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25 March 2021

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The Secretary  
 NSW Department of Planning Industry and Environment  
 GPO Box 39  
 Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Sir

**SUBMISSION ON WESTMEAD 2036 DRAFT PLACE STRATEGY  
 CATHOLIC EDUCATION DIOCESE PARRAMATTA**

This submission is made by the Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta (CEDP) in response to the public exhibition of the Westmead 2036 Draft Place Strategy (the Strategy).

Catholic Education is the second largest provider of school education in NSW. CEDP is responsible for a total of 80 schools in western Sydney and the Blue Mountains. Relevant to this submission is the Westmead Catholic Community (WCC) at 2 Darcy Road, Westmead.

A State Significant Development Application (SSD-10383) is in the final stages of assessment with the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (the Department) for Stage 1 of the WCC redevelopment. The future Master Plan will ultimately see the site developed into a mixed-use education precinct with a student population of up to 6,000, and complementary uses around the periphery of the site to support Learning Partnerships, innovation and collaboration. Both the SSDA and Master Plan are described in further detail below.

CEDP welcomes the exhibition of the Strategy and the vision it establishes for Westmead as a world-class innovation, education and health precinct. However, CEDP is disappointed that the Strategy and Structure Plan do not reflect CEDP's plans for the WCC. It is also suggested that the Structure Plan could be improved to reflect a more inclusive approach to land use planning, where different uses can exist side-by-side to foster collaboration, innovation and a greater sense of community, as envisaged by the Strategy.

CEDP's SSDA and Master Plan are directly aligned with the intent of the Strategy. The SSDA provides additional education capacity, supports active transport and capitalises on transport connectivity. However, the suitability of the site is being questioned by City of Parramatta Council and the Department, based on potential traffic impacts. It is critical that the intent of the draft Strategy is reflected in the assessment of this piece of State significant social infrastructure.

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## Executive Summary

- **CEDP is supportive of the draft Strategy.** It directly aligns with CEDP's intent for the WCC, the SSD that is under assessment and the future Master Plan which CEDP has been working toward for a number of years.
- **CEDP suggests that the Structure Plan be developed to reflect modern thinking around co-location of uses.** The Structure Plan seeks to segregate industry, health, education and residential uses, rather than bringing them together. The desired outcomes for this Precinct would be better supported by adopting a land use framework that would allow different uses to exist side-by-side.
- **CEDP's Master Plan, and the associated mix of uses, aligns with the strategy, purpose and vision for the Precinct and should be acknowledged. The Master Plan will support:**
  - Growth in education provision.
  - Stronger opportunities for collaboration and alignment of education with industry, health and research.
  - Improved access, activation and connection for the community.
  - Greater permeability for the Precinct, delivering better connectivity, active travel and public transport usage outcomes.
- **CEDP requests direct and ongoing engagement as the Strategy is finalised.** CEDP is disappointed that there has been no direct consultation during preparation of the draft Strategy and Structure Plan, particularly given CEDP's substantial and long-standing presence in the Precinct, and membership in the Westmead Alliance. In the absence of direct consultation, the Structure Plan fails to reflect CEDP's publicly available Master Plan for the WCC.
- **CEDP requires collaboration between Council and Departmental staff, and for these parties to adopt the strategic thinking envisaged by the draft Strategy.** CEDP's SSDA for Stage 1 of the WCC has been under assessment for nearly 12 months. Council has formally objected to the proposal on traffic grounds, and both Council and the Department have questioned whether the site is suitable for the proposed school development. CEDP needs these parties to acknowledge the Strategy to enable the vision for the campus, and Precinct, to be realised.

## Overview of Catholic Schools

The CEDP, Catholic Education Office Diocese of Wollongong and Sydney Catholic Schools have a combined 315 schools across NSW. Quality learning and teaching is a core value of Catholic Schools, which they offer from preschool to Year 12. They also have several programs which engage with parishes and the local and wider community. These include volunteering, Vocational Education and Training courses, Post School Pathway Programs, Family Educator Projects and the Duke of Edinburgh scheme. This work creates and sustains valuable links which create mutual benefit for the school and wider community.

