

Catherine McAuley Catholic College, Medowie Community Communications Strategy

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Revision 1



Table of Contents

Background	3
Identify people to be consulted during the design and construction phases	5
Post-submission engagement.....	7
Distribution of accessible information about, or relevant to the development	8
Procedures and mechanisms for Information Distribution	12
Appendix 1: CSO Notice to Neighbouring Properties.....	14

Background

The Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle's (the diocese) Catholic Schools Office (CSO) has proposed the development of Catherine McAuley Catholic College, Medowie. Shaped by community consultation, the planned development includes a seven -stream high school, three-stream primary school, early learning centre and chapel.

In late 2014-2015 the CSO undertook a significant study into the future provision of schooling, locally. The study provided every family, student and staff member in the diocese with an opportunity to share their views in several ways, including completing a survey, tabling individual written submissions or by attending a public meeting (held at various regional locations). The study was undertaken on behalf of the diocese by an external consultant, adding an arms-length approach to the recommendations.

The study created a series of 12 recommendations for the future provision of Catholic schooling in the diocese, including the establishment of Catholic secondary education in Port Stephens. This recommendation came on the back of overwhelming support from survey participants for the concept and was reinforced by those who attended the public forum in Nelson Bay. The study also concluded that there is strong support for the addition of a new primary school in the region.

Catherine McAuley Catholic College's proposed location is 2 Kingfisher Close and 507 Medowie Road, Medowie (Lot 412 and Lot 413 DP 1063902). The design aims to engage learners, educators and the wider community in the ecology surrounding the site, providing an ideal setting to incorporate the natural environment into learning and play. Investigations have been carried out regarding ecology, flooding, bushfire, aboriginal heritage, heritage, social impact, contamination, noise and traffic generation and the site master plan responds to these investigations. The tendered Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) includes content garnered as part of these investigations.

This Community Communications Strategy has been developed by the CSO on behalf of the diocese and includes information regarding the following:

- people to be consulted during the design and construction phases;
- procedures and mechanisms for the regular distribution of accessible information about or relevant to the development;

- the formation of community-based forums, if required, that focus on key environmental management issues for the development; and
- procedures and mechanisms:
 - (i) through which the community can discuss or provide feedback to the Applicant;
 - (ii) through which the Applicant will respond to enquiries or feedback from the community; and
 - (iii) to resolve any issues and mediate any disputes that may arise in relation to construction and operation of the development, including disputes regarding rectification or compensation.

Identify people to be consulted during the design and construction phases

The CSO engaged several stakeholder groups across the greater Port Stephens region during the design phase, which revealed widespread support for the proposed development. The CSO will continue this consultation in the lead up to and during construction, providing timely and transparent progress updates.

The diocese has hosted 18 Project Implementation Committee (PIC) meetings relating to the project, since forming in 2016. The PIC meetings have covered a range of planning items, as well as the identification and instigation of regular communication with relevant stakeholders during the design phase. PIC members include:

- diocese representatives consisting of staff from the CSO, Property Services and Finance
- parent representatives from various Port Stephens suburbs (4);
- Webber Architects

The PIC will continue to meet during the construction phase and subsequently identify further community consultation opportunities with relevant stakeholders including the Medowie Progress Association (MPA), Royal Australian Airforce (RAAF) Williamtown, elected representatives, council, near neighbours and schools.

The CSO continues to liaise with the Medowie Progress Association (MPA), which was instrumental in assisting with community profiling in the project's infancy. The MPA's primary aim is to promote co-operation between the residents of the Medowie area and government, endeavouring to strive for the betterment of the district. CSO representatives initially met with the MPA secretary, and following this, all members received a letter that outlined the project and a copy of the Social Impact Assessment. These documents were also made available to the public via the MPA website. Following this, the CSO delivered a presentation on the project at an MPA meeting at the Medowie Community Hall on 26 February 2018. Social media was used to promote the meeting and presentation. Moving forward, the CSO will continue this partnership to inform the community of project developments, utilising a dedicated page on the MPA website to provide timely updates regarding construction and community feedback opportunities.

The Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) Williamtown is a significant employer and landholder in the Port Stephens community, located close by to the proposed development. Accordingly, during the design phase, the diocese instigated communication with representatives from the RAAF to

inform them of its plans. On 26 February 2018 Ellen Davis-Meehan of Key Insights (project consultant) met with Group Captain Peter Cluff, Senior Australian Defence Officer at Williamstown. The meeting covered potential benefits and partnerships between the RAAF and the College and general discussion about RAAF projects, personnel and their education needs. Group Captain Cluff identified many potential benefits of a Catholic College at Medowie and said the RAAF would enthusiastically welcome the development. The diocese will continue to provide the RAAF with project updates, particularly as construction commences.

The CSO has also facilitated research across several local communities including Medowie, Nelson Bay and Raymond Terrace and the results show strong support for the College. Feedback from this consultation notes that once opened the College will reduce travel time for students in these communities who are currently attending schools in Newcastle.

To date, the diocese has received no negative feedback towards the project. Community engagement relating to the SIA drew positive feedback, revealing widespread support for a Catholic college in Medowie.

Updates regarding the project, including construction and environmental management details, will be communicated with Port Stephens Council and the Member for Port Stephens.

Before construction, the diocese will conduct a letterbox drop to all residents near the site to inform them of the project and its anticipated construction schedule. This letter will invite residents to register their interest in attending a public forum on the project (Appendix 1). Also included in this letter are the contact details for residents who seek to discuss any project related questions or concerns with the diocese.

The table below also outlines post-submission engagement with project stakeholders.

Post-submission engagement

Name of organisation	Methods	Responsibility and roles
Medowie Progress Association	<p>Provide timely updates of milestone events during construction via electronic communication with the MPA executive, with an open invitation to meet with project managers.</p> <p>Provide the MPA online audience with timely updates regarding construction via the dedicated Catherine McAuley Catholic College page on the MPA website</p> <p>https://medowie.nsw.au/catherine-mcauley-catholic-college.html</p>	CSO
Catherine McAuley Catholic College website	<p>Ensure the public has access to an up-to-date project overview, including diocese contact details for the project, via a dedicated webpage that will be publicly promoted via letterbox drops, and communication to key stakeholder groups.</p> <p>https://www.mn.catholic.edu.au/schools/region-map/north/catherine-mcauley-catholic-college/</p>	CSO
Port Stephens schools	<p>Provide timely updates of milestone events during construction via electronic communication, with an open invitation to meet with project managers.</p>	CSO
RAAF	<p>Provide timely updates of milestone events during construction via electronic communication, with an open invitation to meet with project managers.</p>	CSO
Pacific Dunes Golf Club	<p>Provide timely updates of milestone events during construction via electronic communication, with an open invitation</p>	CSO

	to meet with project managers.	
Near neighbours	Letterbox drop of critical information including the construction timetable, referral to Catherine McAuley Catholic College website, project contact details.	CSO
Port Stephens Council	Provide timely updates of milestone events during construction via electronic communication, with an open invitation to meet with project managers.	CSO
Government agencies	Provide timely updates of milestone events during construction via electronic communication, with an open invitation to meet with project managers.	CSO
Media	Provide timely updates of milestone events during construction.	
Parish community	Provide timely updates of milestone events during construction via electronic communication, with an open invitation to meet with project managers.	CSO and diocese

Distribution of accessible information about, or relevant to the development

The diocese is committed to providing timely information to the community regarding the proposed development, as demonstrated during the design phase. The project manager will ensure key internal stakeholders, including the property, construction and communications teams have procedures in place to support the coordinated and timely distribution of information to the public regarding project milestones. Additionally, procedures and mechanisms are in place for the diocese and North Constructions to record and respond to public enquiries and for this information to be made available to the public, where required.

The diocese will continue to inform the community about the projects' progress in the lead up to, and during construction via interactions with identified stakeholder groups including the MPA, media and near neighbours.

