

1 April 2021

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Ms Karen Harragon
Director, Social and Infrastructure Assessments
Social and Infrastructure Assessments
Department of Planning, Industry and Environment
4 Parramatta Square
Parramatta NSW 2150

Attention – Prity Cleary, Senior Planner

Dear Karen,

RESPONSE TO REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION WESTMEAD CATHOLIC COMMUNITY SSD-10383

We write in response to the letter from the Department dated 25 March 2021 relating to the proposal's consistency with the Westmead Place Strategy and requesting additional information with respect to access to open space. A response to the issues raised is provided below. We would also like to reiterate the key objectives of the proposal, which are to:

- Facilitate the relocation of the Sacred Heart Primary School, which has reached the end of its usable lifecycle and has inadequate play space, into a new, state of the art teaching facility as part of the Westmead Catholic Community (WCC).
- Provide for an additional 1,260 primary school students, which will assist in supporting the projected shortfall of 9,530 primary places in the catchment area.
- Support the projected growth in housing and employment in the Westmead precinct, consistent with the Westmead 2036 Draft Place Strategy, as outlined in **Section 1** below.

1.0 Westmead Place Strategy

CEDP has made a submission in response to the public exhibition of the Westmead 2036 Draft Place Strategy (the Strategy). The Trustees of the Marist Brothers have also made a submission on the Strategy. A copy of the submissions are provided at **Attachments A** and **B**, respectively. A summary of CEDP's submission is provided below. The proposal is directly aligned with the intent of the Strategy. The SSDA provides additional education capacity, supports active transport and capitalises on transport connectivity.

Alignment with the Westmead 2036 Draft Place Strategy

The draft Strategy outlines the vision for the Precinct over the next 20 years. The strategy will support growth in the Westmead precinct, which is forecast to bring 4,400 new dwellings into the area. By 2036, it is anticipated that there will be a shortfall of 9,530 primary places and 11,738 secondary places in the catchment area, across both the Catholic and Government school systems.

The WCC is located within Sub-precinct 2 – the Health and Innovation precinct. This area is described as Westmead's 'engine room', defined by its world-class health, research, education and innovation facilities. It sits just north of Sub-precinct 1 – the Westmead South precinct which is proposed to be a walkable residential neighbourhood, which will offer housing choice and diversity.

The proposal will clearly support the objectives of these precincts, providing facilities to meet growing demand for education, within walking distances of an identified residential precinct. The potential for improved connections

between North and South Westmead (via a rail underpass and green link) would enhance connectivity and support non-car travel between and within these precincts.

It is evident that the WCC proposal will support, and is supported by, the 'Big Moves' and 'Directions' outlined in the Strategy, as outlined in **Table 1**.

Table 1 Consistency with Draft Westmead Place Strategy

Strategy Component	WCC Consistency
Big Moves	
<p>Big Move 1 - Drive change in the innovation eco-system to accelerate delivery of Australia's premier health, education and innovation district.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver a highly integrated mix of uses, including health and medical care; education and training; research and development; innovation commercialisation and industry. 	<p>The project is the first stage of the wider WCC Master Plan. The Master plan seeks to facilitate this by collocating education uses with complementary uses to foster Learning Partnerships and innovation.</p>
<p>Big Move 3 - Activate and connect our community with vibrant, diverse and well connected public spaces and places.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a network of villages and commercial activity centres along transport corridors and nodes Improve overall connectivity with active transport, wayfinding, pedestrian links and new river and rail crossings; and maximise access to waterways, open spaces and places of activity. Protect and enhance expansive riparian, green space and environmental assets, including the river, increased tree canopy and foster sustainability outcomes for future generations. 	<p>CEDP is committed to active transport and improving connectivity to and through the campus. The SSDA seeks to achieve a mode share shift of 10% or greater.</p> <p>The WCC Master Plan includes north-south and east-west connections, including the east-west connection that has been envisaged by Council in the draft Westmead Innovation District Master Plan. CEDP remains committed to delivering these connections as part of future stages of the Master Plan.</p> <p>The submitted design includes a significant increase in the tree canopy coverage within the works area, increasing the coverage from 207m² to 4,680m².</p>
<p>Big Move 5 - Capitalise on transport connectivity and reduce car dependency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capitalise on connectivity from Parramatta Light Rail and Sydney Metro to reduce car dependency. Create an integrated multimodal interchange from Sydney Metro West with Sydney Trains, T-way buses, Parramatta Light Rail and active transport thereby improving the accessibility and connectivity of Westmead. Make walking and cycling the mode of choice for short trips. Improve connections between North and South Westmead by enhancing existing and creating new rail crossings. Explore the function of these rail crossings for active transport to create one connected green grid. Explore opportunities to improve bus connections, including those south to Merrylands and Prarieewood and those north to Castle Hill, with consideration of customer movement needs throughout the day and across the week. 	<p>The project benefits from a high level of accessibility, close to rail, bus and road connections, as well as the future Parramatta Light Rail and Metro station. CEDP is proposing to capitalise on this proximity to transport through the proposed mode share shift via a Green Travel Plan, which will specifically target students on public transport arterials and those within walking / cycling distance of the site.</p> <p>The potential for improved connections between North and South Westmead (via a rail underpass and green link), as envisaged by the Strategy, would enhance connectivity and support non-car travel within the site and greater Westmead Precinct.</p>
Strategic Directions	
<p>Direction 1 - Evolve Westmead to be a truly connected 30-minute city by leveraging new transport connections and improving existing networks within the Precinct, GOP and neighbouring centres.</p>	<p>The project seeks to leverage new transport connections, locating a significant piece of social infrastructure in close proximity to multiple existing and new transport connections including Metro and light rail.</p> <p>As the TfNSW Environmental Impact Assessment does not account for any mode shift away from car usage to public transport related to the light rail, Metro and walking/cycling, the impact of these on background growth is excluded from the TIA. Given the site's connectivity to pedestrian links, bike paths, Metro, light rail, bus lines and heavy rail, it is reasonable to assume car trips and surrounding traffic will be reduced in the future as a result of these transport initiatives.</p>

