

Submission in response to the ACT
Government's
Towards 2020: Renewing Our Schools
Proposal

as it pertains to

HALL PRIMARY SCHOOL

AND

HALL PRE SCHOOL

**VILLAGE OF HALL AND DISTRICT
PROGRESS ASSOCIATION**

November 2006

Summary

The Village of Hall and District Progress Association is a registered voluntary group that represents the community of Hall village and the surrounding district, and includes a number of affiliated community organisations, including the Hall Primary School P&C. Now in its 104th year, the Association takes great pride in this role and particularly in the initiative taken by former members of the Association in establishing Hall School. The Progress Association welcomes this opportunity to make a submission on the ACT Government's Towards 2020: Renewing our Schools Proposal, as it pertains to Hall Primary and Preschools.

While we can understand the need to rationalise parts of the primary and preschool education system in the ACT, we strongly oppose the proposed closure of Hall Primary and Preschool for the following reasons:

- (i) Consultation has been grossly inadequate;
- (ii) As the oldest continuously operating public school in the ACT we see a strong historic argument for the school to remain open;
- (iii) There is an opportunity to maintain the school as a living heritage feature for the benefit of all ACT residents;
- (iv) The social and economic impact on children, parents and the Hall and district community would be severe and unwarranted;
- (v) NSW students: Cross-border financial arrangements have been established with NSW, and the outlook for negotiating better arrangements look promising – it is premature to consider closing the school before pursuing this potential;
- (vi) The community has demonstrated its resolve and ability to work with the ACT Government and others to ensure the continued viability of Hall Primary and Preschools.

These points are outlined in detail below.

(i) Consultation

The Towards 2020 Proposal did not involve any consultation in its development prior to its release on 6 June 2006, and has the appearance of a *fait accompli* rather than a proposal for genuine discussion.

We do not believe that adequate consultation has taken place over the Towards 2020 Proposal, specifically as it relates to Hall Preschool and Primary School. We feel that consultation has not been open or transparent, and relevant and vital information, such as the Costello Report, has not been provided in a timely and accessible way to enable maximum community participation in debate about the proposal. In particular, specific queries for information by members of the Hall and district community have either received a tardy response from the ACT Government or still remained unanswered. This has disempowered the community, including parents of children attending Hall Primary and Preschools from being able to fully engage in the debate.

One example of this relates to projected school enrolments.

The Department of Education announced its Towards 2020 Proposal on 6 June 2006. At that time, the only additional information available on the Department of Education's website concerning projected enrolment figures was a July 2004 document "Projected enrolments 2005 to 2009". A question was raised to the Department by a member of the Hall community concerning disparities in this document and the Towards 2020 proposal. In August 2006 the July 2004 document was replaced on the Education Department's website with a new document (dated July 2005) "Projected enrolments 2006 to 2010" figures, which happens to contain figures that match the Towards 2020 Proposal figures for projected enrolments.

The question has never been answered as to why, if this later document was truly published in July 2005, it took until August 2006 to make this document available on the Department's website. We do not believe this is in the spirit of open and transparent consultation.

Further, detailed questions by a member of the Hall community over the way in which exact calculations for Hall Primary School projected enrolments were made have never been answered by the Department of Education. Average enrolments at Hall Primary School over the past twelve years was 142 children (based on Department of Education census data) and the February 2005 census figure was 118 children. Yet, the Department's new projected enrolments are for 110 children; showing the July 2005 estimates to be in error for 2006 projected enrolments by 18 children or 16%. This has obvious implications for the calculation of the cost per child for education at Hall Primary School. An enquiry requesting an updated document for "Projected enrolments 2007 to 2011" never received a response.

The February 2006 census gives enrolment at Hall Primary School at 128 children. While actual enrolment figures are increasing at Hall Primary School, we do not have access to the Department of Education's rationale for estimating 110 children enrolled per year. We dispute this figure until such time as convincing evidence is provided. Thus the principle of providing relevant and timely information has not been fulfilled.

