



NEW HIGH SCHOOL IN BUNGENDORE
Application No. SSD-14394209

I wish to register my objection to the proposed High School in Bungendore.

It is not rational to fully oppose the establishment of a secondary school in Bungendore. Indeed, having the experience of three children to put through their school years from Bungendore makes me somewhat envious of the coming generations of students and their families. However, you will gather from this history that I am not a new resident of Bungendore and consequently I have accumulated substantial knowledge and experience of Bungendore, its peoples and its places. My feelings are that a secondary school is essential but that the present proposal is a blunt instrument serving arguments which are biased towards a political solution rather than a finessed and optimal one to best serve the community of Bungendore. It is in a sense highly likely that the secondary school proposition, whilst laudable, is being misused to achieve outcomes unrelated to the public face of the project. These things cannot be supported, nor can the unreasonably low standard of the planning process as it has been presented to date.

I will respond to the dot points as presented in the exhibition document distributed to local residents.

- *Demolition of Bungendore Community Centre, Bungendore Pool and Majara St road infrastructure*

The Bungendore Community Centre has served the community well as a meeting place and health clinic. It was constructed for a smaller village and consequently a larger purpose built facility should be provided for the expanded community. Of significance is the dedication of the current health clinic to a hardworking and dedicated community nurse, Norah Starrs. It would be a profound injustice if memory of her was lost beyond her burial in the local cemetery. Planning and dedication of any new facility should significantly honour her past role in caring for the community of Bungendore.

Our loss of the pool and no firm indication of timing for the installation of a replacement are distressing. Because that pool plays a large part in promoting water safety and development of sport and fitness any hiatus between its demolition and replacement represents an unacceptable risk to the community. Rather than prioritise the low cost establishment of alternative playing field to the west of Bungendore, planning should focus on replacing the most costly and difficult to substitute swimming pool. Indeed, it should be a condition of the proposed build that it not proceed until such time as there is physical infrastructure in place. Sweet words and budget promises do not, and never will, prevent drowning. Promotion of water safety can.

The community of Bungendore worked very, very hard to raise the funds required to build our pool. The need was recognized because of the difficulty of access to facilities for the promotion of water safety and fitness in Bungendore's children. It was necessary for children to travel to Queanbeyan, Civic, Dickson, the AIS or Tuggeranong pools to fulfill those needs. Not all families have the structures, capabilities and wherewithal to participate in the physical transport, time allocation or cost. Having experienced these constraints personally it would be very, very

unkind of this development to re-impose these burdens and risks on future generations. I can attest that as humble as the existing facility is, it has produced confident swimmers and successful athletes who have gone on to much higher levels of achievement than would otherwise have been possible without access to a local swimming pool.

The removal of the Majara St infrastructure is laudable. Construction of the low level crossing of Turallo Creek which feeds too much traffic into this precinct and is frequently subject to closure by flooding was a planning catastrophe. Closure of that part of Majara St between Gibraltar St and Turallo Terrace should be taken as an opportunity to redesign traffic flows from the north of Turallo Creek and, I will argue, ought to go further by amending the road infrastructure and traffic management on Majara St between Gibraltar St and Malbon St.

Notable concerns have been raised about the probability of increased traffic density on Turallo Terrace. While the low level crossing of Turallo Creek persists, this probability will be fulfilled. Arising from the increased traffic on Turallo Terrace will be more movements at the intersections off Turallo Terrace of Butmaroo, Ellendon and Molonglo Streets. None of these intersections or streets is well designed as arterial roads and it can be foreseen that they will suffer as a consequence. Butmaroo St between Turallo Terrace and Gibraltar St is poorly paved, has sub-standard drainage infrastructure and is a residential street. Ellendon St is in a similar condition north of Gibraltar St and feeds into a higher use area in the commercial and service centre of Bungendore. Creditably Ellendon St at least has a traffic distribution infrastructure at the Gibraltar St intersection and likewise these are present at the Gibraltar St and Molonglo St intersection. The intersection of Turallo Terrace and Molonglo St is both difficult and dangerous to negotiate because of poor sight lines and the use of this road by heavy vehicles to and from the extractive sand pits at Lake George and the waste disposal facilities at the former Woodlawn Mine site.

From the above observations it can be reasonably foreseen that more traffic is likely to be funnelled onto Ellendon St and thus to Trucking Yard Lane. This section of road is already subject to excessive volumes of traffic with a propensity to exceed the speed limits. It is worthy that some efforts are being made to improve pedestrian access on the southern parts of Ellendon St. However, poor planning has made Ellendon St narrow and with the misalignment of lanes at the intersection with Rutledge St increasing traffic volumes on this under-designed road would be ill-advised.

Further work is required to improve the distribution and management of traffic from the northern existing suburban area and the currently under development expansion further north again. The haphazard planning of these flows and the increased demand from school drop-offs which will arise from the provision of a secondary school will see this problem only increase in magnitude and significance.

