

SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT ADDENDUM: DRAFT

Sydney Olympic Park New High School

1. INTRODUCTION

In September 2021, Urbis completed a Social Impact Assessment (SIA) to inform a State Significant Development Application (SSDA) for the Sydney Olympic Park new high school in Wentworth Point. The proposed site is at 7-9 Burroway Road, Wentworth Point and the SIA was undertaken on behalf of the Department of Education (DoE).

Since the completion of the SIA, the SSDA for the Sydney Olympic Park new high school has been exhibited and submissions collated. DoE is now responding to submissions and to additional information required by the Department of Planning and Environment (DPE). One of the matters which DPE requested information on is:

The amendment report should also consider social impacts as a result of the reduced ability to cater for the high demand of enrolments in the catchment – given the uncertainty for timing before the school can reach full capacity.

There have also been a number of changes to the design of the new high school since Urbis completed the SIA. These include:

- Reduction in size of the hall building, including removal of indoor sports court
- Reconfiguration of the central courtyard
- Removal of an outdoor sports court.

It is also proposed that student enrolments be capped at 850 students. Any increases to the number of enrolments would require a separate approval.

The rationale for these changes is described in the Amendment Report prepared by Meccone. The amended design is detailed in plans prepared by Woods Bagot.

2. ADDENDUM PURPOSE

The purpose of this SIA addendum is to address DPE's request for information relating to the enrolments in the catchment and review of potential social impacts which may have changed due to the design changes. It focuses on a reassessment of two impacts which were considered as part of the original SIA. These impacts are:

- Improved access to education
- Access to open space for students.

The addendum uses the same methodology as the original SIA dated September 2021 and also relies on the same policy analysis and social baseline.

3. REASSESSMENT OF RELEVANT SOCIAL IMPACTS

3.1. IMPROVED ACCESS TO EDUCATION

Description of impact	Impacted groups
Increased supply of and access to education facilities in Wentworth Point	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Current and future secondary students in Wentworth Point ▪ Current and future secondary students within the school's future catchment area
Current environment	
<p>Population forecasts prepared by .idcommunity for the City of Parramatta project the population of Wentworth Point residents of high school age (12 to 17 years) to increase as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 138 people in 2016 ▪ 586 people in 2036 ▪ 595 people in 2041. <p>In 2041, there are forecast to be an additional 1,120 people aged 12 to 17 years in Sydney Olympic Park and the Carter Street Precinct.</p> <p>There are currently no high schools in Wentworth Point. Concord High School is the only government high school within the suburb's catchment area and is located approximately 9km from the site. Consultation with Council and the DEL indicated that some Wentworth Point students are travelling up to an hour each day to access Concord High School, which has caused stress on families managing before/after school drop offs.</p> <p>The capacity of the local school network to accommodate the Wentworth Point population is decreasing. Data from ACARA shows that the number of high school enrolments at Concord High School has been steadily increasing, with the school currently accommodating 1,286 students and 15 on-site demountables as of September 2021. The projected growth in the student population across Wentworth Point and the Parramatta LGA is also expected to increase the demand for local enrolment places. Given this demand, the Infrastructure Summary Paper for Greater Parramatta and the Olympic Peninsula (GPOP) includes a priority action to develop a new high school for Olympic Park and its surrounds.</p> <p>There is also limited education choice in the area, with the only other government high schools in the area being single-sex schools. Consultation with the DEL indicates there is strong demand from the community to have a co-ed government school in the area.</p>	

Impact of the proposal

The revised proposal will provide a new co-educational high school in Wentworth Point with capacity for up to 850 students in Years 7 – 12. The school will have capacity to cater for the 595 high school aged residents forecast to be living in Wentworth Point by 2041, even in the unlikely event that none of these students were enrolled in private schools.

The location of the school in Wentworth Point will increase accessibility to students and parents. The majority of secondary students in Wentworth Point are currently reliant on vehicles or buses to travel to school. The proposed location of the school within the Wentworth Point community will reduce travel times for students and families and provide students with the opportunity to walk or cycle to school. This has potential to increase positive health outcomes, with the uptake of active transport methods to school known to improve concentration and cardiovascular health among students, as well as reducing stress levels (Heart Foundation, Active Travel to School 2019).

While the original proposal was positively received by the community, questions were raised about the expected catchment area of the school and the ability of the school to accommodate future growth. There were particular concerns that the size of the new high school will not be sufficient to meet forecast enrolment numbers, considering the enrolment growth at Wentworth Point Public School. These concerns are likely to be exacerbated with the 850 enrolment cap now proposed to be placed on the new high school.

In addition to Wentworth Point residents, the new high school will have potential to cater for some, but not all of, the 1,120 Year 7-12 students forecast to be living in Sydney Olympic Park and the Carter Street Precinct in 2041. The cap on student numbers will likely cause some disappointment among students and families whose children had been hoping to attend the new school.

In regard to catchment areas, DoE advises that it has established processes to determine the intake years and enrolment boundaries for new schools. This process is informed by a range of information including demographic data, projected enrolment trends and the availability of public and active transport routes. The catchment area is typically determined by DoE six to 12 months prior to the opening of a new school to ensure the community is kept informed around enrolment periods and to allow the school to prepare for incoming enrolment numbers.

Management measures

- Design of the school buildings and interface to enable a future Stage 2 development to increase the capacity of the school.

