



HALL PUBLIC SCHOOL

1911 TO 2011 AND BEYOND



A Submission to the *Towards 2020* Taskforce

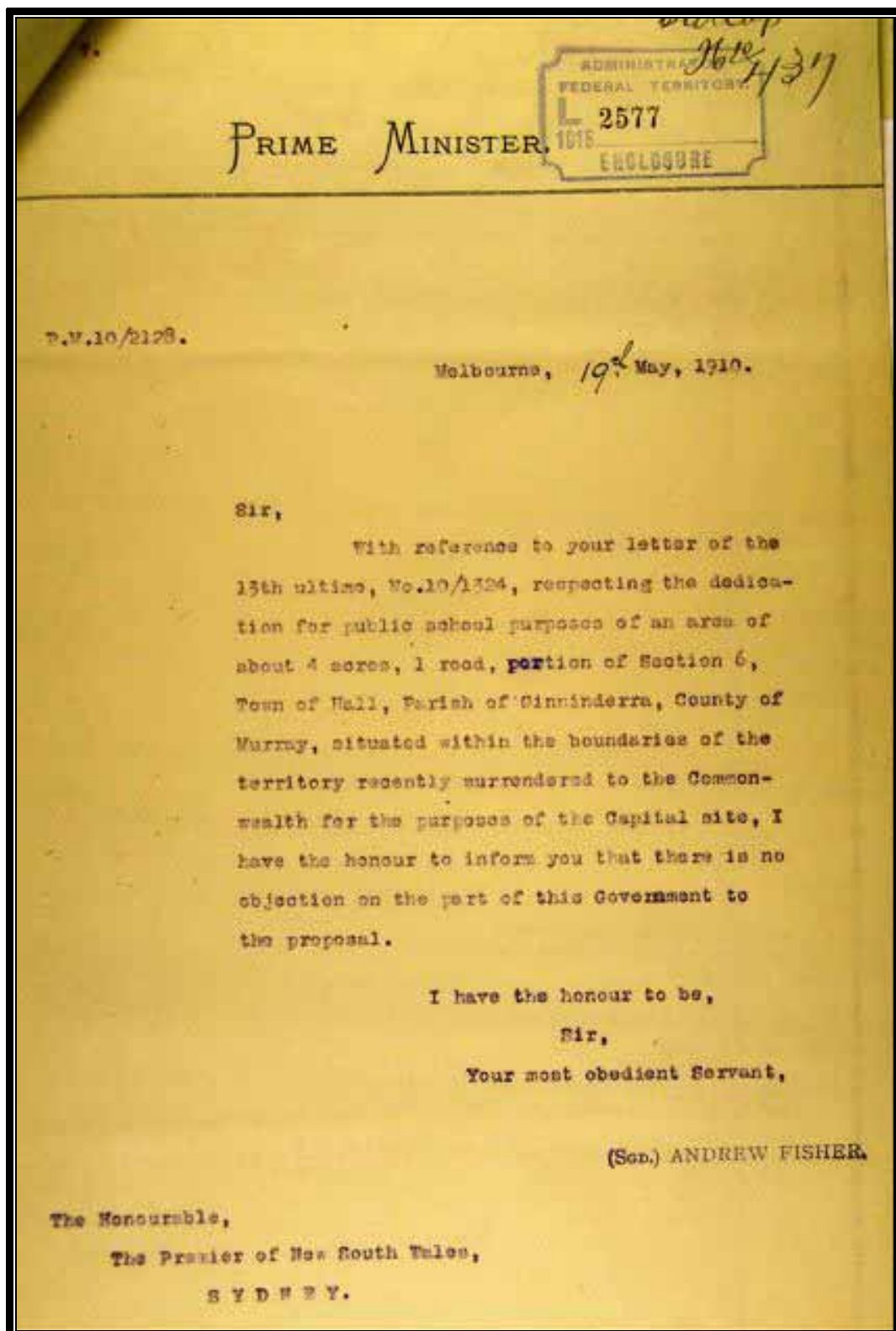
from

Hall Primary School P&C Association Inc.

Hall Preschool Parents Association Inc.

Hall Primary School Board

(On behalf of parents and members of the
Hall Primary and Hall Preschool communities
and the broader Hall region.)



Reproduction of Letter dated 19 May 1910 from Labor Prime Minister Andrew Fisher to the Premier of New South Wales agreeing to the establishment of a public school at Hall in the newly proclaimed national capital territory.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Hall Public School comprising Hall Primary and Hall Preschool (Hall PS) is a heritage listed school located in a rural village setting on the fringe of the Canberra suburban area. For 95 years Hall PS has been opening its doors to the children of the surrounding region, some of whom are descendents of the school's founding fathers.

Hall PS provides families in Gungahlin and northwest Belconnen with diversity by offering the opportunity for choice of a smaller, community based school for their children's preschool and primary education.

With the Laurie Copping Heritage Centre (the Museum) at its heart, Hall PS is a living heritage education resource and provides an essential learning environment, not just for the students at Hall PS, but for the ACT and surrounding communities.

Our vision for Hall PS is its continued operation as a P-6 school with a strong focus on early childhood education. With the primary school, preschool and out of school hours care services all located within the school grounds, Hall PS is ideally positioned to adopt the Government's vision of a seamless curriculum for early childhood education.

We shall maintain our strong focus on the core curriculum areas of literacy and numeracy, achieving the quality educational outcomes our parents have come to expect for their children, whilst continuing to adapt our programs as the ACT education system's curriculum evolves. The Key Learning Areas will continue to be well supported alongside the varied extra-curricula activities including music, sport, the arts and special interest areas. We also envisage taking advantage of our rural connections to expand our agri-environmental focus, developing units of study that may be used by other ACT schools.

Hall PS has an exemplary and enviable record of family and community support. This support is demonstrated by: assistance in the classroom and at school events including sports carnivals and concerts; participation on the School Board and P&C; above average rates of voluntary contributions; and commitment to fundraising activities.

To address the physical requirements of the school buildings, we will pursue a variety of funding sources, including establishment of a School Building Fund, applying for heritage and other suitable grants and the development of innovative funding arrangements such as public/private partnerships.

Hall PS is essential to the economic and social well-being of the Hall community. The school and the activity it generates are vital to maintaining a vibrant local community and maintaining the village character of Hall.

The physical separation of Hall Village from suburban Canberra coupled with the loss of Hall PS would have a devastating impact on the lifestyle and well-being of the elderly residents of Hall Village. Given that there is no ACT public transport available to them, these residents rely heavily on the social interaction between Hall PS and the community. Also, local businesses would experience declining patronage and subsequent financial loss.

Hall PS is committed to working with the ACT Government to capitalise on the community support for the school in a way that meets the Government's fiscal requirements and also takes advantage of all Hall PS can offer.

LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 That Hall PS continue operating as a P-6 primary school within the ACT public education system.*
- 2.1 That Hall PS and the Laurie Copping Heritage Centre be further developed as a living education/heritage resource for the ACT public education system and for the ACT tourism sector.*
- 2.2 That Hall PS pilot the emerging early childhood education program and curriculum.*
- 2.3 That Hall PS continue its focus on core curriculum and providing rich experiences for students in broader curriculum areas whilst maintaining its successful values and student welfare programs.*
- 2.4 That Hall PS further develop its rural and environmental programs as an education resource for the wider ACT public education system.*
- 3.1 That Hall PS, as a small school within a small rural village community, be recognised as an essential element in the ACT public education system.*
- 3.2.1 That Hall PS extend its Cottage Care before and after school care services to include preschool students.*
- 3.2.2 That Hall PS participate in developing Government strategies to market public education.*
- 3.3 That the traditional catchment area to the north and west of Hall Village be recognised as belonging to the Priority Enrolment Area for Hall PS.*
- 3.4.1 That curriculum development be undertaken on a cluster or regional basis.*
- 3.4.2 That Hall PS work with others schools both within and across clusters to establish a system for sharing specialist teachers.*
- 3.5.1 That Hall PS work with others schools both within and across clusters to establish a system for sharing administrative services such as janitorial staff and office staff.*
- 3.5.2 That Hall PS community work with the ACT Government to negotiate an appropriate contribution of additional resources from the NSW Government to the ACT public education system.*
- 3.5.3 That Hall P&C Association pursue funding to build a bus shelter and covered walkways as a priority.*
- 3.5.4 That Hall PS pursue the feasibility of re-equipping the Hall Pavilion for use as the Hall PS school hall.*

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Appendix 1	Hall School – A Brief History.	Prepared by Jo Hall, Hall Village Resident and Mother of Andrew (14) and Rania (10).
Appendix 2	Heritage Implications Regarding Hall Village.	Prepared by Jo Hall, Hall Village Resident and Mother of Andrew (14) and Rania (10).
Appendix 3	The Laurie Copping Heritage Centre – A Treasure Trove for Students and Teachers – Notes on Museum Open Day, Sunday, 1 October 2006.	Elizabeth Burness, Storyteller/Teacher/Illustrator, 'History With A Difference' and Voluntary Curator, Laurie Copping Heritage Centre.
Appendix 4	Educational Opportunities for the Laurie Copping Heritage Centre (Hall School Museum).	Prepared by Helen White, retired Teacher and Hall Village Resident.
Appendix 5	The Man Who Saved His Old School.	Article by Sally Hopman, Canberra Times, Sunday 19 July 1998.
Appendix 6	'Once Upon a Time at School' – Handout for Students Visiting the Hall School Museum on Rural Heritage Celebration Day, 3 November 2006.	Prepared by Elizabeth Burness, Storyteller/Teacher/Illustrator, 'History With A Difference' and Voluntary Curator, Laurie Copping Heritage Centre.
Appendix 7	Hall Primary School Programs and P&C Services and Activities.	Prepared by Jennifer Lewis, Mother of Ben (11) and Jack (8), and Maryann Harris, Mother of Sean (12), Aidan (11) and Erin (9).
Appendix 8	Choice and Diversity – the role of Hall Primary and Preschool.	Prepared by Rebecca Smith, Hall Village Resident and parent of two former Hall PS students.
Appendix 9	Hall and Surrounding Region Survey, October 2006.	Co-ordinated by Anita Kilby, Mother of Sam (13) and Jack (11).
Appendix 10	Educational Outcomes and Goals.	Prepared by Hugh Watson, Hall Village Resident and father of 3 former Hall PS students.
Appendix 11	No Educational Rationale for School Closures.	Dr Ian Morgan, 27 August 2006.
Appendix 12	Geography and Demographics – the role of Hall PS in the ACT Region.	Prepared by Rebecca Smith, Hall Village Resident and Mother of two former Hall PS students.
Appendix 13	Letter to Editor, Canberra Times.	Tony Morris, Hall Village Resident, Wednesday, 5 July 2006.
Appendix 14	Costs and Cost Reduction Strategies.	Prepared by Leigh Crocker, Father of Georgia (8), Emma (6) and Tekla (3), Kirsty Windeyer, Mother of Charlotte (7), Jessica (4) and Harrison (1), and Rebecca Smith, Hall Village Resident and Mother of 2 former Hall PS students..
Appendix 15	Social, Economic, Health and Environmental Impacts of Closing Hall PS.	Prepared by Mary Hyndman-Rizik, Grandmother of Oliver (9), Saami (7) and Amani (3); and David Vernon, Father of Michael (8) and Jonathan (5).

1. Introduction

Continued operation of Hall Public School (comprising Hall Primary and Hall Preschool) as a P-6 public school is considered the best option for all stakeholders, and accords with the Government's *Towards 2020* catchcry of 'Choice, Diversity and Opportunity'.

Recommendation 1.1: That Hall PS continue operating as a P-6 primary school within the ACT public education system.

Hall Public School (Hall PS), as a smaller rural based and heritage rich P-6 school is an invaluable and essential learning environment and education resource within a strong, diverse and high quality ACT public education system. The school provides an early childhood focus with strong emphasis on core curriculum. Hall PS is committed to supporting all students to become responsible, independent and caring citizens who value learning and are equipped to effectively contribute to a changing society.

As one of very few ACT Schools with a student capacity less than 200, Hall PS provides families in Gungahlin and northwest Belconnen with **diversity** by offering the **opportunity** for **choice** of a smaller, community based school for their children's preschool and primary education. The continuation of this option is essential as parents investigate, consider and carefully choose what they believe to be the best educational environment for their children.

The body of our submission addresses four aspects:

Our Vision – Hall PS 1911-2011 and Beyond

Our proposal for the continued operation and development of Hall PS as a P-6 school and heritage education resource within the ACT public education system. (Section 2)

Towards 2020 Proposal – Issues for Hall PS

A discussion of the issues and suggested strategies to deal with challenges specific to Hall PS identified as a result of the *Towards 2020* proposal and our subsequent fact/information gathering endeavours. (Section 3)

Towards 2020 Proposal – Impact on Hall Community

This section deals with the importance of Hall PS to the Hall Village and District and the serious social, economic and financial impacts on these communities should Hall PS close. (Section 4)

System Wide Issues of the Towards 2020 Proposal

A brief discussion on issues which have implications for the ACT public education system as a whole. (Section 5)

Our position and submission are based on:

- views and concerns of our families and students;
- extensive discussions within and between the Hall Primary School P&C Association, the Hall Preschool Parents Association, the Hall Primary School Board and the wider school community;
- discussions with and surveys of members of the school community, residents of Hall Village and broader district community;
- attendance at government community consultation forums and expert education seminars;
- meetings and/or discussions with various MLAs (both Government and Opposition);
- meetings and/or discussions with Department of Education staff;
- meetings and/or discussions with representatives of other school parent bodies;

- visits to other schools and discussions with parents and staff of those schools;
- research on relevant issues (eg, DET website, media articles, research papers); and
- reference to relevant Acts and Guidelines.

We have done our best given the time, resources and information available to us.

2. OUR VISION – Hall PS 1911-2011 and Beyond

Our vision for Hall PS is:

- a public school where parents will be queueing to enrol their children to take advantage of its uniqueness and quality educational outcomes;
- a community school, taking advantage of the very high level of community support and parental involvement in the school;
- a small school, offering choice for parents seeking to have their children educated in the supportive and caring environment that a small school offers;
- operating with an enrolment of 170 students in the primary school and all preschool places filled;
- an efficiently run school, exploiting the high level of parental involvement, and reducing operating costs by sharing administrative and specialist resources with other schools;
- taking advantage of the P&C's on-site before and after school care service (Cottage Care) to pioneer the development of early childhood learning programs;
- using the rural nature of the school to develop rural education resources for the ACT public education system, including farm visits and specialist rural education courses; and
- proudly educating residents on both sides of the ACT/NSW border, with appropriate input from the NSW education system.

Hall PS is the oldest continuously operating public school in the ACT and is due to celebrate its centenary in 2011. A brief history of the school and The Laurie Copping Heritage Centre (Museum) is set out in Appendix 1.

Hall PS is unique in the ACT. As a heritage listed, smaller, community based school located in a rural village setting on the fringe of the Canberra suburban area, it provides choice and diversity not available at other schools. Our school must be maintained and further developed as an invaluable living heritage education resource and an essential learning environment for the ACT and surrounding communities.

2.1 A Living Heritage and Education Resource

Recommendation 2.1: That Hall PS and the Laurie Copping Heritage Centre be further developed as a living education/heritage resource for the ACT public education system and for the ACT tourism sector.

Hall PS (the grounds and all buildings including the Museum) is listed in the ACT Heritage Register as part of the Heritage Listing of Hall Village Precinct. It is the only ACT school to have full heritage listing.

The opportunity to maintain the school and the museum as living heritage features for the ACT should not be discarded. A heritage listed school successfully functioning as a school within the public education system has more value to the ACT than just the shell of its buildings. The ACT has a unique opportunity to sustain a vital link to its history and the importance of public education. (See Appendix 2.)

Heritage listing means that the school and Museum are eligible for Heritage Advisory Service support and funding from the Heritage Grants Program; and the site must be maintained for community use in perpetuity.

