

**RE: SUBMISSION - MEADOWBANK EDUCATION and EMPLOYMENT PRECINCT SCHOOLS PROJECT -
STATE SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION No: SSD-9343**

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission.

I object to the planning application to relocate Marsden High School situated since 1959 (60 years) on an attractive spacious **5.4 hectare site** with excellent transport links at 22a Winbourne St, **West Ryde** (close to Victoria Rd) to part (about 60%, that is approximately 1.98 hectares) of the 3.3 hectare site adjacent to the TAFE NSW Meadowbank Campus at 2 Rhodes St Meadowbank. The application aims to increase built capacity for high school students, ultimately catering for 1,500 students and a 120 place Intensive English Centre (IEC), that is, 1,620 students and provide high quality classrooms and collaborative learning spaces. There is a need for more classrooms for high school students, but the application seeks to crowd 1,620 students into a 1.98 hectare area which is only 36%, or about a third, of the existing Marsden High School site. This does not make sense planning or educational sense.

I note that a primary school catering for 1,000 students will be sharing the proposed 3.3 hectare school site, that is, 2,620 school students overall. Adjoining the site is the approximately 6 hectare TAFE campus which will cater for 13,000 to 14,000 students and is subject to a separate State Significant Development Application. In contrast, nearby Epping Boys High School enjoys a 9.15 hectare school site.

Essentially I consider the planning for the high school as outlined in the application documents to be flawed as it lacks a holistic approach, lacks context, has a narrow focus and contains some factual errors. I disagree with the summarized applicant's assessment conclusions on page vii Environmental Impact Statement's Executive Summary, in particular that the proposal is suitable for the site (given the superior alternative and location of the existing 5.4 hectare Marsden High School).

In essence, the existing Marsden High School is of **immense strategic significance for the provision of secondary education** to the state of NSW and **both** the Local Government Areas of **Ryde** and **Parramatta** given its spacious 5.4 hectare site with minimal constraints, excellent transport links, proximity to Victoria Rd, its location by Marsden Rd and formal school catchment area across parts of Ryde and Parramatta Local Government areas, in particular the nearby Meadowbank/Shepherds Bay precinct, and the Melrose Park development (which will ultimately cater for an additional 11,000 dwellings and is currently being constructed on Marsden High Schools' doorstep -just across the road).