SIA recommendations

- Clearly communicate the catchment area to all existing and prospective families in the broader Wentworth Point and Sydney Olympic Park community, as soon as details are confirmed.
- Communicate proactively to families in the broader Wentworth Point and Sydney

	Olympic Park community about the progress of planning for Stage 2 of the school.
Residual impact (considering management measures)	
Likelihood: Almost certain	Magnitude: Moderate
<p>It is expected the development of a new high school in Wentworth Point will generate a high positive impact by increasing access to and capacity of co-educational secondary education in an area of identified need. This positive impact is not as high as it could be given the cap on student numbers and uncertainty about when, and if, Stage 2 of the project will be delivered.</p> <p>The location of the school will reduce the need for some students and parents to commute longer distances to access education, generating positive health and wellbeing outcomes for these families.</p>	

3.2. ACCESS TO OPEN SPACE FOR STUDENTS

Description of impact	Impacted groups
Access to open space to incoming school students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current and future secondary students in Wentworth Point
Current environment	
<p>It is important for all school sites to provide play areas and open spaces for student use. These spaces provide students with the opportunity to socialise with students and participate in recreational activities, which contribute to improved wellbeing and personal development. As the site is undeveloped, there is currently no open space on site.</p> <p>The SINSW School Site Selection and Development Guidelines (2020) and the Educational Facilities and Standards Guidelines (EFSG) state that new schools should provide a minimum of 10 sqm of open space per student. The EFSG advises that open play space can consist of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paved and grassed areas Rooftops and terraces Covered outdoor areas. <p>The School Site Selection and Development Guidelines also state that new schools should consider the living conditions of the surrounding urban environment. As most high density areas have limited backyard or active open space, the Guidelines consider that schools should provide</p>	

students and the broader community with added amenity through the provision of on-site open space.

Impact of the proposal

The amended proposal is for the delivery of a new high school with up to 850 students. All students will need access to suitable outdoor open spaces and recreation facilities. Community consultation on the original proposal indicated there was concern the new school will have insufficient open space to cater for student needs.

Open play space

The amended proposal will provide 5,108sqm of open play space. This equates to 6.0sqm of open play space per student. This is 4.0sqm of open space per student less than the EFSG benchmark.

DoE advises that enrolments at the school will only start with one to two year groups (i.e. Year 7 or Years 7 and 8). This means the number of students using the open play space will be considerably fewer than 850 students in the first few years' of the school's operation, increasing towards the 850 student cap thereafter.

The EFSG suggests management measures for school proposals where the open space benchmark cannot be met. For secondary schools, this includes:

- Demonstrating that the site can provide desirable play outcomes and/or
- Supplementing open space provision with council owned open space.

The GANSW Design Guide for Schools (2018) provides some insight into play outcomes, stating that schools should "allow for passive and dynamic play of different age groups" (2018: 18).

The amended proposal includes a main courtyard on the western side of the site, with one outdoor multipurpose sports court and a courtyard for free play and socialising. There is also a small courtyard provided to the north of the site.

The design of these outdoor spaces includes as many play experiences as possible given the space available. Nonetheless, these spaces provide a limited diversity of play experiences. In particular, there are a lack of options for students seeking quiet spaces for passive recreation and reflection. This may have particularly negative impacts on neurodiverse students and students seeking solitude or quiet recreation in small groups to support their physical and mental health and wellbeing.

Recreation space

In addition to outdoor play space for use during the day, students of the future high school will require access to playing fields for some forms of structured recreation (such as football and hockey) and for school carnivals.

There are currently no arrangements in place for open space provision to be supplemented with structured recreation space provided by the City of Parramatta or other council. The proposal previously referenced the potential for the construction of a new playing field in the Peninsula Park to the north of the school, with potential for this space to be made available to the school through a joint use agreement. However, the delivery timing of this playing field is uncertain, and the school cannot rely upon the field for open play space purposes.

Urbis has been advised that DoE intends to enter into an interim off-site arrangement for students to access outdoor recreation uses, until such a time as the playing field is delivered.

Management measures	SIA recommendations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inclusion of varied play options in the outdoor spaces available within the constraints of the site. ▪ Staging enrolments, with a maximum of two year groups commencing in the first year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work actively with relevant agencies to progress the construction of the new park on the adjacent site as soon as possible, as a matter of urgent priority. ▪ Prepare a plan of management which describes how the use of the limited open play spaces on the school site will be managed. This could include staggering of student breaks through timetabling and arrangements to allow students to use as many of the interior spaces as possible during school breaks for passive recreation and reflection, including the library and hall on Level 1. ▪ Enter into an agreement/s for off-site use of structured open space for recreation (including playing fields) prior to the commencement of the school's operation.

Residual impact (considering management measures)

Likelihood: Almost certain

Magnitude: Minor to major, as enrolments increase

Based on the above assessment, it is likely the proposal will initially have a medium negative impact on student access to open space and associated physical and mental health and wellbeing. This is due to a lack of diversity in play experiences and the uncertainty around arrangements for access to structured recreation opportunities off-site. If no additional open space is provided, this impact will increase as enrolment numbers rise and the area of open space per student decreases.

Should enrolments reach the 850 cap without the provision of additional open space, the proposal will have a very high negative impact on student access to open space and associated physical and mental health and wellbeing. This impact is likely to be more pronounced for Wentworth Point students given the existing deficit of open space throughout the suburb.

4. OVERALL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Based on this reassessment and the above social impacts and other impacts assessed in the SIA prepared by Urbis and dated September 2021, it is likely the proposal will create a low positive impact on the community.

5. AUTHOR CREDENTIALS

This Social Impact Assessment addendum was prepared on 8 June 2022 by:

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Trigg".