(ii) Historical links to the Hall community

In November 1903 Bedellick School (on Spring Range Road) burnt down so pupils had a 10 kilometre walk to Ginninderra School. By December 1903 Hall district residents had written seeking establishment of a school in Hall. This approach was rejected. In 1906 the Village of Hall and District Progress Association petitioned the NSW Government for a school at Hall. A further approach in 1909 pointed out that 20 of the 45 pupils at Ginninderra School came from the Hall area. In 1910 approval was given to build a school at Hall to accommodate up to a maximum of 30 children.

By 1911, declaration of the ACT saw Hall become a border village subsumed by the Federal Capital Territory. Hall Public School opened early in 1911 and has remained the district's educational and social focal point. Mr C. W. Thompson was the first teacher at Hall and served until 1933. For his retirement, a tablet was unveiled at the school recording his long service and a function was held for him at Kinleyside Hall.

Traditionally a large proportion of Hall School's enrolments have come from surrounding NSW resident families. The first Empire Day Picnic was held on 24 May 1912 and a Gould League established. In 1915, Arbor Day was celebrated by pupils planting pine trees that surround the school grounds. In 1918, pupils planted the Peace Tree to celebrate the end of the First World War. That juniper tree still grows behind the Kindergarten classroom, and is heritage listed. In July 1919, another thirty pine trees were planted by the ladies of the Hall Branch of the Red Cross Society, each tree representing a Red Cross volunteer.

Pupil numbers of 50 saw the original building extended in 1924. From 1911 to 1974 the Commonwealth Government paid NSW to provide Federal Capital Territory's education services. Laurie Copping was principal of Hall Primary School from 1960 to 1986. He and his wife, Irene, lived in the "Cottage" (now Hall Primary Before and After School Care), from 1961 until 1986.

Students were always district children, attracting children from a wide area because of the school's excellent reputation. In 1974 the Commonwealth took over running of the school.

Parental representation reversed a 1957 proposal to close the school and transport pupils to Lyneham. This resulted in the construction of a new school building and Headmaster's residence. In the mid 1960s "Service Before Self" was adopted as the school motto. 1967 saw provision of two transportable classrooms and 1968 the completion of additions. During this period the original school building was saved from demolition to become a School Museum.

In 1981 enrolments peaked at 181 pupils. Over many years the school has been used to trial many new academic, musical, social and sporting programs before their introduction into the full ACT schools' program.

In 1986, at the 75th anniversary of the school, His Excellency Sir Ninian Stephens officially opened the Hall Primary School Museum. Present were some of the original students, who pointed out the trees they had planted. In 1997 a time capsule was sealed in a cairn constructed near the Museum, unveiled by the youngest and oldest students in the school at that time, along with retired Laurie Copping. It is due to be opened in May 2011, at the Centenary of the Construction of the school.



In 2004, the School Museum was dedicated to Laurie Copping by His Excellency Major General Michael Jefferey. The Governor General said:

...I began thinking about my own years at primary school, growing up in a small mining town in Western Australia. I think our school was about the same size as Hall Primary, maybe a little smaller. Our school years were great. While we worked hard at our studies in and outside the classroom, life was a

wonderful adventure for us. We made time for exploring in the bush with schoolmates, about animals and insects, went fishing, and played a lot of backyard cricket. And we all hopped in with chores around home; feeding the chooks, chopping the wood, helping mum and dad everyday around the house... So what is special about the Hall district community that inspires people like Laurie Copping to care about the wellbeing of local people and motivates them to preserve the records of the past? Yours is a community that invests in itself. And I think that like Australians everywhere, your community is a highly self-reliant group of people. Australians are very good at making-do with limited resources yet when opportunities are seen or there are causes to uphold, they routinely pitch in to help others.¹

As the oldest continuously operating public school in the ACT we see a strong historic argument for the school to remain open so that it can continue to provide special, innovative and advanced educational services to the Hall District. As our Governor General so wisely puts it, Hall is a community that invests in itself. The greatest investment of any community in its future is its investment in its children.

(iii) A living heritage feature for the Australian Capital Territory

The whole of Hall Primary School, including the School Museum and the Peace Tree, are heritage listed in the ACT Heritage Register as a part of the Heritage Listing of Hall Village Precinct. In fact, this is the only school in the ACT that has full heritage listing.