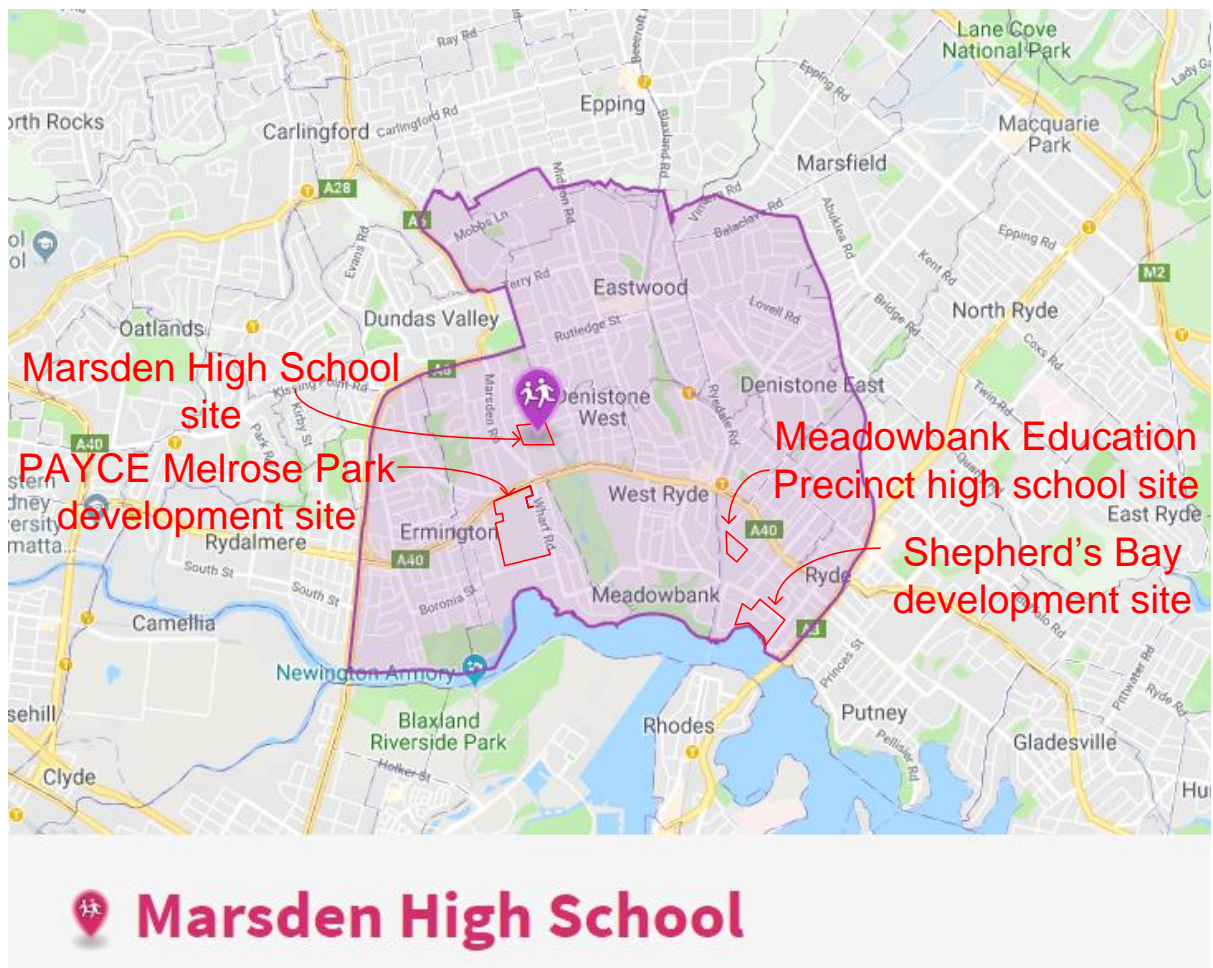
The existing Marsden High School is a thriving school with a 2019 enrolment of 846 students (*NSW Public Schools February 2019 Enrolment Census* – www.data.cese.nsw.gov.au) with room for very significant growth. From a planning and educational perspective it should be regarded as the “jewel in the crown” for secondary educational provision. Yet, for reasons which have not been divulged, and with no consultation, it has been determined that the current Marsden High School site is surplus to educational requirements. Further, I was informed at the information session at Marsden High School on 11 November 2019 by the senior NSW Schools Infrastructure officer that the current Marsden High School buildings would be demolished **immediately** the proposed Meadowbank Education Precinct school was constructed.

I submit that consideration should be given to designing and constructing a multi-storey superlative state of the art secondary school on the existing, superior Marsden High School site catering for 1,620 to 2,000 students, instead of unnecessarily crowding the high school students into the tiny 1.98 hectare area portion of the Meadowbank site. This area could be reserved for a secondary school in the future when and if required (if there was no more spacious site available). In the meantime, it could be utilised for open space and perhaps sports courts and fields.

CONTEXT

The State Significant Development Application is narrow and parochial in focus. The application neglects to address the formal catchment area and thus students served by Marsden High School. Please see the prescribed Designated Enrolment Area Map below.

Marsden High School Designated Enrolment Area - NSW Public School Finder - NSW Department of Education Website.



Marsden High School and the IEC is co-located with Ermington Public School on a 7.85 hectare site (*NSW Department of Education Asset Management Register 2012*, which was provided to Northern Sydney Council of Parents & Citizens Associations pursuant to a GIPA Application). Marsden High School, together with the IEC, has 5.4 hectares of the site. It is very close to Victoria Rd and by Marsden Rd,

West Ryde which is the boundary between Ryde Local Government Area and Parramatta Local Government Area, and the boundary between NSW Ryde Electorate and NSW Parramatta Electorate. It is common for public schools to have formal catchment/enrolment area across adjoining local government areas and across NSW electorates.

