



# Big Picture is taking off in Australia.



Parents, teachers and citizens see the value of a new design for schooling: a design based on personalised learning. Big Picture Education seeks to improve outcomes 'one student at a time.'

Many philanthropists and funders believe education is the key to improving life for people, especially young people: so they invest in Big Picture.

Call it 'seed money'. Call it 'leverage'. Whatever the name, it does make a big difference.

Investors want their donations to work hard. They assist organisations that have real impact and are cost-effective, sustainable and replicable.

That's Big Picture.



# Big Picture

EDUCATION AUSTRALIA

ONE STUDENT AT A TIME IN  
A COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS

SMALL SCHOOLS BY DESIGN

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# GROWING BIG PICTURE

Leverage and Replication in  
Big Picture Education Australia





## LEVERAGE IN LAUNCESTON

This is the story of the success of Launceston's City Campus and how donations and investment played a powerful role in that success.

The City Campus story starts with a need. In 2006, some Launceston educators wanted to make student learning deeper and better: they wanted to be more successful with more students.

The principals of several Launceston high schools and local education leaders formed a consortium and received some state government funds to look for good new ideas.

Meanwhile, Big Picture Education Australia (BPEA) was just beginning. The founders of BPEA had seen a new design of education in the USA that incorporated many powerful learning ideas into a coherent whole.

A connection was made between the Launceston consortium and BPEA.

### Seed Money

BPEA spent some donated money to visit Launceston and share ideas. Prospect High became a member of Big Picture and paid a fee for guidance and professional development over a couple of years.

BPEA encouraged the consortium to see Big Picture Learning in action on a USA study tour. BPEA provided the intellectual property and supported the consortium with professional development, materials and coaching.

The consortium trialed some of these good ideas – student-centred learning, mentoring in the community – and adapted them to fit.

They decided to create a Big Picture campus in Launceston. It would provide a choice for students, parents and teachers at the feeder schools and show what could be done by focussing on student learning: one student at a time.

Big Picture used some more donor money to hold the first conference in Tasmania and invited the Education Minister to that conference. **That was the start of something big.**





## City Campus

The City Campus began in 2011, taking students from all the feeder schools.

Commonwealth buildings, worth an estimated five million dollars, were transferred to State Education and became the City Campus.

More was invested as the partner schools transferred their staffing and resource packages for each student.

The state government supported the initiative with extra implementation funding of \$150,000 each year for three years.

Support also came from the University of Tasmania and The Beacon Foundation.

The Origin Foundation invested significantly into researching the Big Picture design. One of the trial sites is the City Campus.

The City Campus hub was up and running.

## Outcomes

After just a few years, the outcomes were very significant, especially given that students were largely switched off learning in their previous schools:

- Student attendance is consistently better than in their previous schools
- Teachers report improving levels of student engagement and attainment
- Student retention rates from grade 10 to 12 are above Tasmanian averages
- Tracking surveys show that around 80% of school leavers are learning or earning
- Surveys show that students, parents and staff are very positive about opportunities, student engagement, learning and teaching and the all-important relationships in the school

## Leverage

Big Picture Education invested around \$50,000 of donations in the development of Launceston City Campus. It added powerfully to the money from government and the design principles from the USA.

The generous early philanthropic investment was a lever for more money and more commitment. It enabled the financial investment from the government and personal investment from parents, students and teachers.

The outcomes are striking and the returns on the early investments are huge. In fact, take away the seed money, and we may not have a City Campus at all.

# REPLICATION IN THE HUNTER

The City Campus hub in Launceston, a significant and complex educational development, was established over a few years of assiduous study, planning and testing.

This led to the formation of another, in the Hunter region of NSW. With the experience and wisdom gained from setting up in Launceston, the Hunter hub was created in under a year.

The Hunter hub is not an exact copy of the Launceston one. It was built for the specific needs of Newcastle educators and students using Big Picture principles.

## The Cooks Hill Campus – a new school for the Hunter

Just as in Launceston, educators in the Hunter region of NSW had wanted to do better with more students.

Big Picture Education made a series of presentations to Hunter teachers and administrators in 2011. The reactions were strong. People wanted a new way of doing school. Several interested principals from various schools began to meet and plan how it could be done.

They met with the regional Director of Education who saw the possibilities. Together, they identified a site, an unused school building, where a Big Picture school could be started.

Meanwhile, Big Picture Education Australia escorted the Hunter educators to the ACT to see the Big Picture design in action. They observed the innovative practices and shared ideas and issues with the ACT teachers.

Hunter Sports High School and other schools including Belmont and Toronto decided to act. They were looking for better ways of encouraging deep learning and re-engaging students in schooling.

The principals and Big Picture Education undertook a feasibility study to start a new school. Establishing a new public school is no small accomplishment. There is going to be a substantial budget and the need for big commitments from government, students, parents and teachers.

Were they daunted? Probably. A new school that was to meet the requirements of students from several schools is a considerable challenge.

But they had an advantage: they could learn from the experiences of the Launceston hub. And learn they did! They visited and skyped and emailed and they shared learning and challenges.

The sharing accelerated the growth of the Hunter hub. Big Picture Education supplied the design, the materials, the professional development and the coaches.

When Big Picture held a conference in Melbourne, seventeen teachers and leaders from the Hunter attended and met other educators from all over Australia. They shared wisdom.

The feasibility study was completed. The need was real and a Big Picture campus of Newcastle High School was established for no more cost than that of a traditional high school.

While state and federal governments and ministers changed, the need for the Cooks Hill Campus remained and grass roots support for the idea was sustained.

In 2013 student enrolments began and staff were interviewed and selected for commencement in January 2014.

A fully functioning Big Picture campus in the centre of Newcastle is a major enterprise.

The staff and students at the Cooks Hill Campus are flying; early indicators are spectacular.

## Spreadable Schools

A new campus was created in less than two years. How?

The Cooks Hill Campus has benefited from the experiences of Launceston City Campus. The new campus will be riding on earlier work - Launceston, conferences, professional development, materials and the Big Picture design.

This is not 'cookie cutter' schooling; nor is it a franchising or yet another bureaucracy. The implementation of the Big Picture Education design is different in different places with different people and different needs but the principles are the same; the robust principles come from the design. It's a design that has proved to be easily spreadable.

We can help spread Big Picture across the country.

## International Scaling

Big Picture is growing quickly in Australia because we developed from the established work of the founders of Big Picture Learning in the USA. They provided the design for learning that we adopted.

Those USA founders are excited about the rate of growth of Big Picture Education in Australia where the school and political cultures are so different from those of the USA.

The Big Picture design has spread easily and quickly from the USA to Australia and from Australia to New Zealand.

Together, Big Picture Learning in the USA and Big Picture Education Australia established an international network with four foundation members: the USA, Australia, New Zealand and the Netherlands. India, Israel and the UK (led by the UK Innovations Unit) now join this group.

The growth and development of Big Picture learning is based on quick and efficient networking and colleagues learning together.