

17 December 2019

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: Comments to Lindfield Learning Village SSD-8114

Please note my objection to the current proposal for Stage 2 & 3 works to Lindfield Learning Village.

Whilst as a local resident I am in favour of an LLV School, in principle, I have some very strong objections to the current proposal for Stages 2 & 3. My primary objection is the very DANGEROUS Loop Road and IGNORANT traffic proposals. I also would propose that the overall school numbers are reduced so as to minimise the impost on the local road network (which is very congested as is and does not have the capacity to receive the additional traffic volumes proposed).

I have summarised my concerns as below:

1. Loop Road proposal utilising Dunstan Grove is VERY UNSAFE and irresponsible
2. Community Consultation is laughable
3. Emergency Vehicle access is compromised
4. Local roads are NOT SAFE for proposed traffic
5. Traffic & Transport Assessment Report is a whitewash
6. No alternatives have been proposed
7. Green Transport Plan is wishful thinking, but should not be relied upon as factual

**** Loop Road proposal utilising Dunstan Grove is VERY UNSAFE and irresponsible ****

Multiple documents reference the one-way loop road system, inferring it is a simple and straight forward route for car & bus traffic during peak times. However, what ALL documents fail to address is the elephant in the room... that being that Dunstan Grove is a public two-way road that forms an integral part of this Loop Road proposal. And this is where it is MOST DANGEROUS. I also note that Dunstan Grove road and apartment block is not shown on any drawings within the proposal, so as not to draw attention to the issue!

The Traffic report and supporting documents confirm there will be 14 busses and 300+ cars travelling on Dunstan Grove during each morning and afternoon peak, and more throughout the day. However, these reports fail to include the surrounding existing residential traffic – from Dunstan Grove and Charles Bean Oval. Dunstan Grove road lanes can accommodate typical two-way traffic (standard size cars), however larger vehicles (delivery vans, large SUVs) often fail to remain within their lane. The submission documents note that a 7.8m Fire Brigade vehicle will need to cross over the double-solid lines to reach the end of Dunstan Grove and access the rear of the school in an emergency. However, the frequency of such an emergency is minimal, therefore the risk of crashing into another car coming up the hill at the same time is very small. What is not included in the submission is that a standard 12.5m school bus is a much larger vehicle and will certainly need to cross over onto the oncoming traffic lane to navigate the 5 corners from Eton Rd down Dunstan Grove and into the rear of LLV. Also noting these corners have limited sightlines (i.e. blind corners). Utilising the traffic numbers within the report, there would be 28 busses per day, within two 2.5-hour peak periods. This is extremely frequent, and the risk of a crash with oncoming traffic is almost guaranteed on a daily basis. This proposal has not been thought through carefully by the proponent

with the local community in mind, and is completely ignorant of the risks associated with this proposed traffic loop.

There is an existing unmarked crossing on Dunstan Grove, immediately following a blind corner under the school over-bridge. At present a great number of Dunstan Grove residents utilise this informal crossing on their way to and from each day. With the proposed increased volume of traffic (+800 vehicles per day), and the poor sightlines on this corner, risk of pedestrian and vehicular accidents is extremely likely. A zebra crossing may assist but will not remove this risk as the road itself is simply not suitable for this volume of traffic.

Whilst the school may have procedures for drop off, it is delusional to believe that all parents will adhere to these guidelines. Noting the volume of traffic proposed at each morning and afternoon peak, the queue of cars within the Loop Road will be significant, and at times more than 100m long for many minutes. As is a common occurrence in the morning traffic rush, people have limited time and tend not to be too patient when they are in a hurry. The report does not even consider those parents who will drop off their children at the Dunstan Grove roundabout and return up the hill avoiding the queued Loop Road via the school, nor parents dropping off their children outside the Blair Wark VC Community Centre and turning around across Dunstan Grove at that location (often a 3-point turn minimum, adjacent to a blind corner, as currently happens many times a day). These existing traffic issues will only multiply with the increased traffic load and have not been considered within any of the reports.

The loop road is explained as only operating during morning and afternoon peak times. However, in reality there is likely to be many instances during the day that busses are required to access the school to transport large numbers of students, such as for sporting carnivals, excursions, etc. As mentioned above, the SAFETY RISKS ARE SIGNIFICANT based on the current proposal, let alone with increased and unplanned bus traffic throughout the day.

