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Mr Kel Torre
Chief Executive Officer
Melton City Council

08/02/2019

Dear Kel,

I am writing on behalf of Melton Secondary College School to propose that Melton City Council (MCC) partner with Melton Secondary College (MSC) in the development of a performing arts centre (PAC) as a shared school and community facility.

I acknowledge the in-principle support for the construction of such a facility provided by Cr Bob Turner [23/04/2018]. It is clear that MCC understands the benefits that such a facility would bring to the college and to the wider community. Cr Turner noted very clearly that MCC has made no consideration of financial contribution to such a project at this point in time. In putting this proposal to you I would ask however that MCC consider the medium to longer-term benefits and the funding opportunities this project would bring.

Why does Melton Secondary College want to build a PAC?

The college master plan identifies the need for a new performing arts centre (PAC) positioned at the front of the school site adjacent to the new administration building. The Department of Education and Training (DET) have informed the MSC School Council that funding for this facility will be allocated in future budgets.

The PAC which MSC is entitled to through the DET facility schedule will provide classroom and staff work areas and a presentation space with seating for 25-50 students. Not only will the limited auditorium and theatre space fall short of the curriculum and community needs of a growing creative and performing arts program it would offer little to support participation in the performing arts by the wider community of Melton.

The fact that MSC is entitled to a PAC that meets its entitlement and the commitment from government to fund it provides an opportunity for MCC to potentially leverage off state government funding and the existing land and form a partnership that would provide the local community with a PAC at a much-reduced cost.

Our architect's (Clarke Hopkins Clarke) have estimated that the funds required to build the PAC within the scope of entitled space at around \$3m. Additional funding in the vicinity of \$2.5m would allow the inclusion of expanded auditorium seating (300+), stage, entry foyer and other spaces to support community performances and events.

MSC has a history of joint facility partnership that benefits the wider community. The construction of the Melton Indoor Recreation Centre (MIRC) and Shared Community Use MoU has given local sporting clubs access to a three-court stadium for the past 30 years. It is true that the MIRC has required considerable investment over the life of this agreement and that there have been periods where both parties have had to work hard to make the MOU work. Given that the MOU is about to expire, MSC School Council appreciates the good will shown by MCC in giving early notice of its intentions and its support in making sure this facility remains available for community use into the future.

Last November, the Deputy Premier, James Merlino announced funding of \$3.3m to MSC for the development of an AFL standard oval to be developed in partnership with MCC and AFL Victoria. MSC School Council is looking forward to commencing this very exciting project in the coming months and working with MCC to develop an MOU that works well for both parties. It is very encouraging from the school's point of view that the Victorian Government is willing to invest substantially in infrastructure supporting sport in the school and community.

I understand that proposals such as this typically take some time to progress and may not eventuate at all however, I feel there is reason to be optimistic about this one.

MCC clearly recognises that there is an infrastructure shortfall to be addressed, however it is clear that this is only one of many competing infrastructure needs in this rapidly growing LGA. This proposal seeks to provide MCC with a cost effective medium term solution to this shortfall and allow it to achieve multiple priorities.

The factors that would make it a cost effective proposition for council include:

- Substantial investment by MSC/DET through the entitled facility component and potential for additional Vic Gov funding through grants.
- Existing land for construction
- Existing parking on site and access to substantial parking nearby
- Central location on Coburns Road
- An existing performing arts program at MSC to support the development of a community performing arts culture
- Shared operational responsibility through an MoU

Conversations in recent months with community leaders and elected government representatives have been positive and I am encouraged by the continued enthusiasm of students and parents for the performing arts curriculum. So many of our students, Melton citizens of the future, are inspired by the opportunity to stand up and perform in music, dance or theatre. This part of our curriculum breathes life throughout the school.

There is much more information required to scope the costs of building and operating a PAC and to establish the benefits such an investment might yield. If Melton City Council sees sufficient potential in the proposal to support moving forward I would be very keen to work with you and your officers to investigate this proposal further and see if we can build a facility that will add substantially to the development of a thriving arts culture in Melton.

Kind regards



David Reynolds
College Principal