Listing on the ACT Heritage Register means that the place or object is:

- of particular importance to the people of the ACT and enriches our understanding of history and identity;
- is legally protected under the *Heritage Act 2004* including the application of Heritage Guidelines;
- requires advice by the ACT Heritage Council on development issues to improve conservation outcomes; and
- is eligible for support from the Heritage Advisory Service or funding from the Heritage Grant Program.

The Heritage listing for Hall Primary School carries with it a particular conservation policy and various specific requirements to ensure its implementation, in particular:

The intrinsic features of the Hall Village Precinct should be managed in a manner appropriate to conserve its historical significance as a rural village predating the Territory, and conserve the natural, aesthetic and Aboriginal values of its landscape setting.

The process of developing the Village of Hall Master Plan took several years of active community involvement through the Village of Hall and District Progress Association. This Association is now in its 104th year, the longest continually running local community group in Canberra, and during all those years has remained active in developing Hall and the district and protecting the character of Hall village.

There is an opportunity to maintain the school as a living heritage feature for the Australian Capital Territory. A heritage-listed school that maintains its use as a school

is worth more to the ACT than just the shell of its buildings and a ghost of its past. It is a unique opportunity for the comparatively recent Territory to sustain links to its history and its heritage while the majority of other heritage sites are increasingly absorbed into Canberra suburban development. The School Museum is open to the public on the first Sunday of each month, when Hall Village hosts a popular local produce market day. Maintaining the school as an operating school is more in keeping with the conservation policy of maintaining its historical significance than closing it.

There are great fears among the community of Hall and District as to what would happen to the site if the school were closed. While Minister Barr has assured us that the building will be put to “community use”, Chief Minister Stanhope has stated that school sites would be sold for development purposes. This contradiction has not been clarified during the consultation process. The land on which Hall School is sited is valuable and, even if a genuine assurance could now be given as to the use of the land, the temptation to sell this piece of land under successive governments in the ACT would remain a continuous threat to the heritage of the village if it were no longer a school.

The heritage listing of Hall has been pivotal in defeating proposals for extension of rural residential development adjacent to Hall as well as the Government dismissing proposals for development within the existing boundaries of the village eg the proposal for 26 houses to be built on vacant land in Palmer Street almost opposite the school. Currently the ACT Government is defending the requirements of the heritage listing in legal actions related to the construction of Victoria Squareⁱⁱ in the main street (Victoria Street). Clearly in making these decisions the ACT Government has been mindful of the impacts the development would have on the heritage values of Hall. Consistency with this approach would demand that the Government also foreclose on any redevelopment of the site of the school particularly as it is in a position that is even more prominent in the village than the aforementioned development proposals.

Finally, to illustrate the point that it is not just for Hall residents that the community and Government so fiercely protects Hall’s heritage values, but for the benefit of the broad community, we quote from Simon Corbell’s (Minister of Planning) foreword to the “Village of Hall Master Plan” published in May 2002:

Hall is a special place that is valued by both its residents and the broad ACT community. To its local residents Hall provides a special ambience and village lifestyle. To the broad ACT community it provides a tangible link to the region’s history. In addition, the various recreation and community facilities in Hall support a number of significant regional activities such as the Hall Markets, major polocrosse and equestrian events, a campground on the Bicentennial Trail and other community events that need to occur in a broad open space setting.

The Plan is an initiative of the Hall community and they have been closely involved with its preparation. The community was primarily concerned that suburban development in Gungahlin recognised Hall as a discrete village, and established principles to protect its distinctive qualities. The Plan achieves this by creating a rural buffer to any future development, excluding any additional road connections into the Village and providing a set of development control guidelines that respond to the natural and cultural identity of the area.

