



EDUCATIONAL MODELS PROPOSED FOR LINDFIELD LEARNING VILLAGE

11 AUGUST 2014



KILLARA PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS AT UTS LINDFIELD



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PREAMBLE



'Learning Village' Preschool plus mixed primary and high school proposed

Plan transforms UTS campus into innovative public schools

Alexandra Smith

In one of Sydney's most striking public buildings, the age of students will not dictate what they learn, teenagers and preschoolers will study together, and Skype hubs will put students in daily contact with peers around the world.

These are some of the ideas being discussed as part of the transformation of the UTS Kuring-gai campus into Australia's most innovative public school.

Dubbed the Lindfield Learning Village, the school will have a preschool, a mixed primary and high school that could eventually include university-level subjects. It could cater for up to 3000 students.

The NSW Department of Education and architecture firm BVN Donovan Hill are working with a world leader in contemporary education, British academic Stephen Heppell, on the model for the much-needed school in Sydney's north.

The site has been secured. The



World leader:
The UTS campus at Lindfield, which is to be developed into a public school.
Photo: Christopher Pearce

"That recipe will continue to evolve as we see and learn from others' proven ideas around the world."

Professor Heppell said the recipe could include developing the school as a village for learners of all ages, creating small schools within the campus, a focus on studying "by stage, not age" and ensuring the school was technology-rich with a global focus.

"I'm bursting with excitement when I think about what we can do with Lindfield," he said.

While an online forum is encouraging educators, students and the community to consider all options, the NSW director of public schools Meredith Ash said the school would focus on the "stage of the student, not their age".

"There will be schools within the school, making them flexible, easy to change and collaborative among themselves," she said.

The first stage of the department's public consultation closes on August 18.

UTS building in Lindfield, which won the prestigious Sulman Medal for architecture in 1978, will be handed over to the department next year in a land swap with the university. It will reopen in 2017.

Professor Heppell, an international expert on learning spaces, will be in Sydney on Tuesday to give a public lecture at the Lindfield campus as part of the early consultation process, which includes site tours, workshops and online discussions.

"We're putting together a unique recipe on a unique site with a

unique community," Professor Heppell said. "We have this gorgeous space, and there is something special about pinching a university premise and giving it to children."

He said the Lindfield model would not be experimental, but would build on "the most successful and appropriate" ways of transforming education, "making it better for learners, for teachers, for wellbeing and for results".

"All schools are unique, so we will be assembling a unique Lindfield recipe from many of these tested and effective ingredients," he said.



TOP: LINDFIELD SCHOOL OF THE FUTURE PUBLIC CONSULTATION SITE

MIDDLE: NEWSPAPER ARTICLE, SMH 28.07.14

BOTTOM: IMAGES FROM PUBLIC CONSULTATION WORKSHOPS WITH PROFESSOR STEPHEN HEPPELL

PREAMBLE

The models proposed herein are based on current research into many areas of education: quality schools, physical and virtual learning spaces, teaching and learning, and technology. This research, when combined with the thoughts, feelings, ideas and concerns expressed during public consultation, and layered with the experience of qualified experts in the fields of education and architecture, forms a multi-dimensional approach to understanding the potential of the Lindfield Learning Village as a place of truly inspiring learning.

The models represent three valuable and relevant approaches to innovative teaching and learning in an environment built for exactly that purpose. Each model includes a core set of practices, approaches and designs which are necessary for a school of the 21st century, and all hold high quality teaching and learning as the pinnacle purpose of the school. However, each model is subtly but significantly different in the focus and overall vision which will inform strategic decision making through to day-to-day activity on the site.

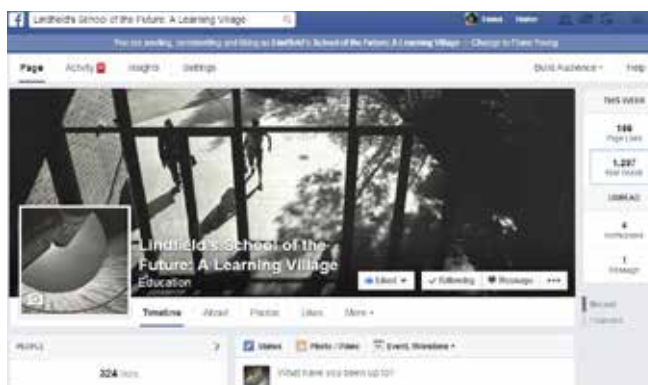
Through the use of an interactive website (www.lindfield.mindmixer.com), face-to-face public consultations, media releases and social media conversations, the project team has gathered together significant amounts of information including the most valuable information of all: the thoughts and ideas of young people from the Lindfield area, all of whom were excited to participate in designing a school for the future rather than for the past¹.

The quality of the feedback from students was particularly high. Their excitement about a K-12 school, as well as support from parents, indicates that planning for a 5-12 or 7-12 school alone was not sufficient to the needs of the community, which is supported by demographic data.

This document is divided into four: (1) the research-based summary of the core elements to be present in any model chosen; (2) a detailed explanation of each model; (3) a description of the proposed implementation process (timing and facilities/design) and (4) an appendix which includes precedents and case studies from around the world.

There are several key decisions to be made about the final educational personality which the school will initially adopt, but there should be no question that it must be a school where innovation, creativity and global citizenship are at the forefront of learning and teaching.

¹ As expressed in Walden, R. (ed) (2009) Schools for the Future: Design Proposals from Architectural Psychology, (Cambridge, MA: Hogrefe & Huber Publishers) and others.



TOP: SNAPSHOT FROM LINDFIELD_SOTF TWITTER SITE
BOTTOM: IMAGE FROM LINDFIELD SOTF FACEBOOK PAGE

“Re-imagine the learning experience for our children. Traditional schooling does not seem to equip kids for challenges beyond the classroom, traditional teaching methods and the narrow definitions of ‘success’ do not cater for the many different types of learning and achievement that are possible in our society. I am thrilled at the idea of a public high school that would present a different model.”

