

To whom it may concern,

I would like to express my continued opposition to the proposed K-12 Minarah College. The revised proposal does little to address the concerns of the community and minimise the considerable challenges which this project would impose upon the area. As previously outlined, my position as a resident of Catherine Field for 20 years allows a deep understanding of the issues that this proposed school would pose and that continue to be blatantly ignored by their proposal. Before outlining my various concerns I would like to request that my private information (name and address) not be disclosed.

This project at any scale (whether it be 980, more or less) is incompatible with the area due to the topic of rurality. There is a reason why you do not see small lot residential subdivision having taken place at the location in question — it is not ready. This decision has not come lightly to anyone — whether it be the local council, developers, or the state government — but it has come after careful consideration of the land and insufficient resources available to accomodate potential residents. In fact, the Department have not identified Catherine Fields as being a priority within the South West Growth Area and deemed that until a point of time that this occurs no significant development should occur in the area. So, if various authorities have deemed the current state of this area inappropriate for further development then why should a development such as Minarah College proceed? If with all the pressure and demand for housing that persists this, this land is *still* not being developed then why should this development proceed? If the rest of the area is to maintain the objectives of RU4 primary production small lots, why should this development not have to abide by such objectives?

The 2021 census states that the population of Catherine Field was 2,609 (I believe Catherine Park slightly contributes to this). Even if we were to assume that the entire figure of 2,609 was residents of Catherine Field, (who, might I add, live on land only recently transitioned from rural to large lot residential) with a school of 980 students and 51 staff you are talking about an almost 40% increase in the number of individuals within the area. Yet there's still no improved roads, no drainage, there's a reliance on septic systems, and conveniently the developers for this project will avoid making any contributions that can contribute to improvement of this area's assets.

They will argue that they are not living at this school and the resources expended by the residents is significantly more. Yet, we are talking about a school which will operate from 7am to as late as 9-10pm potentially 7 days a week, as they wish for this development to be at least a 35% commercial enterprise and hire out the hall and field late at night and on weekends. With the average resident of Catherine Field currently not being at home for majority of the week, whether they be at work or school, the attendees of Minarah College will be spending a substantial amount of time in the area despite not holding the responsibilities of typical residents. Yet they get to avoid making a contribution to the local resources, whilst simultaneously degrading them with overuse.

It is claimed that the reduction down to max. 980 students, with a staggered increase in the schools operational scale, addresses these concerns of degrading local resources and such. Yet the revised proposal demonstrates various inconsistencies which disprove this claim. For instance, the reduction in student numbers is not reflected in the scale and density of the development. Although the student numbers have reduced by nearly 600 students, the amended proposal indicates only a net deduction of 1,363m² of GFA from the original EIS. The negative ramifications of overusing the community resources is evident with similar private schools such as Bellfield College located in Rossmore and Unity Grammar in Austral also inadequately considering the rural environment, especially with such a strong community use of the school similarly occurring at these schools. Both schools have significantly burdened the local services, particularly the roads, and little effort has been made other than what Minarah College similarly proposes now in Catherine Field across over a decade of operating. Considering the similar rural environment of the proposed school in Catherine Field to both Austral and Rossmore, with no proposed improvements to local infrastructure or redevelopment currently scheduled or expected within at least the next five years, the precedent of these nearby schools indicates a negative outlook for the Catherine Field community and poses unnecessary complications for future town planning should the construction of Minarah College proceed.

The proposed solutions to address these traffic concerns remain inadequate, with the widening of the road, a bus bay and parking spots proven as inadequate solutions again by the above mentioned schools but also through a knowledge of the local area. The 2021 Census revealed that only 4.8% of the local population identified their religious affiliation as Islam, with not all being school-age individuals that could attend this school of course. Considering the sheer scale of the Camden LGA, this would imply an ever smaller number of students available in the vicinity of the school in Catherine Field, Oran Park, Gregory Hills, etc. The Social Impact Assessment even identifies that “the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the immediate vicinity and the suburb of Catherine Field indicate that the population is generally older”, highlighting the lack of school-age residents to populate the school alongside the smaller population density of the area compared to other locations. The discussion of disadvantage within this assessment also suggests a lack of economic resources for local students to attend a private school, which can amount to thousands of dollars in school fees each year, with recent economic and inflationary pressures likely worsening this greatly. Therefore, the school would place exorbitant pressure on the local roads and environment as students would need to travel greater distances to attend their school.

With limited parking spaces and drop-off/pick-up spaces available, especially when taking into consideration the 51 staff members who will likely travel in from outside of the area and occupy the spots, there will likely not be sufficient spaces to accommodate the parents of the many students forcing parking to take place on Catherine Field Road. As has been recognised previously, “High private vehicle ridership has been observed, with a substantially lesser reliance (close to zero) on public transport options for the Green Valley Campus”. Catherine Field is a rural area and thus public transport is limited. The school may offer rather limited bus options but

students will likely have to be transported by their parents driving them to school. The proposed staggered start times will also do very little to alleviate traffic concerns, instead ensuring that traffic is generated by the school for more hours throughout the day. This will provide no breaks in the traffic generated for the local residents, business owners and local wildlife. Moreover, any proposed facilities that will be open to the community after school hours or on weekends will only ensure that this traffic persists consistently. The proposed right turn bay will also do little to alleviate traffic concerns, with few cars able to fit in such a turning bay.