The planning framework set by this Master Plan will help ensure that pressure for change does not diminish Hall's social and environmental qualities. Protection of the village character is not only important to Hall residents but to the entire ACT and region community. The Plan will ensure that all Canberrans continue to have the opportunity to enjoy Hall's history and rural ambience that dates back almost 120 years."ⁱⁱⁱ

(iv) Financial and Social impact on students at the school, the students' families and the general school community if the schools were to close

The village of Hall was established in 1882 – predating the establishment of Canberra by a considerable period. At that time Hall was a service centre for the district providing commercial and community services over a wide area of what is now NSW and the ACT. For the residents of Hall District, the political boundary between the ACT and New South Wales is nothing more than an administrative border. It does not in any way form a physical boundary between the community within the ACT and the community within NSW. People consider themselves residents of Hall District, first and foremost, regardless of administrative arrangements.

Indeed, the Postmaster-General recognized how Hall was integrated into the neighbouring district across the border when in 1967 a postcode (2618) was allocated that covers Hall and neighbouring districts in New South Wales. It is one of the few postcodes in Australia that ignores State and Territory boundaries. Postcodes were allocated by the Postmaster-General on the basis of commonality of interest within a geographical district.

Hall's role as a service centre still exists today and has not been obliterated by the establishment of an arbitrary administrative line delineating the ACT/NSW border. Hall today is far more than a rural adjunct to suburban Canberra. It still provides commercial services to the surrounding area, a major part of which is in NSW. Socially it also functions as a service centre for this area – the school enrolment profile is further evidence of this as most of the students are drawn from nearby areas that are now within NSW.

These links are recognised in the heritage listing prepared by the ACT Government that states:

Proclaimed in 1882, Hall Village represents a small rural service centre associated with the pastoral use of the area prior to the formation of the Australian Capital Territory. Hall Village continues to provide services to the surrounding rural area within the ACT and NSW, and the community values the sense of physical and social separation from Canberra. — from the ACT Heritage Register^{iv}

More recently these links were again recognised in the Master Plan for Hall Village which was adopted by the ACT Government in 2002. It states:

"...Hall is a village, not a suburb. As such it is seen as being separate to, not part of Gungahlin, yet it is considered to be part of Canberra. Hall is also seen as being

closely linked to its rural hinterland, most of which is actually in New South Wales, not the ACT.”^v

In this context we strongly contest being grouped as part of the “Gungahlin Region” in the Towards 2020 Proposal, for the first time in the history of the ACT Department of Education. Hall Primary and Preschools, along with Tharwa and Jervis Bay, have always been acknowledged as rural schools, not falling into the same category as suburban Canberra.

If the ACT Government is to pay more than just lip service to the Master Plan statement, it must acknowledge that the school is central to the service role that Hall fulfils. The package of commercial, social and educational services present in Hall is at a level of critical mass. Closure of the school will have a serious effect on the other services in the village by greatly reducing the reasons for people from the surrounding area to visit the village on a daily basis.

Hall Primary School plays a critical role in the life of Hall village and surrounding district. The relationship between the school and community life in small communities is recognized in various research. The school-community relationship is multi-faceted: schools have positive economic and social impacts, provide a resource for community development and offer a delivery point for social services.^{vi}

Hall Primary School and Preschool contribute significantly to the social and economic life of Hall village and the wider District. For example, each year on Remembrance Day, the Rotary Club of Hall organizes an evening service attended by War Veterans, serving military personnel and residents of Hall village and district. The students of Hall Primary School lay wreaths, sing and commemorate Remembrance Day in this solemn community event. Similarly, each year, the Christmas Carols event organized by Hall Primary School and Preschool engages the broader community of Hall village and district in celebrating the Christmas Season. On many occasions, local church groups and the Hall Village Brass Band have joined in this special celebration with the school and its students at the heart.

In 1990, students formed a junior Landcare Group. Hall Primary School was the first school to receive a three-year grant for revegetation of Hall Creek. Over the last sixteen years, successive classes at Hall primary School have undertaken environmental projects and activities in Hall village and district including revegetation of parts of the Hall Village Reserve and degraded land in the district. In September 2006 for example, the school students joined with community members to plant trees around Hall. Such occasions illustrate the close connection between the school and the Hall District.