The collection of historical artefacts, books, photographs, etc, held in the Museum represents a wonderful resource for researchers. This resource can be used to develop programs for use by all educational institutions, both public and private, from preschool through primary, secondary and tertiary levels.

The value of the Museum's collection and strategies to promote its use by education researchers, teachers, students, and community groups is set out in more detail in Appendix 3, Appendix 4 and Appendix 5.

Hall PS will host a Rural Heritage Celebration Day on Friday, 3 November, an event which exemplifies the way the Museum can be a catalyst for educational opportunities. Students and teachers from seven schools have been invited to join our students in celebrating our region's heritage. Students will: visit the museum schoolhouse to experience a typical school day in the early 1900s (Appendix 6); participate in traditional games; enjoy a taste of damper; and witness sheep shearing and whip cracking. It is intended that this will be the first of many such educational days for ACT students.

2.2 Early Childhood Focus

Recommendation 2.2: That Hall PS pilot the emerging early childhood education program and curriculum.

Hall PS is ideally situated to meet the challenges of the fast emerging National and Territory focus on Early Childhood Education.

Viable options within a Hall PS P-6 environment include:

- a full time preschool with mixed session types (two full day sessions or three half day sessions) and a Playgroup operating from our on-site before and after school care centre (The Cottage); or,
- a part time preschool with Playgroup and/or Playschool on non-preschool days.

From our research and discussions regarding this topic, we have identified two key elements of this early childhood focus. The first is the development of a 'seamless' pathway and curriculum for the Preschool to Year 2 education band (4 to 8 years old) within the ACT public education system. The second is the significantly increased investment needed in training and professionally developing appropriately qualified staff.

Although *Towards 2020* includes several Early Childhood Schools, there is no consistency in the models being proposed – they include P-2, P-3 and P-4 schools. Projected enrolments at these schools range from 75 to 150. We understand that there is currently no system wide plan to implement the Early Childhood School model or to assess its success. Also, it is understood that all P-6 schools and the current and yet to be constructed P-10 schools, will be implementing the early childhood education focus.

With the preschool being located within the primary school grounds, Hall PS is an ideal site to pilot the implementation of the early childhood seamless curriculum within a P-6 school. An early childhood focus does not necessarily require a structural segregation for students. There are advantages for retaining Years 3 to 6 at Hall PS for the younger students (buddy system and role models), the older students (mentoring and leadership opportunities) and for maintaining parental involvement from preschool through to Year 6.

From a parental perspective, Hall PS has operated informally as a P-6 school for many years. Close ties and co-operation between both parent associations and shared experiences involving preschool and junior primary classes already exist.

2.3 Focus on Core Curriculum Areas

Recommendation 2.3: That Hall PS continue its focus on core curriculum and providing rich experiences for students in broader curriculum areas whilst maintaining its successful values and student welfare programs.

Hall PS is a smaller, rural community based school which supports and promotes innovation and lifelong learning. At Hall PS we strive to satisfy the needs and appreciate the unique qualities of each student. We recognise that education is a collective responsibility. We offer a balanced program that supports students to become responsible, independent and caring citizens who value learning and are well equipped to effectively contribute to a changing society.

To achieve this, Hall PS places strong emphasis on the core curriculum areas of literacy and numeracy as these represent crucial building blocks for a student's further learning. A belief held by many experts in the field of education is that primary schools should concentrate on the development of basic skills (that is, literacy and numeracy).¹ Hall PS also provides successful programs in the broader curriculum areas of Science & Technology, ICT, SOSE, Health and Personal Development, and the Arts. Students participate in: PSSA events; Music in Primary & Secondary Schools; UNSW Australasian Schools Competitions; band programs; Chess Club; Science Club; and the annual pottery, photography and art show.

At Hall PS we implement a student well-being model and program called "Standing Tall at Hall", incorporating the *SCARF Values* and *Bounce Back! Resiliency Program*².

We are able to take advantage of the small school size to encourage and teach social skills, protective behaviours and anti-bullying strategies to ensure that students have the skills to deal appropriately with problems and to ensure a safe and secure school environment. With these programs in place, we provide children with opportunities to succeed and develop self-esteem. Consequently, student management is a significantly smaller part of our school model.

2.4 Rural/Environmental Education Program

Recommendation 2.4 That Hall PS further develop its rural and environmental programs as an education resource for the wider ACT public education system.

The school's agri-environmental focus developed from when it became the first ACT school to form a Junior Landcare group in 1990. Hall PS continues to be involved in projects with Greening Australia, Waterwatch, the International River Health Conference, Waterbug Snapshot, and Clean Up Australia Day.

Hall PS will increase its value to the public education system by strengthening existing environmental education programs and links with the surrounding rural area. Parental involvement will be used as a catalyst to forge links with regional agricultural colleges and schools, developing units of study for ACT schools. Community and particularly parent involvement will be used to develop courses and farm visits to help ACT students to

¹ Educational Seminar on Shaping the Future of Public Education in the ACT, 29 August 2006.

² Helen McGrath and Toni Noble, 2003.

appreciate the rural community and the entrepreneurial and employment opportunities it offers. Topics envisaged here include: animal husbandry; agriculture; forestry; and farming technology and methods.

The *Towards 2020* process has mobilised the Hall community and parents and reinforced the importance and uniqueness of Hall PS to the community. The Government now has the opportunity to capitalise on this mobilisation and further develop Hall PS in a way that will strengthen its unique role in the ACT public education system. The Hall community and P&C have a history of committed and ongoing involvement in the school, maybe more than any other school in the ACT. The community and P&C want to work with the ACT Government to show how, at very little cost to the Government, Hall PS can greatly enhance choice, diversity and opportunity within the ACT public education system.

The Hall PS curriculum and the extra curricular activities and programs offered by the school and its P&C are discussed in more detail in Appendix 7.

3. TOWARDS 2020 – ISSUES FOR HALL PS

This section of our submission discusses the issues and challenges specific to Hall PS and identifies strategies to establish it as an integral part of the ACT public education system.

3.1 Choice, Diversity and Opportunity

Recommendation 3.1: That Hall PS, as a small school within a small rural village community, be recognised as an essential element in the ACT public education system.

The ACT Government is committed to providing a public education system that offers choice and diversity. The advantages of providing choice and diversity are discussed in Appendix 8 and include: increased participation of students, parents and families in school programs and activities; improvements in school achievements and student behaviour; improved teacher morale; and more positive attitudes towards teachers.

As a small school within a small rural village community, Hall PS holds a unique position in the ACT education system and is therefore an essential element in the provision of a full range of learning environments for parents and students.

Overwhelming support for Hall PS is demonstrated by the 4,392 individuals who endorsed our petition³ calling for the retention of Hall PS. A survey conducted by Hall PS P&C of Hall district residents about their education choices for their children and their employment, business and social links to the ACT clearly indicate that the choice of a small, rural community based school is highly valued. The comments provided by NSW respondents illustrate their perception of themselves as being a part of the Canberra community. (See Appendix 9)

The advantages of small schools in terms of educational outcomes and social wellbeing of students is widely documented. Appendix 10 discusses these issues further. Small schools can produce outstanding and rounded educational outcomes and do not suffer many of the social impediments of larger schools. They provide a safer, saner education.

There is no general consensus as to what constitutes a small school. Some researchers argue that the optimum size for primary schools is 300-400 students. However, there is growing support for a move towards small, neighbourhood schools with an average enrolment of 200. Research is showing that small schools provide better educational

³ Petition tabled in the ACT Legislative Assembly by Ms Mary Porter, AM, MLA on Wednesday, 16 August 2006.

outcomes for some students, better participation rates in extra-curricular activities and provide a safer environment for children.⁴

The advantages of small schools are also highlighted by Dr Ian Morgan in his paper titled “No Educational Rationale for School Closures”, 27 August 2006 (Appendix 11).

The nature of small schools where all teachers interact with all students, enables students experiencing difficulties to be easily identified and supported. Children in smaller schools are accepting of individual needs both within the classroom and in the playground. Small schools provide a very supportive environment for special needs students whose families wish them to remain in mainstream classes.

Hall PS offers both composite and single year class groups. Composite classes can be advantageous for both students and teachers. For students, a composite class allows for acceptance of differing skill levels among classmates where those who have attained a specific skill level, regardless of age, can work together. As in single year classes, teachers must provide diverse and challenging programs for every student based on individual learning abilities and needs.

When questioned on the issue of seeking to close small schools, particularly those with enrolments below 200, the Government has repeatedly stated that *Towards 2020* is ‘not a cost cutting exercise’ and that ‘this is not a one size fits all model’. The Government has also stated that ‘small schools have a role to play in a strong and vibrant public education system’⁵.

Small schools enjoy committed parent and community support. Hall PS has an exemplary and enviable record of parent, family and community support. The P&C Association enjoys a very successful record in raising funds to augment school resources and support school activities. In recent years, annual totals of \$9,000 to \$15,000 have been raised which is, pro rata, above the ACT average. The school has no difficulty in filling School Board positions and the average annual rate of voluntary contributions received is 70%, almost double the ACT average.

At Hall PS, parents are involved in their children’s education on a daily basis, assisting with reading and maths groups, participating in sporting events, art & craft enrichment programs; and, assisting with other events such as concerts and assemblies.

Hall Preschool enjoys the same level of parental commitment, both financial and in the classroom.

3.2 Capacity and Demographics

Hall PS capacity has been identified as 175 and with a 2006 enrolment of 128 is operating at 73% of that capacity. Hall Preschool capacity is 40 (based on two sessions of 20 students, if operating as a full time preschool), not 50 as stated in the DET documents. Hall Preschool currently operates part-time. Its 2006 enrolment of 15 represents 75% of its part-time capacity.

There is no conclusive evidence of a declining enrolment trend. In 1986 Hall PS enrolment was 128 and during most of the 1990s, student numbers were in the 140s. Enrolments have moved from 140 in 2001, to 165 in 2003, 110 in 2005 and 128 in 2006. Hall Preschool enrolments have ranged from 15 in some years to 20 (with a waiting list) in other

⁴ “Ten Educational Trends Shaping School Planning & Design”, Kenneth R. Stevenson, Ed.D., Department of Educational Leadership and Policies, College of Education, University of South Carolina, September 2002).

⁵ FAQs, DET Website, FAQs regarding proposed closure of Ginninderra District High School and construction of new West Belconnen P-10 school).

years. Over the past 10 years, preschool enrolments have averaged 18 which equates to 90% of its part-time capacity.

The Gungahlin-Hall District has the second fastest growing population (behind Barton) in the ACT⁶. Given the current rate of population growth in the Gungahlin-Hall District and the fast growing rural residential developments in the Murrumbateman area, it is inevitable that the number of families choosing to enrol their children at Hall PS will rise in the coming years.

Recommendation 3.2.1: That Hall PS extend its Cottage Care before and after school care services to include preschool students.

Strategies to increase enrolment numbers closer to Hall PS capacity of 215 (primary 175 and preschool 40) include improved marketing of the school and its programs, further development of the Hall PS website and extending out of school hours care to preschoolers. We plan to provide centre-based childcare services for preschool children in conjunction with our current out of school hours care program. Preliminary discussions held with relevant Territory and Federal agencies indicate that our plans are feasible.

Recommendation 3.2.2: That Hall PS participate in developing Government strategies to market public education.

We welcome Ministerial/Departmental offers of assistance to develop school websites as marketing tools. We are committed to ensuring a vibrant and relevant public education system. We look forward to working with the Minister next year in marketing public education in the ACT.

3.3 NSW Resident Students

The high percentage of NSW resident students and the significant number of out-of-area ACT enrolments at Hall PS, combined with the apparent low level of support from in-area students attending other public schools, have been raised as issues of concern for Hall PS.

Recommendation 3.3: That the traditional catchment area to the north and west of Hall Village be recognised as belonging to the Priority Enrolment Area for Hall PS.

When considering statistics relating to these issues, the difference between the official Priority Enrolment Area (PEA) for Hall PS and its traditional catchment area must be considered. The official PEA for Hall PS encompasses the Village of Hall and the surrounding rural areas within the ACT, a total population of 400 persons. However, since opening its doors 95 years ago, Hall PS has educated residents in NSW to the north and west of Hall, including Wallaroo, Kaveney, Nanima and Spring Range Roads as well as the Murrumbateman area. These issues are discussed in Appendix 12.

The extremely small official PEA population means that out-of-area enrolment percentages for Hall PS are greatly inflated. Inclusion of the region's traditional catchment area within Hall's PEA, irrespective of an arbitrary line drawn on a map, would give a more accurate figure.

For residents of Hall Village and District, the political boundary between the ACT and NSW is nothing more than an administrative border. It does not in any way form a physical

⁶ Population Projections for Canberra Suburbs and Districts, 2004-2014, Demographics, Chief Minister's Department Website)

boundary between the local community resident in the ACT and the local community resident in NSW. Community members regard themselves first and foremost as residents of the Hall Village and District, regardless of administrative arrangements. (See Appendix 13.)

Indeed the Postmaster-General recognised the integration of Hall Village and District when the postcode of 2618 was allocated to the entire district in 1967. It is one of the very few Australian postcodes that ignore State and Territory boundaries. Postcodes were allocated on the basis of commonality of interest within a geographical district.

The exclusion of NSW residents from the Hall PS PEA is contrary to the principles of choice, equity and right of reasonable access to quality education which underpin the ACT public education system. It should be acknowledged that should Hall PS close, students resident in NSW will simply enrol in other ACT schools, not necessarily achieving any significant cost savings to the ACT budget. This is demonstrated by the cost/student figures at schools in adjacent regions:

- Gold Creek \$10,786;
- Ngunnawal \$8,782;
- Palmerston \$8,888;
- Evatt \$10,524; and,
- Maribyrnong \$11,481.

The difference between the cost of educating NSW students in the ACT public education system and the monies received for this purpose, via the Commonwealth Grants Commission, is discussed in Section 3.5 along with options for sourcing additional funding.

3.4 Educational Issues

The Government has stated that 'a viable school is one that is able to offer a broad curriculum and broad educational opportunities.....small schools may limit the opportunities for students to access and participate in a rich curriculum and all key learning areas'⁷.

Appendix 10 sets out how Hall PS meets the stated purpose, vision and priorities of the ACT public education system. In summary, the best outcome for our children is what we already have – a school that has met community needs for almost a century, a school that has adjusted to meet increasing educational demands, and a school that has retained a close, caring and friendly culture in an increasingly individual-dominated world.

Recommendation 3.4.1: That curriculum development be undertaken on a cluster or regional basis.

The responsibility for curriculum development places a large burden on small schools and their staff. We welcome indications from the Department that it is moving to implement curriculum development on a cluster or regional basis instead of at individual school level.

Recommendation 3.4.2: That Hall PS work with others schools both within and across clusters to establish a system for sharing specialist teachers.

To ensure the provision of as broad a curriculum as possible, we will be seeking to share specialist teaching resources with other schools in the surrounding areas.

Hall PS has installed modern IT infrastructure, equipment and resources. Interactive whiteboards are located in all teaching spaces and in the Library, the school's computer lab

⁷ DET *Towards 2020* website FAQ section.

was refurbished in 2005 and we have submitted an application for an *Investing In Our Schools Programme* grant that, if successful, will upgrade IT equipment in the computer lab and classrooms.

3.5 Financial Issues

Issues relating to school operating costs, building maintenance costs, construction of an appropriate school hall and refurbishment of existing buildings have been raised in conjunction with the *Towards 2020* proposal for Hall PS. Our comments and response in respect of each of these issues are set out in Appendix 14.

Recommendation 3.5.1: That Hall PS work with others schools both within and across clusters to establish a system for sharing administrative services such as janitorial staff and office staff.

Recommendation 3.5.2: That Hall PS community work with the ACT Government to negotiate an appropriate contribution of additional resources from the NSW Government to the ACT public education system.