**** Community Consultation is laughable ****

Whilst the Dunstan Grove Strata Committee have had 2 sit-down meetings, and 1 on-site walk-through meeting with stakeholders, none of our concerns have been listened to. In fact, we have been LIED TO by Schools Infrastructure and their representatives. On each occasion we have pointed out the safety concerns (as noted above). We have been assured many times that these have been addressed within the SSD Submission, specifically the bus sweep path concern. Having read through all documents within the submission, I am disheartened to learn that NONE of our SAFETY issues have been considered at all, and no thought appears to have been given to the impact on local residents and community. The community has been steamrolled in this process, and it is disgraceful that all stakeholders are blindly pretending to have completed their due diligence in community consultation. Dunstan Grove Strata Committee have been open with their residents about the issues. However, had the committee not instigated these meetings, there has been no other attempt to engage in a meaningful manner with local residents, and certainly not those living within other nearby areas such as Tubbs View, Shout Ridge, Abingdon Rd, or Eton Rd.

There was a public consultation meeting held on 7th December where a number of local residents turned up to voice their concerns. Three days prior to this meeting the Dunstan Grove Strata Committee were provided with a copy of the bus swept paths on Dunstan Grove, clearly showing 5 instances where busses would cross over the double lines and at times a significant distance onto the wrong side of the road! (Refer attached markup, with pink highlight showing these clash locations). In response to our complaints, at this consultation meeting a proposal was displayed showing road widening in these 5 locations to alleviate the crossover issue. Whilst this widening was

claimed to resolve the issues, it is only on paper that it works as there is no allowance for safety margin and the 'human factor' that it is very difficult to keep a bus strictly within the minimum space each time. In addition, further issues are created by lessening the footpath width to accommodate for street signage and lighting. Notwithstanding, neither the swept path study nor the widening proposal is included within the submission, so is not available for the wider community to view and comment on. This again is further evidence of the stakeholders blatant attempt to hide and disguise the ugly truth and push through their agenda without considering the impacts on the wider community.

**** Emergency Vehicle access is compromised ****

Whilst the submission documents refer to a fire truck accessing the rear of the school in the event of a fire, this is in conflict with the queuing expected on the loop road. Should there be a medical emergency (a greater likelihood for Dunstan Grove than a bush fire), it is hard to understand how an ambulance will navigate down Dunstan Grove within and past the queue of traffic whilst other vehicles are also driving the other direction. The submission documents discuss the requirement for the Loop Road in the event of an emergency, for which it does solve a serious concern. However, it seems contrary to that logic to then redirect all car and bus traffic along the same dead-end road, thus blocking the very road they are claiming is integral for emergency vehicle access!

**** Local roads are NOT SAFE for proposed traffic ****

The Response to Submission document does acknowledge there will be increased traffic on Bent St and Eton Rd, however it fails to address the DANGEROUS TRAFFIC SITUATION that currently exists on Abingdon Rd and which will only increase dramatically with Phases 2 & 3 of the School. The shortest route from Pacific Highway is via Westminster & Abingdon Rds. This is currently a windy road with limited sightlines and no pedestrian footpaths. Given this road is frequently used already, as it is the most direct route to the highway, it is sensible to assume a large number of additional cars will also use this road to access LLV.

Abingdon Rd is the current bus route for the existing 565 bus. It is also assumed that the school busses would follow the same route. This road is quite dangerous for vehicular traffic, as parking is permitted on both sides of the road, and often creates congestion and dangerous head-on situations along the many windy and blind corners. Increased bus and car traffic will only heighten this risk.

There is no footpath along Abingdon Rd, which forces pedestrians onto the road. (Noting this is the main bus route for the 565, it is expected there will be pedestrian walking along at least parts of this road to travel to the bus stop locations from their homes). I have previously addressed this issue personally with Council and have been advised that it is not a priority area. Given it is already a dangerous road to walk along, and will only increase with the School vehicular traffic and any students walking to the train station, it seems remiss of Council not to take action and install footpaths. Given this is now causing an issue as part of this SSD submission, the onus then falls to Dept. Planning to take action. I would request the Dept. Planning to enforce as part of the approval process that the School install a footpath along Abingdon Rd from Eton Rd to Shirley St. Failing to enforce this is acknowledgement of the risks and acceptance of this dangerous travel path. (Previous phase 1 approval required pedestrian access from LLV to Lindfield Primary School and Pacific Highway. This has been done, however the crossings are not safe, and this is still not the most direct nor most commonly used pedestrian route to Roseville and Lindfield train stations and Pacific Highway).