Other school events such as school concerts and celebrations bring together school families and residents from around the village and district providing a focal point for social interaction and the development of essential social capital. The Rural Fringe is a bi-monthly voluntary publication of the community, sponsored by the Village of Hall and District Progress Association, and it serves as one of the means of letting the community know what is going on at the school, featuring regular articles about the school and activities of the students, including contributions from those students. The Fringe has been produced for about twelve years and is distributed free to all post boxes for the Hall and surrounding District (sample copies provided to Minister Barr at

meeting on 27 September 2006 with President and Vice President of the Village of Hall and District Progress Association).

In recent meetings, elder residents in the community have remarked how essential the presence of children in the school is to their own sense of well-being within the community and have actively and vociferously supported the continuation of Hall Primary School and Preschool. "The sound of their voices in the playground lifts the spirits," remarked one resident of the Aged People Units in Hall during one of the meetings at the school.

The Hall Primary School Museum has been and continues to be an unique resource for the whole ACT community. For many years the former headmaster, Laurie Copping, organized visits by other ACT schools to the museum to experience life in a 1911 school. A volunteer professional curator is now running the Museum. The Hall and District Progress Association have arranged a half-day program with the school which combines a visit to the Museum with a Heritage walk through the village, providing a pre-planned program for other ACT schools to visit. Hall hosted a Rural Heritage Celebration Day in November 2006, an event which exemplified the way the Museum can be a catalyst for educational opportunities. Students and teachers from seven schools joined our students in celebrating our region's heritage. Students visited the museum schoolhouse to experience a typical school day in the early 1900s, participated in traditional games; enjoyed a taste of damper; and witnessed sheep shearing and whip cracking.

The Hall Primary School and Preschool also provide the facilities for many community activities including extra-curricula sport, music and dance, as well as broader community activities such as the use of the multi-purpose court, community meetings and the like. For many years the Eisteddfod winning Hall Village Brass Band practiced each week in the school hall until they became larger than the hall could accommodate.

One clear indication of the support of the village and district for Hall Primary School and Preschool was the 2005 Westfield "Shop for Your School" promotion where Hall Primary School won their category as a result of broad community support. Similarly, Hall Primary School and Preschool has regularly engaged in district events including local art exhibitions in neighbouring areas and other promotional events at local shopping centres in Belconnen.

The school has been the hub for building community networks throughout its existence. More than any other single community entity at Hall, the school has been the focus of community fund raising efforts. A measure of this is the fact that the Hall Parents and Citizens group raises more funds on a per capita basis than any other school in the ACT. While the strong links between the school and the community are evident through both formal ways such as organised fundraising, they are also very evident through informal measures such as parental involvement and the pride families take in the school.

For many families the school has been the trigger for building the networks that sustain our community. Long standing community support networks have had their genesis in the relationships built amongst the school community. While we recognise that this exists in many school communities, in a semi rural and rural environment such as Hall

District, opportunities for social contact are less than in the urban environment. The school has provided a vital function in triggering supportive networks.

In addition to the social contribution of Hall Primary School and Preschool, there is an essential economic contribution to Hall village and district. Hall village is home to a number of small businesses including Hall Automotive Service Station, Hall Premier Store and Post Office, The Shearing Shed hairdressers, Hall Rural Stockfeeds, Hall Rural Centre, The Gum Nut Café, the Wood Duck Inn and others. It is clear from informal local research that Hall Primary School and Preschool make a vital contribution to the vitality of these small businesses, particularly retail and service businesses.

For example, many families patronize the Hall Premier Store and Post Office while delivering and collecting their children from school and preschool. Hall Premier Store has reported a very substantial reduction in sales (by 25%) during school holiday periods. Hall Premier Store would be seriously threatened by the closure of Hall Primary and Preschool, which could also result in the loss of the Hall Post Office leaving residents with no postal facilities or mail deliveries. The local hairdressing salon, the Shearing Shed proprietors predict a downturn in business if the school, were closed as a result of parents who choose to use school pick up times as a convenient time to visit the hairdresser for both children and parents. One of the hairdressers, who previously operated the hairdressing business at Spence, said that the closure of Spence Primary School resulted in considerable loss of clientele and a devaluing of her business there.