As shown on the above map, the existing Marsden High School is more centrally located to its Designated Enrolment Area than the proposed Meadowbank Education precinct.

Marsden High School is a thriving high school with a 2019 enrolment of 846 students. It is an in demand school with an enrolment of approximately 170 year 7 students for 2020. The overwhelming majority of students live in the designated enrolment area - 64.76% which is significantly higher than the Sydney average of 57% (*“Why School Shopping is Killing Off the Local High School, Sydney Morning Herald 25 February 2015*).

Marsden High School has no demountables (contrary to what is stated in the development application). It has 56 permanent classrooms and a Permanent Usable Floor Area (UFA) of 7,112. It has extensive, attractive grounds and a full size oval.

Public primary schools located within Marsden High School’s formal enrolment area (*NSW Public School Finder, NSW Department of Education Website*) are:

- Denistone East Public School
- Meadowbank Public School
- Ermington Public School
- Melrose Park Public School
- Eastwood Public School
- Ermington West Public School
- Rydalmere East Public School

Melrose Park Public School, Ermington West Public School and Rydalmere East Public School are located in Parramatta Local Government Area. Erminton Public School’s catchment area is across areas of both Ryde and Parramatta LGAs.

At the information session on Monday 11 November 2019 at Marsden High School the Senior NSW Schools Infrastructure officer emphasized on several occasions that the Designated Enrolment Area Marsden High School would remain the same with the proposed relocation to the small Meadowbank site.

However, the State Significant Development Application is so narrow that it neglects to consider current and future students living in Parramatta Local Government Area in the Marsden High Enrolment area. These students are treated as if they do not and will not exist. Further, there has been no consideration of the Melrose Park Payce Development in construction which will ultimately cater for 11,000 additional dwellings and which is squarely within the Marsden High School Designated Enrolment Area and on

Marsden High School's "doorstep". Parramatta Council has not been consulted, nor any relevant planning documents relating to Parramatta.

This is of critical importance as the NSW State Government has a legislative obligation for public educational provision. The *Education Act*, 1990 NSW explicitly provides that a child is entitled to be enrolled in a government school in the designated intake area in which the child's home is situated. The Application does not appear to consider this.

The stated purpose of the State Significant Application is to accommodate future population growth within the City of Ryde Local Government Area. The Parramatta LGA component of the Marsden High School Designated Enrolment Area is ignored throughout the Application documents. For example, the Social Impact Assessment narrowly focuses on the community profile of Meadowbank, and fails to consider the community profile of the Marsden High School Designated Enrolment Area including the area within Parramatta LGA. As is well documented, there is a severe shortage of schools in Parramatta LGA and the school student population is expected to increase significantly more than in Ryde LGA. Schools are essential infrastructure.

Until recently, the NSW Department of Education's standard benchmark for a new high school was 6 hectares for 800 – 1,000 students. This Application is about one fifth of this for the proposed 1,620 students. This is unacceptable when the existing spacious 5.4 hectare Marsden High School site can be re-developed to provide outstanding secondary education facilities.

The current Educational Facilities Standards are for 10 square metres of play space per student. The State Development Applicant does not address whether this criteria has been met. Adequate play space is essential for students' physical and mental health and cognition. It is particularly important for issues such as increasing obesity, and for students with disabilities such as ADHD and on the autism spectrum.

Given all of the above, I do not consider that the State Development Application proposal for the relocation of Marsden High School is suitable for the proposed site and in the public interest.

I submit that serious consideration be given to re-developing the Marsden High School site at first instance to provide for increased student capacity and to provide high quality classrooms, collaborative learning spaces, open spaces and outstanding sports facilities. There is ample room on site for demountable classrooms while construction would be in progress. There are many examples of rebuilds or major upgrades at existing school sites. These include Arthur Phillip High School, Alexander Park Community School, Harbord Public School, North Curl Curl Public School, Mowbray Road Public School, Chatswood Public School, Chatswood High School, Killara High School, Killara Public School, Willoughby Public School, Willoughby High School and Artarmon Public School.

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission.

Yours sincerely,