



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 must make it very clear that I am not opposing the establishment of a high school to serve the Bungendore and surrounding communities, as a teacher for nearly 40 years I am very strongly supportive of a local high school.

I **object** to the proposed location of the school, for the following reason(s):

Bungendore Park is Crown Land and was zoned as "Recreation" at its establishment. The proposed loss of the most important green space in Bungendore is not in keeping with the reason that it was declared Crown Land. It is impossible to accept that the forced acquisition of such a vital village amenity will do anything but harm to the well-being of the many residents who actively use the park. Its importance is recognized in Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council's (QPRC) Bungendore Structure Plan, which states that *Bungendore Park is the primary recreation facility in Bungendore* (Page 10).

The recently announced NSW Government's NSW Public Spaces Legacy Program and The Parks for People Program, with funding of \$250 and \$50 respectively, only serves to underscore the importance of green space and parklands to our communities. Bungendore on the other hand is to be deprived of this most valuable of assets. The Social Impact Assessment states that the fenced area of the park will be *used exclusively by the Department of Education during school hours under a joint use arrangement. This will result in a loss of public recreation access during much of the day on weekdays* (Page 24).

It is patently clear that a 2.9 hectare site, less than 75% of the recommended area for a high school, is far too small. A situation that will be exacerbated by increased population that is forecast by QPRC's Bungendore Structure Plan. Table 1 on Page 16 of the Plan estimates a more

than doubling of Bungendore's population by 2041. By way of illustration, an **initial** 300 block development of Elm Grove is currently under construction and a number of other green fill developments have already been completed or are very near completion. The Bungendore Structure Plan states that *there is a need to accommodate 1400 additional dwellings over the 30 year time period to account for the current growth rate* (Page 4).

The population increase, and resultant higher enrolments, will outstrip the proposed accommodation of 450 students, a capacity less than half of the capacity that those supporting the high school have estimated will be needed. A small site and increased enrolments will inevitably lead to demountable buildings further intruding into the park and the call for a larger campus of the high school. It makes no sense at all to proceed with construction on the proposed site.

Little consideration seems to have been given to the impact of the school's location on local traffic. Many students of Bungendore Public School and Bungendore Pre-school are driven to school by parents. A wider catchment than just Bungendore village, and senior students driving to school will add considerably to the traffic in the immediate area of the school with spill over to the surrounding streets.

I understand that the bus interchange will be on the northern side of Gibraltar Street, if this is the case it is highly likely that the Bungendore War Memorial will become little more than a bus shelter, subject to littering and possible vandalism. Should this be the case the outcome would be an insult to those whose names appear on the memorial and their families. I am aware that the Bungendore War Memorial Committee has worked tirelessly to maintain the memorial and its precinct and this year raised nearly \$30,000 to fund a major restoration project.

The recently released Landscape Site Plan shows fencing to within a few metres of the northern perimeter of the memorial. This would make it impossible to accommodate participants and spectators attending ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day ceremonies. The 2021 ANZAC Dawn Service attracted an estimated 900 attendees while 3,000 participants and spectators were involved in the March.

Bungendore has a long association with serving and past military personnel who now make up a notable portion of the local population. Data from the 2016 Census shows that Bungendore had a population of 4,178 people, of these 8.6% listed "Defence" as their occupation, compared to NSW's 0.6% and a national figure of 0.7%. This significant cohort would be particularly disturbed by any threat to the sanctity of the memorial and its surrounds.

The immediate area surrounding the proposed location holds many of Bungendore's historic structures that are recognized in QPRC'S Bungendore Structure Plan, it notes *that the east-west grid subdivision pattern of the original settlement and low scale development creates an open, informal and spacious character that contributes to the rural village character of Bungendore. This area is bounded by Molonglo Street, Rutledge Street, Majara Street and Turallo Terrace. There is a clear delineation between the historic nineteenth century village and the late twentieth and twenty first century residential areas* (Page 6).

The proposal completely disregards the effect that erecting a two story, pre-fabricated concrete building, that shares no architectural similarity with its immediate surrounds will have on the historically valuable ambience that is currently so obvious.

The announcement of a new high school in Jerrabomberra is very interesting from a value-for-money perspective, that school is being built on 4.5 hectares and is intended to accommodate 500-550 students at a cost of \$24.9 million. Bungendore's school is to be built on just 2.9 hectares, is designed for 450 students and has been costed at \$34.7 million. One must ask if the Bungendore proposal is in any way cost effective and whether it will meet the expectations of those of us who believe that Bungendore should have a high school that will genuinely meet the needs of the students and wider community alike.

The recent discovery of lead contamination in the vicinity of the proposed site is very concerning. While older aged children may not be as severely affected as pre-school and primary aged students, the construction of the building itself is most likely to create lead laden dust particles which may well pose a significant health risk to a wide number of people living and working nearby. To ignore even the slightest possibility of adversely affecting the health of our community would be seen as uncaring and as ignoring the health of our community.

It is widely known in the community that the proposed site was not the preferred choice of the NSW Department of Planning. In view of the adverse effects on the major local recreation green space, the historical context of the immediate area, the much reduced site size, traffic congestion, negative value-for-money, lead contamination, and the potential desecration of the war memorial I urge that the school be located on the site previously recognized as being far more suitable than what is being forced on our community.

I have not, and no associate of mine, has made any political donation to any person in the 2 years preceding this submission.

Yours faithfully,

A solid black rectangular box redacting the signature of the author.