

The Tyranny of Distance

Despite the fanfare of the opening of the Wantirna campus, its open spaces and state-of-the-art facilities, the initial resistance to the location of the new campus could not be ignored. Even though it was only an additional 10 minute bus or car ride from the Burwood campus of Mount Scopus Memorial College, enrolment numbers at Bialik were declining, and fast.

By December 1976, the end of Wantirna's first year, 40 children had left the school. In February 1977 the Executive noted: 'budgeting for the year past was sound and correct, but no-one could have foreseen such an exodus of students ... the college faces the most toughest [sic] year in its existence.' By November, the Executive admitted that the situation looked dire.

By 1978 the only option for Bialik was to admit that the Wantirna venture had been a failure and to look for a new location closer to Shakespeare Grove. 'It is now apparent,' wrote Israel Kipen in May 1978, 'that even more important than wide open spaces is the location of the school relative to the community it serves.'

Once again the search began for a new home for Bialik. This time the School Council found what appeared to be the perfect site – a former brickworks site on Auburn Road, Hawthorn East. Funds were raised, plans were discussed and the Wantirna campus was sold to Taylor's Coaching College. Bialik was returning to Hawthorn.



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