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Submission from:

Tracey Smart  
[REDACTED]

Parent of one child, currently enrolled at Marsden High School in Year 8 2021, transitioning to Year 9 at the new Marsden HS campus next year, 2022.

Application Name: Meadowbank Education and Employment Precinct Schools Project - Modification 4 - SSD-9343-Mod-4

Have you made any reportable political donations? No, I have not.

To the Director Social and Infrastructure Assessments

I am writing to you to **strongly object** to the proposed modifications to the Meadowbank Education and Employment Precinct project.

My son is currently enrolled at Marsden High School and will be travelling to the new campus next year via public transport. As we live in Rydalmere, this will mean he will be taking the bus down Victoria Road, disembarking on the corner of Hermitage Road and Victoria Road, and then crossing to walk down Hermitage Road towards the new campus. This will be the most common sense route for my son to take to school. I was extremely upset to hear that the State Government was seeking changes to the proposal to delete an extended footpath along the western side of Hermitage Road, as this will seriously impact the safety of my child and the many other children who will be travelling to the school via this route. Walking on the opposite side of the road towards the new school is unfeasible as there are many industrial businesses that have busy driveways with a heavy flow of work vehicles and heavy trucks, obviously extremely dangerous for children.

While following up my concerns with the Schools Infrastructure Unit, I received a very inadequate response saying "Data indicates low anticipated demand to access the School facilities via Hermitage Road". I struggle to understand where this data has been obtained from as the Marsden P&C have gathered alternate data showing that there actually are a large number of students travelling from the Parramatta area, as well as many other areas outside of the Ryde area. This is a very small, but extremely necessary piece of work that is absolutely necessary to ensure the safety of our children, and therefore cannot be deleted from the project scope.

Another issue of concern is the necessity to change the flow at the traffic lights at Victoria Road and Hermitage Road, in order to allow enough time for children to cross. Currently there is a very short window for pedestrians to cross Victoria Rd as the large amount of traffic around the area struggles to get through the intersection before the lights change. This obviously is a huge issue and will directly impact children's safety on the way to the new school.

This needs to be part of the Project scope in order to properly protect our children and for a brand new, purpose built school, there is really no excuse for these safety concerns to be put aside.

The safety concerns raised by our P&C also include the necessity for barriers on Victoria Rd, to stop children from running across against the traffic lights. As much as we parents try to drum things into our children's heads, adolescent brains do not always make the right decisions when faced with stressful situations, such as running for a bus, or being late for school. So unless the proper safeguards are put in place (such as correct timing of lights, footpaths, crossings and barriers) there may well be tragic consequences.

The School build itself has ongoing issues such as suitability of the oval surface, as well as a problematic lack of undercover play areas. Again, there really is no excuse for these things to be overlooked. The State Government has a duty of care, noted in their own guidelines, to ensure that outdoor areas are both safe and sheltered in order to protect our children. Speaking as a mother of a very fair skinned child, and a teen-ager who very often does not slip/slop/slap, there needs to be more attention on sun safe areas in the new school grounds.

I have forwarded some of my concerns to Ryde Council (who are supportive of these concerns), as well as the School Infrastructure Unit and State Ministers Victor Dominello and Sarah Mitchell. I am hopeful that my concerns will have a common sense reception and that the safety of my child and other children who will be attending the new school, will be considered as more important than that of cost cutting measures.

In conclusion, I ask that you note my fervent opposition to the above-mentioned modifications proposed to the Meadowbank Education and Employment Precinct, and hope that sanity prevails.

Regards.

Tracey Smart