Catholic Schools are beginning to incorporate mixed-use precincts into their schools as a means of servicing the needs of the school, its students, families and the wider community. Through the recently submitted SSD for the WCC (see details below), CEDP is looking to implement this new community-based model of operation in Westmead.

## Westmead Catholic Community SSDA and Master Plan

The WCC is located at 2 Darcy Road, Westmead as shown at [Figure 1](#). The WCC is a significant land holding, with an area of approximately 12 hectares. It is owned in part by the Trustees of the Roman Catholic Church of the Diocese of Parramatta and in part by the Trustees of the Marist Brothers Province.

The WCC site currently contains three separate schools being Catherine McAuley Westmead, Parramatta Marist High School and the Mother Teresa Primary School. Collectively, the three schools currently accommodate approximately 2,630 students and 190 staff.

The majority of the existing buildings across all three schools are reaching end of life, and historically, the schools have been operated independently with minimal collaboration and resource sharing. Separately, Sacred Heart Primary School is located on Ralph Street, Westmead. The buildings on the Sacred Heart Primary School site at Ralph Street are aging and the playground is on leased land, which is due to expire in February 2021. Sacred Heart currently accommodates approximately 197 students and 13 staff.

SSD-10383 was lodged for the project in March 2020, nearly 12 months ago. The submitted SSD represents the first stage in the WCC Master Plan, and seeks approval for:

- A primary school with capacity for approximately 1,680 students (an increase of 1,260 students), to provide expanded facilities for the existing Mother Teresa Primary School on the site and to relocate the existing Sacred Heart Primary School at Ralph Street.
- A new Parish Church.
- A Catholic Early Learning Centre (fit-out within an existing building) with capacity for 200 students.
- Landscaping.

In the future, the WCC Master Plan will see the campus redeveloped to integrate the two high schools in multi story buildings that will be accessed by a new internal street network. This will involve expanding the services offered to accommodate approximately 6,000 students. There is also an opportunity for surplus land around the periphery of the site to be redeveloped to accommodate a range of complementary uses that would align with the strategic intent for the Precinct.

Future stages of the WCC Master Plan also seek to improve connectivity within the Precinct, with new pedestrian and vehicular connections into and through the site. This includes north-south connections, as well as an east-west connection as suggested by Council in the draft Westmead Innovation District Masterplan (refer to [Figure 2](#)).

Over the course of the assessment for SSD-10383, concerns have primarily related to traffic and parking impacts associated with the proposal. Council has formally objected to the SSD on these grounds, and the Department has questioned whether the site is suitable for the proposed development, based on the potential traffic impacts. CEDP is continuing to respond to traffic-related requests for information, however it is unclear if the Department will recommend approval to the Independent Planning Commission.



As detailed in [Table 1](#) below, 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.



**Figure 1** Aerial photo of the WCC campus  
 Source: Nearmaps



**Figure 2** Future Master Plan, including new north-south and east-west connections  
 Source: Alleanza Architecture

### Alignment with the Westmead 2036 Draft Place Strategy

The draft Strategy outlines the vision for the Precinct over the next 20 years.

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 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
<b>Big Moves</b>	
<p><b>Big Move 1</b> - 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"> <li>• Deliver a highly integrated mix of uses, including health and medical care; education and training; research and development; innovation commercialisation and industry.</li> </ul>	<p>The WCC Master Plan seeks to facilitate this by collocating education uses with complementary uses to foster Learning Partnerships and innovation.</p> <p>It is suggested that the Structure Plan be reconsidered so that uses can be co-located to achieve these outcomes, rather than segregating uses as per the current Structure Plan.</p>
<p><b>Big Move 3</b> - Activate and connect our community with vibrant, diverse and well connected public spaces and places.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a network of villages and commercial activity centres along transport corridors and nodes</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Protect and enhance expansive riparian, green space and environmental assets, including the river, increased tree canopy and foster sustainability outcomes for future generations.</li> </ul>	<p>CEDP is committed to active transport and improving connectivity to and through the campus. The SSDA seeks to achieve a 10% mode share shift.</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><b>Big Move 5</b> - Capitalise on transport connectivity and reduce car dependency</p>	<p>The WCC benefits from a high level of accessibility, close to rail, bus and road</p>