Working collaboratively with the Medowie Progress Association allows us to use its website <https://medowie.nsw.au/catherine-mcauley-catholic-college.html> and distribution list to invite feedback from the relevant business, residential and community stakeholders affected by the project.

At least 48 hours before construction commences the diocese, in conjunction with North Constructions, will undertake a letterbox drop to all residents near the site, providing them with a project overview and an invitation for them to register their interest in attending a public forum on the project. The letter will also include details of a dedicated phone number and email address to enable the community to submit queries, raise concerns and/or submit/escalate any complaints (Appendix 1).

The diocese has already started providing information to the general community via various media channels, including:

Traditional media

<https://www.newcastleherald.com.au/story/5605577/hunters-newest-catholic-high-school-builds-expressions-of-interest-before-2020-opening/>

<https://www.portstephensexaminer.com.au/story/6332890/state-planning-approves-new-catholic-college-for-medowie/>

<https://www.miragenews.com/110-million-catherine-mcauley-catholic-college-approved/>

<https://www.newcastleherald.com.au/story/6330721/work-to-start-on-new-catholic-high-school/>

<https://www.nbnnews.com.au/2019/08/15/work-set-to-begin-on-new-medowie-high-school/>

MN News Today (an online diocese news website, which has an audience of more than 40,000 people)

<http://mnnews.today/catholic-schools/2018/32094-foundation-principal-appointed-for-catherine-mcauley-catholic-college-medowie/>

<http://mnnews.today/catholic-schools/2019/43782-progress-on-the-region-s-newest-school/>

The Catholic Schools Office website

<https://www.mn.catholic.edu.au/schools/region-map/north/catherine-mcauley-catholic-college/>

The diocese's communications team will continue to provide information to the general community on a regular basis via print, broadcast and online media platforms.

The Communications team has an established mechanism for dealing with all media queries and where possible adopts a proactive approach to providing information. A record of all media related to the project will be kept.

Additionally, North Constructions will also provide information to near neighbours via a letterbox drop, which will include a project overview as well as details regarding construction, environmental management and contact details for the project team managing the day-to-day operation of the site. North's management of the site includes responsibility for:

- construction environmental management plan
- construction traffic and pedestrian sub-management
- construction noise and vibration sub-plan
- construction waste management sub-plan
- construction soil and waste and water management sub-plan
- bushfire and flood emergency response
- asbestos management plan
- koala management sub-plan
- unexpected contamination and archaeological response.

Provide for the formation of community-based forums, if required, that focus on key environmental management issues for the development

The diocese has a demonstrated ability to engage the public in community-based forums regarding this project, as evidenced by their presentation at an MPA meeting at the Medowie Community Hall in February 2016, and the CSO's 2014-15 study into the future provision of secondary schooling, which included a well-attended public forum in Port Stephens.

Before construction commencement, the diocese will extend an invitation to Medowie residents, community groups and business holders (via various mediums including a letterbox drop to near neighbours and the MPA distribution list) to register their interest in attending a community-based forum. If the diocese receives interest from the community to stage a forum, they will do so. It would provide an opportunity for the diocese to disseminate timely information regarding the construction timetable and environmental management responsibilities as well as a platform for the public to ask questions. If during construction, there is a spike in enquiries that are best responded to in a community forum setting rather than one-on-one meetings or via written correspondence, this will be considered and promoted accordingly.

Procedures and mechanisms for Information Distribution

- (i) through which the community can discuss or provide feedback to the Applicant;***
- (ii) through which the Applicant will respond to enquiries or feedback from the community; and***
- (iii) to resolve any issues and mediate any disputes that may arise in relation to construction and operation of the development, including disputes regarding rectification or compensation.***

In response to (i) and (ii), we have established a dedicated phone number and email address via which members of the community can submit queries, raise concerns or submit complaints.

E: MedowieProject@mn.catholic.org.au

PH: (02) 4923 0618.