Strategy Component	WCC Consistency
	<p>These connections support opportunities for increased non-car mode share to reduce car dependency and minimise impacts on traffic and parking.</p>
<p>Direction 2 - Encourage initiatives towards a safe walking and cycling city that is centred on pedestrian and cycleway connections that link to wider regional networks and surrounding places of interest.</p>	<p>CEDP is committed to active transport and improving connectivity to and through the campus (as part of the future Master Plan). The SSDA seeks to achieve a 10% mode share shift or greater. The Green Travel Plan submitted with the SSDA outlines a number of initiatives to encourage walking and cycling.</p> <p>In addition, the project removes pedestrian crossovers and creates new direct entrances into the site, improving pedestrian and cyclist safety and accessibility.</p> <p>CEDP welcomes the potential for improved connections between North and South Westmead (via a rail underpass and green link) which would enhance connectivity and support non-car travel within the Precinct.</p>
<p>Direction 3 - Enable Westmead to be a smart city incorporating cutting edge technologies and digital collaboration to meet the day to day needs of the community.</p>	<p>The project seeks to relocate the existing Sacred Heart Primary School – the teaching spaces at the existing Sacred Heart Primary School are beyond their usable lifecycle. The project will relocate these 210 students into a new, state of the art educational facility, and will provide space for an additional 1,260 new students, integrating with the existing schools to create the WCC.</p> <p>The future Master Plan also provides opportunities for the collocation of education uses with complementary uses to enable Learning Partnerships to develop, and to foster innovation, collaboration and a sense of community.</p>
<p>Direction 4 - Foster a strong collaborative relationship and pride between government, local community, industry and investors to collectively deliver the Westmead vision.</p>	<p>CEDP is a member of the Westmead Alliance, Business Western Sydney, Western Sydney Leadership Dialogue, and the Western Sydney Business Connection.</p> <p>As noted above, SSD-10383 has been under assessment for nearly 12 months. With the exception of Council, the SSD was generally supported by the agencies who made submissions on the SSD during the public exhibition period.</p> <p>The SSDA and Master Plan are clearly aligned with the draft Strategy. Moreover, the redevelopment of the WCC is critical in achieving the vision for the Precinct. It is crucial that the intent of this Strategy is reflected in the assessment of this piece of State significant social infrastructure.</p>
<p>Direction 5 - Protect and enhance existing employment areas with a focus on job creation to transform the existing health and education precinct into the Westmead Health and Innovation District.</p>	<p>The WCC redevelopment protects employment areas and fosters job creation in the education industry.</p> <p>The new student places and jobs created by the project promote opportunities for more new and existing parents to work close to the schools. This further promotes ride share and modal shift within the precinct. The incorporation of the Early Learning Centre in the project further promotes this by providing childcare places for families working and living in the precinct.</p> <p>The SSDA will generate approximately 70 additional operational jobs. The future Mater Plan would provide further opportunities for job creation.</p>
<p>Direction 7 - Deliver a range of social infrastructure and services that support community diversity and wellbeing to enhance the appeal and competitiveness of Westmead, including actions to</p>	<p>Within the catchment area, it is anticipated that there will be a shortfall of 9,530 primary places and 11,738 secondary places in the Catholic and Government school systems by 2036. The proposed increase in dwellings in the Westmead area will contribute to this shortfall.</p>

