

PRESS RELEASE - 1 May 2016



**As Tauranga's population continues to grow, the Catholic community looks to the future to accommodate growing numbers.**

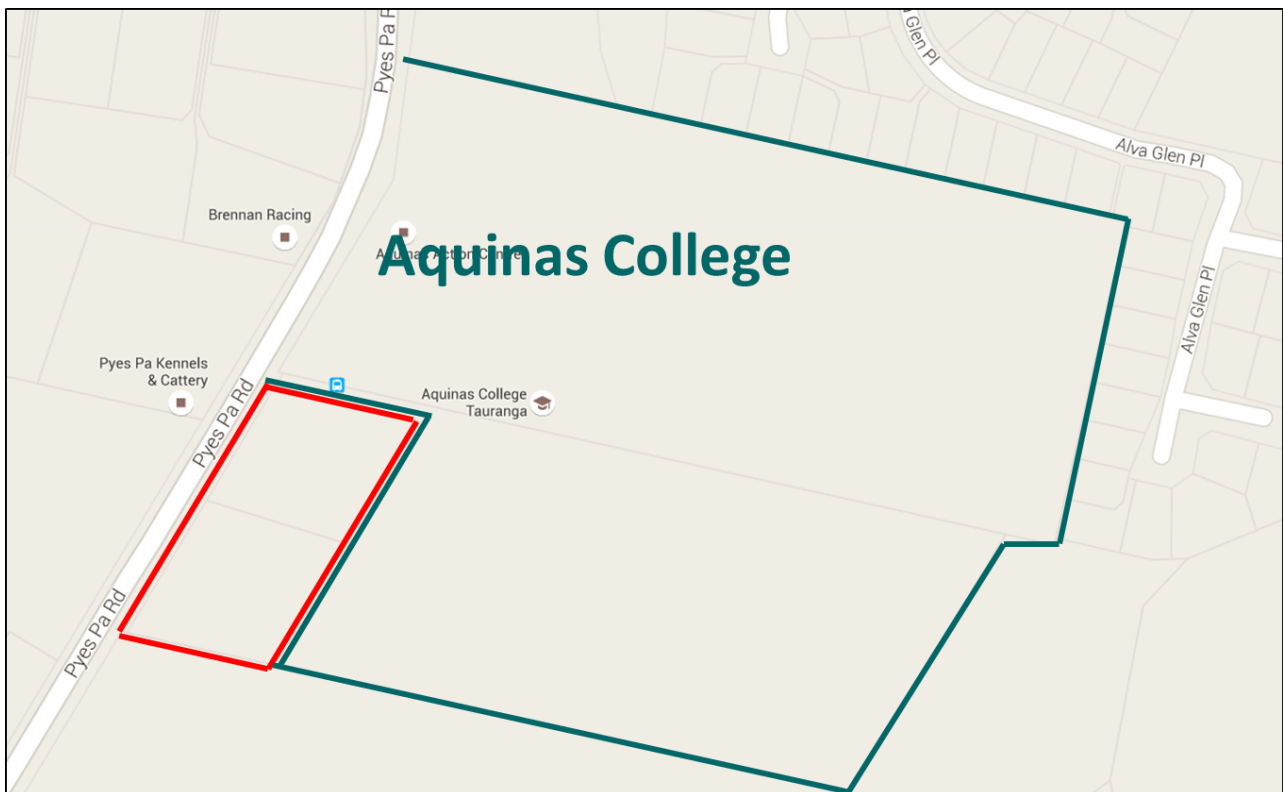
The Catholic Diocese of Hamilton, in conjunction with the Parish of St Thomas Aquinas - Tauranga Moana, has purchased a one-hectare property on Pyes Pa Road, adjacent to Aquinas College, as a potential future site for a new Catholic primary school and church.

A working group, formed more than a year ago to represent the Parish of St Thomas Aquinas, has been assessing and forecasting the future needs of the Catholic community along with the ability for the current church facilities to meet those needs. Similarly, the Diocesan Schools Office is constantly surveying the future needs of Catholic Education.

Parish Priest for the Parish of St Thomas Aquinas, Fr. Mark Field describes the purchase as a unique opportunity. "We already have capacity issues in our largest Church building [on Cameron Road]. When the opportunity came up to purchase a parcel of land adjoining the boundary of our local Catholic College, in an area with an increasing concentration of Catholic residents, it was simply too good to pass up".

The Catholic Diocese of Hamilton, along with the Parish of St Thomas Aquinas is set to embark on a Site Analysis and Planning Exercise to determine the best use of the property to meet the future needs of the Catholic community.

Settlement will take place on 31 August 2016.



## Questions and Answers

*Has the Diocese considered any other land options?*

No – a search for suitable land had not begun. The owners of the property at 205 Pyes Pa Road approached the Parish / Diocese with first option to purchase when they decided to sell.

*Why was there no consultation prior to the land being purchased?*

A very narrow timeframe was placed on the option to purchase which did not allow time for wide consultation. The Diocesan Finance Council – seeing the site as strategic - made a swift decision to purchase at their first meeting of the year.

*Who made the decision to buy the land?*

The decision was supported by the Diocesan Finance Council and College of Consultors, and the Parish Finance Committee and Parish Pastoral Council, based on the recommendation of the Redevelopment Committee to consider securing a site for future growth.

*How much was the property purchased for?*

A purchase price of \$2.25m was negotiated between the Diocese and owners (valuation is \$2.3m)

*How will the land purchase be funded?*

The split and corresponding financial commitment required from the Diocese and the Parish will not be known until the Site Analysis and Planning Exercise has been completed. The Parish has some funds set aside to contribute to the land purchase and options for financing the balance will be considered once the settled price has been determined.

*What if the analysis shows that this is not a suitable site for a new church?*

If the Diocese has no plans to utilise the land, options to either on-sell or subdivide the property will be considered.

*If a church goes ahead on the site, when is it likely to be finished?*

A timeline will be established once the Site Analysis and Planning phase has been completed. Any building and development of the land is likely to take up to five years.

*What will happen to St Mary Immaculate Church in town?*

The Site Analysis and Planning Phase will include consideration of St Joseph's, Te Puna; St Therese, Bethlehem; and St Mary Immaculate Church, Tauranga City.

*Who will be involved in the Site Analysis process?*

The Diocese will engage an external consultant to manage the process which the Parish, Diocese, local authorities and both Aquinas College and St Mary's Primary School will be involved in.

*How do I get involved / have my say?*

Feedback will be sought through the usual channels (i.e. parish newsletter and magazine; email; Parish App etc.) and progress will be communicated via a separate section on the parish website.

*What will happen to the house already on the property?*

Options for the house on the property will be considered as part of the Site Analysis.

*Will Aquinas College land use be looked at as part of the Site Analysis?*

Absolutely. The Site Analysis will consider all resources available to the wider Catholic Community both now and in the future.

*Will there be any collaboration with Aquinas College regarding sharing of facilities / funding of shared facilities?*

All options will be considered including facilities that could potentially be shared between the college, parish and wider community.