Unfortunately, the roads are also not safe and there is no suggestion that this will be improved any time soon. In fact, the roads have only worsened since the original application for this development, with the road being riddled with pot holes and being barely more than dirt at times — one must only look to the adjacent Chisholm Road to see the completely inadequate conditions available to local residents. There is an extreme bend in the road on Catherine Field Road near the proposed site of the school which poses a great risk to both drivers and attendants of the school. The proposal indicates that only metres away from this bend on Catherine Field Road will be the main site access point. No proposed school or community facilities with such great numbers of potential occupants should think to make such a location the setting of their facilities if they genuinely prioritise the safety of individuals. Vehicles consistently speed on these roads due to the rural nature of the area, regardless of the speed limit, including trucks and heavy duty vehicles from the multiple businesses located in the area which are forced to use Catherine Field Road due to the decision to make no right turn available from Deepfields Road onto Camden Valley Way.

Even if these vehicles did travel the speed limit, which local residents can personally assure that they don't, the sheer number of vehicles on a road with children proposed to walk the pathless and streetlight-less streets of Catherine Field Road is a severe risk. Section 3.4.1 of The Transport & Accessibility Impact Assessment clearly states "Currently there are no provisions for footpaths along the Catherine Fields road" and that "There is no anticipated footpath works planned for the Catherine Field area". This does not meet the Environmental Assessment Requirement "identify any infrastructure upgrades required on-site & off-site to facilitate the development & any arrangements to ensure that the upgrades will be implemented on time and be maintained". There are no pedestrian footpaths or crossings other than those proposed within the kiss and drop area, so the school itself obviously will not take responsibility for this either. Parents who attempt to pick up children outside of school, because there will not be enough parking spaces, will be unsafe walking or parking on the sides of roads, additional to the impact on traffic this will have. Only mere years ago was a driver killed nearby on the end of Springfield Road due to speeding, poor road conditions and a similar road bend as that on Catherine Field Rd.

Another consideration is that due to substantial deforestation and development of the Camden area in recent years, the presence of local wildlife within Catherine has greatly increased. Suddenly increasing the car traffic within the area through the development of this car-dependent

school would come at a substantial cost to local wildlife, which would not occur should there be local students who can actually walk to their school or utilise public transport to minimise the number of cars on the road. Moreover, the school would require greater efforts to address local wildlife than Minarah College has currently proposed, especially due to rural nature of the location. Catherine Field residents are currently required to utilise fencing on their properties that allow for wild animals to make their way across the land through the fencing. Would the school consider such factors and be equipped to have wild animals such as foxes and snakes, which is commonplace within Catherine Field across the year, roaming through the school grounds?

The reduction to 980 students barely reduces the negative impact on directly neighbouring residents. Local residents would still be forced to live next to a school which is processing the sewerage of nearly 1000 individuals through septic tanks next to their properties, with the smell certain to be a considerable nuisance for them and even the students. Locals are able to vouch that the smell of pump-out septic tanks pollutes the air and this is in relation to households with only a few mere individuals, not hundreds of students and staff. Moreover, the telecommunication networks are insufficient as it is in Catherine Field — one can only imagine the negative impact hundreds of students and staff will have on the local internet and telephone supply in a rural area when the existing service is already poor and we have only been connected to the NBN in the last few years. The substantial shift to working-from-home and high prevalence of at-home businesses must be considered when discussing the major impact that this school will have on these services, with the proposal lacking any suggestions to alleviate this and the government providing no future proposal to improve the services.

Flooding should also be considered, with the the existence of a natural overland flow towards the Heatherfield Close side of this site raises concerns for neighbours regarding where this water will move once diverted for the sake of the school's construction. Also, flooding is expected within the carpark at the exit gate where the overland water flows and the flood safety plan provided (which is very likely to be used based on the environmental events of recent years) offers absurd solutions. It would either keep the children on site or asks that they walk the students through flood waters to Catherine Field hall which cannot hold 980 students plus 51 teachers and which will have no footpaths or safe roads to accommodate this journey.

Unfortunately, it is abundantly clear that despite promises of a safe and inclusive environment Minarah College will not include the local population in their operations as private religion-based schools do not provide opportunities to those who do not follow their religion. Yes, greater educational services and job opportunities should be provided across Camden but this school will largely offers these to students and staff outside of the area, considering the demographics of Camden mentioned above. One can argue that we should be encouraging a more diverse community by drawing families to an institution such as that proposed; however, previous failures in infrastructure and policy can highlight that a reactive approach such as that where we first build a school without sufficient local students to attend is not wise. We should be proactive — build

the homes and develop the diverse population first through housing and development that will improve the community through contributions that must be made to the local government and then build a school that is *needed* once there are adequate resources to support it.

If educational facilities need to be built, which they do, then state funding should be provided to a PUBLIC school which does not divide based on socio-economic or religious status but instead caters to all students in the local rate-paying population who can safely travel to the school without negative ramifications to local services and climates. Such a school should not be proposed on a site riddled with safety concerns, insufficient resources, and negative ramifications on local residents and the rural environments.

Overall, it is apparent that numerous crucial issues are triggered by the proposed school which have not been addressed by developer. The costs of developing such a school in the proposed location, both for the state government financially and to the livelihood of local residents, should not be triggered. The revised proposal does little to alleviate the concerns of local residents or address the numerous implications this development will have on residents and the environment. On the basis of the numerous concerns addressed above, I object to the proposed development. Whether it is a proposal for a total of 980 students (although the Department even did not recommend more than 650 students) or less, the decision to proceed with such a development would demonstrate a glaring case of negligence and hypocrisy from development authorities.