As demonstrated in Appendix 14, based on information made available, increasing primary student numbers to 170 (95% capacity) would decrease the cost per student at Hall PS to \$8647. This is well below the ACT average and substantially closes the gap between cost of educating NSW students and monies received via the Commonwealth Grants Commission. The development of a cost-reduction plan in conjunction with the Department of Education (DET) will further reduce costs and bridge this gap. Initiatives to be pursued include: sharing administrative staff (office manager, janitor) costs with other schools; sharing of specialist teachers with other schools; and negotiating for the NSW Government to directly fund a teacher for Hall PS. The negotiation of an equitable cross border agreement with the NSW Government including education services, is another avenue to be pursued. The Hall PS community is eager to assist the Minister for Education in this matter.

A building condition assessment of Hall PS buildings in July 2004 indicated that the buildings were on average below desired standards. A five year program to maintain the buildings at normal standards was proposed at a cost of \$143,800. This figure equates to a cost of \$3,375/m² that compares very favourably with many other ACT public schools (Appendix 14).

The Minister has also stated that Hall PS requires capital expenditure on an appropriate school hall, bus shelter, covered walkways between buildings, shade structures, and refurbishment of the toilet block. The presence of asbestos in the school buildings has also been mentioned.

It is a fact that many ACT public schools, including Hall PS, have buildings that could use an upgrade. However, we believe that Hall PS should not be closed because it has buildings that are ageing, an issue that goes hand in hand with the school's heritage status. Adequate ongoing maintenance is required for all buildings. In the case of a heritage site, this should be approached as a challenge to be met, not as a reason to close a unique school.

Recommendation 3.5.3: That Hall P&C Association pursue funding to build a bus shelter and covered walkways as a priority.

Funds for the construction of a bus shelter, covered walkways and shade structures can be sourced in various ways including: P&C fundraising activities and volunteer efforts;

establishment of a School Building Fund (for which there is solid community support as shown by survey results reported in Appendix 9); applying for heritage and other suitable grants; and the development of innovative funding arrangements such as public/private partnerships.

A strong community commitment to identifying and accessing suitable funding sources is evident in the Hall community. Indeed, in 2005, Hall PS was successful in gaining an \$86,000 grant through the Federal *Investing In Our Schools Programme* for the construction of a shade structure over the playground equipment. This structure was designed to provide additional shaded areas for students and included provision for the collection and storage of rainwater as a first step in the upgrading of the school oval. These grant monies have been placed on hold by the Territory Government pending its decision on the *Towards 2020* proposal.

Recommendation 3.5.4: That Hall PS pursue the feasibility of re-equipping the Hall Pavilion for use as the Hall PS school hall.

In respect of the construction of a school hall, the estimate of \$1.5m quoted by the Minister's staff seems extraordinarily high given the requirements of a school the size of Hall PS. Further investigation of this issue is needed. In any event, if capital funds are not available within the Education Budget, we and the Hall community can equip the Hall Pavilion to meet the needs of Hall PS for whole school events. Funding can be sourced through the means mentioned above. Although a school without a hall is not ideal, Hall without a school is unacceptable.

The Government has also raised the presence of asbestos in Hall PS buildings as a matter of concern. Hall PS is not unique in this respect with many other schools and public buildings in the ACT also containing asbestos. We acknowledge the potential for asbestos to be a problem; however, we know that methods exist and are continually being improved for the containment of asbestos during necessary building works. In terms of IT technology and infrastructure, the use of wireless technology and use of external or internal conduits eliminate or minimise the need to disturb the asbestos.

4. TOWARDS 2020 PROPOSAL – Impact on Hall Community

Hall PS plays a vital role in the life of Hall Village district, it is essential to the economic and social well-being of the wider community. There is a danger that closing the school will have a detrimental effect on local businesses and would change Hall from village to dormitory suburb with serious consequences to the heritage nature of the village. The school and the activity it generates are vital to maintaining a vibrant local community and maintaining the village character of Hall.

The elderly residents of Hall Village rely on the social interaction between Hall PS and the community and the services provided by local businesses, particularly the post office and general store. The loss of these activities and services would have a devastating impact on their lifestyle and well-being. With no ACTION bus service available to them, these elderly residents would be left isolated.

The physical separation of Hall Village from suburban Canberra makes travel to and from school a more significant issue compared with students moving from one suburban school to the next. Children who are residents of Hall Village will no longer be able to walk to school. Children currently travelling by bus to Hall PS will be faced with increased travel time exceeding the acknowledged maximum of 30 minutes for one-way travel between home and school.

We submit that a true cost/benefit analysis including all direct and indirect effects, both quantitative and qualitative, would support our position that the benefits of keeping Hall PS open far outweigh the costs.

The economic, environmental, health and social impact on students, families and the wider Hall and District community of the *Towards 2020* proposal are discussed in further detail in Appendix 15.

5. SYSTEM WIDE ISSUES OF THE *TOWARDS 2020* PROPOSAL

Many questions and concerns remain as to the rationale for the *Towards 2020* proposals. No assessment of the full costs and benefits of the proposal has been undertaken. Parents are concerned that Government is experimenting with their children's education.

The *Towards 2020* targets preschools and primary schools. However many of the issues raised as problems within the current system have more relevance to the secondary and college sectors. For example, the stated need for broad curriculum choices applies more to the secondary and college sectors rather than the P-6 years where a focus on basic skills is required.

The requirement for choice and diversity is not met by providing different models in different regions. This limits choice, as once commenced with a specific model, a student is tied into remaining with that model. To move suburbs and attend the local school would result in students entering an entirely different education model. To ensure equity of choice all models must be offered in each region.

Before any schools are closed or amalgamated or new schools built, there needs to be a thorough and detailed debate and analysis of all the issues from the ground up so that the most appropriate model for a vibrant, dynamic and successful public education system can be identified.

A recurrent theme in education forums has been the need for more investment in education, particularly in: the early childhood education programs; professional development of teachers; and provision of appropriate learning environments suited to individual student needs. Perhaps the higher cost of the ACT system is the premium which must be paid to achieve what the Minister has stated is the 'best public education system in Australia'.

6. CONCLUDING COMMENT

Hall PS is unique. Its blend of rural location, size and its history are features that can benefit public education right across the ACT. *Towards 2020* has highlighted to Hall parents and the wider Hall community the importance of the school within the region.

Hall P&C looks forward to working with the ACT Government to capitalise on the community support for the school in a way that meets the Government's fiscal requirements and also takes advantage of all Hall PS can offer.

Hall School – A Brief History

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 Register¹

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 Hall district community petitioned the NSW Government for a school at Hall. It wasn't until 1910 that approval was finally given to build a school at Hall. It was built to accommodate 25 children, up to a maximum of 30.

By 1911, declaration of the ACT saw Hall become a border village subsumed by the Federal Capital Territory. Hall Public School opened early 1911 and has remained the district's educational and social focal point. Enrolments in that first year, and each year thereafter 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 the 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 1924 pupil numbers rose to 50 and so the original building was extended. From 1911 to 1974 the Commonwealth Government paid NSW to provide Federal Capital Territory's education services. 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 cottage. 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.

Enrolments continued to grow and 1967 saw provision of two transportable classrooms and 1968 the completion of further 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

¹ <http://www.environment.act.gov.au/heritage/actheritageregister>

pointed out the trees they had planted. In 1997 a time capsule was 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, learnt 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.***²

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 excellent, innovative and inclusive educational services to the Hall District. As our Governor General so wisely puts it, Hall is a community that invests in itself.

Prepared by:

Jo Hall, President
Hall and District Progress Association
and Mother of Andrew (14) and Rania (10)

² 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

Heritage Implications Regarding Hall Village

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:

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 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. 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. Maintaining the school as an operating school is more in keeping with the conservation policy of maintaining its historical significance than closing it.

Simon Corbell's (Minister of Planning) foreword to the *Village of Hall Master Plan* published in May 2002 supports our view that Hall village holds a special place within the broader ACT community:

“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."

Simon Corbell, Minister for Planning

Prepared by:

Jo Hall, President
Hall and District Progress Association
and Mother of Andrew (14) and Rania (10)

THE LAURIE COPPING HERITAGE CENTRE

A TREASURE TROVE FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

(Notes on Museum Open Day, 1 October 2006)

Hall Village is a unique part of the ACT and district. In researching stories from Canberra's past, it is obvious how important Hall is because it is the only part of the ACT which retains a sense of a bygone era.

Yesterday, Sunday 1 October 2006, I had a wonderful opportunity to see this bygone era at work as we opened the old schoolhouse museum to the public. Set up years ago by Laurie Copping, the longest serving Principal at Hall Primary, the school museum is a treasure trove for students and teachers alike.

As a teacher/storyteller, I found yesterday was magic. Past students came from far and wide and we were able to find their old school rolls, find them in photos and soak up the reminiscences as the old schoolroom brought back submerged memories.

What a resource - so rich and so many of these memories will be passed on to the current children at this wonderful school and to many others who are very keen to visit.

Several times I attempted to lock up but more and more past students and their families arrived. Thank goodness we did not stick to the advertised opening times, because the earlier stories of the 1940s and 1950s had stories of the 1970s added to them. Two past students from the 1930s will be visiting soon so I'm looking forward to adding their stories to those from yesterday and to those in the publications available at the school.

Mr Copping had kept some of the teachers' lesson plans which were fascinating to compare with current teaching organisation. We even found an old book on mistakes in teaching published early last century. It stated 'teachers were not to become excited in the schoolroom'! Well, I'm sorry, yesterday was an exciting experience on many levels.

On my last attempt to lock up, a Year 5 student currently at the school arrived. She had come on her bike, as I remembered from the past, to play on the school playground during the holidays and noticed the museum was open. Well, she was so interested in all the displays I was a little sad that she had not come earlier to hear the 'kids from the past' remembering when they were 'holed up' in the one-room school. I was able to share some of the stories with this young person who has had the security and unique village experience so enjoyed by the 'kids from the past' who revisited their old school yesterday.

I desperately hope that future generations can continue to share this unique Hall experience - an 'old time school' in a 'living school'.

Elizabeth Burness

Storyteller/Teacher/Illustrator, 'History With A Difference', and
Voluntary Curator, Laurie Copping Heritage Centre

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE LAURIE COPPING HERITAGE CENTRE (Hall School Museum)

The original school house was built in 1910 and commenced operation as a school in January 1911. Over the years more buildings were added to enable the school to meet with the growing demand from increased enrolments. In the 1960s the original school house was saved from demolition through the efforts of concerned community members lead by the then Principal Laurie Copping. The Hall community continues to work for its preservation and recognition as a unique heritage and education resource within the ACT.

The Hall Primary School House Museum was officially opened by His Excellency Sir Ninian Stephens in 1986. In 2004 the Museum was dedicated to Mr Copping and renamed The Laurie Copping Heritage Centre, by His Excellency Major General Michael Jefferey. It is listed on the register of Canberra museums.

Since its establishment, the Museum has hosted visits by students from ACT schools, historic play re-enactments and heritage celebrations. The Museum is a valued educational resource and 'heritage destination' for schools in the ACT and surrounding districts and for residents and visitors to the ACT.

Outlined below are suggestions and proposals for: teaching strategies and classroom links; professional development options for teachers and educators; development and promotion of community use of the Museum; the role of a Curator at the Museum; and public/private partnering and sponsorship opportunities.

School Involvement - Teaching Strategies and Classroom Links

- Develop links and partnerships with other educational institutions, eg. ANU, UC, ACU, CIT and other public and private schools.
- Further develop existing educational material and age appropriate packages, to be provided in advance, for visiting school teachers to use on site with their classes.
- Conduct regular Heritage Days with other schools, in collaboration with their teachers, to ensure students maximize the benefits of learning in an authentic context.
- Conduct Rural School Celebration Days with, for example, Tharwa Primary, Michalego Primary and Gundaroo Primary, at Hall School Museum and incorporate the museum as a focus for the day. These would be specific programs, targeting the similarities and differences of the country school while sharing the heritage aspect of each.
- Encourage use of the Museum as an extension of the classroom for appropriate history lessons.
- Develop specific units of work for students with special needs, such as IEC/ESL students to introduce them to Australian history and culture, supporting and promoting integration into our community.

Professional Development for Teachers

- Encourage teachers from Hall School's cluster/region to develop units of work, incorporating creative writing, storytelling, oral/written history, based on material and artifacts in the Hall School Museum.

Museum Curator

- Employ a Curator for the Museum to develop and market an educational program for all ACT schools (pre-schools, primary schools, high schools and colleges), to complement and add to the heritage programs currently run by Lanyon Homestead, Calthorpes Cottage, etc.
- Our current Curator works on a voluntary basis and is prepared to continue in this capacity. However, it is clear that so much more could be achieved by having her input on a more regular/frequent basis.

Community Involvement in the Museum

- Develop partnerships with different associations in the ACT to promote and increase community use of the Museum, eg, Art Association for sketching sessions, Writers Association for theme days, Storytellers Guild for historical storytelling, and Tourist Association to establish as an important component of the ACT and Hall Village & District 'tourist experience'.
- Invite frequent guest speakers from the local Hall Village area to the Museum to host 'Memories of Hall' for the general public, seniors groups, libraries and writing associations.
- Provide pamphlets to visitors with 'Heritage Walk' options around the Hall environs, including the School Museum.
- Develop marketing strategies, including a Website for the Museum (via Dept. Education and Hall School).

Helen White
Teacher (Ret.) and
Hall Village Resident

22 SUNDAY TIMES JULY 19 1998

Sunday Features



Laurie Copping, in the Hall Education Museum: he was "naughty" enough to prevent the Hall Public School from being knocked down.

Photograph: Dean McNicol

The man who saved his old school

WHEN plans were mooted to knock down the original building of the Hall Public School, circa 1911, Laurie Copping did something he has spent his working life telling children not to do. He was "naughty".

The former principal feared that when he retired authorities would decide the same fate for the building. And he refused to have a bar of it.

"When they tried to knock it down, I managed to stop them," he says. "I was naughty, you could say. I went above their heads."

Although he retired as principal in 1981 after more than 20 years, Hall school has remained his passion. A passion that envelops its past, present and future.

He is curator of Hall Education Museum, established in the school's original building and officially opened in 1986 by the then Governor-General, Sir Ninian Stephen.

The museum was born out of Laurie's dream to keep the school's colourful history alive — it was the oldest functioning



Country Life
Sally Hopman

school in the ACT — and with it the history of an early Australian village.

He regularly takes school groups and interested others through the museum, giving them a glimpse of the past.

Typical of the one-teacher schools of the time, the tiny wooden building oozes history, sitting as it does in the maze of demountables that is Hall school today.

The original teacher's chair is still in front of the fireplace — it turned up in someone's shearing shed, Laurie says, and was given to the school. One of the original school desks also takes pride of place in the front row and other desks from schools as far afield as Queensland have been given to the museum.

One old desk, made of jarrah timber, was found on the school

veranda one morning with the note on it: "Mr Copping might like this for the museum". He did.

The museum's collection of books tells its own story: that bible *The Key to Modified Curative*, *Hector the Stowaway Dog* and *The King Who Lived on Jelly* are shown off alongside *Books of Lessons for Use of Schools 1862*.

The walls are papered with the fruits of young labours, like the cotton-growing project mounted on cardboard, complete with stuck-on cotton wool to illustrate the story. And those maps that teachers used to pull down to show you something then snap them back up again if your attention went elsewhere. And of course, times-tables and music charts also dot the walls.

The Queen is there, perched royally above the desks, as is the roll of honour of the Hall heroes who never came home from the Great War.

There is even a collection of rubber stamps, including the one we all dreaded seeing on our exercise books, "SEE ME".

There are old wirelesses and older duplicators, slates and certificates for ancient efforts.

One of Laurie's favourites is a huge old gramophone. "It was a wedding gift for a Hall couple, the Lees, who married in 1920," he says. "They lived across the road from the school and would lend it to the teacher here so the children could enjoy music."

"I ended up teaching the couple's grandchildren."

"When the wife died, she left it to the school."