Strategy Component	WCC Consistency
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate opportunities for primary and secondary school needs, noting projected residential growth in Westmead South and Parramatta North Investigate opportunities for shared-use and co-location of community facilities on Council-owned and State-owned assets. 	<p>The development of the WCC is critical in meeting the growing demand for primary and secondary school needs in the Precinct. The completed Master Plan will provide for approximately 6,000 students.</p> <p>The SSDA also proposes a new Parish Church for shared-use by the school and broader Parish community.</p> <p>Finally, the SSDA and future Master Plan also present opportunities for shared use of school facilities for community use, including open space.</p>
<p>Direction 10 - Expand the urban tree canopy and create active and connected places that integrate with green infrastructure including neighbouring waterways and parklands for the enjoyment of the community.</p>	<p>Tree canopy coverage is an important consideration for CEDP. The SSDA seeks to offset the loss of trees through significant additional canopy and understory planting. There will be a 25% tree canopy coverage within the development site area.</p> <p>In the future, the future Master Plan will enhance connections and learning opportunities within the riparian corridor which runs along the site's western boundary, which is identified as an area of open space under the Structure Plan.</p>

2.0 Open Space

The questions raised by the Department are addressed in turn below. We note the following overarching comments for consideration when reviewing these responses:

- The application seeks approval for the new primary school building and an associated increase in primary school students.
- Expansion of the high schools does not form part of the current SSDA. Whilst indicative use arrangements and open space figures have been provided for the current high schools and future Master Plan phase, a detailed assessment of open space access (and any increase in the use of Council's facilities associated with the additional high school students) will be subject to a future SSDA.
- Whilst primary school students may use the ovals occasionally as part of the PDHPE curriculum, their main play spaces are within and adjacent to the primary school building. The proposed open space design for the primary school represents an innovative and modern approach to the provision of open space, which aligns with CEDP's learning pedagogy and is supported by independent research.

Further, the initial Response to Submissions dated September 2020 provided a detailed response to a number of open space issues. Several of the initial responses remain relevant to the current RFI. Some of the key points from the initial RFI have been summarised below.

Primary School Open Space Design

- The landscape design ensures age appropriate outcomes and encourages inquiry, exploration and social interaction. The design also acknowledges the educational value of recreation, and has been designed so that it engages students, and encourages activity that has the added benefits of social and cognitive development. The immediate adjacency of play space to learning areas is part of CEDP's purposeful design outcome to promote multi-use of the space, allow better supervision and less time being spent walking from place to place, both vertically and horizontally.
- The open space design is supported by independent research, as outlined in the recent paper titled *Towards Effective Learning Environments in Catholic Schools (TELE): An Evidence-based Approach* undertaken by the Learning Environments Applied Research Network (LEaRN) and The University of Melbourne.
- The proposed primary school building is built across six levels (including Ground Level). Whilst open space is interspersed throughout the building, Levels 3 and 5 (roof level) are dedicated to open space. In total, there will be over 7,800m² of open space across Levels 1 – 5 (i.e. all ground level play space is in addition to this). The proposed open space design:

- Comprises purposefully designed, age appropriate spaces that are inclusive, and cater for students of both genders and all ages.
- Provides open spaces, which in conjunction with neighbouring learning areas, will enable teachers to be flexible and agile in their grouping and organisation of students.
- Is accessible in all weather conditions, so children never spend recess and lunch indoors on hot, wet or windy days.
- Provides activated spaces with a range of equipment and materials which encourage greater physical activity from a greater number of students when compared to traditional open play space.
- Comprises multi-use spaces which can be used for outdoor learning as well as play and circulation, offering better opportunities for supervision.
- Provides an open play area at Level 5 which focuses on the importance of fitness and exercise, with multi-sport court facilities, open synthetic turf areas for play and amenity, and a running track for sporting and recreational uses to allow for a range of students and sports to utilise the rooftop space at any given time.

Open Space Quantity

As noted above, there will be over 7,800m² of open space across Levels 1 – 5 of the new primary school building (i.e. all ground level play space, including the ground level undercroft, is in addition to this). This equates to 4.6m² per student, within the building. On ground level, there is an additional 6,070m² of open space. This includes the undercroft and outdoor area adjacent to the new primary school building, but excludes the ovals. This additional area equates to 3.6m² of additional open space per student, taking the total open space provision for the primary school to 8.2m² per student (i.e. 4.6m² + 3.6m²).