This phone number and email address will be monitored from Mondays to Fridays from 9am to 5pm. After-hours callers will be able to leave a voicemail or be advised they can contact the diocese via email. This process will be logged and recorded by the diocese in relation to overall project comments, concerns and queries. Construction specific issues will be directed to North Constructions and managed as per the below.

Feedback will be provided on the following basis:

- telephone calls or emails – initial response to acknowledge receipt of any phone call or email within and a written response within seven working days
- complaints – a written response within 10 working days (this to allow time for us to investigate the nature of the complaint).

Concerning (iii), construction related issues/disputes will be promptly managed, avoiding unnecessary delays. The following process will be adopted to ensure this:

- In the first instance, North Construction will attempt to resolve the dispute with the complainant.
- Where North Construction is unable to resolve construction-related complaints/ grievances with the stakeholder, or it is not appropriate in the circumstances, they will escalate the complaint/ grievance to the diocese's communications and/or property team.
- Equally, the complainant can also escalate their complaint/ grievance by making contact with the diocese via the dedicated community hotline or submit details in writing to the dedicated email address.
- If a situation, issue or complaint concerning the performance of the project is unable to be resolved within a reasonable time period by North Construction and/or the diocese, or

there is a perceived or real conflict of interest in responding to the grievance/ complaint, the diocese will engage an appropriately qualified and experienced, independent mediator to attempt to resolve points of conflict. The independent mediator's role will be to negotiate the best possible solution for all parties, including rectification and/or compensation if required. This approach will be adopted during both the construction and operational stages of the project.

Appendix 1: CSO Notice to Neighbouring Properties

Letter from the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle Catholic School's Office addressed to the project's near neighbours, to be distributed at least 48 hours prior to construction commencing.

9 September 2019

Dear Householder

In July 2019 the NSW Department of Planning approved the Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle's development application to construct an early learning centre, three stream primary school, seven stream high school and chapel at 507 Medowie Road, Medowie.

Community consultation has shaped the planned development, which will commence with the construction of the chapel and provision of Years 7 and 8 at the college from 2021, with the opening of a St Nicholas Early Education Centre to follow soon after.

When complete, the high school will be able to accommodate 1200 students from Years 7 to 12 and will feature state of the art learning centres, including a library and recreation areas. It will be the first Catholic secondary school in Port Stephens and will benefit the community at large by reducing travel times and increasing options for education.

In addition to the construction of the College, extensive works will be undertaken to upgrade Medowie Road, providing traffic lights at the South Street intersection including North and South-bound turning lanes at entry and exit points and dedicated pedestrian crossings with safety islands. These roadworks will be undertaken by a specialist contractor and will commence shortly after building works with completion prior to the College opening.

CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT

The Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle has appointed North Construction and Building Pty Ltd (North) to deliver Stage 1 works including the chapel, St Nicholas Early Education Centre, Block A of the high school, parking bays, slip lane, a dedicated bus entry lane and drop off zones.

Construction will commence in October 2019 and is forecast to be completed in December 2020.

North is responsible for the development and management of the construction site in accordance with the Department of Planning guidelines.

The community are invited to contact North if they have questions or concerns regarding construction related matters. Please refer to appended Development update from North.



COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

The Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle is committed to transparent community consultation. If you would like to register your interest in attending a community forum, please contact;

Catherine McAuley Catholic College community hotline on (02) 4923 0618.
Alternatively, you can send an email to MedowieProject@mn.catholic.org.au

This hotline and email address will be monitored from 9am-5pm, Monday to Friday, with an ability to leave a voicemail.

Any construction enquiries should be referred to North in the first instance. However, you may also contact the Diocese via the above-mentioned community hotline and email should you seek additional information or support.

Further information about the project, including environmental management plans and construction progress as well as information about the College's operations (including employment and enrolment opportunities) can be found online at <https://www.mn.catholic.edu.au/schools/region-map/north/catherine-mcauley-catholic-college/>

Regards and thanks

Yours sincerely



Gerard Mowbray
DIRECTOR OF SCHOOLS