Visitors can also learn about the hard old days. The sort of days when a child received a cut for writing with his/her left hand. Also, as officially recorded in the school's *Punishment Book*, the day in 1924 when two boys brought their father's revolver to school and fired it across the playground. Apparently they were just after some stray chicks. They, too, were cut.

But to complete this picture of history, Laurie doesn't rely on the collectables alone.

When children from Canberra schools visit, he shows them, literally, what it was like at school in the old days.

On entry, hands are out for inspection, shoes are checked to see that they shine and hair that it is brushed. "I always

check that mine are, too," Laurie says.

Visiting children are invited to sit at the old desks, sing their tables, look at copies of the old readers and write on slates.

"I tend not to let them use pen and ink because you can imagine how fatal that would be."

Laurie says many of the items were given to the museum, but he regularly visits sales and auctions in the hope that he might pick up a bargain for the museum.

But he does get some offerings that are not quite suitable for the school museum.

"I remember I was offered this old mangle once," he says. "I had to say no because we didn't put the kids' fingers through it, so it wasn't something we could really use here."

People interested in visiting the museum can contact Laurie on 6296 1102.

The talk in Gunning

Three issues that have caused more than a little discussion in the Gunning Shire are now on public exhibition. They include the old courthouse at Gunning, the proposed service centre at

the end of the Gundaroo Road and the proposed amendment to the 1987 Gunning Local Environment Plan. Now is the time to have your say.

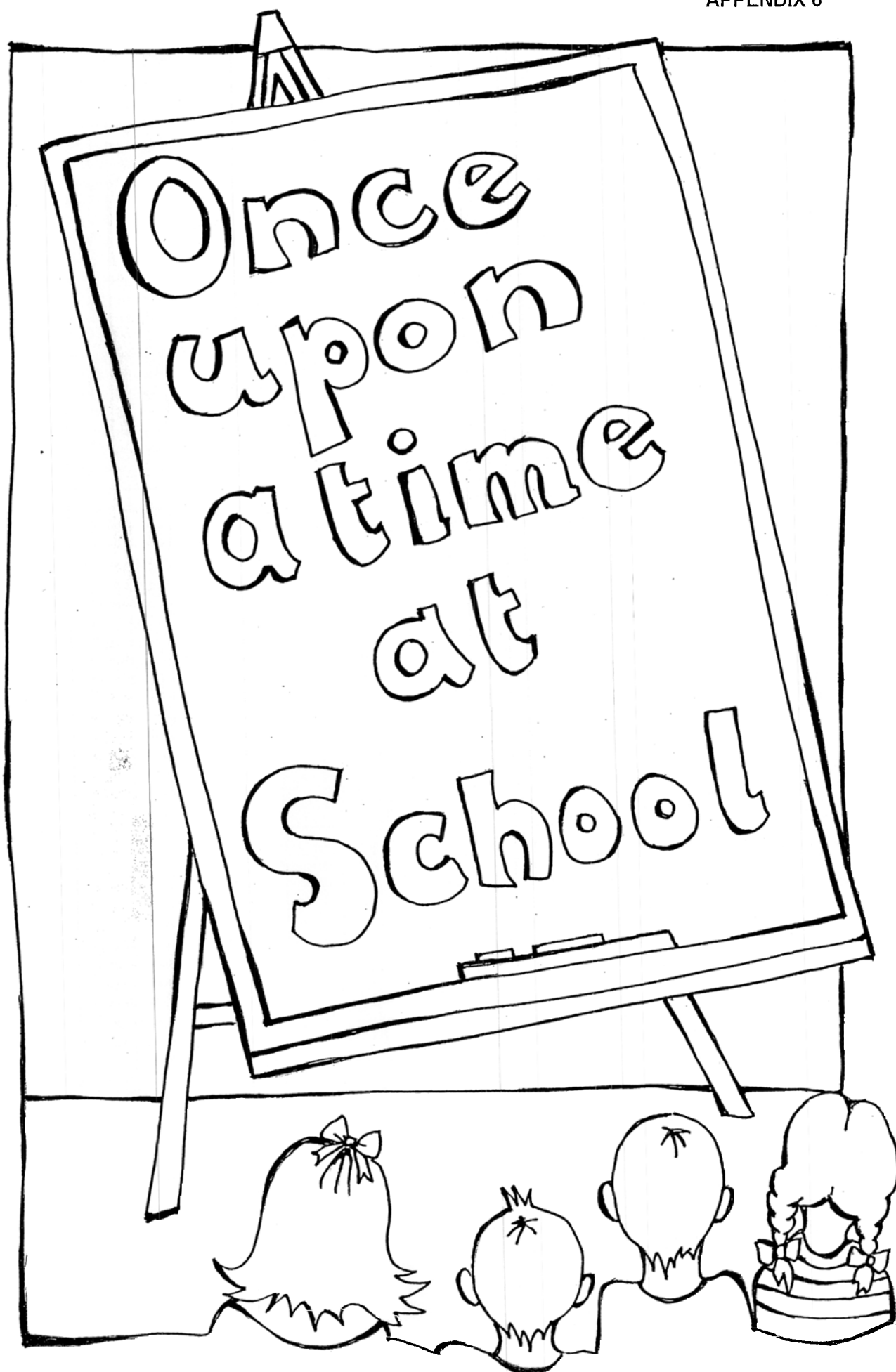
Hall as Heritage

Word has it that there will be big talks this weekend to discuss listing the village of Hall, with the Heritage Commission. Stay tuned.

Soft, sweet hands

If your hands are far from attractive, rub some sugar and oil together in your palms. Not only will you be dirt-free, but your hands will be as soft as a baby's bottom. Fat and white sugar rubbed into the hand together also works. Put the fat in the palm of your hands, add a tea spoon of sugar and rub it in. Then lather up with hot water and soap. And if they stink from peeling something unattractive, rub them with lemon juice.

Sally Hopman's e-mail address is sally.hopman@canberraatmuse.com.au. Her postal address is *The Canberra Times*, PO Box 7155, Canberra Mail Centre ACT 2610.



The school was one room.

There was one teacher.

All the children aged 5 years to 12 years learnt their lessons together.



School started at 9am with all the students lined up in front of the school, boys in one line, girls in another line.



The teacher would check the hands and boots of the students to make sure they were clean.



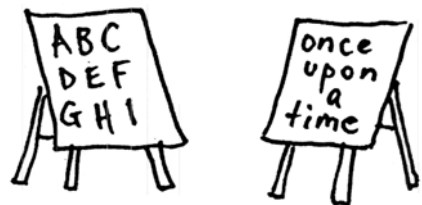
The students would salute the Australian flag while they recited that they would Honour God, serve the King and salute the flag.



After marching into the school the younger children sat at the front and the older children sat at the back of the schoolroom.



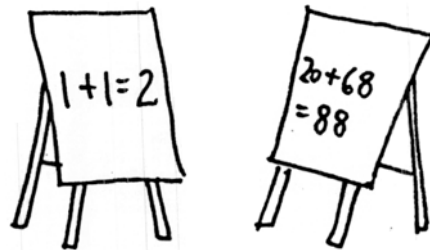
The lessons for the morning were written on two blackboards at the front of the schoolroom, junior lessons on one and senior lessons on the other.



The junior classes wrote on slates with slate pencils or pencils and exercise books. Senior students would use pen and ink.



Arithmetic,(number work) was the first subject of the day. Students also learnt reading, writing and dictation.



They also learnt history, geography, debating, religion, drawing and colouring in with crayons.

Sewing for the girls and woodwork for the boys was taught once a week.



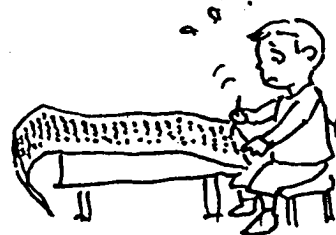
Sport was cricket for the boys and rounders for the girls. Games included prisoners-base, hopscotch, knuckles, hoops, marbles and sometimes tennis.



No talking was allowed in school. punishment included being hit on the hands or legs with a cane out in front of all the other students.



Other punishments included writing lines like 'I must not talk in school' written 500 times which had to be done after school.



If a student spelt words incorrectly in their writing exercises they also had to write out lines after school.



The students also had to make a fire in the fireplace at the front of the schoolroom. The boys had to cut wood and keep the fire alight during the day.



The students also did gardening at the school and planted pine trees around the school boundaries.



The older girls had to sweep out the school room after school. Students ate their lunch in the verandah until the weathershed was built.



Students came to school by walking, riding bicycles or on horseback. Some lived many kilometres from the school.



The students would sit for an exam called the Qualifying Certificate to show they had completed Primary School.



Pupils of Hall Public School in 1918.

Front row: (left to right) Elvin Hall, Jack Dolan, Wally Murty, Jacky Hall, Averill Gozzard, Noel Burton, Tom Gribble, Jack Kevin.

Second row: Neta Gozzard, Kathleen Thompson, Nina Southwell, Zena Hall, Dulcie Southwell, Vera Burton, Ivy Robinson.

Third row: Kevin Thompson, Bruce Kilby, Fred Hall, Alan Southwell, Grace Kilby, Merlie Gribble.

Back row: Thelma Southwell, Mollie Buckmaster, Beryl Kilby, Ida Southwell, Jack Hall, Archie Southwell, Zeta Gribble.

Hall Primary School Programs and Hall P&C Services and Activities

1. Literacy Program

Our unique setting at Hall PS provides an excellent environment for us to have a whole school literacy block each morning. The **Balanced Literacy Program** in the junior school focuses on developing skills and strategies for independent reading, and our senior students engage in **Co-operative Reading** that aims at further developing and empowering students as independent readers.

Literacy achievement is carefully tracked across the school, with students receiving teaching instruction and support that is appropriate to their level of development and achievement. Our whole school structure and approach allows us to have flexible literacy groupings, across classes, enabling children to work at a suitable level.

The extensive parent involvement and support we enjoy gives our students more individualised attention and produces high levels of success.

2. Numeracy Program

Our successful and dynamic numeracy program at Hall is focused around the **Count Me In Too!** maths program, where children are individually assessed at the beginning of each year using an assessment tool. Teachers gain an accurate and detailed insight into areas of development for individual students and the class.

Students participate in weekly hands-on maths activities, using *Count Me In Too!* resources and games. Students work on maths tasks appropriate to their individual level of development, provided and directed by the class teacher. Through differentiated curriculum, teachers ensure that children are working to the best of their ability, and are receiving appropriate instruction and support in areas for development.

3. Student Welfare Program

At Hall PS we implement a student well-being model and program called “**Standing Tall at Hall**”, incorporating the **SCARF Values** and **Bounce Back! Resiliency Program** (by Helen McGrath and Toni Noble, 2003).

We believe that a positive classroom environment and ensuring the well-being of all students, is at the core of all we do. We are able to take advantage of the small school size to encourage and teach social skills, protective behaviours and anti-bullying strategies to ensure that students have the skills to deal appropriately with problems and to ensure a safe and secure school environment.

We explicitly and implicitly teach values and resilience education and believe that with these programs in place, we provide children with opportunities to succeed and develop self-esteem. Consequently, student management is a significantly smaller part of our school model.

4. Environmental Programs

Hall Primary has a long involvement with **Landcare** starting in 1988 with its participation in the Yass River Revegetation Project. The Lions Club generously donated a shade house to the school for the project. In 1990 Hall Primary was the first school in the ACT to form a Junior Landcare Group and received a grant of \$30,000 over a three year period for revegetation work on Halls Creek. The students cleared and replanted the area along Halls Creek behind the Equestrian Oval. They also developed a walking trail with accompanying map for other visiting schools to use.

Since 1997, we have been involved with **Greening Australia**. Students are instructed on seed propagation and the tubestock is kept in the school's shade house. The students water, weed, and thin the plants and then plant them at selected locations within the district. Over the years, trees have been planted at the school, in the Hall Horse Paddock and in the Hall Reserve opposite the school as a long-term project to control the lerps, which are attacking the gum trees. The trees and shrubs planted will attract birds, which will in turn eat the lerps. Tubestock has also been planted on private property on Wallaroo Road and Spring Range Road as well as in the reserve off Dog Trap Road. Hall Primary students also participated in plantings for the "Corridors of Green" at the rest area near Murrumbateman and on CSIRO property along the Barton Highway near Hall.

Hall Primary has also been involved with **Water Watch** since the 1990s. Students regularly monitor the condition of Halls Creek and send the findings off to be collated with sample results from across the ACT. This program is supported in class with lessons and activities on turbidity, salinity, pH, temperature, pollution, stormwater and catchment areas.

Senior students participate in the biennial **International River Health Conference** held in Mildura (our participation is generously sponsored by Hall Rotary Club).

Water Bug Snapshot is another program in which we participate. Students visit the local creek or local dams and use nets to take samples of the invertebrates living in the water. These invertebrates are then classified into groups from most to least sensitive to environmental changes. Tabulation of the findings is then used to determine the condition of the creek or dam.

Students also participate in **Clean up Australia Day** activities throughout the Hall Village.

5. Hall P&C Services and Activities

Hall Primary is supported by an extremely dedicated and active P&C Association. P&C members work very hard to raise funds that are used to augment the school's educational resources. Members also give generously of their time to assist with numerous school programs and activities.

The following services are provided to the Hall community by the Hall Primary School P&C Association Inc.

5.1 *Before & After School Care*

Hall Cottage Care is operated within the school grounds by the P&C in the old Headmaster's residence (the Cottage). Hall must be the only public school in the ACT that has had a resident principal!

We currently employ eight child-care staff and one administrator. We are licensed for 33 children. During 2006, 35 families have used our service.

The setting provides arguably the most welcoming and homely environment of any outside school care service in the ACT. Visitors from other services always comment about the wonderful atmosphere of the centre. We aim to provide a "being at home" feel, which helps to bring a better school/home balance for the children with parents working full-time who utilise the service for 4 hours a day, from 8am to 9:30am and from 3:30pm to 6pm.

The P&C has extensively renovated the 1960s building over the past few years at a cost of \$32,957. The Cottage provides a wonderful resource for teachers to engage small groups of children in specific learning activities. The Cottage is also a resource for P&C activities; music lessons; and various Hall and District community groups.

5.2 *Music Tutoring*

The P&C organises external tutors to come to the school to provide private tutoring for students for various musical instruments.

We currently have 2 piano tutors providing lessons to 18 students, and 1 tutor providing lessons to 6 students on drums, clarinet and guitar.

Lessons are currently provided by Bellchambers Music tutors. In the past we have employed individual tutors to provide piano, guitar, flute and singing lessons.

5.3. *Other Tuition/Classes*

As a service to the Hall community the P&C has sought to bring tutors/classes to the school whenever interest has been expressed in a particular activity.

The following activities have been initiated by the P&C over recent years:

- **Tae Kwon Do** – classes have been held at the school since 2002, and continue at present.
- **Tennis** – lessons are currently held, and have been held on and off over many years in accordance with interest levels.
- **Irish Dancing** – classes operated for about 3 years until the students' progress required different facilities.
- **Dance/movement** – classes were held for about 2 years, specifically for junior primary school children.
- **P.A.S.S.** – Primary After School Sports Program operated at Hall Primary for nearly 3 years, mostly for junior students.

5.4 *Uniforms*

For the convenience of families, the P&C operates an on-site uniform shop, carrying stock valued at approximately \$11,000.

5.5 *Parent Community Financial Support*

- **Literacy & Reading Resources** – during the past five years, the P&C has donated an average of \$5,000 per year for purchase of literacy resources.
- **Public Address Systems** – the P&C provided funds for the purchase of a PA and sound system (\$3,800) for use in concerts, assemblies, fundraising activities, etc. A smaller portable system (\$1,800) was also purchased early in 2006.
- **Smart Boards** – in 2005 the P&C provided funds (\$7,000) to assist with the purchase and installation of interactive whiteboards in each learning space and the library.
- **Changeable Sign** – the purchase and installation of the changeable sign was funded by the P&C in 2005 (\$4,800).
- **Excursions** – the P&C subsidises the cost of class excursions wherever possible, usually by covering the cost of bus transport.
- **Voluntary Contributions** – payment of voluntary contributions by Hall Primary families has always been very high, exceeding 70% each year.

