Key Issues relating to the Review of the School of Fashion and Textiles
overview by the Pro Vice Chancellor (Design and Social Context)

The DSC College welcomes this review and joins with the School of Fashion and Textiles in anticipating the outcomes and advice from the review which will improve the efficiency, effectiveness and potential future directions of the school while at the same time supporting and recognising the successes and aspirations of the school.

The College has every reason to be proud of the achievements of the School, its leadership and management and how it has developed over the last few years.

However, the review is timely and potentially could assist in helping the School and the College think through a number of issues that affect the future development of the School. I have discussed these issues with the Head of School and describe them briefly in the following points.

1. Fashion

There are two streams of fashion in different schools within the College. I have inherited these and I do recognise the differences between the two streams. However I think it would be helpful if the review could ask the question of whether this is the best use of resources for the outcomes that are achieved or whether we should be asked to reconsider this issue to see if we could gain synergy from different arrangements or closer integration.

A combined response would allow for professorial leaders and improve the critical mass of HE staff who could also develop further stronger research platforms. In addition if further integration was achieved one might start to reduce or eliminate the confusion created by the range of program titles.

Finally in relation to this issue there are a series of underlying issues that also need to be considered including the relationships with fashion designers and the fashion and textile industries, the relative strengths of locations in the city and at Brunswick and the nature of the competition with other providers in Melbourne and nationally.

2. Multi tasking

One of the key strengths of the school is its capability to operate across a range of areas:

- VET
- HE
- Industry Training (taking place in industry not at Brunswick)
- Offshore
- Commercial income streams

This capability comes from the leadership, the talents of the staff in the school but also through the school’s relationship with the market and industry partners. This will be tested as the tertiary landscape is changed to become more contestable and it would be useful if the review could explore the area of further competition and how this will be anticipated and prepared for particularly in relation to private providers.

3. Research

The School is in the early development phase in relation to research and it would be useful to explore in the review how the research agenda is to be pursued and developed over time and used as a key strength in competing with others.
4. International Direction

The School has some offshore activity and strong academic networks across the world. What is the international policy and direction for the School and how could this be implemented over time, building on the strengths and capabilities listed in .2 above.

5. Development of Brunswick Campus

As many will know Brunswick is an excellent campus that is close to the city and increasingly has its own attractiveness for students of fashion and textiles in the locality. It is a good fit. However it does not have a critical mass and perhaps needs a further 1500-2000 students there. This would imply either another school or increases in the operations of the existing schools – Fashion and Textiles, Design TAFE and Education. I have discussed this with the VC and with the local authority and the local community. All are positive. Fashion and Textiles growth is constrained by the HE business plan not allowing further growth (fixed CGS places in 2010). TAFE is constrained by space. If Fashion and Textiles couldn’t take up the expansion for various reasons then perhaps we should be considering a further school being located at Brunswick.

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