



Sunday, July 24, 2022

Director, Social and Infrastructure Assessments
Planning and Assessment
Department of Planning and Environment
Locked Bag 5022 Parramatta NSW 2124

Attention: Nahid Mahmud

Application Number: SSD-30759158 - Minarah College

RE: Objection to proposed school - Minarah College at Catherine Field

I strongly oppose the development of an Islamic School, Minarah College at 268-278 Catherine Field Rd Catherine Field.

My reasons are listed below.

1 The school does not meet any of the needs of the local community, or in any way enhance the lives of locals.

In the 2021 Census data on Religious Affiliation in the Catherine Field postcode of 2557, 41.7% identified as Christian and 20.1% as having no religion. Only 8.4% identified as Islam, being 1,698 people. In the neighboring post code 2570 (Oran Park and Camden) Islam was not listed in the top 6 religions. On the eastern side of Catherine Field in the 2179 postcode area (Leppington and Austral), 14.1% listed their religion as Islam, being 2,301 people, where there are already at least 2 Islamic Schools. It is obvious from the magnitude of this proposal, catering for 1500+ students that the intent is that most of these students will be driven to the site as there is not the local population to support a school of this size. Clearly building an Islamic school in Catherine Field is not addressing the needs of the local or neighboring communities, and in fact will be a major inconvenience and detrimental to quality of life with no positive outcomes for most.

A new public school Barramurra catering for 1000 students has recently opened within 2 kilometres of the Minarah proposed site. We don't need another school.

2 Traffic flow between Bringelly Road and Camden Valley Way via Catherine Field Road, and travel to and from the village of Catherine Field.

Given the small number of Muslims currently living in the areas of South Western Sydney closest to the school (as listed above) it is clear that hundreds of student will be driven to the school from more distant areas. A total of 30 spaces are provided for Kiss & Ride access, divided between two lanes within the site. These spaces are accessed via the northern crossover and exit via the southern crossover.

With only 30 kiss and drive spots on the site, and the time it will take for each family to stop, say goodbye and alight from vehicles I anticipate immense traffic congestion along Catherine Fields Road in both directions as hundreds of cars from the South cue to turn right into the school and traffic from the north cue to turn left into the school. I am very concerned that this will impact the residents from Heatherfield Close's ability to both exit and enter Heatherfield Close, and there will be a high probability of serious car accidents.

3 Insufficient infrastructure near the school site and within Catherine Field.

In the Design Guide for Schools (Government Architects, NSW 2018) in 2.2 Design Considerations under Health and Safety it states that new school development should "Support safe walking and cycling to and from school through connections to local bike and foot paths and the provision of bike parking and end of journey facilities."

Catherine Fields Road is a single lane road in very poor condition with many potholes, very little lighting, no kerb and guttering or pathways and considerable erosion along the side of the road preventing road-side parking. In many places there is no pedestrian access due to culverts or erosion. There is certainly no space for parking on the side of the road and the school site happens to be right on a blind bend in the road. All of these factors make it a highly dangerous and undesirable site for the location of a school.

I have grave concerns about the flow of through traffic at pick up and drop off times. Many cars arriving and departing from the school kiss and ride drop off area will be turning right at a blind bend as they exit the school and rejoining the queued cars coming from the south and waiting to turn into the drop off area. I am yet to see a proper traffic flow study that addresses the bottleneck and dangerous conditions that will be created with the development of this school.

4 Unrealistic plans for wastewater management.

The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) states it is proposed to have on-site effluent management including the construction of a sewerage treatment plant to be used on a temporary basis until the site can connect to reticulated sewerage infrastructure.

Preliminary assessment of available EMA and flows concludes that an onsite wastewater management system is a viable solution up to the end of Stage 2 of the development. (5.1 pg19 EIS) By the end of stage 2 (2031) there will be 652 students and 41 staff onsite. This school is to be built on a site of only 10 acres. As a resident who has lived in the area for over 20 years running a septic system for a family of 4 on a one-acre block, I wonder how a system for 693 people can be maintained on a 10 acre block for any length of time without catastrophic environmental effects and it is totally unacceptable to expect the local residents to tolerate the stench of a regular pump out facility.

The wastewater management assessment concluded that the proposed school is capable of being provided an adequate wastewater management system for stages 1 and 2. It then states "It is anticipated that reticulated sewer services shall be available prior to stage 3 commencing in approximately 2035". It is therefore apparent there is no other plan for the provision of wastewater management for stages 3,4 and 5 if the sewer service does not proceed by 2035. I don't feel you can proceed with a development of this scale under these assumptions.

5 Run-off water problems

Catherine Field has experienced substantial flooding of our roads and road degradation since late 2021 due to months of heavy rains. In Heatherfield Close we have experience first-hand the difference one new large residence on a battle-axe block has made to the run-off water in our street. A new house at No. 17 on a previously vacant block has created enough run-off water to flood the street in front of No 13 and No 19 on numerous occasions and cause some flooding in the grounds of No 8 with a flow on to 246 Catherine Field Road. Given the roof area, and road surface/concrete areas of the proposed school and that flooding is already occurring on Catherine Field Road the potential for extensive flooding of the road and properties on the western

side of Catherine Field Road is enormous. It appears that reports prepared for the Minarah College proposal were based on data from the Upper South Creek Flood Study dated 2013 and Camden Council's flood risk precinct maps dated 2019. Neither take into account the extensive flooding that Catherine Field has experienced within the last 6 months.

6 Construction pollution, noise and traffic over 4.5 years in total construction time is unacceptable in our quiet rural town.

The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) lists in its proposal (page 12) "Bulk earthworks across the site" that will create a huge amount of dust and noise before the construction phase even begins.

The EIS also lists the removal of 230 trees. Since the urbanization of the surrounding suburbs of Oran Park, Gregory Hills and Gledswood Hills over the last 10 years we have seen the local bird life in Catherine Field increase dramatically because so many trees have been removed. Please don't remove any more trees!

The timeframes for development are listed below (from EIS Page 50, 3.2.4) and show that this construction will be a major imposition on the local community for years to come.

- Timeframes:
- Phase 1: Demolition of existing buildings – expected timeframe 2 weeks
 - Phase 2: Excavation and earth moving – expected timeframe 4 weeks
 - Phase 3: Construction (Stage 1 to 5)
 - Stage 1 expected timeframe 52 weeks
 - Stage 2 expected timeframe 40 weeks
 - Stage 3 expected timeframe 40 weeks
 - Stage 4 expected timeframe 52 weeks
 - Stage 5 expected timeframe 40 weeks

The earth moving equipment using required for this development using our local roads will create even more damage to our poorly maintained roads.

Yours sincerely,