Prepared by:

Jennifer Lewis
Mother of Ben (11) and Jack (8)

and

Maryann Harris
Mother of Sean (12), Aidan (11) and Erin (9)

1 Choice and Diversity — the role of Hall Primary and Hall Preschool

1.1 Introduction

The ACT Government's *Towards 2020 Renewing Our Schools Report*¹ points to the fact that many parents and families now exercise choice about which school their children attend. The ACT Department of Education and Training is committed to providing a “network of contemporary and innovative schools”², so choice in a climate of heterogeneity is possible.

Hall Primary School is a small school within a small community. This makes Hall Primary School unique and therefore an essential element in providing choice to students and parents. Further, it is this choice which, among other factors, bears upon the educational outcomes of our primary school students.

1.2 Hall Primary School: A Needed Option in the Provision of School Choice

*Towards 2020*³ lists the projected enrolments in 2010 for primary schools closest to Hall. The smallest of the schools is Harrison, with a projected enrolment of 350 students. In comparison, the Department of Education and Training estimates the 2010 enrolment at Hall to be almost a third of this, at 110 students.⁴

As well as providing the ACT community with a small school option, Hall Primary School offers students and their families the choice of education in a semi-rural environment. This environment extends to Hall Primary's curriculum as well as to its physical environment.

Hall Primary School has had an agri-environmental focus since it became the first ACT school to form a Junior Landcare group in 1990.⁵ Since then the school has been involved in joint projects with Greening Australia, Waterwatch, the International River Health Conference, Waterbug Snapshot, Clean Up Australia Day and the Keep Australia Beautiful campaign. Hall Primary was the 1996 ACT Environmental School of the Year.

1.3 The Benefits of Choice

The empirical evidence in favour of school choice is persuasive. Greene⁶ points to the “overwhelming positive effects of school choice on student achievement”. Harvard University economist Caroline Minter Hoxby⁷ has repeatedly demonstrated that the competition created by choice leads to a general rise in school achievement across entire school districts.

In 2005, the Australian Council of State School Organisations (ACSSO), the Australian Parents Council (APC) and the Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training became partners in the Family School Partnerships project. Research from this project states that “the right to choose a school for their child ... is a fundamental right in our society”.⁸

¹ *Towards 2020 Renewing Our Schools*, ACT Department of Education and Training No. 06/617 p.4

² *ibid*

³ *ibid* p3

⁴ *ibid* p2

⁵ pers. comm. Jennifer Lewis, Hall Primary School Parents and Citizens Association, 14 August 2006

⁶ Jay P. Greene cited in Buckingham, J., Canberra Times 27 July 2006 *Executive Highlights* No. 372

⁷ *ibid*

⁸ Family School Partnerships – Issues Paper, accessed via internet 6 August 2006 p4

Stemming from the exercise of this right is the increase in familial participation in school governance and children's education. Novak⁹ provides evidence of this, stating "increasing the effective level of school choice delivers significant benefits to students through greater involvement of students and families in determining their own high quality education".

*Parental involvement seems like the least controversial concept in education reform – just try to find someone who admits to being against it.*¹⁰

1.4 Parent and Family Involvement

1.4.1 Student Success

The Family Schools Partnership project cites over 85 studies¹¹ that document the profound and comprehensive benefits for students, families and schools when parents and family members become involved in their children's education. The findings from this pertinent research show that:

- when parents are involved students tend to achieve more regardless of socio-economic status or ethnic or racial background; and
- students whose parents are involved have higher graduation rates, higher grades and test scores, better attendance and exhibit more positive attitudes and behaviours.

1.4.2 School Quality

Correspondingly the same research demonstrates that:

- schools that work well with families have improved teacher morale and higher ratings of teachers by parents; and
- school programs that involve parents outperform identical programs without parental and family involvement.

1.5 Hall Primary School and Familial Involvement

Hall Primary School has an exemplary and enviable record of parent and family involvement and support.

- Hall Primary's P & C Association raises between \$9,000 and \$12,000 and up to \$16,000 annually. This fund raising rate is higher, *pro rata*, than the ACT average;
- Hall Primary School has to hold elections to fill School Board positions - in most years the number of nominees is twice the number of vacancies;
- The average annual rate of voluntary contributions to Hall Primary School is 70%, almost double the ACT average.¹²

These statistics are achieved through an atmosphere that is welcoming and inclusive of all. It is also noteworthy that the high level of parental and familial involvement at Hall Primary School exists in the context of the broader community, acknowledging the adage that:

It takes a whole community to educate a child.

⁹ ibid p3

¹⁰ Public Agenda Online – Playing Their Parts: What Parents Really Think About Parental Involvement – *Special Edition 1999* cited in ibid p1

¹¹ ibid p14

¹² pers. comm. M.Harris, Chairperson Hall Primary School Board, 9 August 2006

Community involvement with schools is becoming a major education issue. Hall Primary School is indeed a village school and very much part of the broader community. In this context Hall Primary School is integral to the social capital of the community it serves. It provides rural and village families with access to social networks, connections to external agencies and organizations and personal support, all of which put such families in a better position to raise their children.

1.6 Conclusion

The exercise of parental choice, the improved educational outcomes of such choice and the unique characteristics of Hall Primary School highlight the imperative of Hall Primary's continued, long-term existence.

Prepared by:

Rebecca Smith
Hall Village Resident., and
Mother of 2 former Hall PS students.

HALL AND SURROUNDING REGION SURVEY

OCTOBER 2006

Survey Conclusions

The survey respondents represented a diverse range of the population. 42% of households did not have any students or children. Families represented all age groups of students/children attending public and private education. Business owners and employees in the ACT and NSW are represented. Four respondents indicated in their comments that they are retirees and/or pensioners. Nineteen adult respondents indicated that they had attended Hall Primary School.

We had 61 responses to our Region Survey.

Those 61 responses represented 117 adults, 55 students (3 tertiary students, 3 college students, 20 Year 7 to 10 students, 27 primary school students, 2 preschool students) and 21 children below 4 years of age.

Fifteen respondents reside in the ACT and 46 reside in NSW.

Of the 15 ACT resident respondents (representing 24 adults), 14 or 93% indicated that the 2006 ACT Budget would influence them to vote against Labor in the next election. One respondent was undecided.

Education related results

The vast majority of adults had attended public education and tertiary education.

Of the high school age students, 74% attend private schools, whilst 64% of primary school students attend public schools. **Parents intend to send 21 out of 24 children aged under 4 years to Hall Preschool and Hall Primary School.**

Of those children that attend private schools, the reasons parents expressed for choosing private education over public education was a perception that private education provided a better level of education and discipline. Many indicated that dress code and religious instruction were also a factor.

When indicating their main reason for choosing private education, the outstanding factor was the perception that a better level of education is provided by private education.

Establishment of Hall Primary School Building Fund

A total of 27 respondents indicated that they would consider making a donation to a building fund for Hall Primary School.

Community education/leisure classes, held out of school hours

There was considerable interest in the introduction of a variety of community classes, which could be held at Hall Primary School out of school hours.

The most popular were yoga, art and first aid with 19, 19 and 15 respondents respectively indicating an interest in those classes.

Composition of survey respondents

Business owners

Of the respondents, 44 are business owners: 24 owned a business operating in the ACT; and 18 in NSW.

Of the ACT respondents, 6 own a business operating in the ACT.

Of the NSW respondents, 20 own a business operating in the ACT and 18 in NSW.

Fourteen to sixteen business owners indicated that they would be interested in a regional tourist promotion using a brochure, a billboard in Hall or a shopfront in Hall displaying local produce and/or offering wine tastings.

Employees

Of the respondents, 49 are full time employees, 90% of whom are employed in the ACT. 22 respondents are part time employees, 86% of whom are employed in the ACT.

Of the ACT respondents, 11 are full time employees in the ACT and 1 is a part time employee in the ACT.

Of the NSW respondents, 33 are full time employees in the ACT, 5 in NSW and 18 are part time employees in the ACT, 3 in NSW.

A total of 85% of NSW resident employees are employed in the ACT.

Comments received

...about how Governments could make public schooling more appealing:

- Showcasing public education achievements, advertising class sizes (much smaller than private schools), work harder at removing underperforming teachers.
- Promoting the quality of ACT education & supporting all co-curricular activities. Marketing of successful case studies.
- Offering a wide range of excursions to near & distant places.

- Free bus service.
- Improving pay & career prospects to retain experienced teachers. Address discipline & violence issues.
- Offering diversity of choices. Not all parents want their kids to go to large schools. Most parents want their kids to have a secular education.
- Ensuring schooling is free and close to home for all ACT families.
- Teaching old fashioned good quality basics not pointing to the 200 most used words on the wall and telling the child to get on with it. And a sophisticated distinctive uniform to say I am proud of the school which I attend.
- Looking after teachers & students properly. Hall is a wonderful school, it was let down by the Ed Dept about 6 years ago – many local families left.
- Keeping them smaller & more personal & introducing uniform back into the system. Maintaining discipline.
- Cutting expenditure on private and spending this on public schools.
- Funding.
- Funding, funding, funding and allowing schools to develop their own special character.
- Improving teaching techniques by getting back to basics – maths, English, reading, writing etc. Stop this fancy crap and teach like they did 20+ years ago.
- Increasing numbers of Special needs teachers, so that children who wish to learn could do so without disruption & interruption by those children who don't and can't.
- Better discipline, better education.
- Supporting teachers re discipline. Having & enforcing school uniforms.
- Employing more teachers to teach English grammar. Small schools are great. All children in urban areas should have a school close enough to walk to. ACT teachers should get the same pay as NSW teachers.
- Regulating class size and paying teachers a good salary thereby attracting and keeping able teachers.
- Paying teachers better wages so as to attract the best candidates for each position. Resources and support need to provide teachers & through this children with the appropriate aid.
- They shouldn't have to – they are appealing.
- Encouraging their activities.
- Better dress code and discipline.
- Making uniform compulsory in high schools.
- Resourcing public schools to the same level as private schools.

- Properly & fully funding public schools. And supporting a mix of schools including smaller schools & rural schools such as Hall & Tharwa.
- Proximity to home. Some policy on uniform. Avoiding super-schools at all costs!!
- Leaving school as they have been, giving Canberra a heart for the community.
- Spending more on Public Education, less on Private Education.
- Supporting them financially into the future – instead of closing them.
- Allowing choice to NSW residents.
- Not closing Hall Primary.
- Main reason for considering leaving public school system & sending my children to private school is no faith in the ACT Government & their education system!
- Consistency of standards in education and discipline.
- Diverting private school subsidies to public education. Greater use of school facilities after school hours, greater concentration on individual child needs, learning styles & interests, increasing teacher's pay, conditions. Public education in Australia greatly disadvantaged by lack of Government support & funding.
- Introducing a discipline, encouragement and anti-bullying system that doesn't encourage the bullies and overlook the victims.

...other comments received about public/private schooling

- There is a place for private schools but more resources & planning needs to address the drain from public to private.
- Public schooling provides a more rounded education in a realistic Australian context.... Better preparation for life in Australian society.
- Public schooling is now pitched at caring for lowest common denomination rather than striving for excellence, across all skill & intellectual endeavour.
- More funding for public schools!!!
- We know people who send their children to private schools because they want their kids to get more individual attention. Forcing kids into larger schools will drive families into choosing the private system.
- DON'T go the way of USA and go for "mega" schools. As a teacher, the bigger and more grades (ie, K-10) brings with it inherent issues of discipline, lack of personal knowledge of students which can support children/parents/teachers in their roles as educators in the ed process. Leave education to educators, not politicians or public servant number crunchers!
- Public schools are the cornerstone of our democracy. No funds from the public purse should go to private schools but I will defend to death their right to exist.

- Have had 3 children all attend Hall Preschool, Hall Primary, Lyneham High, Dickson College, 2 Uni & 1 Business College. We as a family all enjoyed time spent at Hall both educationally and for sense of community.
- We sent 4 children to private secondary schools in ACT after teaching in the public education system in NSW. Because of Departmental attitudes, fear of litigation etc, discipline at public high schools is becoming hopeless. There is little support for teachers and many are demoralised.
- Where do I start? If there are no public schools then what choice do parents have but to send their children to private schools? Closing public schools gives people no choice. Why close Hall Primary? With such a long standing tradition of quality education – the Government is making a very poor choice.
- There is no perfect education system, but too much is expected of teachers these days, as parents hand over their own responsibilities to the education system.
- Private schools should not receive a cent of govt funding. Private schools are machines for the transmission of privilege; they are undemocratic, inequitable and elitist.
- Private schooling detracts from good public schooling re funding, teaching.
- Governments should not provide funding to any private schools. Public education should be the priority. No other first world country provides government funding to private schools.
- Our first child attended Hall Preschool – it was fabulous – was hoping to send our second there also.
- We will be devastated if Hall closes. We intended on sending all of our children there.
- This does not apply to us now but we decided on a mix of private and public schooling depending on individual child needs.
- Would it be possible for the Hall community to open its own school by leasing current buildings, hiring its own teachers and administering the school itself?

... from NSW residents when asked if they have experienced any difficulties (as a result of being a NSW resident) in obtaining services from ACT Government organisations

- Refused access to CHADS, refused access to ACT Mental Health, required to travel to Yass, Goulburn & Sydney for son's medical treatment.
- The only reason we are not at Hall Preschool this year is because we would not have been offered a place until the second week of February – This does not allow for planning of hours at work and corresponding childcare days which are worked out by Oct/Nov for the following year.

- I've had 2 children in the last 2 years and was unable to have a midwife visit my home on release from hospital due to living just over the border in NSW.
- Not able to enrol in preschool until term starts made it difficult to plan, therefore continued to drive further to Murrumbateman. After delivering babies at Calvary there was a lack of communication with health nurses at Yass, who do the home visits as "ACT does not cross the border", even if they are closer. Use of public facilities such as libraries, are limited.
- No, but I have not made many demands on services. I am an ex ACT Govt employee.
- Very difficult getting services with newborns.
- Medical services, police services. Policing is appalling. I dread a life threatening emergency as we are in no man's land out here. As a rural community we do need these services.
- Constantly!
- Only ACT Government call center. You think you are ringing a Department, you get the call center, then the operator doesn't know what to do.
- Generally not – Equipment loan pool at Canberra Hospital and special seating service at Canberra Hospital.
- It takes a lot longer for services. PLEASE DON'T CLOSE HALL SCHOOL!
- Not so far. That is why the ACT's bias against our children at Hall primary has come as such a shock. They are treating us as aliens with no ties to the ACT community, at least in regard to schooling of our children. However, they are happy to take our money when we wish to do business in the ACT, which is where we spend 99.9% of our money. Barr says that they are (grudgingly) willing to educate our kids in other ACT schools & that that will be cheaper than keeping Hall Primary open largely for the education of NSW kids. That is the argument we have to counter.
- Occasionally over many years, there have been rumours of removal of access to ACT education & buses for NSW students.
- Access to ACT Therapy child health services, access to primary schools.
- Midwifery services for post natal care as part of the going home early program (which saves hospital costs). I was eventually able to get Calvary nurses visit me at home (500m over the border) when the NSW Health Service (via Goulburn) offered to foot the bill after I contacted our local member. Surely that sort of system could be established where the nearest service provider performs the service and is reimbursed by the resident's service provider, be it for health, education or whatever? An overall cost saving for everyone!
- To close Hall School is a crime, there are so many young families in Murrumbateman, where will our children go in the future? Most people in Murrumbateman work in ACT, it's only logical to keep the school open in such a fast growing area, it's only going to get bigger out here.