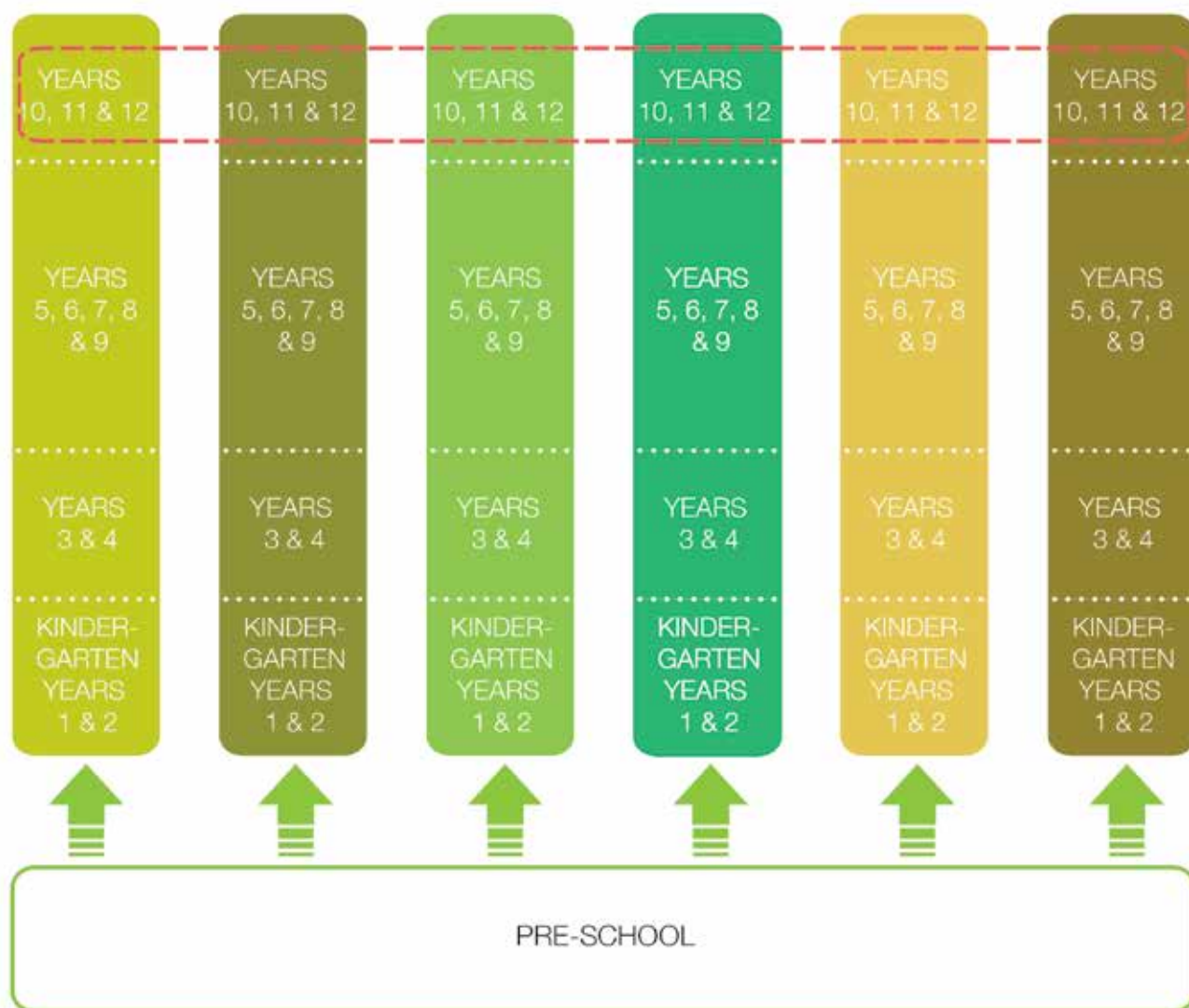
Sharon B, Mindmixer (consultation website)



EDUCATIONAL MODELS: THE CORE ELEMENTS

My vision is a school comprising preschool, primary and high school to best utilise the space the UTS building provides.

Tania E, *Mindmixer* (consultation website)



EDUCATIONAL MODELS: THE CORE ELEMENTS

A school of the 21st century needs to nurture and support learning which is relevant not just for today, but for the future. Learners will grow to be critical, creative, engaged citizens who are active in their community and the world. Therefore, regardless of the model to be chosen, there should be core elements which have proven to be effective within innovative learning communities around the world.

There are several core elements which are common across all models. These are represented in the adjacent diagram. Each element is explained briefly.

P-12 The school will satisfy not only the brief requested to investigate options for a new school, but also the needs of the community by having a pre-school and primary students on campus as well as secondary students and other community members¹. Essential to this approach is the establishment of *Home Bases* (often referred to in literature as “schools within schools”²), in which teaching and learning is focused on a project-based, multi-age and learning-centric curriculum.

Home bases Students will be enrolled in a group of 150-300 students known as a *Home Base*³. As mentioned above, this relates to research into effective learning and social groups. These *Home Bases* will allow students to take on a strong identity within the larger campus, including using their own facilities and participating in a clear learning program distinct from other *Home Bases*. This will not be tied to age but rather learning preference and interest, and will allow teachers to form better relationships with students and track their progress accurately in order to better support their individual needs.

University & research partnerships Local and international universities would be invited to engage their Teacher Education Programs in a meaningful way, as well as researchers and leading experts working with teachers and students to constantly improve learning for all⁴.

Community & parent engagement The school will seek to establish strong and valuable links with the community which go beyond shared facilities to harness

the collective potential of the community as learners and teachers⁵. The feedback gathered from our public consultation both online and in person shows significant support for the shared use of the Lindfield site as a learning space.

Induction unit for new students A pioneering evolution of a process that is an essential element of an any school. New students (especially those from schools with significantly different educational models) and teachers would progress as needed through an induction program before being welcomed into a permanent *home base*⁶.