Other roads within the immediate vicinity are also significantly impacted by this proposal, but not mentioned within the submission documents. As Abingdon Rd and Eton Rd are the main feeder roads into the school, any streets branching off these roads will experience significant congestion during peak hours. Most notably, Shout Ridge and Tubbs View have stop signs at their Eton Rd junction and will find it very difficult to turn onto Eton Road against the heavy flow of traffic in the morning and afternoon peak hours.

**** Traffic & Transport Assessment Report is a whitewash ****

ARUP are a well-regarded traffic consultancy firm, however I am shocked and surprised that they have endorsed this plan in its current state. Their report completely ignores the safety concerns created along Dunstan Grove as a result of this Loop Road. It appears that this report was written under the direction of a Client who only wishes to consider this one solution and no alternatives, and who DOES NOT CARE ABOUT SAFETY of the local community. For ARUP to fail to address the significant safety risks, in particular the bus swept path crossing over onto oncoming traffic, is completely NEGLIGENT.

**** No alternatives have been proposed ****

The loop road is a good solution for emergency vehicles only as they will need to access the rear of the site, however it is a terrible proposal for all school traffic.

No other alternatives appear to have been investigated thoroughly before deciding on the DANGEROUS Loop Road solution. It is obvious that the Loop Road is the most cost-effective solution for the School. However, given the significant safety risks associated with this proposal, I cannot see how this proposal has the endorsement of Schools Infrastructure, let alone ARUP as the traffic consultant. Anyone who approves this report is accepting the risks as is, and will have blood on their hands (figuratively, but very likely also literally) following the first inevitable pedestrian and vehicular accident.

There are alternative solutions possible within the School Grounds, via the existing main entry road, to facilitate the morning car traffic, although this would require more construction work to modify the existing hardstand, car parking and play areas. It is obvious that this is not preferred and was dismissed early in the planning phase as it would be slightly more costly and there is a budget that the School needs to fall within. TO COMPROMISE SAFETY FOR COST IS ABHORRENT.

The Dunstan Grove Strata Committee has proposed a few alternatives to the School for their consideration. These may or may not be the final solution, but deserve to be investigated in detail as all alternative options proposed a safer than the current Loop Road proposal.

**** Green Transport Plan is wishful thinking, but should not be relied upon as factual ****

To assume young children will be sent to school by their parents on a bicycle is ludicrous. As a mother myself, I can assure you I will only be comfortable for my child to cycle a short distance on safe pedestrian paths in areas with safe crossings if she were to ride to school in the future, and only once she is much older and more aware of her surroundings and more traffic-aware. I would also not be comfortable sending my child alone on a bus in the junior primary school years. I am surely not alone as a parent with those concerns, therefore any assumptions that a significant proportion of young children will adopt other methods of travelling to school other than by car is not realistic.

Further, the suggestion of car-pooling is also not realistic with young children. Whilst it might be possible, given the current regulations around car seats until a child is 8 years old, it is unlikely another parent will have a spare car seat just to drive another child to and from school.

Not only that, but as the school is not a local catchment, the students attending LLV will be coming from suburbs further away. Therefore, the likelihood of another student who a child is friends with travelling from a nearby location to the school at the same time is reduced, and further contradicts the suggestion of a large number of students carpooling.

**** SUMMARY ****

In summary, I strongly object to this proposal on the basis of SIGNIFICANT SAFETY CONCERNS with the current proposal. I would request the loop road is rejected as the main travel route, and the maximum number of students permitted at the school is reduced to 1200. Whilst I am in favour of a school being developed on the site, I believe it would be remiss of the Dept. Planning to approve this proposal in its current format without significant changes. It is almost a certainty that there will be pedestrian and/or vehicular accidents along Dunstan Grove and Abingdon Rd, the responsibility will fall firmly on the approving authority as Dept. Planning, as well as Ku-Ring-Gai Council, for not enforcing changes at the planning stage when possible, before these risks arise.

Kind Regards,



ATTACHMENT/s:

1. Markup of bus swept path, showing 5x dangerous instances along Eton Rd & Dunstan Grove where oncoming traffic overlap.