- *Construction of three double storey school buildings containing learning spaces, hall, gym, library, canteen and administrative facilities*

Noted; these are typical requirements, and as such when supporting the general principle of education, create no concerns.

- *Establishment of agricultural plot, associated school building and storage shed (for use by Scout Group)*

I am bothered by the ambiguity of this proposition. The current site of the Scout Hall, I understand, was gifted to the Scouts many years ago. A recent attempt to appropriate the site by the Queanbeyan Palerang Regional Council for a retirement village exposed the administrative ignorance of the Council and fortunately was given the rejection it deserved. It is unclear whether it is supposed that the new facility now on this site is also planned for appropriation by the High School who might then out of generosity allow the Scouts to use what was their own purpose built facility. The community deserves clarity on this matter and the Scout movement should be given certainty of continuity of facilities. For years the Scouts had to make do with the Bungendore School of Arts for their meetings. They should never be pushed out again.

Apart from perhaps providing a location for such rural pursuits as how to did a post hole and construct a fence, the proposed site for an agricultural plot could be not be less suitable. This area was a creek flat with good alluvial soil. Sometime around the 1990s the then Yarrowlumla Shire Council deposited and levelled a deep layer of clay and stone across the site, destroying what had been fertile soil. This is now the preferred site of a dog off-leash area. Past studies and community consultation rejected all alternatives. It is notable that the plan for a secondary school does not mention how this loss of facility will be managed. Indeed, should an agricultural plot be established here on part of the site, and supposing this logically includes animal husbandry, the co-location of off-leash dog exercising is absurd. One of the constraints to further development of this area with additional fencing to further enhance its use as a dog exercise area was its propensity to flood which would inevitably destroy any fencing. How this would not also happen to agricultural fencing and livestock is unclear.

- *Change of use of existing Council building to a school building including associated building alterations*

I have already mentioned what appear to be political motivations to the siting of the school. These things become increasing odious as time passes. Of course proponents come and go. Both the local member and the mayor have announced their departure from office and the mayor's spouse has been nominated as a candidate to replace the retiring local member. There are undoubted political advantages to come from the raising of profile and redistribution of the value of the Council facility away from Bungendore. In reality none of those benefitting in the political sphere from this proposition will have to bear the burden of responsibility for running down the amenity of Bungendore. It will be the people of Bungendore, and if we are honest, the town would not exist but for its people.

The cost to the taxpayer and ratepayer of this facility were well offset by the provision of significant services to the Bungendore community. As a town which is developing apace the location of planning and administrative services effectively on-site has never been more important. Centralisation of these amenities in Queanbeyan ignores the very real need for Bungendore to have its own identity and character. It is virtuous that this building is not to be demolished. It is a poor decision, likely motivated by a Queanbeyan-centric cash grab, to take away from this community.

- *Construction of a new community building containing a community library, Council shopfront and community health hub*

This is a weak solution to offset the devastating loss of the Council Offices. The replacement of the Community Centre, expansion of the Library out of the school precinct and replacement of the Norah Starrs Health Clinic are an absolute minimum requirement. Given that the school will gain from its purchase of the Council lands it would be fitting that instead of extracting that wealth for Queanbeyan's benefit they were reinvested in the community which will give up their amenity in their acquisition.

- *Use of Mick Sherd Oval during school hours and construction of new sports courts, outdoor play spaces, Covered Outdoor Learning areas and pedestrian plaza*

Noted

- *Removal of existing Rotunda and Bush Balladeers stone memorial (to be relocated to Frog Hollow Reserve)*

The removal of the Rotunda and Bush Balladeers stone memorial cannot be opposed. Whether funds ought to be wasted on relocation of a folly is another question.

I will use this opportunity to express my disgust with the off-hand manner in which the Archaeological Report has dismissed the existence of a burial near the corner of Gibraltar St and Majara St, opposite the original school building. I have been resident in Bungendore for more than 40 years. I can personally attest to the presence of a cast iron grave surround in that location prior to its removal. I cannot comment on the motivation for its removal or the identity of the individual buried there. My suggestion is that the site is beneath the shrub adjacent to the curb and visible in the background of Fig 33 of the Archaeological Report. Certainly the site was south of the large *Pinus radiata*. Others, such as past students of the school who attended over 70 years ago and are still resident on Bungendore, would be better placed to recall more of the structure and its history. There are assertions that this was an Aboriginal person. That assertion is without consequence. Irrespective of race, there is a human burial of the site and their humanity deserves recognition. I have read the pathetically weak arguments of the Report which supposes that the burial is not real because Bungendore has a cemetery. This is utter nonsense and fails wholly to disprove that a burial exists on the site where a formally constructed grave existed within the past 40 years. Loss of memory or questioning of community members who had not experienced the truth of the structure in no way invalidates the existence of that burial or the opinion of the author. It would be an utter shame and a disgrace to defile someone's last resting place without due recognition.

- *Associated works including on-site car parking, service vehicle area, internal road, bike parking, earthworks, civil works, relocation of Oval flood lighting, tree removal, landscaping, shared pathways, fencing and school identification signage*

Two matters here are and should be major concerns for this project: shared pathways and tree removal.