The local real estate agent has 35 years of experience in the district. He states that the major selling point in this region is the proximity of facilities such as the rural school which supports the life style these buyers seek. School closure would impact on property values and lower the rates collected by the ACT Government. Hall Automotive Service Station reports that the loss of trade would be considerable, and attracting staff and mechanics would be increasingly difficult. Parents avail themselves of other services including purchase of rural supplies and patronizing food and beverage outlets and the Antique Hall, while in Hall village undertaking activities related to the school. Such passing trade is substantial in a village like Hall, where the majority of parents are travelling from NSW on their way to or from work in the ACT.

If parents do not come into the village to pick up or deliver children to the school, they may not visit to support the other services such as the general store, post office, garage, coffee shop, tavern, hair dresser, rural supplies and stock feeds stores. These businesses are not buffered against such loss of daily trade. As their viability is affected so the services available in the village will be withdrawn and the spiral of closures will continue.

The ACT Government should also recognise that this scenario would also mean a reduction in revenue flowing to the ACT as businesses in NSW at places such as Murrumbateman take advantage of the opportunity to deliver similar services. The economic impacts on the local community and the reduced revenue flowing to the ACT will be a direct consequence of the closure of the school – similar economic impacts are unlikely to be as obvious at other schools facing closure as will be experienced if Hall school is to close.

Residents of Hall and district have chosen a particular rural lifestyle. The Towards 2020 Proposal takes a limited view on the matter of diversity and choice. If parents wanted to send their children to larger schools then that option is currently available to them, but the fact that Hall Primary School is thriving, with relatively consistent enrolment figures (averaging 142 over the past twelve years), indicates that parents from Hall and District (and others from nearby suburbs) have chosen to send their children to a smaller school. While this may offer more limited education facilities in some areas, it does offer what many of us consider a richer educational experience in terms of promoting community, environmental and other values. Parents should be able to choose to send their children to a small, rural, community school of which Hall is only one of two in the ACT.

Hall P&C also offers safe, close and high quality before and after school care in the Cottage at the School. For many parents this provides the chance for parents to undertake formal employment in the ACT. Closure of the School and this facility would result in fewer parents being able to continue with full time employment, affecting both the economy of Hall village and District and the ACT, and particularly affecting women.

During the consultation period, residents of the Hall and District community have repeatedly requested a full financial and social analysis be undertaken on the impact of closure of the school and preschool. This request has been ignored by the ACT Government. We strongly believe it would be irresponsible in the absence of such data for the closure of the school to proceed. We stand willing to work with the ACT Government to jointly undertake this analysis.

As researchers have found, local schools are essential to the economic and social well-being of the wider community. Hall primary School and Preschool play an essential role in the life of Hall village and district. The social and economic impact on children, parents and the Hall and district community of closure of the preschool and primary school would be severe and unwarranted. Parents should be able to choose to send their children to a small, rural, community school of which Hall is only one of two in the ACT

(v) NSW Students

The Towards 2020 Proposal takes an extraordinarily insular view of ACT's education system without a realistic perspective on the ACT's true position relative to NSW. The complex cross boundary issues of water, health, secondary education, environmental protection and so on have long been the topic of debate and cooperation between the ACT and NSW, yet primary school education has only found its way onto the agenda during the last few months, since the release of the Towards 2020 Proposal. We suggest that in the same way that the ACT is happy to capitalize on, for example, the tourism generated by the Hall District wine industry, it takes a more holistic view of our relationship with NSW when it comes to education, considering, for example the economic benefits to the ACT of commuters from Spring Range Road, Wallaroo Road and Murrumbateman into the nation's capital city for work purposes, and making use of conveniently located Hall Primary School within the village whose very existence is to service the district.

Hall Primary School is not expensive compared to the average cost of primary schooling in the ACT. Minister Barr has stated as much, although obtaining an accurate and current figure of cost per child has proved impossible during the past few months (another question from a Hall resident that has remained unanswered), it is in the region of \$10,000 per child against an average cost of about \$9,500 per child across the ACT. The ACT Government has not determined a target average cost per child for the Towards 2020 Proposal, so we can only work within the current (disputed) figures.