1 Heppell, S., All Through Schools, <http://rubble.heppell.net/all-through>

2 Heppell, S., Schools-within-schools, <http://www.heppell.net/vertical-groups>

3 Heppell, S., *ibid*.

4 Timothy et al (2010) Providing Authentic Leadership Opportunities through Collaboratively Developed Internships: A University-School District Partnership Initiative, Journal of Research on Leadership Education, <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ913599>

5 http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/ltolats_tcm4-712920.pdf and <https://www.principals.ca/Display.aspx?cid=8573&pid=807>

6 Hay Group; AITSL (2014) Literature review and environmental scan: building the right foundation - improving teacher induction in Australian schools http://www.aitsl.edu.au/docs/default-source/default-document-library/building_the_right_foundation_improving_teacher_induction_in_australian_schools_hay_jan_2014

We need to bring FRESH ideas to the table and why not have students themselves sitting at the table! We need to quit thinking that we are the experts that know best about what and how kids learn. They should be encouraged to think and act for themselves and take part in every aspect of how the school is setup and run. Let's use this opportunity to revolutionise education!

Mack X, *Mindmixer* (consultation website)

The idea that the campus belongs to the community, that parents and grandparents are as familiar with the campus as the kids that attend during the day because they are busy there in the afternoon and evening. A buzzing community hub where you can meet new people at classes whatever your age.

Karen R, *Mindmixer* (consultation website)

We need to stop thinking about separating kids based on age. If we group them by ability level, then there will be a good mix of kids of different ages and learning styles in each grouping. And there can be different groupings for different things so kids get to mix with a variety of people. It's important that kids can go at their own pace and that brighter kids are not held back.

Glenys M, *Mindmixer* (consultation website)

EDUCATIONAL MODELS: THE CORE ELEMENTS

Student voice This campus will be particularly special as it will be a hub of reflective practice, which includes students helping to make decisions about key aspects of their *Home Base* and the campus as a whole. Students will also take a more active role in their own learning, gaining skills in self-assessment and peer-evaluation, which is often the way students most regularly experience feedback¹.

Special needs enabled All students will be catered for as their needs require. By utilising the diverse and deep skills, expertise and experience of the many members of the school community - including university partnerships - an outstanding, supportive and inclusive environment can be maintained².

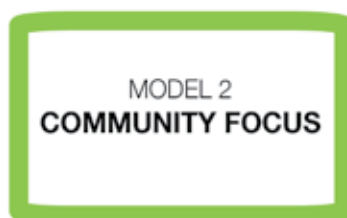
Tech-rich Students will be able to benefit from the technology provided by the school as well as their own devices in order to become responsible digital citizens who can participate in a global community and economy³. The new Digital Technologies curriculum encourages the use of technology in all areas of teaching and learning, as well as the need for students to be skilled technology users rather than just technology consumers⁴.

NSW Syllabus - though the school will be highly innovative in its approach to teaching and learning, all NSW Syllabus requirements will be met. This includes offering the Higher School Certificate courses in which students wish to participate.

I would like to see this school being an example of the very best that public education can provide and a cornerstone of that is that it would take all comers. I'd also like to see special education prioritised and incorporated into the planning right from the start with appropriate learning spaces, assistive technologies and qualified staff.

Corinne C, *Mindmixer* (consultation website)

In addition to these essential elements, the following models could be adopted:



¹ Many scholars, including current chair of AITSL, Professor John Hattie, have proven the role of feedback to be essential to effective learning. See http://www.teacherstoolbox.co.uk/T_effect_sizes.html

² Education rights for children with disability http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/disabilities_education_rights.html

³ Levin & Schrum (2012) Leading Technology Rich Schools <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED5316>

⁴ ACARA, Technologies curriculum rationale, <http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/technologies/rationale>