The present shared pathway from Gibraltar St and around Mick Sherd Oval to Turallo Terrace and beyond is a major safe route for Primary School students and other pedestrians and cyclists. It is unclear how the traffic from this pathway will be redirected. There is a logical alternative from the co-location of the path with the Turallo Terrace and Butmaroo St intersection. But as stated earlier, this area is likely to carry exaggerated volumes of vehicular traffic, is poorly developed to carry pedestrian and cycle traffic and is crossed by vehicular ingress and egress to the tennis facility. More attention is needed to how the significant amenity of safety provided by the existing path will be replaced and enhanced to at least the same level as presently available to parents and children.

Bungendore has over the years provided significant amenity for populations of birds. The Yellow Tailed Black Cockatoo has used the mature pines of the park as a food and habitat resource. It should be noted that Yellow Tailed Black Cockatoo numbers are recorded as declining in NSW and that the fires of 2020 destroyed large area of alternative habitat. With the decline and removal of senescent trees the amenity provided by our park to these large, long-lived parrots has declined. There is one mature *Pinus pinea* near the Turallo Terrace-Butmaroo St intersection which remains productive. Two smaller and immature specimens of *Pinus pinea* exist near the swimming pool and it is supposed that these are at risk. Because these are very slow growing trees provision of replacement trees is not a viable solution to off-setting their loss. These trees should be conserved and indeed such conservation and the attendant narrative this would create would not only enhance the school experience but provide kudos to the school proponents and developers.

Also on Turallo Terrace is a collection of flowering grevilleas. Though mature, and some may say untidy, they are valuable habitat for nectar-feeding birds. It is in part that untidiness which adds to their habitat desirability. A number of these birds, including the scarlet honeyeater, eastern spinebill, white-plumed honeyeater and yellow-faced honeyeater use these grevilleas as they migrate during Spring and Autumn. These plantings should not only be protected as part of the school precinct, but should be further enhanced. Such enhancement should include the eradication of the informal roadways which exist across the verge of Turallo Terrace which are used by individuals and Council staff to both legally and illegally move vehicles to and from the Oval.

- *Associated off-site works including upgrades and changes to road intersections and infrastructure, new vehicular access, drop-off/pick-up and school bus zones, pedestrian crossings, footpaths/shared pathways and public car parking*

As noted above, without major enhancements to roadworks and traffic management this project should not proceed.

There are major opportunities to be had from a broader and more intelligent analysis of traffic flow and parking considerations. However, the recent disclosure of elevated lead levels in the railway station precinct and the erection of exclusion fencing as part of investigation and management of potential lead contamination should inform decisions about this area.

I have given support to the closure of Majara St proposed in the project description. However, there appears to be substantially more gains available as part of this project by re-design of the parking proposition to make enhanced improvements in the block between

Gibraltar St and Malbon St. This section of road is already problematic because of traffic flows passed the Primary School. These can be lessened and the safety of not only students but road users in general increased by amendment of Majara St from a bi-directional carriageway to a one-way street.

The proposal to use the Station forecourt as formalised parking for the Primary School is a highly appropriate deployment of an underutilised space. The existing road structure with an entry and exit both at Gibraltar St and onto Majara St could be greatly enhanced and made safer by making the entry one-way from Gibraltar St and exit one-way onto Majara St. There already are traffic problems in these locations. Illegal U-turns at the Gibraltar St-Majara St intersection and along Majara St itself are existing problems which put road users, as well as pupils, at heightened risk. It is my suggestion that the traffic lane of Majara St adjacent to the school boundary be resumed and Majara St be made one-way with traffic flow from north to south only. This has the amenity of widening the verge for safer pedestrian and cycle use and encouraging the removal of the pinch point created by the non-functioning bus shelter. This change would not encumber either Station users or those doing the school run, because logically they are already in a powered conveyance and not extra personal effort is required while better providing for their safety. Indeed there is an added value to accrue because this arrangement would eliminate the dangerous right hand turns made out of Malbon St onto Majara St which almost invariably happen at speed and across the dividing lane markers. The intersection of Malbon and Majara Streets is inherently dangerous. Drivers heading westward must pass over a crest, often into a setting sun, negotiate the cluttered and confusing environment of the level crossing, made more so by a billboard on the left, then the rapidly approaching intersection with frequently turning traffic looking for the shortcut to Bungendore Rd via Gibraltar St and followed quickly by the pedestrian refuge across Malbon St. The new traffic circle presently under construction at the Molonglo St-Malbon St intersection would act as an efficient distributor of traffic to Bungendore Rd and closure of the right hand turn into Majara St would eliminate the pressure from turning traffic and through traffic northbound on Majara St thus greatly reducing the hazards created by the unnecessary complexity of the existing arrangement. By installing traffic calming devices in a one-way Majara St between Gibraltar St and Malbon St, this would further reduce its desirability as a "rat run" and make our community's children safer from vehicular traffic.