

# Work starts on new Bridgewater education campus

By **ANDY BENNETT\***

PREMIER and Minister for Education and Skills David Bartlett visited the Bridgewater campus of the Federation on December 3 to mark the start of work on the first of the new buildings that will comprise our new grades nine to 12 and adult learning centre and middle school.

It was an exciting occasion as the building work, which starts with the construction of our new gymnasium, is the first step in what will be an ambitious and comprehensive program to completely redevelop how education and training is delivered in our community.

Over the next 12 to 14 months what is now vacant land, an oval and buildings housing our current high school, will be transformed into a new middle school for our grade five to eight students, contemporary and innovative grades nine, 10 and adult learning facilities including a state-of-the-art trade training centre, a performing arts centre and new outdoor sports, recreation and social spaces.

In the community consultation and research process that followed the tragic fire at the high school in October 2007, five key community needs were identified. We were asked to provide:

- Quality early childhood development and care for all children.
- Integrated quality pre-schooling and early years education.
- High-quality and integrated middle years education.
- Individualised learning programs for secondary stu-



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dents and managed transitions into training and employment.

- Improved adult learning opportunities.

When we add our children and family centre project, planning for which is well under way at the moment, the development of a Learning and Information Network Centre (LINC) and the extensive renovations and building additions being carried out at our primary school at the moment you can see how those needs are being systematically met through our building program.

Next year is going to be a very exciting but somewhat messy year as all the building work unfolds.

It will be equally as exciting and busy on a people front as we develop new ways of working together that are probably more important than the buildings.

Our vision is to build a truly community-owned and based network of schools and learning sites where there is a place for everyone no matter what your age and education and training needs.

For that to happen we need the support and participation of everyone in the community from kids to parents and families, from school staff to employers and volunteers, and from government agencies to community and not-for-profit organisations.

In the big picture model of education that we will adopt in our grades nine to 12 area, there is a saying: "Parents are enrolled too."

That doesn't mean we require our parents to be at school on time ready to work every day (although that's fine if that's what you want to do). It means that we can't educate your children without your active involvement.

There is another old African proverb that says the same thing: "It takes a village to raise a child." In our case it will take a whole community to make the big differences we envisage.

For me, 2009 has been a wonderful year full of learning and getting to know our community again after last working here in 1994.

I have run into lots of familiar faces and met many people for the first time. Each time I am enthused by the level of interest and commitment to make this a wonderful place to learn, work and live.

I wish you all a very happy, safe and relaxing Christmas break. I hope you store up lots of energy for what will be a very exciting new year in the Brighton community.

Federation website and email address:

Our website at [www.education.tas.gov.au/basmlearningfederation](http://www.education.tas.gov.au/basmlearningfederation) is constantly updated to include news about latest developments including building concepts and plans. Your ideas and comments are very welcome.

Alternatively, you can email comments to [bsm.learningfederation@education.tas.gov.au](mailto:bsm.learningfederation@education.tas.gov.au)

*\*Andy Bennett is manager of the Bridgewater and Southern Midlands Learning Federation.*