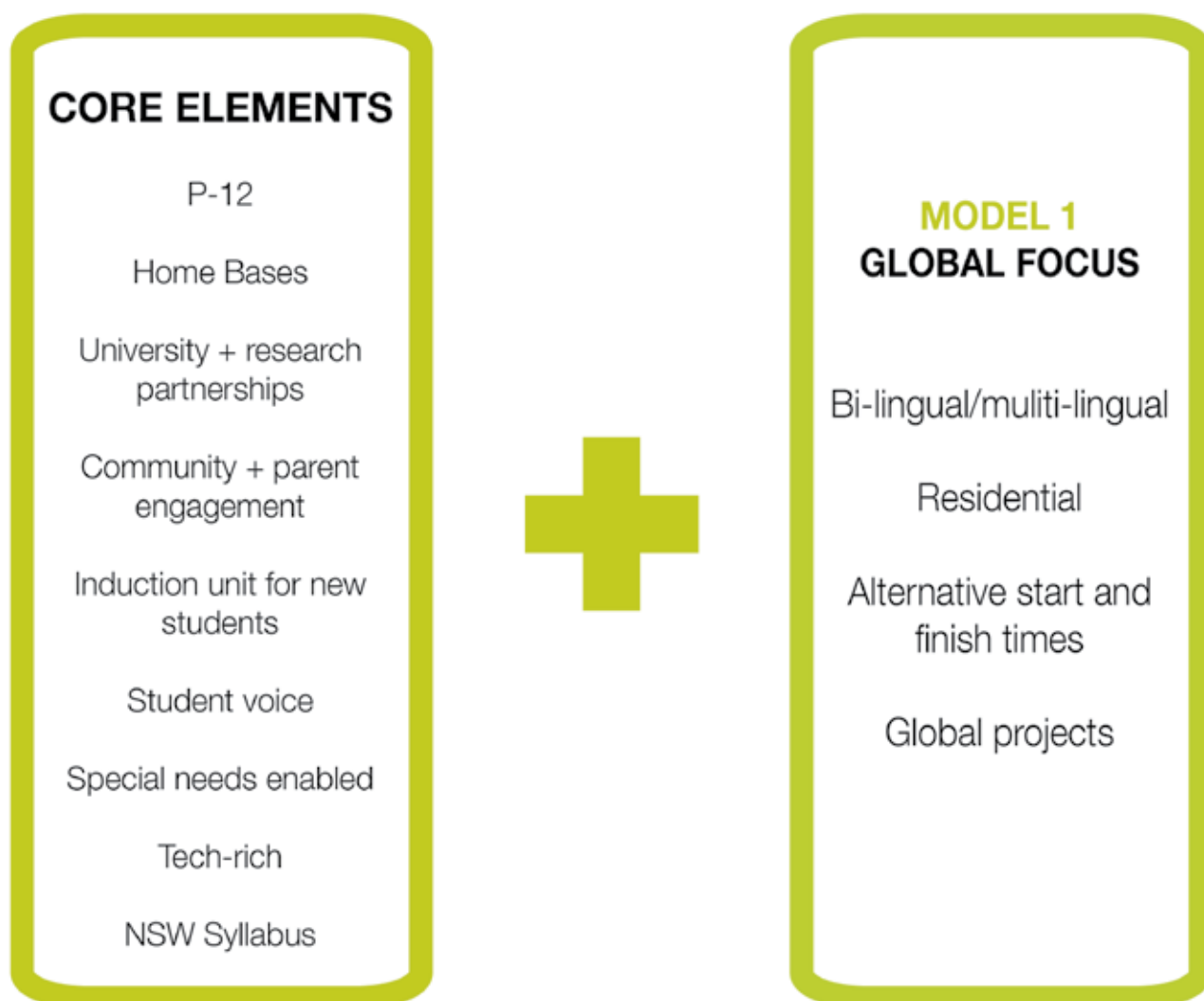


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MODEL OPTIONS

Does children's schooling need to be tucked into 9-3? How about 10-4 to help reduce the congestion on the roads during peak hours?

Karen R, *Mindmixer* (consultation website)



MODEL ONE: GLOBAL FOCUS

The Global Focus model responds to the political, social and economic demands which now face all Australian citizens. We live in a global community where events have far-reaching consequences or at the very least are easily communicated throughout the vast information networks which now exist.

Our students live in a world where what they learn and how they learn can open new windows on to the world. Australian students will find it no alien concept to discuss French history with a Paris-based archivist or debate the landing at Gallipoli with a group of Turkish students.

Teachers will encourage every learning experience to have elements of learning other languages, customs, practices and ideas. Other schools' staff and students will be invited to participate on site through a form of residential visits in order to foster face-to-face collaboration between schools.

Using technology as well as local resources, such as native-speaker parents and community members, the site will draw the world into the day-to-day learning experience¹. New and interesting opportunities for global connections will be at the forefront of planning projects, undertaking research and designing the curriculum.

Language skills and cultural sensitivity will be the currency of this world order².

It would be great to have a public school in the area that emphasized the importance of cross-cultural competence and learning other languages. There could be a large number of cultural/linguistic exchange programs, as well as excellent foreign language teaching within the school, so that students from the new UTS school could study abroad and others could come for short stays in Australia. This would help students appreciate different kinds of people and ways of thinking, as well as prepare them well for their future careers.

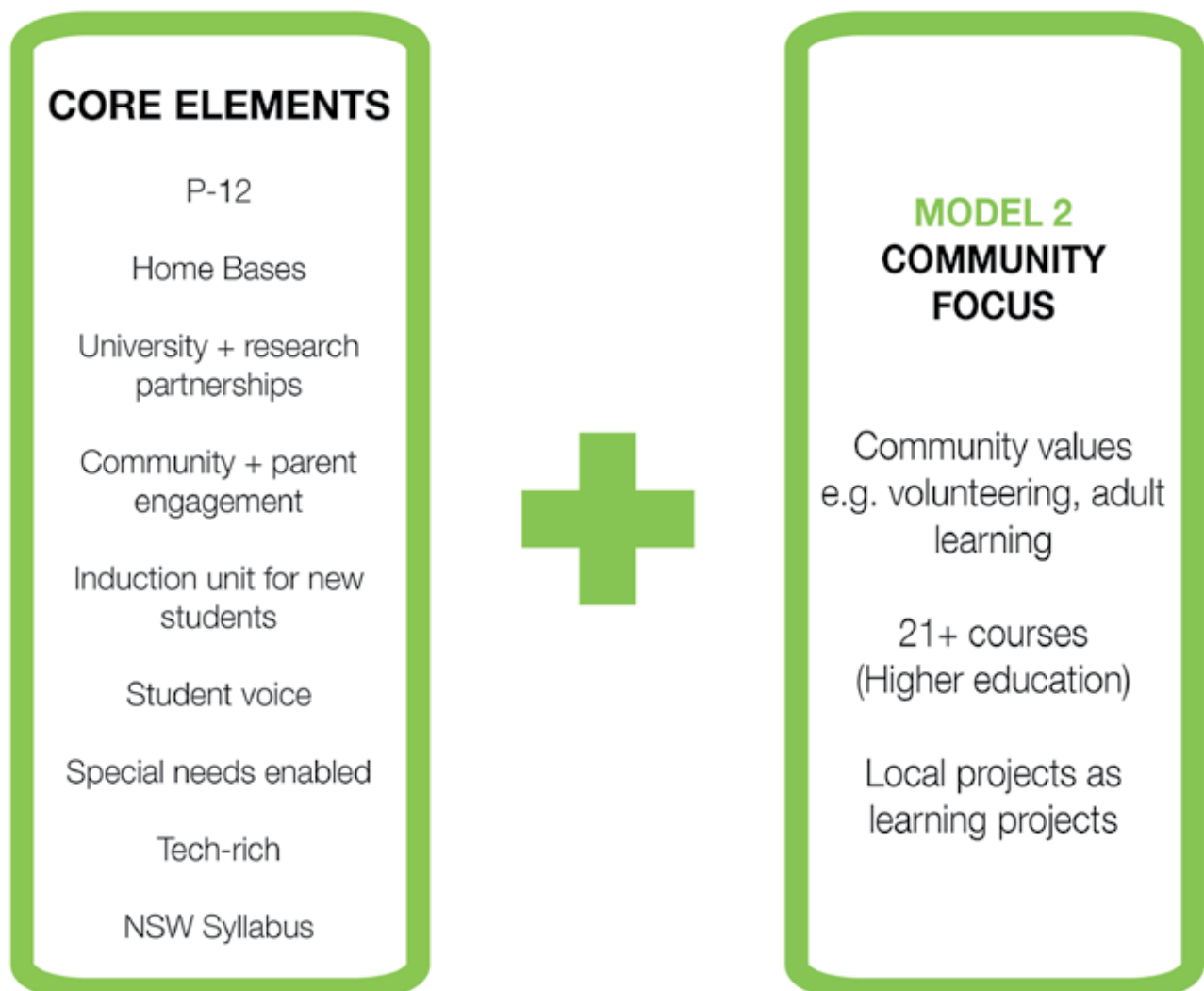
Rebecca W, *Mindmixer* (consultation website)