Strategy Component	WCC Consistency
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capitalise on connectivity from Parramatta Light Rail and Sydney Metro to reduce car dependency.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Make walking and cycling the mode of choice for short trips.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Explore opportunities to improve bus connections, including those south to Merrylands and Prariewood and those north to Castle Hill, with consideration of customer movement needs throughout the day and across the week.</li> </ul>	<p>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.</p> <p>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 within the Westmead Precinct.</p>
<p><b>Strategic Directions</b></p>	
<p><b>Direction 1</b> - 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 WCC seeks to leverage new transport connections, locating a significant piece of social infrastructure in close proximity to multiple transport connections. This supports opportunities for increased non-car mode share to reduce car dependency and minimise impacts on traffic and parking.</p>
<p><b>Direction 2</b> - 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. The Green Travel Plan submitted with the SSDA outlines a number of initiatives to encourage walking and cycling.</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><b>Direction 3</b> - Enable Westmead to be a smart city incorporating cutting edge technologies and</p>	<p>The Master Plan provides opportunities for the collocation of education uses with complementary uses to enable Learning</p>

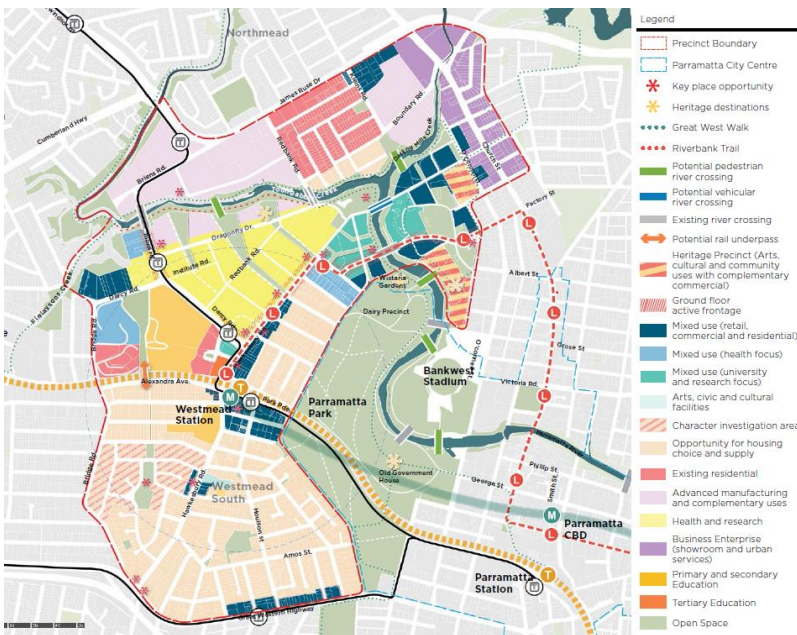


Strategy Component	WCC Consistency
digital collaboration to meet the day to day needs of the community.	Partnerships to develop, and to foster innovation, collaboration and a sense of community.
<p><b>Direction 4</b> - Foster a strong collaborative relationship and pride between government, local community, industry and investors to collectively deliver the Westmead vision.</p>	<p>CEDP would welcome the opportunity to collaborate with government to deliver the vision for the WCC.</p> <p>As noted above, SSD-10383 has been under assessment for over 12 months. Over the course of the assessment, concerns have primarily related to traffic and parking impacts associated with the proposal. Council has formally objected to the SSD on these grounds, and the Department has questioned whether the site is suitable for the proposed development, based on the potential traffic impacts.</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><b>Direction 5</b> - 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 SSDA will generate approximately 70 additional operational jobs. The future Mater Plan would provide further opportunities for job creation.</p>
<p><b>Direction 7</b> - 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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate opportunities for primary and secondary school needs, noting projected residential growth in Westmead South and Parramatta North</li> <li>• Investigate opportunities for shared-use and co-location of community facilities on Council-owned and State-owned assets.</li> </ul>	<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.</p> <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 and Master Plan also present opportunities for shared use of school facilities, including open space.</p>