- We were unable to choose the high school our child would attend therefore we chose not to use the public high school system, despite having had children at Hall Primary School.
- Current education system. 1st time in 20 years of being a NSW resident that I have experienced cross border discrimination!! Lets hope ACT children don't receive the same treatment when wanting to enter NSW Government facilities such as hospitals and further education facilities.
- Have very little need of ACT Government services – have no children & prefer Yass Hospital when hospital services required.
- School age dental – as soon as our son left Hall Preschool this was no longer available.
- Child at Hall Primary is unable to access satisfactory community health services as at school in ACT and lives in NSW.
- Choice of high school/college.

...general comments

- When will common sense come back – perhaps when politicians come out of their offices and mix with the people, who vote for them and not party line.
- I'm a pensioner now but did work in Canberra – moved to Hall for superior education – son wanted to learn.
- Hall Primary School is an important and integral part of the Hall & District community. Closing schools – public schools – whilst funding private schools is an absolute & unforgivable disgrace. Public education is the future of this country. The Stanhope Labor Government should be ashamed of it's betrayal of principles of fairness & equity & it's repudiation of the common good of public education. Save Hall School!
- I feel strongly about retaining Hall School as an excellent public school serving our District (ie Hall/Murrumbateman). Having worked as a teacher in the NSW public education system for 30 years, I endorse local, community based public education. As a retiree I am adamant that the closure of Hall School will result in an economic and social catastrophe for Hall Village.
- Hall School belongs to the NSW citizens who built it and their families. Hall is a border community – a valid concept. We don't need to extend Mr Howard's border control to such absurd lengths! What Hall School can gie suburban kids in the way of environmental education should be preserved. It's unthinkable that Hall should be reduced to one of the soul-less suburban centres.
- We vote in NSW. If the Labor Government does nothing to support us to keep Hall open, we will be taking our votes elsewhere.
- We think this [the survey] is a positive step to try to find alternative activities for the school facilities and provide genuine options.

- We are able to afford to send our children to a private ACT high school. I am very concerned about families unable to do this – being last on the intake list means children could end up anywhere! I would think there are very few NSW residents around this area who do not pay an awful lot of tax in the ACT.
- If we lose the school, we lose the community of Hall. If we lose the community we lose the fabric of society in the Hall region. If we lose the fabric of society we invite anarchy and crime. If they take over we lose everything. The “community” must come first.
- School closures, whilst some have merit, are basically a dollar conserving issue for the current ACT Government. Having squandered the biggest flush of funds it will ever receive in GST & property stamp duty, on politically correct social engineering, it has overlooked the one valid & economically sound key to society’s management – a first class education for society’s children!!
- It is essential to get NSW to back their students.
- Cross border issues are becoming more problematic. The Stanhope Govt want a wind farm & \$2,000,000 from us NSW residents but don’t want our children and won’t acknowledge the important place our heritage has in the fabric of Canberra’s history.
- Comment regarding voting against Labor in next election in response to their 2006 Budget – no Labor votes. When Libs return, they’ll inherit Labor’s debts, as it happened Federally.
- Comment regarding donating to a Hall Primary School Building Fund – only if my pension has a balance! My pension doesn’t last long: I have no savings. I am almost debt-free. I could help with organising (light work) a fete; we no longer have the Christmas Carols/Picnic on the school’s lawns (has been rained out for the last 2 years). I feel we need this to rejuvenate our hearts, and thus bring Hall folks together again. (A combined churches Carols night is planned this year.)
- A vote for Labor is a vote for neo-conservatism and we have such a party already!

Prepared by:

Anita Kilby
Mother of Sam (13) and Jack (11).

All Responses to Hall & Surrounding Region Survey - Oct 2006

Figures show the number of responses to that option or the number of people in that category, as applicable.



We reside in :	15	ACT	46	NSW
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Please indicate the number of adults in your household in each category:

26	Own business in ACT	44	Employed full-time in ACT	19	Employed part-time in ACT
18	Own business in NSW	5	Employed full-time in NSW	3	Employed part-time in NSW

For employees - Employed by:

9	Federal Government	18	Private organisation in ACT
5	ACT Government	2	Private organisation in NSW
	NSW Government		Other.....

As a business owner, I am interested in a Hall/Murrumbateman region tourist promotion using:

22	Tourist Brochure	17	Shopfront in Hall displaying produce
17	Billboard in Hall	16	Shopfront in Hall offering wine tastings
1	Billboard on Highway	1	Restaurant

The Hall Primary School P&C currently arranges lessons/classes in music, taekwon do & tennis at the school. Are there any classes/groups that you would be interested in participating in if they were held at Hall Primary School outside school hours? Please indicate age group.

19	Art lessons	7	Ballroom dancing	1	Other dance -adults
19	Yoga	3	Ballet/Kids dancing	1	Choir
15	First Aid	2	IT	2	Pilates
2	Tennis	3	Craft	1	Tai Chi
1	Cooking	1	Gardening	1	Small business
1	Pottery	1	Netball	1	Colonial history

Would you consider donating to a Hall Primary School Building Fund?

Donations would be tax deductible.

44	Yes	14	No
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For ACT Residents

Will the Stanhope Government's 2006 Budget proposals featuring cost cutting measures affecting schools, tourism etc influence you to vote against Labor in the next election?

14	Yes		No
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All Responses to Hall & Surrounding Region Survey - Oct 2006

Figures show the number of responses to that option or the number of people in that category, as applicable.



We are resident in:

14	Hall Village	4	Kaveney's Road region NSW
	ACT rural surrounding Hall Village	4	Murrumbateman Village NSW
13	Wollaroo region NSW	14	Murrumbateman rural region NSW
4	Spring Range region NSW	2	Other NSW
5	Namina Road region NSW	1	Aranda

Our household consists of the following numbers of people (count each person once only):

117	Adults	3	Year 6 students	2	Preschool students
3	University/CIT students	5	Year 5 students	5	Next year preschool students
1	Year 12 students	3	Year 4 students	1	4 year olds-not in preschool in 2007
2	Year 11 students	5	Year 3 students	3	3 year olds
6	Year 10 students	5	Year 2 students	5	2 year olds
5	Year 9 students	3	Year 1 students	1	1 year olds
6	Year 8 students	3	Kindergarten students	6	Babies
3	Year 7 students				

Number of households with no students/children: 26

Parents/carers/adults in this household went to school at (indicate numbers where necessary):

Primary School		High School		Further Education	
19	Hall Primary	60	Public	31	TAFE/CIT
65	Other Public	37	Private	55	University
20	Private	7	Other	10	Other
9	Other				

Please answer the following questions relating to each student/child of your household, indicating numbers where necessary

High School students go to school at a:		Primary/Pre School students go to school at:		We intend for children not yet at school to go to:	
6	ACT public school	15	Hall Primary/Pre School	21	Hall Primary/Pre School
17	ACT private school	3	Other ACT public school		Other ACT public school
	NSW public school	8	ACT private school	3	ACT private school
	NSW private school		NSW public school		NSW public school
	Home schooled	1	NSW private school		NSW private school
	Other.....		Home schooled		Home schooled
		1	Other-Murrumbateman preschool		Other.....

If your children go to a private school, please indicate your reasons for that choice:

8	Religious instruction	13	Better level of discipline	10	Dress code
3	Parent/s went to private school	12	Better level of education	1	Before & After school care
1	To participate in the HSC rather than the ACT Year 12	2	For Middle school option	1	Unable to have choice of high school
		2	For Yr 7-Yr 12 at one site	1	Good drama/music dept
2	For all schooling at one site	2	Family tradition	1	Recognition of individual needs

If your children go to a private school, please indicate your MAIN reason for that choice.

2	Religious instruction	2	Better level of discipline	1	Dress code
	Parent/s went to private school	7	Better level of education		Before & After school care
	To participate in the HSC rather than the ACT Year 12	2	For Middle school option	1	Unable to have choice of high school
			For Yr 7-Yr 12 at one site		
	For all schooling at one site		Family tradition		

1 Hall Primary School - Educational Outcomes

1.1 Introduction

Hall Primary School performs well in terms of educational outcomes when compared to other primary schools in the ACT. When one considers what parents desire from education, Hall meets these desires. Hall Primary School is at the forefront of academic attainment and social development; it fosters love of learning, happiness at school and the extra-curricular involvement of students.

1.2 The Small School Argument

As a small school Hall has advantages it can exploit. All the teachers know all the students and all the students know the students. Parents have actively chosen to send their children to the school simply because it is a small school. The Hall schools straddle the urban and rural fringe and this brings important diversity to ACT schooling and importantly, as the oldest continuously operating school in the ACT, it links us to our past.

Some have argued that small schools are unable to provide the same educational offerings as large schools and thus are inferior. Whilst it is accepted that curriculum breadth may be restricted in small schools, research evidence demonstrates that such constraints are amply made up for by the advantages, both social and in the learning environment provided by small schools.

Prominent US academics, Dr Joe Nathan and Karen Febey from the National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities, published research in 2001 entitled: *Safer, Saner, Successful Schools*.¹

The research examined outcomes in 22 public schools in 12 states, representing urban, suburban, and rural communities. The studies demonstrate that a school's ability to improve academic achievement and behaviour in a safe, nurturing, and stimulating environment was predicated partly on size of the school. The researchers found that on average, smaller schools provide a safer and more challenging school environment that creates higher academic achievement and graduation rates, fewer disciplinary problems, and greater satisfaction for families, students, and teachers. The researchers suggested that sharing facilities with other organizations can enable schools to offer broader learning opportunities for students, provide higher quality services to students and their families, and present a way to efficiently use scarce education funds.

Dr Kenneth R. Stevenson from the University of South Carolina published an article entitled *School Size and Its Relationship to Student Outcomes and School Climate*.² He showed that it is questionable whether large schools provide better academic outcomes and, once all costs are taken into account, that they are less expensive to operate.

After an in-depth analysis of previous school size research, Cotton (1996, 2001) concluded that smaller schools produce better academic results and provide a better school climate.

¹ Joe Nathan and Karen Febey, *Smaller, Safer, Saner, Successful Schools*, National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities, Washington, D.C.; Minnesota University and Center for School Change, Humphrey Institute, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 2001

² Kenneth R. Stevenson, *School Size and Its Relationship to Student Outcomes and School Climate A Review and Analysis of Eight South Carolina State-wide Studies*, University of South Carolina, April 2006, National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities 1090 Vermont Avenue, N.W., Suite 700, Washington, D.C.

Raywid (1999)³ has further pointed out that studies indicate smaller schools allow more opportunities for students to be involved in co-curricular activities, and offer more personalization and individual attention than larger schools. Howley (1996), based on his own research and review of other work on school size, has raised doubt about the cost effectiveness of larger schools. He argues that, though it first appears that larger schools are more cost-effective to operate, if completion rates are taken into consideration, smaller schools actually are more cost efficient.

Dr John R. Slate from University of Missouri, Kansas City and Dr Craig H. Jones from Arkansas State University in an article entitled *Effects of School Size: A Review of the Literature with Recommendations* concluded that:

“In spite of the face validity of school consolidation as a solution for educational problems, the research on school size indicates that the economic and curricular advantages of large schools are often exaggerated and that a variety of factors influence the relationship between school size and students’ academic achievement. Thus, educational decision-makers need to develop reform plans based upon a balanced consideration of all the important factors related to school size.”⁴

Finally, researcher Cynthia Reeves from Challenge West Virginia, Charleston in a 2004 article called *A Decade of Consolidation: Where are the Savings?* found that between 1990 and 2000, total enrolment in West Virginia decreased 11%, 202 schools were closed, and education spending increased by 16%. Per pupil expenditures increased more in West Virginia than in any other state, *but student achievement remained stagnant* during this period. Transportation and administrative costs rose in spite of the declining numbers of students.

There are obvious implications here for the ACT and for the Hall Schools. Small schools can produce outstanding and rounded educational outcomes and do not suffer some of the social impediments of larger schools. They provide a safer, saner education and the savings expected through closures may not materialise for the ACT.

1.3 Hall Primary School and ACT Educational Goals

Hall Primary School is an integral part of the ACT education system and meets many of the outcomes the Government is seeking as expressed through its published ACT Education Goals. For example:

ACT Education Purpose: *Our purpose is to be a leading education provider. We do this by providing world-class education and training, which is innovative, responsive and inspires all students to succeed.*

The ACT as a predominantly urban community demonstrates its innovative educational character through having a small rural school. Hall Primary School meets the goal of responsiveness because it is meeting an expressed community need: a small, safe rural school. One has only to read the comments of current and former students and their parents to understand how inspiring the school is and has been for them (see attached page from Hall community newsletter “The Rural Fringe”, August 2006).

³ Raywid, M. (1999), *Current literature on small schools*, Charleston, USA WV: ERIC Reproduction Service No. ED42049.

⁴ John R. Slate & Craig H. Jones *Effects of School Size: A Review of the Literature with Recommendations* University of Missouri, Kansas City, Arkansas State University

ACT Education Vision: To deliver a sustainable world-class education and training system that will significantly add to the economic, social and cultural well-being of the people in the ACT.

The cultural and historic values of Hall Primary School add to the social and cultural well-being of the people in the ACT. Indeed the cultural capital of the ACT would be sorely diminished by the closure of Hall Primary and Preschool.

One of ACT Education's priorities is to ***provide high quality education and training to meet the needs of the 21st century***. The outcomes sought include:

- maximising learning opportunities and outcomes for all students;
- ensuring education and training opportunities are tailored to meet each student's needs;
- improving the learning outcomes of all students, and in particular those of indigenous students;
- increasing the level of student retention and participation;
- providing quality learning environments which are safe, secure and inclusive;
- focusing on high quality teaching in every classroom; and
- monitoring, analysing and reporting student achievement and progress to students, parents, carers and community.

Hall Primary and Preschool meet each of these outcomes. The articles quoted earlier show how a small school maximises learning opportunities and outcomes for all students. In fact, Hall Schools maximise the ability of teachers to tailor the learning to each student's needs - nobody is forgotten.

A small rural school such as Hall is specifically meeting local needs in a way a larger urban school cannot. The environment is safe, friendly, inclusive and encouraging; something that larger schools cannot always achieve. Teachers choose to come to the school because of the quality of the teaching and educational leadership and there is also a very close school-community link that has been demonstrated many times through school-community events and the keen interest all of Hall has in our school.

Hall Primary and Preschool also meet two final priorities for ACT Education:

- ***Exceed the expectations of our stakeholders.***

The response from the Hall Community on hearing of the Government's announcement is testament to the fact that the School exceeds the expectation of so many stakeholders. Our former students testaments further demonstrate the value of a primary schooling in a small rural school

- ***Work with parents and carers to provide the best possible outcomes for children and young people.***

The best outcome for our children is what we already have: a school that has met community needs for nearly a century, a school that has adjusted to meet increasing educational demands, and a school that has retained a close, caring and friendly culture in an increasingly individual-dominated world.

Prepared by:

Hugh Watson
Resident of Hall Village, and
Father of 3 former Hall PS students.

NO EDUCATIONAL RATIONALE FOR SCHOOL CLOSURES

The Australian College of Education has challenged participants in the school closure debates to focus on educational outcomes. Save Our Schools Canberra is happy to take up the challenge, since improving educational outcomes, particularly equity in outcomes, for ACT students, is the ultimate test of the Stanhope Government's proposal – a test which it totally fails.

To start, it is important to remember that international surveys such as the OECD's PISA and the TIMSS studies show educational standards in the ACT are the highest in Australia, and up with the best in the world. One of the few weaknesses in overall performance is a relative lack of equity in outcomes, with student background having an undue influence on educational attainments.

There is, of course, always room for improvement, but the biggest challenge in the ACT is therefore improving educational outcomes for students from disadvantaged groups – in particular students from lower income families and Indigenous students. Proposals that leave these students without better support, let alone worse-off, are not what the ACT needs. From this perspective, the Towards 2020 proposals make no educational sense.

It is now almost universally accepted on the basis of solid evidence that the key to improving educational outcomes for students, and particularly for students from disadvantaged backgrounds, lies in the early years. This view has been embraced by both the Liberal and Labor parties at the Commonwealth level, with proposals for universal pre-schooling, and in the ACT, it has led to bi-partisan programs to reduce class sizes in the early primary years. However, the impact of the Stanhope-Barr school closures fall mostly on the preschool and primary sectors – despite the general recognition that they are the most important.

