

38-50 Swift St, Ballina 2478

26-5-2017

To whom it may concern,

I wish to express my concerns regarding the lack of parking proposed for the new Ballina Coast High School in Swift Street, Ballina NSW. I am the Principal of St Francis Xavier Catholic Primary School which is also situated in Swift St. Our school entrance sits directly across the road from what used to be the main entrance to Ballina High School and is now a demolition and development site.

I am very concerned about the safety risks to my 383 students and 260 families due to inadequate parking facilities provided onsite at the new school. Provision for parking on site would free up the surrounding streets for the extra cars of parents from Ballina Coast High School as well as maintaining parking spaces for parents in our school community. Our well-established road safety policy, developed as part of the current Transport for NSW Road Safety Strategy, has ensured the safety of our children and their families. Strict procedures and expectations are based on the current conditions.

Currently the parking spaces immediately in front of the entry to St Francis Xavier School are deliberately occupied by teachers' cars. This decision was made to prevent the movement of these vehicles, particularly when our 44 Kindergarten students are dismissed from school and bus travellers are crossing the pedestrian crossing operating between the two schools. Current statistics from the Centre of Road Safety highlight the most dangerous times for injury to children are before and after school dismissal times. These stationary cars provide stability at this dangerous time for vulnerable road users.

This current policy will be affected by the increased volume of vehicles in transit and vehicles requiring parking spaces when Ballina Coast High School is completed. With no parking identified on the plans for Ballina Coast High School there is the potential for any vehicle associated with the new school to disregard current safe road safety practice and occupy the stationary car spaces presently occupied by teachers from St Francis Xavier school. The issue is the vehicles moving in and out of the car spaces as the 383 students are entering and exiting the school.

In 2017 approximately 190 St Francis Xavier students access the bus bays across the road in Swift St and many others use the crossing as they walk to and from school each day. Whilst this crossing is supervised in the afternoon, any additional traffic will create additional risks for our children in this already high risk area. I draw your attention to the fact that whilst we have procedures and policies in place to protect our enrolled children, we are dealing with children as young as five years old. Transport for NSW advises that these children are so vulnerable in the traffic environment that they must hold an adult's hand until they are eight years old.

Pre school children face even greater dangers in the traffic environment. Each September we introduce approximately 50 new children who are only four years old and their parents to this new environment. At this stage, these children are not yet familiar with the traffic environment around our school and in many cases, have not yet adequately developed cognitively or physically to keep them safe in a busy environment.

The current procedure is for parents to park their cars, then proceed to a designated area inside the school gate and collect their children from the supervising teacher. The same procedure occurs for our new Kindergarten children. There will be chaos and potential jostling for parking positions to collect children if Ballina Coast High School does not have on site parking. This will translate into extended collection time and extended supervision time for teachers. Crane St is already used by Ballina Primary parents to park and collect their children, so St Francis Xavier parents cannot move their parent pick up to Crane St.

I have grave fears for the safety of our students and families if the current plans for Ballina Coast High School are not amended to include onsite parking.

Yours sincerely



Dan Gubby
Principal