The ACT Government currently receives a cross border subsidy of \$7,000 per child through the Commonwealth Grants Commission system for each primary school child from NSW educated in the ACT. This amount seems to fall short of the cost of educating a child at Hall Primary School by about \$3,000 per child, the same for educating a child at Gold Creek Primary School, or if these children are assimilated elsewhere in the ACT system (which they must be for where else would they go?), about \$2,500 per child. The ACT Government has not viewed this as an issue prior to mid 2006, and has not previously made representations through the Grants Commission or directly to NSW prior to the latter part of 2006. Yet the proposal to close Hall Primary School has been made prior to these representations. In addition, the ACT Government will not make any overall saving by closing Hall Primary School as these children will be accommodated elsewhere in the ACT education system.

We have agreed with Minister Barr to work jointly with the Education Department and NSW Government to pursue supplementary funding for NSW students through the cross border arrangement in the Grants Commission formula, or directly with NSW, and to this end have written to both the NSW Minister of Education and the NSW Premier. The myth of a possible primary school in Murrumbateman at some far distant future date has been exploited by NSW politicians, but presents no solution for the proposed closure of Hall Primary School in December 2006.

We contend that it is illogical to propose closure of Hall Primary School before pursuing funding possibilities with NSW, and that there will be no cost saving to the ACT by closing Hall Primary School as these students will be assimilated elsewhere in the ACT system. We urge the Department of Education to take a more holistic economic view of our relationship with NSW. We have demonstrated our willingness to work with the ACT Government on this new topic.

(vi) Demonstrated resolve and ability to work with Government

The Village of Hall and District Progress Association has a strong track record of working with Governments over the past hundred years in bringing about significant benefits to the residents of Hall and district. For example the water supply, sewerage system and paved roads in Hall were brought about through the efforts of the residents of Hall and District through the Association. Indeed it was our forebears that initiated the construction of Hall School a hundred years ago. In more recent times, we have worked with the ACT Government to formulate the first Master Plan for the ACT (in 2002) and in 2006 as joint party to the proceedings, helped the Administrative Appeals Tribunal uphold an ACTPLA ruling on the development in Victoria Square.

We will continue to work with the ACT and NSW Governments on cross-border financial arrangements;

We will work with the ACT Government and Hall Primary P&C to refurbish the Hall Pavilion (which we manage) as a School Hall;

We will continue to work with Hall Primary and Preschools to provide rich historical and heritage education opportunities for other school children in the ACT;

We will work with the ACT Government on conducting a joint social and economic study on the impact of closure of Hall Primary and Preschool.

If issues of funding are material to the continued operation of Hall Primary and Preschools, we will work with the P&C and ACT Government to develop appropriate partnerships with the private sector in the region in order to provide supplementary funding.

Conclusion

We trust that our responses and specific proposals for action will be taken into account in the final decision making for the Towards 2020 Proposal, and appreciate the opportunity for our feedback to be taken seriously by the ACT Government. We, the residents of Hall village and district, strongly recommend that Hall preschool and primary School continue operating as a preschool to year 6 primary school within the ACT public education system.

ⁱ Address by His Excellency Major-General Michael Jeffery AC CVO MC, Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia, on the occasion of dedication of the schoolhouse museum as the “Laurie Copping Heritage Centre” Hall Primary School, ACT 26 November 2004

ⁱⁱ Primavera vs ACTPLA, June-August 2006

ⁱⁱⁱ Village of Hall Master Plan, May 2002, <http://www.actpla.act.gov.au/plandev/masterplans/hall/hall-masterplan.pdf>

^{iv} <http://www.environment.act.gov.au/heritage/actheritageregister>

^v <http://www.actpla.act.gov.au/plandev/masterplans/hall/hall-masterplan.pdf>

^{vi} *What Difference do Local Schools Make?* A Literature Review and Bibliography Prepared for Annenberg Rural Challenge Policy Program by Priscilla Salant, Department of Agricultural Economics Washington State University, Pullman, Washington and Anita Waller, Ephrata, Washington September 25, 1998