

Mrs Carolyn M E Cole
[REDACTED]
BUNGENDORE
NSW 2621

Director - Social and Infrastructure Assessments
Planning and Assessment
Department of Planning, Industry and Environment
Locked Bag 5022
Parramatta NSW 2124

Dear Sir or Madam

**NEW HIGH SCHOOL IN BUNGENDORE
APPLICATION NO. SSD-14394209**

I refer to the above state-significant development application. I have not, and no associate of mine, has made any political donation to any person in the 2 years preceding this submission.

I object to the proposal, for the following reason(s):

1. Location

The location of the proposed high school is inappropriate on the following grounds:

- a. NSW State Government standards for new high schools require a minimum of 4 hectares. The Development Application specifies that the Bungendore Park site has a site area of 2.9 hectares.
- b. Bungendore Park is Crown land, gazetted in 1884 and dedicated for Public Recreation.
- c. Bungendore Common, which will also be used for high school buildings is heritage protected for its historic cultural and social significance and entrusted to Council in 1979 by its former trustees to be preserved as a recreational reserve;
- d. Destruction of the town's heritage precinct;
- d. Permanent removal of well used and popular public amenities including the town's swimming pool;
- e. Constrained potential growth of the future high school, noting Bungendore's significant population growth projected over the short to mid term and the very tiny building envelope offered by the proposed site;
- f. Increased traffic and road safety risks caused by the closure of an important and heavily used road without the benefit of traffic studies.

2. Crown Land dedicated for public recreation

Bungendore Park is the town's only green space protected as Crown Land and dedicated for public recreation. The park is fundamental to the town's heritage and its character. The park is a natural draw for large numbers of visitors and tourists who drive through Bungendore on their way to and from the South Coast contributing significantly to local businesses.

The construction of a high school on Bungendore Park will not only remove Bungendore's much loved and well used recreation amenity, it will also remove any reason for visitors to linger and it will fracture and destroy what has always been Bungendore's well balanced and readily identifiable historic precinct.

In *Crown Land 2031* published in May this year by NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment. Mr Rob Stokes, Minister for Planning & Public Spaces stated that:

'A key priority for our government, particularly for me as the state's first Public Spaces Minister, is to provide better access to quality, green, open public space for people right across NSW. Crown land will play a significant role in achieving that goal'.

Bungendore Park is Crown Land and it is the town's only dedicated public recreation space. *Crown Land 2031*, proudly claims its top priority to be to '*Strengthen community connections with Crown land*' this has been roundly ignored by the Department of Education's high school plan for the sake of political expediency at state level and financial gain at local level.

3. Untruths, misrepresentation, questionable motives and opaque decision making

A future Inquiry will be informed by documents released by the NSW Dept of Planning in response to an FOI which show that in June 2020 the State Government was finalising arrangements for a large, master-planned site for the school on Tarago Road, in an area on Tarago Road already identified for future development. The site was supported by Department of Planning and the Department of Education.

The documents show that Queanbeyan Palerang Regional Council (QPRC) then intervened in the process by proposing sites that *"were not identified during the EOI process"*. Within days the Department of Education emailed the Department of Planning stating that the preferred site location was now Bungendore Park and not the site on Tarago Road. No explanation was provided.

Bungendore residents were deceived and misled by Department of Education staff who stated at their most recent community hub in Bungendore *'that the delivery of the new school is time critical and must be completed in time for enrolments in 2023. She stated that there is no contingency plan to develop the school on any alternative site should the currently proposed site prove unviable'*. It is clear from the documents released by the Department of Planning that this statement was patently untrue.

4. Failure in statutory duty to deliver value for money and accountability for decision making

At the same meeting the Department of Education's consultant project engineer stated that he was completely unaware that under the QPRC structure plan Bungendore's population will increase from 3,300 to 12,000. He was emphatic that the proposed site for the new school **would not** be in any way sufficient to accommodate such significant growth.

The Auditor General's recent report states that *'School Infrastructure NSW has been focused on delivering existing projects, election commitments and other government announcements. This has diverted attention from identifying and delivering projects that would have better met present and future student and classroom needs.'*

The Department of Education's plan fails to recognise a community built scout hall on a portion of the common, flood prone areas and low level crossings and a railway line directly behind the proposed site. The building itself has the appearance of a quick fix inner city multi storied high school with no space to grow.

To reiterate, I object most strongly to this SSDA.

Yours faithfully,

Carolyn M E Cole