¹ Heppell, S., Learning Places and Spaces: virtual and actual, <http://rubble.heppell.net/places/default.html>

² General Peter Cosgrove, Australian Principals Associations Professional Development Council, 30 May 2002; and Asia Education Foundation National Summit, 26 November 2003.

Design a curriculum around innovative projects to solve community problems enabling deep learning and sharing of cross generational expertise.

Sue B, *Mindmixer* (consultation website)



MODEL TWO: COMMUNITY FOCUS

Undoubtedly, the students of the Lindfield Learning Village will be active local and global citizens but this model requires them to be more aware of their role in these environments and to actively pursue new and challenging learning opportunities therein. This requires ongoing, meaningful connection with the community, including parents¹.

Not only will P-12 students be active citizens, but the school will promote and embrace learning contexts for those beyond their HSC years. By partnering more closely with tertiary institutions such as libraries², universities and TAFE NSW, learners of all ages will be able to engage in new and exciting pathways which encourage them to learn from each other, regardless of their life experience.

Reports show that students who volunteer do better in school than their non-volunteering counterparts³.

By connecting young people with old, and facilitated by passionate and engaged educators, students of all ages will be able to participate in learning experiences which draw on community expertise, knowledge and understandings⁴. This will allow students to contribute to the community as they learn, rather than be isolated from it.

TAFE courses should be incorporated into schools more readily to provide more seamless integration for both teenagers and adults.

Janette E, *Mindmixer* (consultation website)

Have students (primary & secondary) teach and share their technology skills to the elderly members of our community. Technology is moving at such a fast pace, the students could share their learning to help others in their community. They could learn skills such as setting up accounts, paying bills, creating playlists and connecting and communicating with family and friends via the internet (Skype, FaceTime etc).

Andrea S, *Mindmixer* (consultation website)

1 DEC NSW, Family and community engagement, <http://www.dec.nsw.gov.au/about-the-department/our-reforms/local-schools-local-decisions/reform-agenda/working-locally/family-and-community-engagement>

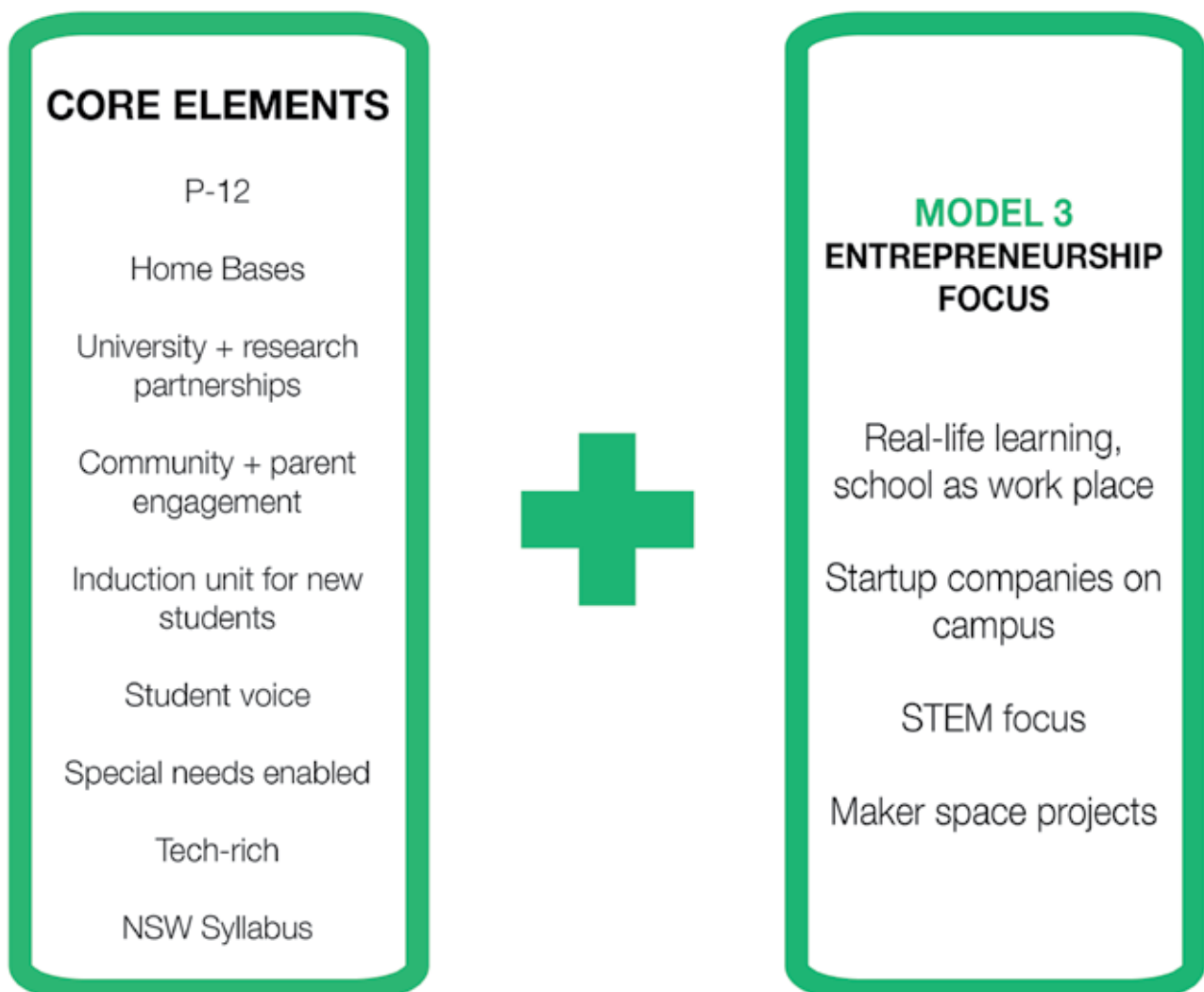
2 Kocevar-Weidinger, E., Kinman., V & McCaslin, S. (2007) Luck, Opportunity, and Planning Innovative Learning Spaces, Library Administration and Management, 21:1, p.29-34

