be treated the same as children from Riccarton, Sumner, or Cashmere. There is no justification for this.

After the stress of earthquakes and rebuilds, our community needs certainty around access to education. Not all parents will choose single-sex education for their children, but childhood friendships established through primary and intermediate school should not be split up at Year 9 based on the date a child’s family shifted into their house.

### **Why do we need a review now?**

Provide certainty to our residents that further amenity will not be lost and prevent further demographic drift away from our suburbs.

The transitional zone currently in place is insufficient for this purpose.

- The transitional arrangement divides communities. Friendships built over years of attending local primary and intermediate schools will be disrupted if one child can access these schools and his/ her neighbour down the street cannot because they moved to that home in 2019.
- The transitional arrangement reinforces inequities in access to education for lower socio-economic groups. Those who rent are much less likely to stay in the same residence for years at a time.
- The transitional arrangement limits the effectiveness of the Kāhui Ako/CoL (Community of Learning) between SBHS, AGHS, Shirley Intermediate, Banks Avenue School, Shirley School, Waitakiri School and Chisnallwood Intermediate. A major purpose of CoLs is to smooth transitions between stages of education for students. Under the transitional arrangement, many students from the feeder schools could not get into the secondary schools that lead the CoL.
- The temporary nature of the arrangement ignores the strong cultural and social ties between schools and their communities. These connections do not have an expiry date.

### **What is the solution?**

Include the current transitional (previous) Shirley Boys' High School and Avonside Girls' High School zones into the permanent zone of the new QEII campus, providing residents of our community a guaranteed right of attendance to the schools that bear their name in perpetuity.