

Italian College in the South West

Frequently Asked Questions

These FAQs are general in nature. The information given is accurate at the time of publication, though it may be subject to change without notice. To keep up to date with the latest news regarding the project for the building of an Italian College in the South West, please visit: <https://www.facebook.com/italiancollegesydney>

1. General:

1.1. Who coordinates the creation of the College?

The building of an Italian College for Sydney's South West is a grass-root initiative aimed to preserve and promote Italian language, heritage and culture and shape the next generations of community leaders. On Saturday 25 July 2020, the inaugural meeting of a Steering Committee was held via zoom. The meeting resolved to investigate the want for an Italian College and the pursuit of a legal structure for the delivery of the project.

1.2. Is there a need for an Italian College in the South West?

Though Italians in Australia are a great example of integration, the community is losing its language and heritage at a rate faster than any other ethnic group in Australia. Since 2005, there's been a drop of around 80,000 people speaking Italian at home with the average first-generation migrant being over 70 years of age. The best way to ensure this project is brought to life is to engage young members of our community, parents, professionals and business people, who have a genuine interest in ensuring the growth, certainty and prosperity of our community and its heritage into the future through education.

20,000 individuals living within the Fairfield/Liverpool/Camden LGAs identified as having Italian ancestry on census night in 2016, with Camden having the biggest growth, mainly due to younger Italian-Australians moving from the Inner West due to housing affordability and prospects of founding a family. The building of key infrastructure, including universities in Liverpool, the new Sydney Orbital and the Western Sydney Airport continue to attract population in the south west, including those of Italian ancestry.

1.3. Is there a want for an Italian College in the South West?

The committee created a [Facebook page](#) immediately after the inaugural committee meeting. The page reached over 1,100 likes in the first week. The overwhelming enthusiasm provides substance to affirm the existence of a general interest in the project. Communication through social media and email have also shown that local Italian Australians are interested in ensuring the continuation of their language, culture and traditions through the establishment of a College.

2. About the College:

2.1. What kind of college is being established?

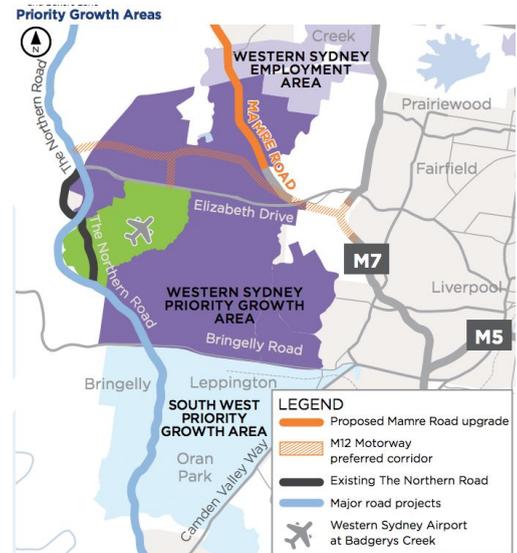
The committee is establishing an Independent College, Kindergarten to Year 12, with a Catholic focus that embraces the Italian language and in particular the rich culture and heritage surrounding that language with an emphasis on providing a communal focus and portal to aspects of the greater community.

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2.2. When you say ‘South West Sydney’, which areas are being considered?

The proposed school location would be within the new Aerotropolis and Western/South Western Sydney Growth Areas. The exact site has not been confirmed yet. Ideally, it would have to allow students from the Fairfield, Liverpool and Camden LGAs to reach the site with ease.

The committee is considering a number of sites and assessing them on its merits. It may be that initially, the school will operate from existing premises and at an agreed timeline move into a definite and purposely built site. The committee welcomes suggestions for land within the south western area, of individuals and groups that are able to assist.



2.3. Is this going to be a ‘Catholic’ college?

As an ‘Italian College’, the committee is eager to establish a school that teaches the fullness of the Catholic faith with passion, vigour and authenticity. The College represents a Catholic response to the needs of the Italian community in Australia, which expects and deserves Catholic religious education to be taught and embedded into the rich cultural and linguistic dynamics of the school and its community. It is expected that as with Catholic schools in Australia, religious education will be a compulsory subject at the College. The committee is exploring association with a distinctly “Italian” Catholic charisma to shape its teaching and learning philosophy.



3. Teaching and Learning:

3.1. What teaching model is being adopted?

The key pedagogical model is bilingual education, at least from Kindergarten to Year 6. The allocated learning time is expected to be divided equally to account for learning in the two languages. The benefits of bilingualism have been largely proven through extensive research for decades. At a high-school level, students would begin to make decisions for their pathways into the future. The school wishes to cater for a variety of academic pathways. Italian, as a subject, will be compulsory until Year 12.

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3.2. Are children expected to be bilingual before reaching Kindy?

There is no expectation that students would have a mastery of the Italian language prior to kindergarten. The purpose of the school is to form students within a bilingual setting as part of its mission and pedagogical focus. Students with a high level of proficiency in the language prior to Kindergarten may be placed in accelerated classes to best support and extend their knowledge, practice and application of the language.

3.3. Will native language speakers be recruited to teach Italian?

Within the means of the College and availability, it is expected that native teachers will be recruited to teach Italian and those KLA subjects delivered in Italian would also be taught by teachers possessing excellent degree of proficiency in the language and teaching qualifications.

3.4. Will the college be an Australian school or international school?

The College teaching modes will be based on the Australian Curriculum as applied by the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA). NESA policies and rules will continue to guide all aspects of teaching and learning at the College. The qualification pathways offered by the school are expected to be the **Higher School Certificate** and the **International Baccalaureate**, to allow students direct entry into overseas higher education institutions, including Italian universities.



3.5. Will students be encouraged to be leaders in their broader community?

One of the principal aims of the College is to continue nurturing the growth of Italian Australian leaders within the nation's multicultural landscape. For this purpose, it is important that the college continue to celebrate with pride significant events, traditions and cultural features of Italy and of Italians in Australia, while emphasising the migrant contribution to the Australian national identity, values and way of life.

4. Enrolments:

4.1. What are the expected fees? Will there be provision for children from low-income backgrounds?

In this initial phase, it is difficult to determine with certainty the fees payable. The committee has however determined that the College intends to be open to all students, regardless of their socio-economic status. Provisions will be made for those who require economic assistance, through scholarships.

4.2. When will the school accept enrolments?

Enrolments could be open as soon as there is a definite site and proper registrations are made with NESA for the approval to operate a school. The first Kindy intake could be in 2023.

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5. Community Involvement and Support:

5.1. How can I get involved in the project?

We encourage all members of the community to get involved in this project, through their networks, family and friends. Please 'Like' and 'Share' the Facebook page on your wall and with your contacts.

If you are interested in actively working for the project, you may write to italiancollegesouthwest@gmail.com and express your intention to join one of the following sub-committees. We are eager to have professionals and committed community members providing ideas in a spirit of collaboration and success:

1. Corporate Governance - Corporate registrations and compliance
2. Accreditation and Curriculum - Responsible for NESAs Requirements
3. Planning - Responsible for Property Location and Designs
4. Community Engagement - Marketing and Advertising the Project

5.2. How can I donate to the project?

Once the school structure has been legally created, a bank account will be set up to receive financial contributions from individuals and groups wishing to support the creation of the College. The committee will open up a public subscription in the form of sponsorship levels that interested stakeholders will be invited into for a sum, e.g. \$1,000. Sponsors and benefactors will also be invited to become **Honorary Members** of the College.