Whilst the primary school is not reliant on the ovals to meet its open space requirements, all students of the WCC will have access to the existing ovals in the south of the site. The ovals are not considered part of the main play space for the primary school students, however primary students will have access to the ovals for delivery of the PDHPE curriculum, as required.

Whilst the proposal relates to the primary school only, the following is noted with respect to the use of the ovals more broadly:

- The ovals currently service a student population of 2,630+ students. When Stage 1 enrolment reaches its full capacity, as anticipated for 2033, the ovals will service a student population of 3,900 (2,630 existing + 1,260 additional primary students).
- Whilst primary school students may use the ovals occasionally as part of the PDHPE curriculum, their main place spaces are within and adjacent to the primary school building. On this basis, the ovals will predominantly be used by the 2,630 high school students on the campus for play and PDHPE. Further details around scheduling of the use of the ovals is provided below and at **Attachment C**.
- At the completion of the Master Plan (i.e. when the second oval is removed) there will be more play space area per student than recommended by the Department of Education's EFSG. The project will target a total area per student of greater than 20% above EFSG at the completion of the Master Plan.

The quantity of open space at the WCC is considered more than adequate.

a) The existing schedule for the shared use of the ovals on site

The ovals are currently shared by both high schools at the WCC. A schedule for the shared use is provided at **Attachment C**.

As noted above, introduction of the primary school to the WCC will not significantly change these arrangements as the primary school students will use the open space areas within and surrounding the new primary school building for day-to-day recreation. Primary school students will only use the ovals occasionally for PDHPE i.e. outside of recess and lunch times and timetabled on a term-by-term basis to avoid any conflicting uses.

b) A schedule for the shared use of the ovals at Stage 1 opening year (2023) and stabilisation year (2033)

The proposal does not seek to increase high school enrolments. The ovals currently service a student population of 2,630 students. When Stage 1 enrolment reaches its full capacity, as anticipated for 2033, the ovals will service a student population of 3,900 (2,630 existing + 1,260 additional primary students). As primary school students will only use the ovals in limited circumstances, the ovals will predominantly be used by the 2,630 high school students on the campus for play and PDHPE.

Notwithstanding, a schedule for shared use of the ovals in 2023 and 2033 has been provided at **Attachment C**. The schedule also shows the area of available open space per student, confirming that the targeted quantity of open space per student is in excess of the EFSG, at approximately 17m² of open space per student (including both primary and high schools) when the ovals are considered. When the ovals are excluded, the quantity of open space per student is approximately 8m²/student for Catherine McAuley and approximately 10m²/student for Parramatta Marist.

c) Existing and proposed schedules of secondary student use of Council's sportsground facilities

The existing use of Parramatta Council's sports facilities by high school students is outlined below. Again, as the proposal only seeks approval for an increase in primary school enrolments, these arrangements will not change as a result of the proposed SSDA.

Parramatta Marist Sports Facilities Use

Parramatta Marist uses the following Council facilities:

- Parramatta Park - Three areas (West Domain Areas 2,3 and Cattle Paddocks) for internal sport each Thursday and School Cross Country.
- Westmead Nurses quarters tennis courts.

Catherine McAuley Sports Facilities Use

Catherine McAuley uses the following Council facilities:

- Doyle Ground, North Parramatta for touch football, volleyball, AFL and Oz Tag.
- Parramatta Park – School Cross Country and internal sport (this has not been used recently due to Covid restrictions).
- Barton Park, North Parramatta – School Athletics Carnival.

d) Details of current Council approval or agreements in place for use of Council facilities

There are currently no formal agreements in place for the use of Council's facilities. Rather, the facilities are booked and paid for on a user-pays basis.

e) Information clarifying whether increased use of the school ovals will result in additional demand for access to Council sportsground facilities, namely Ollie Webb Reserve (Parramatta), Jones Park (Parramatta), Binalong Park (Toongabbie), Doyle Ground (North Parramatta), and Arthur Phillip Park (Northmead).

As noted above, the SSDA will not result in any additional demand for access to Council's sports facilities by high school students. The proposal does not seek to increase high school enrolments, and the introduction of the primary school will not impact existing use of the school ovals.

f) If increased use of Council's facilities is intended beyond that currently agreed to by Council, provide advice regarding the status of those discussions with Council.

The additional primary school students will not trigger any increased use of Council's facilities. The proposal does not seek to increase high school enrolments, and so will not result in any increased use of Council's facilities. On this basis, there have been no discussions with Council at this stage.

We trust that this information addresses the Department's concerns. Please do not hesitate to contact me on the details below if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely,



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