



2 April 2019

Ms Prity Cleary  
NSW Department of Planning and Environment  
GPO Box 39  
Sydney NSW 2001

Dear Ms Cleary

**Objection – SSD 17\_8993 SCEGGS Darlinghurst Concept DA and Stage 1 DA**

Thank you in advance for the opportunity to lodge an objection to the SCEGGS Masterplan Concept and Stage 1 documents. After reviewing the SCEGGS Masterplan I wish to highlight several objections and concerns:

**1. Staff and student numbers:**

The application is unclear with regards to the actual vs. proposed staff and student numbers once the plan has been completed. The application states that no increase in staff and student numbers will occur as a result of the SCEGGS 2040 Masterplan. The SCEGGS 2017 annual report states that the school has 900 students from kindergarten to year 12. However, the traffic impact assessment prepared by Traffix states that there are 185 staff and 931 students (178 kindergarten to year 4 and 753 year 5 to year 12).

I note that the proposed DA also proposes an option for SCEGGS to include a childcare centre for 90 children. These additional student numbers would represent an increase of at least 10% in terms of current student numbers. The report makes no mention of the increase in teaching staff and support staff required to support the childcare centre. This is significant as these additional students and teachers will add further traffic and parking impacts to the surrounding neighbourhood, which is already trying to cope with heavy traffic and parking congestion.

I also note that the impact of the proposed childcare centre has not been taken into account within the submission as part of the Environmental Impact Statement and supporting reports.

In order to understand how the proposed childcare centre could impact the surrounding neighbourhood, it seems reasonable to request that the proposed staff numbers and proposed student numbers be included in the application to help ensure complete transparency throughout the application.

The neighbourhood surrounding SCEGGS has experienced significant traffic management issues for many years even with the current student numbers; including but not limited to double ranking of buses and vehicles, vehicle congestion for periods of 20 minutes or more and abusive behaviour from parents picking up and dropping off their children. I would request that any consent to this plan require SCEGGS to maintain the current approved student numbers, on the grounds that any

increase in student and staff numbers will add further traffic congestion and limit vehicle movements even further.

I would request that the provision of a childcare centre be excluded from the Concept DA given that there is insufficient information regarding the proposal and its future impact to the surrounding residences and traffic flow.

## **2. Proposed Gross Floor area**

The Masterplan proposes an increase of over 3,000 square metres of Gross Floor Area but argues that this will not generate high levels of traffic as existing student numbers and staff populations will not change.

As described above in item 1, the proposed increase in student and staff numbers will in fact increase the levels of traffic as the increase in student numbers (and the corresponding increase in vehicles) will be a direct result of proposed the childcare centre. The increase of the Gross Floor Area should be reviewed in detail and all impacts on the surrounding area be made fully transparent.

## **3. Exemption to Section 94 Contribution**

The Masterplan seeks an exemption from a Section 94 contribution to the City of Sydney. The Masterplan suggests that the development will not result in a net population increase; however, as described in section 1 above, this is not the case. I believe that consent to this plan require a Section 94 contribution be a requirement before the proposal can proceed.

## **4. Traffic Management**

The traffic impact of parents dropping off and collecting students along Forbes Street has been an ongoing concern for residents of the Horizon for many years. The school has taken very limited steps to address traffic congestion along Forbes Street, primarily in the form of written communication to parents. SCEGGS plays no role and has taken no responsibility for the impact of the traffic generated by student drop off and collection each day despite repeated requests to school management over many years.

Forbes and Bourke Streets are very narrow and traffic congestion continues to escalate, particularly as school and extracurricular activities extend later each day and into evenings and on the weekends. We have buses double ranking or parking up to three in a row, thereby reducing the drop off area for parents and causing further congestion along Forbes Street. We have also seen parents:

- Making u-turns on Forbes Street into oncoming traffic
- Double ranking along the street
- Driving through the Horizon turning circle and then stopping, which blocks traffic exiting from the Horizon
- Encouraging their children to cross into oncoming traffic and cross the street towards the front of the Horizon. This is extremely dangerous, particularly when children run out from behind buses.

The school has failed to provide daily traffic management staff to manage parents and buses particularly during the peak morning and afternoon drop off periods. The Horizon has posted a notice at the entrance advising parents that the Horizon

entrance is private property - with mixed results – resulting in congestion at the single drop off and pick up point in front of the Horizon as cars seeking to make u-turns won't move back into Forbes Street until the traffic has eased.

I note that the Traffic Impact Assessment submitted as part of the Masterplan DA suggests that SCEGGS could deploy supervisors to manage traffic; however, in spite of repeated requests to SCEGGS over many years we have not seen this put into place and certainly not on a permanent basis. I believe that SCEGGS must provide authorised traffic controllers at both the Forbes and Bourke street entrances to fully address this issue. Delays accessing the Horizon from the top end of Forbes street can extend for up to 20 minutes as cars wait to drop off and pick up during peak periods. Only authorised traffic controllers will help ensure that traffic movement continues follow at a reasonable speed and in a safe manner.

Further to the above, traffic congestion is made worse as result of SCEGGS taking control of St Peters Street, a public road both during and after school hours as well as weekends. I am not aware of SCEGGS having been granted permission to close this public street nor am I aware of any formal planning consultation having been undertaken regarding the street closure. In effect, we now have a public street that can only be accessed at the sole discretion of SCEGGS. This is particularly dangerous at night and weekends, when the gymnasium is regularly used by different groups and cars drive to the end of the street to make a u-turn since St. Peters street is closed. I would strongly suggest that any consent to this DA must require SCEGGS to provide 24-hour, 7 day a week access to the public to use St. Peters street. I would also suggest that all pickups and drop offs be moved on to St. Peters street to reduce the double ranking along Forbes Street. This can be accomplished if the planting areas on St Peters street are removed, allowing buses and cars to park and traffic to pass on the right side of the street as well – this was in place previously and remained the standard practice for SCEGGS for many years.

The additional traffic generated as a result of SCEGGS incorporating a child care facility would be very significant, as most parents will drive and leave their vehicles to drop off and collect their children. Further, if the childcare facility were to be placed in Wilkinson House, traffic congestion would result in significantly worse conditions as more drop offs and pickups would be occurring. Most importantly, the Traffic Impact Assessment does not address the additional traffic impact of the proposed child care centre nor does it address it in the context of the current traffic environment. This is a significant omission which will impact vehicle access and departure for the entire neighbourhood. The DA consent should prohibit the development of a child care facility at SCEGGS as there is no proposal to address the traffic impact it would generate – significantly - to the further detriment of residents in the neighbourhood.

## **5. Design Excellence Competition**

I note that the proposed development is likely to exceeding a CIV of \$50M given the proposed scope of works. I believe this should be reviewed and a competitive design process should be established before approval is granted.

## **6. Wilkinson House**

SCEGGS intention to demolish Wilkinson House is highly objectionable to me. This is a listed heritage building and designated as part of the East Sydney Heritage Conservation area. The proposed building on the same site makes no attempt to preserve the current building in any way while the master plan even acknowledges the heritage value of the existing structure.

The building occupies a highly prominent position on the SCEGGS site, and its position has made it an integrated part of the Forbes Street streetscape for decades.

I strongly support Option 2 described in the Heritage Assessment documentation - retention of the complete building façade, and adapting the interior for future use, which has been the stated objective by both the SCEGGS staff and their architects at public consultations. The DA should not be approved unless option 2 is agreed.

My feedback is intended to help SCEGGS achieve a balanced outcome that ensures the needs of other residents and community members in the neighbourhood are also considered. Thank you for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,