3 Grantmakers In Ageing, Children, Youth, Families... and Ageing, <http://www.giaging.org/resources/gia-toolkit/children-youth-and-families-and-aging/young-people-serving-older-adults/>

4 Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL), DeforestACTION, Student Voice, <http://www.studentvoice.aitsl.edu.au/videos/379>

This generation needs more critical and creative thinking, business sense and entrepreneurial skills than any, and they are not in the curriculum!

NP, Mindmixer (consultation website)



MODEL THREE: ENTREPRENEURIAL FOCUS

There have been increasing calls from the business community, government and community groups for young people to be more active in developing new and emerging industries in Australia. Groups such as SydEduTech, a recently formed community of educational start-up companies, promote innovation and entrepreneurship as the future of Australia's post-industrial economy.

In this model, students will become entrepreneurs of learning by engaging in activities and tasks that build skills and knowledge useful to a 21st century economy and also develop a deep understanding of the cultural, scientific¹ and artistic basis for progress over time.

Australia must identify where it can succeed in a global marketplace and take deliberate steps to secure this success and invest in innovation².

Students will accelerate creative projects³ and be able to engage in deep design thinking, with expertise on site to help them follow through with sound ideas that can make a difference. Students will also graduate with many of the attributes immediately needed by industries of the future, as well as the contacts and experience to become active designers of the future economy.

The Lindfield campus is within 'striking' distance of various leading-edge organisations and research facilities. There are great opportunities to form rich partnerships with some of these organisations including: bringing speakers from these organisations in to lecture/teach/guide; providing opportunities for kids to visit and undertake research work; undertaking collaborative projects.

Glenys M, *Mindmixer* (consultation website)

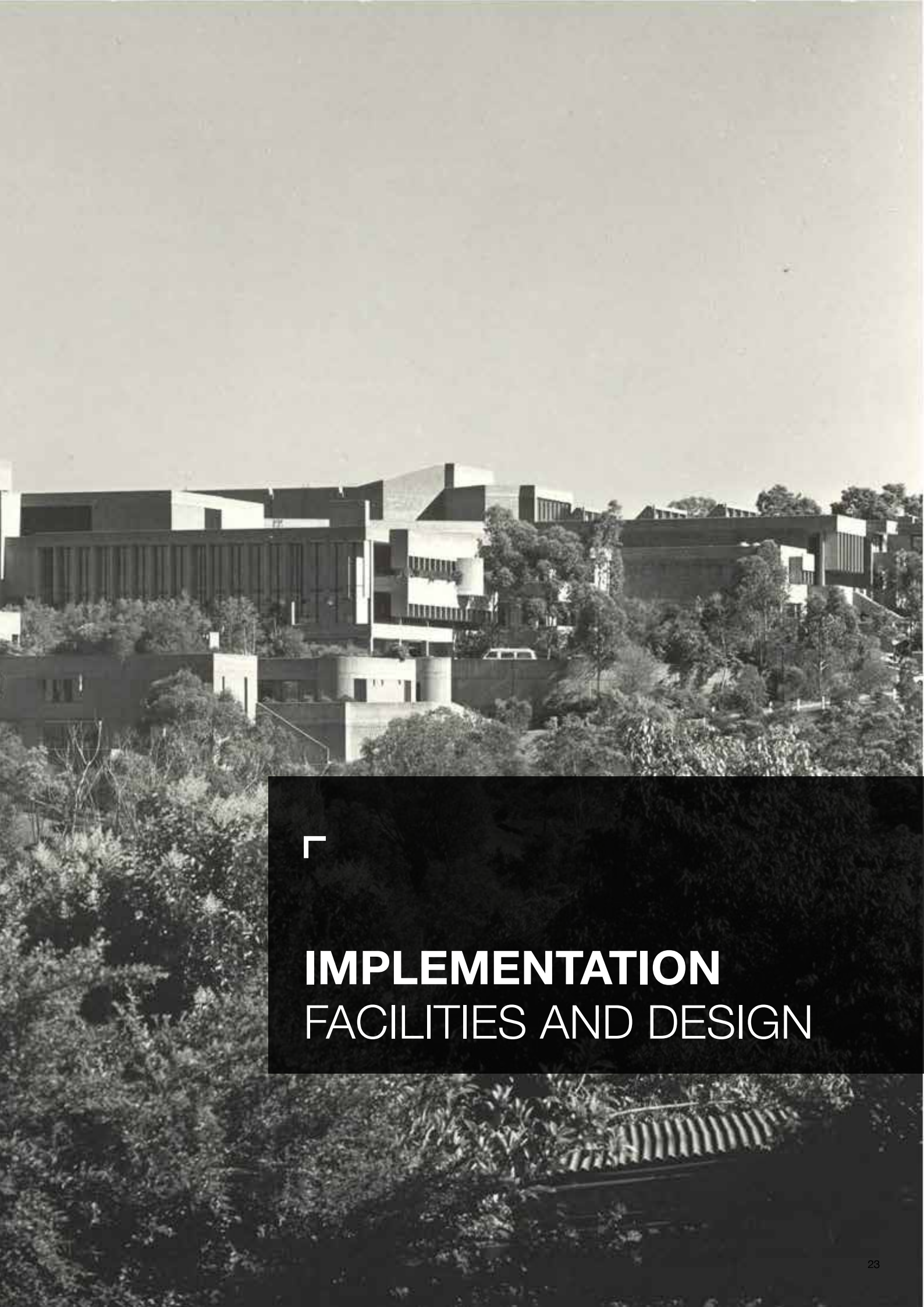
1 Heppell, S., Science Learning Spaces, <http://www.heppell.net/science/default.html>