A key part of the Government's proposals is getting rid of small schools. But, one of the leading Australian experts on school size, Professor Brian Caldwell, has summarised the research evidence as showing that academic achievement in small school is at least as equal, and often superior to that of large schools, and that small schools provide better outcomes in terms of student attitudes and behaviour, participation in extracurricular activities, attendance and lower drop out rates. These are general attributes of small schools, but he also notes that outcomes in small high schools are similar to those from larger high schools, demolishing the Government's claims that curriculum limitations are a major problem. The positive benefits of smaller school environments are particularly important for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Caldwell notes that "poor students and those of racial and ethnic minorities are more adversely affected by attending large schools than are other students." A full version of Professor Caldwell's article can be found at: <http://www.educationaltransformations.com.au/>.

There is absolutely nothing in Caldwell's summary of the literature to support the Government's proposals – in fact, it is a compelling critique of Towards 2020 in educational terms. The Stanhope-Barr proposals simply ignore all this evidence, to propose sweeping cuts to the pre-school and primary school sectors. The impact of these cuts falls most heavily on children from disadvantaged families – precisely those for whom early educational experiences are so critical, and for whom small schools provide a better educational environment.

The proposed closure of a college also flies in the face of this, and other evidence. The recent college review has shown that the college system continues to provide major benefits for most students. The argument that the Government has used for forcing a Year 7-12 structure onto Campbell High School and Dickson College is that some students do not prosper in ACT colleges.

However, there is no evidence that the problems a minority of students have in colleges are related to the college structure itself. In every other jurisdiction in Australia, where Year 7-12 high schools are the norm, the non-completion problem is much more significant, so it is hard to blame the college structure. It is far more likely that it is the students, most from disadvantaged backgrounds, who have fallen behind their peers earlier in their education in primary and high schools who end up struggling.

There is, in addition, an obvious solution – to provide students who are at risk of non-completion with additional support for learning and welfare needs across the school years. In the last election campaign, the Stanhope Government promised to provide additional teachers for the secondary sector for precisely these reasons. But, it has now decided to cut over 100 teachers, most from the secondary sector. Once again, there is no educational rationale.

Overall, it is hard to find an educational rationale for any of the government's proposals. What the Stanhope Government has produced is a dog's breakfast of proposals, based on experimentation with integrated pre-schools, K-3, K-5, 6-10 middle schooling, K-10 and K-12 models, without a systematic review of the literature to investigate what really works. The only common theme is a drive towards larger schools, which, as outlined above, the research evidence does not favour.

So there is no educational rationale, and there are serious doubts over the figures produced by the Government to justify the program in financial terms. If there is to be an informed debate, it will clearly take an independent inquiry to get at the evidence that the Chief Minister has decided to suppress. It is now up to Labor back-benchers to make an inquiry possible, or they will pay the price at the next election.

Ian Morgan

Monday August 28, 2006

www.soscanberra.com/issues/no-educational-rationale-for-school-closures

1 Geography and Demographics - the Role of Hall PS in the ACT Region

1.1 NSW Residents attending Hall Primary School and Preschool

NSW students who attend ACT schools, including Hall primary, bring money into the ACT economy directly and indirectly.

The ACT government also receives money through the Commonwealth Grants scheme for NSW students who attend ACT schools.

1.2 Demographics – Hall PS Priority Enrolment Area and True Catchment Area.

Official ACT Government figures state that the population of the Hall PS Priority Enrolment Area (PEA) is 400.¹ This explains why only 9% of Hall PS students come from the PEA.² The remaining 91% come primarily from the extended Hall Region including Wallaroo, Jeir, Murrumbateman and Gungahlin.

Given current population projections it is inevitable that student numbers at Hall PS will increase. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) confirms that Gungahlin is one of the “fastest growing areas in Australia”.³ Last financial year (2004/05), the population of Gungahlin increased by 39.3%, the second highest rate of population increase in the ACT after Barton.

Similarly, studies conducted by the ABS and the NSW Department of Planning for Yass Shire Council project that Murrumbateman village will increase in size from its current population of 330 to 523 by 2014 and the surrounding area from its present 1,731 to 2,567 by 2014.⁴

The government has stated that NSW students are welcome in ACT schools and the NSW students who attend Hall PS will continue to attend ACT schools whether or not Hall is closed.

The NSW students who attend the Hall Schools live in an area bounded by the Village of Hall to the South, the Murrumbidgee River to the West, Murrumbateman to the North and the Dick’s Creek to the North East, giving an enrolment area of some 100 square kilometres.

For these students there is no viable alternative than to attend an ACT school. For example for the children living in the Wallaroo or Spring Range areas, the closest alternative public school is at Yass, some forty-five minutes drive. Most of these families have one or both parents working in the ACT and it would not be practical to have their children go to school in Yass.

For these same reasons, if a school opened in Murrumbateman, which we understand is unlikely to happen for many years, Hall PS would not lose many students, owing to their families working in the ACT.

¹ Chief Minister’s Department ACT Population Projections for Canberra Suburbs and Districts 2004 to 2014

² Towards 2020 Report 2006 p2

³ Canberra Times, Saturday 26 August p1

⁴ Sydney Canberra Corridor Strategy 2004-2005

The Government has stated that it can educate NSW students more cheaply at a larger school. However, on the Government's own figures, any such savings are negligible or non-existent.

In any event, the *Towards 2020* proposal advocates choice for parents and sending children to a small, rural, community based school is a choice that many parents make.

NSW students attend many other ACT schools which are not proposed to close and the mere fact that a school has NSW students should not be a factor taken into account in any decision to close a school.

NSW students from a variety of geographical areas attend ACT schools. There is no suggestion that other schools with NSW students should close. Given the significant economic, social and cultural contribution made by NSW students and their families to the ACT, any suggestion to close schools because of the high NSW attendance is misguided.

1.3 Negotiation of Cross-Border Agreement on Education.

The P&C understands that the ACT Government is attempting to negotiate a cross border agreement with the NSW government in relation to education. We have supported the government by making representations to the NSW Premier and NSW Education Minister and we are ready to assist in further negotiations to negotiate a mutually agreed solution to this issue.

The ACT and NSW governments have reached cross border agreements on other issues, including medical services and more recently water. The geographical location of the ACT means that there will always be close interaction between residents of the ACT and NSW. Education is one area where there will be cross border interaction. However negotiations to finalise such agreements can take time. If an agreement is not in place by December 2006, we urge the Government not to prematurely close Hall primary school.

1.4 Conclusion.

Any argument that Hall PS should close because of its high percentage of NSW students is misguided. The ACT receives funding for NSW students through the Commonwealth Grants Commission. The ACT economy also benefits from the activities of NSW residents who work, trade and shop in the ACT.

Prepared by:

Rebecca Smith
Resident of Hall Village

Letter to the Editor, Canberra Times

ACT's oldest school

On July 1-2 the Hall Primary School Art Show was well supported by the district's community. It was one of the many forms of sporting, cultural and social community fund raising activities over the past 120 years. On October 12, 1996, Hall and District Progress Association members wrote to the NSW Under-Secretary of Public Administration saying, "We are resolved now to build a school ourselves and would now petition that if we do so up to the required specifications, will you send us a teacher?"

"If we obtain your permission to do so, we will proceed to build at once as we can assure you we feel very strongly the wrong our children are suffering by existing circumstances and we are quietly determined to remedy it in some way." Our forefathers' determination resulted in the 1911 opening of the NSW-funded Hall Public School. Hall district signatories were a handyman/butcher, four farmers, a boarding-house proprietor, a carpenter, four storekeepers, a blacksmith, the Cricketer's Arms Hotel licensee and Billy the bootmaker, a bicycle mender, a barber and a banker.

Some pupils walked 6.5km, carrying their shoes to ensure cleanliness for assembly inspection. Ninety years of strong bonding between district and school remains.

Hall district's heritage of caring and mentoring always acknowledged the ACT/NSW border was no obstruction to our NSW families and neighbours' equality of opportunity and rights of access and choice.

Assembly Members should seriously consider the community and heritage implications of closing Hall district's much loved, oldest, longest operating ACT school.

Tony Morris, Hall

The text of the letter reads:

On July 1-2 the Hall Primary School Art Show was well supported by the district's community. It was one of the many forms of sporting, cultural and social community fund-raising activities over the past 120 years. On October 12, 1996, Hall and District Progress Association members wrote to the NSW Under-Secretary of Public Administration saying, "We are resolved now to build a school ourselves and would now petition that if we do so up to the required specifications, will you send us a teacher?"

"If we obtain your permission to do so, we will proceed to build at once as we can assure you we feel very strongly the wrong our children are suffering by existing circumstances and we are quietly determined to remedy it in some way. Our forefathers' determination resulted in the 1911 opening of the NSW-funded Hall Public School. Hall district signatories were a handyman/butcher, four farmers, a boarding-house proprietor, a carpenter, four storekeepers, a blacksmith, the Cricketer's Arms Hotel licensee and Billy the bootmaker, a bicycle mender, a barber and a banker.

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Hall district's heritage of caring and mentoring always acknowledged the ACT/NSW border was no obstruction to our NSW families and neighbours' equality of opportunity and rights of access and choice.

Assembly Members should seriously consider the community and heritage implications of closing Hall district's much loved, oldest, longest operating ACT school.

*Tony Morris, Hall
Wednesday, 5 July 2006*

1 Costs and Cost Reduction Strategies

1.1 Operating costs

The following information is an extract from the *Towards 2020 website*. It shows the expected savings from closing Hall PS. There is no economic analysis of the impact on the community; it simply shows expected cost savings.

School: Hall Primary School – Proposed for closure 2006	
Financial (all figures in this section relate to 2004-05 unless otherwise indicated)	
Average cost to educate a student: \$10,937 (ACT average \$9,570 per student in a primary school)	
Operational Costs	
Direct employee expenses: \$0.860m	
Direct SBM payments: \$0.129m	
Depreciation: \$0.047m	
Other in school expenses: \$0.051m	
Educational & corporate support costs: \$0.203m	
Total cost to operate the school: \$1.290m	

Savings from Closure			
	SBM	Salary	Total
	\$m	\$m	\$m
2006-07	0.056	0.220	0.276
2007-08	0.112	0.435	0.547
2008-09	0.112	0.436	0.548
2009-10	0.115	0.447	0.562
Total	0.395	1.538	1.933

These savings assume:

- no ongoing building or ground maintenance is required (as it shows School Based Management (SBM) cost savings at close to current SBM payments, therefore assuming nearly all SBM costs will be saved);
- no savings from selling the site; and
- half the teachers salaries will be saved – there is no rationale for the apportionment of these costs to Hall PS.

An alternate financial model for the school could be as follows

	(\$,000)	(\$,000)	
Direct employment costs	860	1060	Based on 170 students.
Direct SBM costs payments	129	129	
Depreciation	47	47	
Other in-school expenses	51	51	
Educational and Corporate support costs	203	183	Based on 10% reduction in overheads
Total	1,290	1,470	
Number of Students	118	170	
COST PER STUDENT	10,932	8,647	

By increasing the enrolments to 170, and keeping the costs down, Hall PS can reduce its cost per student to well below the ACT average of \$10,937.

1.2 Operating Cost Reduction Initiatives

Whilst the economics of small schools can be well justified, the Hall community understands the Government's desire to reduce the per capita cost of educating Hall school students. To this end the Hall P&C propose to enter into an agreement with the ACT Education Department to produce an operating cost reduction plan to bring the per student operating costs to below the ACT average.

Whilst it is not possible to do this in isolation, some of the initiatives Hall PS is keen to pursue include:

- sharing administrative staff with other schools;
- sharing janitorial/maintenance staff with other schools;
- sharing specialist teachers with other schools; and
- approaching the NSW Department of Education to supply one teacher for Hall PS (hence deferring the day NSW will need to build a school at Murrumbateman).

1.3 Capital Costs

1.3.1 The buildings

Hall PS is heritage listed. It is old, the oldest continuously operating school in the ACT. Some of the buildings are old and that is to be expected for a heritage listed school. It should not be used as a reason for shutting the school. A shut school that is heritage listed still requires maintenance.

The Government has stated that \$143,000 of building maintenance is required over the years 2004 to 2009. Unfortunately, despite requests to the Government we have been unable to ascertain exactly what maintenance the Government considers necessary. Hall primary school has a high level of parental and community involvement. Capital improvements to the school have been funded in various ways in the past. For example:

- time and expertise volunteered by community members and parents (for example, much of the garden construction and maintenance); and
- Grants - Commonwealth and ACT Government. (The school has been successful in receiving a grant to build a shade structure over the play equipment under the *Investing In Our Schools Programme*, however these monies have been frozen by the ACT Government pending a final decision regarding the proposal to close the school).

If maintenance is needed for Hall PS then funding could again be sourced from a variety of places including those listed above as well as perhaps by developing innovative funding arrangements such as via public/private partnerships, or through increasing paid community use of school buildings.

1.3.2 The School Hall

The Government states that the school needs a new hall. Whilst it is acknowledged that the P&C has sought the construction of a new hall for some years, the P&C is willing to delay the construction of such a facility until alternative sources of funds can be found. The Government's cost estimate of \$1.5M seems extraordinarily high for a hall that would meet the needs of Hall PS.

Another possibility is the to explore private sector funding for a joint use facility, or Government funding for a joint community/school facility on the school grounds and potential re-use of the existing hall.

Clearly we would rather have a school without a hall than Hall without a school!

1.3.3 Covered walkways

The Government also states that the school needs covered walkways between buildings. We suggest that these could be funded in a variety of ways including applying for Commonwealth grants, utilizing community labour, fundraising to build some of the structures, and exploring public/private partnerships.

It is a fact that many ACT schools have buildings that could use an upgrade. Hall PS is not unique in this area. It should not be closed because it has buildings that are ageing, a fact that goes hand in hand with its heritage status.

1.3.4 Scale of investment required

The following table sets out a comparison, from Education department figures, of the investment in maintenance works required at Hall PS.

School	Year of Construction	Total	year 1	year 2	year 3	year 4	year 5	floor area	\$/sqm floor
1 Ainslie Primary	1927	\$633,850	\$ 246,940	\$ 213,950	\$ 100,100	\$ 17,500	\$ 55,360	4,359	\$ 145
2 Forrest Primary	1958	\$220,830	\$ 48,050	\$ 80,720	\$ 22,590	\$ 31,450	\$ 38,020	4,397	\$ 50
3 Giralang Primary	1977	\$379,025	\$ 127,635	\$ 56,070	\$ 68,980	\$ 46,200	\$ 80,140	4,070	\$ 93
4 Lyneham Primary	1959	\$539,280	\$ 214,220	\$ 166,000	\$ 74,730	\$ 16,800	\$ 67,530	4,460	\$ 121
5 Lyons Primary	1966	\$408,560	\$ 162,770	\$ 131,130	\$ 71,130	\$ 15,830	\$ 27,700	3,770	\$ 108
6 Majura Primary	1964	\$559,850	\$ 212,640	\$ 158,100	\$ 77,500	\$ 39,050	\$ 72,560	4,637	\$ 121
7 Melrose Primary	1967	\$369,160	\$ 16,500	\$ 263,910	\$ 42,850	\$ 21,450	\$ 24,450	3,866	\$ 95
8 Narrabundah Primary	1964	\$174,380	\$ 48,960	\$ 60,070	\$ 23,350	\$ 31,200	\$ 10,800	2,541	\$ 69
9 North Ainslie Primary	1958	\$455,160	\$ 272,630	\$ 69,730	\$ 55,200	\$ 32,100	\$ 25,500	4,457	\$ 102
10 Rivett Primary	1972	\$592,240	\$ 112,290	\$ 176,510	\$ 230,440	\$ 8,600	\$ 64,400	3,981	\$ 149
11 Tharwa Primary & preschool	1912	\$ 43,460	\$ 20,890	\$ 8,110	\$ 3,660	\$ 8,100	\$ 2,700	304	\$ 143
12 Kaleen Primary	1976	\$474,500	\$ 122,860	\$ 26,250	\$ 160,600	\$ 73,960	\$ 90,830	3,740	\$ 127
13 Isabella Plains Primary	1988	\$347,195	\$ 90,115	\$ 120,430	\$ 15,850	\$ 26,400	\$ 94,400	2,492	\$ 139
14 Hughes Primary	1964	\$356,540	\$ 142,050	\$ 126,390	\$ 8,240	\$ 5,930	\$ 73,930	4,147	\$ 86
15 Holt Primary	1973	\$405,611	\$ 147,101	\$ 131,240	\$ 64,010	\$ 35,260	\$ 28,000	3,896	\$ 104
16 Hall Primary	1911	\$143,800	\$ 74,740	\$ 11,530	\$ 6,650	\$ 8,920	\$ 41,960	3,375	\$ 43
17 Curtin Primary	1966	\$396,895	\$ 39,380	\$ 148,315	\$ 82,000	\$ 74,350	\$ 52,850	3,852	\$ 103
			\$ 2,099,771	\$ 1,948,455	\$ 1,107,880	\$ 493,100	\$ 851,130		

The cost/m² at Hall PS is less than for any other school on the list. Also, at \$143,8000, deferring or eliminating this cost will not save the Government any significant amount of money. This does not represent a reasonable argument for closing Hall PS.