Strategy Component	WCC Consistency
<p><b>Direction 10</b> - 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 Master Plan will rehabilitate 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>

**Proposed Structure Plan**

The proposed Structure Plan (shown at [Figure 3](#)) seeks to segregate uses, rather than bring them together as intended by the vision for the Precinct. The desired outcomes for the Precinct would be better supported by adopting a land use framework that would allow different uses to exist side-by-side. Health and research should be interspersed with commercial, industrial and retail uses in the same way that primary and secondary education should coexist alongside tertiary, commercial and residential uses to enable Learning Partnerships to develop, and to foster innovation, collaboration and a sense of community as intended by the WCC Master Plan.



**Figure 3 Structure Plan**  
 Source: Westmead 2036 Draft Place Strategy



## Acknowledgement of the WCC Master Plan

The draft Strategy and Structure Plan fail to acknowledge CEDP's Master Plan for the WCC and the varied uses proposed for the site in the future. Similarly, the Structure Plan does not reflect the future connections into and through the site.

As noted above, the WCC Master Plan will see the campus redeveloped to integrate the two high schools in multi story buildings that will be accessed by a new internal street network. This will involve expanding the services offered to accommodate approximately 6,000 students. There is also an opportunity for surplus land around the periphery of the site to be redeveloped to accommodate a range of complementary uses that would align with the strategic intent for the Precinct. The Master Plan will also provide 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 which will include access and connectivity in the Precinct.

Further details around the Master Plan can be found here -

<https://www.parra.catholic.edu.au/News-and-Events/Planning-for-the-Future/Westmead-Catholic-Community>.

It is disappointing that the Master Plan has not been reflected in the draft Strategy or Structure Plan, despite it being publicly available and being referenced in the current SSDA. It has also been the subject of ongoing discussions with Council over the past two years, and has received in-principle support from the NSW Government Architect's State Design Review Panel as part of the SSDA consultation process.

Importantly, and as detailed in [Table 1](#), the current SSDA and future Master Plan will support the Strategy, purpose and vision for the Precinct by:

- Providing for significant growth in education provision.
- Creating stronger opportunities for collaboration and alignment of education with industry, health and research.
- Providing improved access, activation and connection for the community.
- Providing greater permeability within the Precinct to support better active travel and public transport usage outcomes.

## Ongoing Consultation

To-date, there has been no direct consultation with CEDP. As a key stakeholder in the Precinct and a member of the Westmead Alliance, this is disappointing. CEDP would appreciate the opportunity to be involved in ongoing consultation with the Department as the draft Strategy is finalised, to ensure that the above issues are considered and that the Strategy and Structure Plan reflect the intent for the WCC.

## Conclusion

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission in response to the exhibition of the Westmead 2036 Draft Place Strategy.

We would like to reiterate our support for the draft Strategy and the important role that the WCC has in realising the vision for the Precinct and the future of Westmead.

CEDP's SSD-10383 represents a key piece of social infrastructure and is critical in the realisation of the vision for the campus and the Precinct. Currently, the application is being delayed by concerns relating to traffic and parking, with Council and Departmental staff seemingly failing to appreciate the importance of the WCC in the future of the Precinct.

We look forward to engaging with the Department during the finalisation of the Strategy. Should you require any further information in relation to the matters raised in this submission, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

Yours sincerely



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