2 Catherine Livingstone, chairman of Telstra Corporation Ltd, speaking at QUT Business Leaders' Forum in 2014.

3 Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL), Innovative Learning Spaces, Student Voice, <http://www.studentvoice.aitsl.edu.au/videos/1120>



PHOTOGRAPHER: MAX DUPAIN



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IMPLEMENTATION

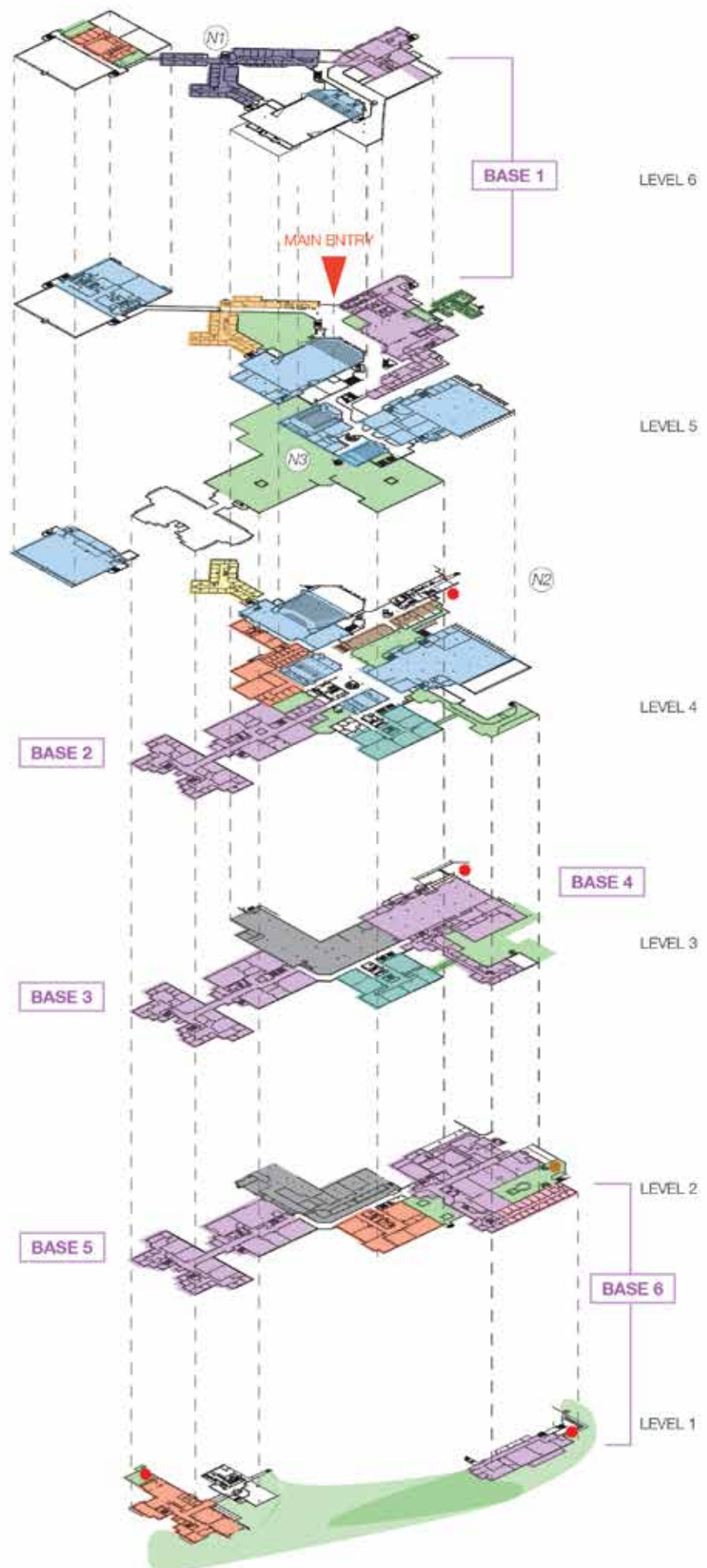
FACILITIES AND DESIGN

NOTES

N1: Area shown as Residential would become Research space in Entrepreneurial Model.

N2: Cafe space could also be used for Start-Up companies in Entrepreneurial Model.

N3: Current rooftop space proposed as outdoor play area.