1.4 Asbestos

The Government states that asbestos in the buildings at Hall PS is a concern. We acknowledge the potential for asbestos to be a problem. However we also understand that there are methods available to contain asbestos should it be necessary to undertake building works and thus believe that the asbestos issue is easily overstated. Many other schools in the ACT, which are not listed for closure, also contain asbestos.

An inventory of the parts of the building that contain asbestos has been undertaken to ensure the safety of the students, staff and other people who attend at the school. It has been concluded that the asbestos poses no risk unless it is disturbed through drilling or sawing of the asbestos cement panels. There are methods, which are improving all the time, to overcome issues relating to asbestos. These include:

- Use of wireless technology to avoid cutting into the material; and
- Use of external or internal conduit to minimise cutting.

1.5 Conclusion

Like many schools and other public buildings and private dwellings in the ACT, Hall PS has buildings that contain asbestos. Hall PS is not unique in this respect and the presence of asbestos should not be used as a reason to close the school.

Prepared by:

Leigh Crocker,
Hall Village Resident and
Father of Georgia (8), Emma (6) and Tekla (3)

Kirsty Windeyer
Mother of Charlotte (7), Jessica (4) and Harrison (1)

Rebecca Smith
Hall Village Resident, and
Mother of 2 former Hall PS Students

1 Social, Economic, Health and Environmental Impacts

1.1 Introduction

Hall PS is essential to the economic and social well-being of the wider Hall community. To assess the overall impact of closing Hall PS this paper examines:

- the increased sense of community, and hence community cohesion, that Hall PS brings to the Hall community;
- potential loss of small businesses in Hall Village;
- loss of village character with loss of school and businesses;
- loss of village amenities with loss of businesses;
- additional travel costs and time;
- carbon cost/environment impact; and
- the economic benefits to the ACT of having surrounding NSW residents work, trade and shop in the ACT.

The Government states that it is committed to sustainable development in many of its policy documents. Thus, to meet its goal of sustainable development, any decisions regarding school closures must take into account the social, environmental and economic impacts on the broader community, and not simply the budget impact on the Department of Education.

1.2 Social Costs of Closure

Hall PS plays a critical role in the life of Hall village and surrounding district. The relationship between a 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.¹

Hall PS contributes 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 PS lay wreaths, sing and commemorate Remembrance Day in this solemn community event. Similarly, each year, the Christmas Carols event organized by Hall PS engages the broader community of Hall village and district in celebrating the Christmas Season. Most years local church groups and the Hall Village Brass Band join in this celebration with the school, its students and the residents of Hall village.

Other school events such as art exhibitions, 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. Regularly the school students join with community members to plant trees around Hall, the last occasion was on 15 September 2006. Such occasions illustrate the close connection between the school and the Village.

¹ *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

In recent meetings, elderly 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 PS. “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.

Hall PS also provides 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.

One clear indication of the support of the village and district for Hall PS was the 2005 Westfield “Shop for Your School” promotion where Hall PS won their category as a result of Hall District residents who, despite not having a direct education link with the school, submitted receipts in support of the school.

1.3 Business Costs of Closure

In addition to the social contribution of Hall PS, its existence provides 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 Gumnut Café, the Wood Duck Inn and others. Business people are reluctant to draw attention to any impact on their businesses as this might result in lowering the value of their business. Nonetheless it is clear from local research that Hall PS makes a very significant contribution to the vitality of these small businesses, particularly retail and service businesses.

For example, many families patronize the Hall Premier Store while delivering and collecting their children from school and preschool. Hall Premier Store has reported a substantial reduction in sales during school holiday periods. Hall Premier Store would be seriously threatened by the closure of Hall PS, which would also result in the loss of the Hall Post Office leaving residents with no postal facilities or mail deliveries. The Shearing Shed proprietors predict a downturn in business if the school were closed. Parents often 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.

Hall Service Station reports that the loss of trade would be considerable, and attracting staff and mechanics would be increasingly difficult. While in Hall village undertaking activities related to the school, parents avail themselves of other services including purchase of rural supplies and patronizing food and beverage outlets and the Antique Hall. Such passing trade is substantial in a village like Hall, where the majority of parents are travelling from NSW on their way to and from work in the ACT.

There is a danger that closing the school will send local business into a decline, and they may go the way of small suburban shopping centres in other parts of Canberra. If this did happen, then the whole nature of Hall would change from village to dormitory suburb, thus impacting on the heritage aspect of the village. The school, and the activity it generates, are vital to maintaining a vibrant local community, and maintaining the village character of Hall.

1.4 Additional Travel Costs and Time – Health Impacts on Children

An issue that must be considered when proposing school closures is the effect on those children who will inevitably need to travel farther to school as a result of their local school closing. The closure of Hall PS will mean that those students travelling to school by bus will endure long bus rides, significantly extending their school day.

Information from Transborder Express (the bus company that transports our children to and from school) indicates that typically students travelling to school by bus will have travel times up to double those currently experienced. For example, students in the Wallaroo area travelling to Palmerston District Primary School will:

- travel approximately two hours per day to and from school;
- have mandatory waiting periods to change buses;
- have early morning starts e.g. 7.30 am; and
- have late afternoon arrivals home e.g. 4.30pm.

Current total travel time for Wallaroo area students is 55 minutes per day, within the acknowledged maximum for one-way travel to school of 30 minutes². For students travelling from Murrumbateman to Palmerston the travel time will increase by 45 minutes each day. These students, unlike the current students at Palmerston, will have a nine-hour school day. Many parents will find the length and conditions of this travel unacceptable for their children and will opt to drive them to school. For students living in Hall Village and surrounding rural properties, walking to school will not be an option, rather they will need to travel by bus or car for up to an hour per day.

The average travelling time between home and work for adults in Canberra is 2.29 hours per week or 46 minutes per day³, significantly less than the travel time required for many present Hall Primary School students should they be forced to change schools in 2007.

The table at Annexure 1 summarizes some of the known risks and effects of long bus travel for students currently at Hall PS.

1.5 Environmental Impacts of Closure

Any decision that the Government makes to close schools will have an impact on the travel profile of students and parents as in many cases they will have to travel further to attend the school. For many, particularly Hall PS' NSW students, the only viable option will be to drive the additional distance, adding negatively to greenhouse emissions.

In the discussion paper entitled *Avoid, Abate, Adapt* (March 2006) the Government states:

“The ACT is part of the Capital Region – it is surrounded by NSW and is nearby NSW settlements... Climate change is without borders and we must work with our regional neighbours to address it”. (p14)

Under the *ACT Greenhouse Strategy 2000*, the Government has committed itself to:

² Zars, B. (1998). *Long rides, tough hides: enduring long school bus rides*. Rural Trust Policy Program. Retrieved 2 July, 2006 from http://files.ruraledu.org/docs/zars_busing.htm.

³ Flood, M. (2005). *Office to work: commuting in Australia*. The Australia Institute: Discussion Paper 78. Retrieved on 20 July 2006 from http://www.tai.org.au/Publications_Files/DP_Files/DP78Sum.pdf

“developing and using improved analysis and modelling tools which consider economic, social environmental impacts and outcomes” (p17),

There is no evidence that the Government has undertaken any such environmental modelling to determine the impacts of school closures on the ACT Greenhouse Strategy.

In March 2003 the Government made a clear commitment to sustainability when it released its sustainability policy *People, Place, Prosperity*. In this document it outlined decision-making principles for sustainability including:

Focusing on the wider region

Take account of the implications of ACT Government decisions on the wider region. Seek to achieve coherence and co-ordination in the development and delivery of policies between governments in the region.

Taking all costs and benefits into account

Include environmental and social costs and benefits into the pricing of goods and services and asset valuations to allow markets to operate efficiently, and use incentive mechanisms to stimulate sustainable outcomes.

We ask that the ACT Government focus on the wider region in making its decision regarding school closures and take into account all costs and benefits.

Case Study – Increased Greenhouse Gas Emissions from School Closure

A child is transported from Hall to Gold Creek Primary School by car. Gold Creek is an additional 3km of travel from Hall. (12km per day - four trips)

- Hence 60km per week or 2,400km per year (assumes a 40 week school year)
- An average car consumes 9 litres fuel per 100km (Toyota Camry 4 cylinder)
- This equals an extra 240 litres of fuel at a cost of \$336 (\$1.40 per litre).
- According to *Greenfleet* (www.greenfleet.com.au) 240 litres of fuel is the equivalent of an extra 500kg of carbon dioxide being released into the atmosphere per family.

If a child attends Gold Creek School for seven years (K-6) instead of Hall School then the cost to the environment is the release of an additional 3,500 kg of carbon dioxide.

Clearly the additional green house impact, resulting from the number of families who will have to transport their children further to school, has environmental consequences that must be considered by the Government.

1.6 Hall District Residents' Contribution to the ACT Economy

Many of the families who have children enrolled in Hall PS run businesses, work and/or employ staff in the ACT. Families shop, buy petrol, participate in social and sporting events and identify with Canberra as their home town. This participation in the business and community life of Canberra is beneficial to the ACT economy and to the diversity of its cultural and community activities.

The Hall district has in the past year been asked to contribute more: through a significant financial contribution to the ACT tourism budget; and our Spring Range residents have been asked to accept the placement of a wind farm in their midst to provide clean energy for the ACT.

1.7 Conclusion

As outlined above, the social, environmental and economic impacts of closing Hall PS are significant and far-ranging. To meet the Government's own stated desire for sustainable development, these impacts must be taken into account when determining the future of Hall PS. These 'externalities' to DET need to be costed to ensure that there is no cost-shifting from DET to other parts of the Government. Failure to do so means that the Government does not meet its own policy guidelines for sustainable development.

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ANNEXURE 1 - RISKS AND EFFECTS OF LONG BUS TRAVEL

Those effected	Importance	Effects
Very young children	Very young children in the Hall areas will be the most negatively effected by very long travel to and from school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily early starts and late returns hardest on very young children. • Less able to sit still for long periods of time – safety issues. • Exposed to travel with older children, including secondary school students ('double routing') – safety and supervision issues.⁴ • Account for most deaths due to school bus accidents in other jurisdictions.⁵
Families and communities	Longer school days, necessitated by longer travelling times, will have a significant impact on Hall PS students. ⁶	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Much earlier start to school days for most families. • Less time after school for family life. • Parent participation in schooling more difficult outside the local community due to time and travel costs. • Private transport to school costly. Increased cars at schools increase the risk of accident. • Long rides take students away from their homes and communities for many hours during each day. • Family response to long bus travel may be to move — financial burden and dislocation from community. • Friendships and social networks formed away from the local community. • Lengthy busing erodes community cohesion and harms social capital.⁷ • Students sleep time and recreational time is reduced. • Rural families most seriously inconvenienced as bus schedules are the not flexible.
Other Issues		Effects
Health and safety	More consideration is given to "health of the bus as opposed to the health of the children in them". ⁸	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The longer the bus ride, the greater the risks to children's safety.⁹ • Lack of safety equipment eg. seat belts and two-way communication devices. • Boarding and alighting — times when most children are hurt or killed.¹⁰ (Transborder indicates that children will be required to change buses up to two times to accommodate the longer bus travel time). • Poor behaviour more likely the longer the bus ride. • Illness and need for toileting more likely on long bus rides. • The earlier the start, the more difficult for many children to get breakfast. • Less time for recreational activity thus leading to issues related to obesity.

⁴ Howley, A & Howley, C. (2001). *Rural school busing*. Charleston, WV: ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools. Retrieved 16 July, 2006 from <http://www.ericdigests.org/202-3/busing.htm>.

⁵ Transportation Research Board of the National Academies. The relative risks of school travel: A national perspective and guidance for local community risk assessment, Report 269. Retrieved 17 July, 2006 from www.trb.org/publications/sr/sr269.pdf

⁶ Fox, M. (1996). Rural transportation as a daily constraint in students' lives. *Rural Educator*, 17(2), 22-27.

Spence, B. (2000). Ibid, p. 3.

⁷ Howley, A & Howley, C. (2001) Ibid, p. 3.

⁸ Zars, B (1998). Ibid.

⁹ Spence, B. (2000a) *Long school bus rides: Stealing the joy of childhood*. Challenge West Virginia. Retrieved 2 July, 2006 from <http://www.challengewv.org>.

¹⁰ Transportation Research Board of the National Academies. Ibid.

Educational outcomes	Long travel times to school are associated with poorer educational outcomes. ¹¹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children tired on arrival leading to reduced concentration and poorer performance. • Long bus travel associated with lower overall school achievement. • Reduced participation in extra-curricular activities.
Social development	Transportation of children away from Hall, their local school, will have an impact on their social wellbeing. ¹²	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feelings of anonymity in large schools. • Separation from family and community more acutely felt by less outgoing students and students from outside the area.
Equity and access	The Education Act states that the 'school system is based on the principles of equity, universality and non-discrimination' and makes a commitment to 'reasonable access to public education for all students'. ¹³ Long bus rides to larger schools contradicts these principles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to schooling made more difficult for current Hall Primary School students. • Rural students in impoverished areas experience longer rides thus are more disadvantaged than others. • Smaller school size significantly benefits lower socio-economic status students and larger school size has a greater negative effect on low SES students.¹⁴
Cost to students/ value of children's time	The decision to bus our students for longer distances indicates that school authorities do not regard our children's time as valuable. ¹⁵	<p>If a Hall student's travel time extends to e.g. two hours daily, this child</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • would spend 15% of their waking hours traveling to and from school. • Would spend the equivalent of one-third of his or her learning time traveling to and from school • would spend 2364 hours traveling on buses to and from school over six years of primary school or over 394 hours per year representing hours of lost opportunity¹⁶ <p>What is children's time worth? At the very least, time spent traveling to and from school represents a lost opportunity and resource.¹⁷</p>

¹¹ Howley, A & Howley, C. (2001) Ibid, p.3.

¹² Lewis, J. (2004). The long and winding road: Consolidation – the separation of school and community. Retrieved 16 July 2006 from <http://www.challengewv.org>.

¹³ ACT Education Act (Part 3.1 Section 18):

¹⁴ Howley, A & Howley, C. (2001) Ibid, p.2 – 3.

¹⁵ Spence, B. (2000b). Ibid, p.7

¹⁶ Spence, B. (2000b). Long school bus rides: Their effect on school budgets, family life and student achievement. *Rural Education Issue Digest*. Retrieved 6 August 2006

¹⁷ Spence, B. (2000b). Ibid, p.7