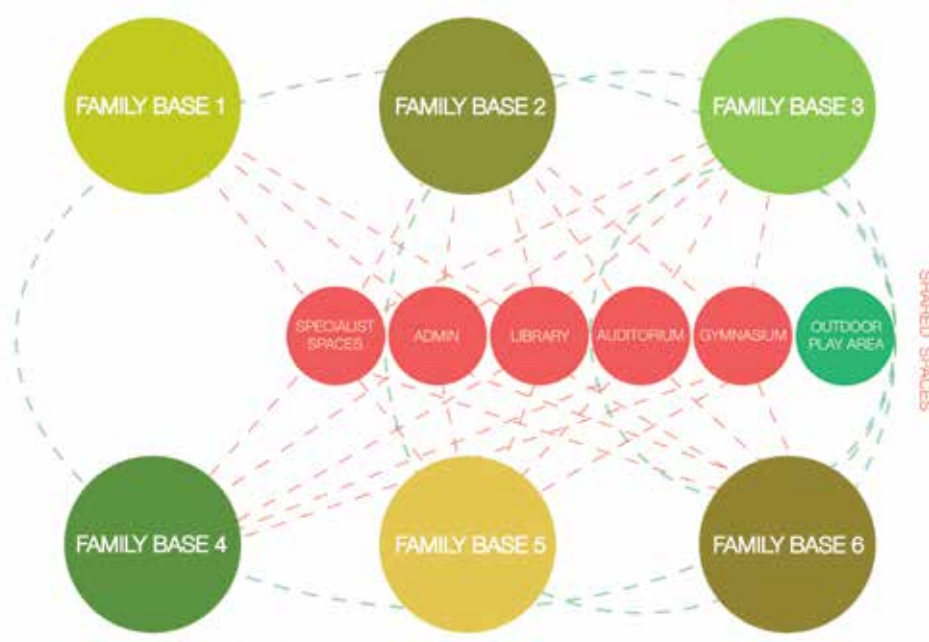
IMPLEMENTATION FACILITIES AND DESIGN

The building originally opened as the William Balmain Teachers College in 1971. The surrounding landscape was a key driver for the design of the building and the way in which it integrated with and through the native bush. The hill top village concept is evident through the building's "internal street" which 'draws all its functions together and allows for a close collection of teachers and students as a social entity'¹. The innovative design of the buildings and their placement in the bushland has received and continues to receive a great deal of praise and awards. In 1978 it received the *Sulman Award for excellence in Public Architecture*.

Although we have access to a fascinating and outstanding educational facility, there are some elements of the building which will need to be redesigned and repurposed in the process of evolving the university into a school of the 21st century². Many aspects of the building will be retained as they currently stand. However, there will be some internal designs (especially relating to light, colour, furniture and other basic amenities) that will be assessed and evaluated³ for their appropriateness for a school.

The plans (adjacent) indicate how the building might be repurposed to support several Home Bases existing on the same site

*Australasia is recognized internationally for implementing innovative learning environments.*⁴



1 Notes on the History of the UTS Kuring-gai Campus https://www.aila.org.au/projects/NSW/ku-ring-gai/docs/uts_hist.pdf

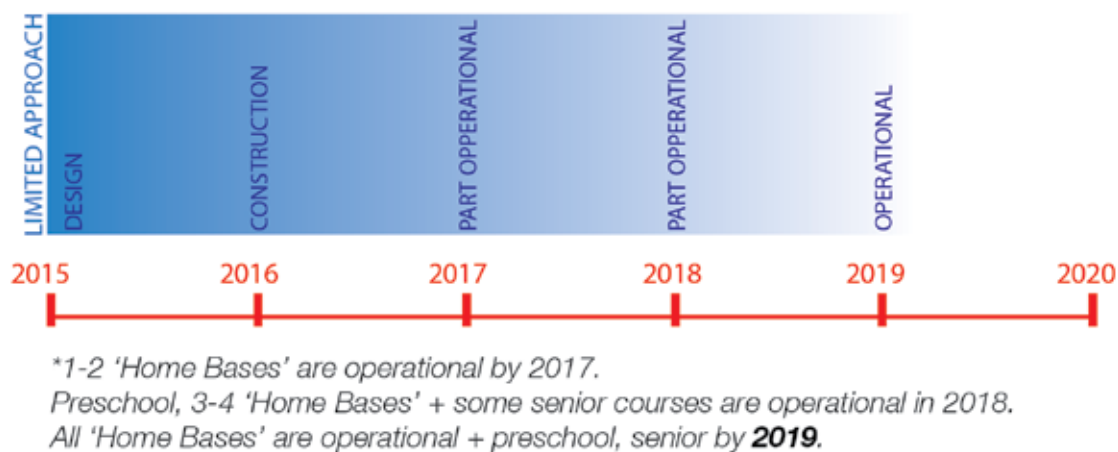
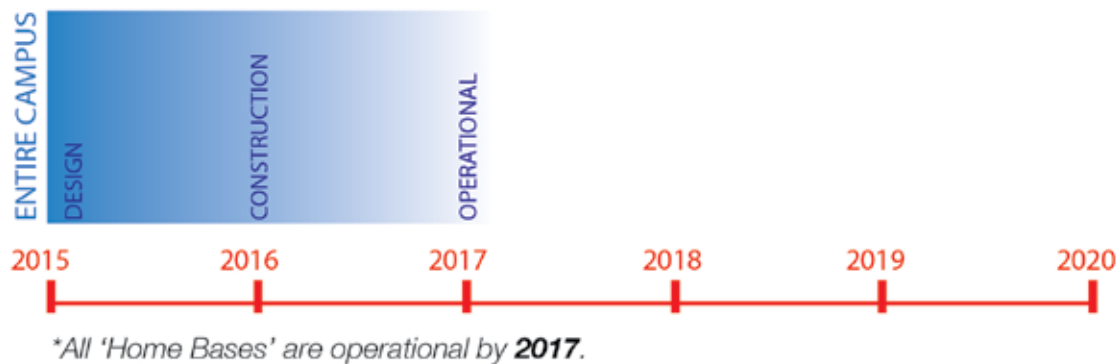
2 Kools, M. (2013) Designing 21st century learning environments, OECD educationtoday blog <http://oecdeducationtoday.blogspot.com.au/2013/09/designing-21st-century-learning.html>

3 Cleveland, B. & Fisher, K. (2014) The evaluation of physical learning environments: a critical review of the literature, Learning Environment Research, 17, p.1-28

4 Newton, C. (2011) Innovative Learning Spaces, first published in Artichoke, posted to <http://architectureau.com/articles/innovative-learning-spaces/>

IMPLEMENTATION TIMING

Suggested options for implementation are shown below.





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Image Credits: Historical photographs of the UTS Ku-Ring-Gai site by Max Dupain.



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