

Attachment Two – Summary of Councillor Comments

General comments

1. This is a significant development for the City of Parramatta with an investment value exceeding 80 million and creating over 1000 jobs. With obvious advantages considering the growth in population and demand.
2. Concerns are raised with the timeframes given to respond.
3. In addition to the traffic and pedestrian safety, such large students' population growth will add pressure to local services which not in line with the long term development goal of Westmead Precinct of being world class medical and research centre / facility.
4. Insufficient green space/play space that would allow for adequate active recreation areas suitable for the anticipated student cohort.
5. Heritage Significance of the Monastery that is going to be demolished - the Marist Brothers have had a presence since 1875.
6. Recreational space is lost.
 - a. In phase 1, the Macaulay hockey field is lost, as is the entire primary playground. To be replace with play space on level 3 and 5 of a building, with no real grass.
 - b. In later phases, the football fields and basketball courts, as well as pool are all lost
7. Recent lessons from Arthur Philip HS and Ministerial directions on high rise schools should be looked at and incorporated
8. Disability and other access to the site, now given a 5+ level primary school as well as a 3+ level car park
9. Safety and amenity
10. Communication and engagement of the community - given only a short period for the local council, previous refusals of the Catholic Education Office to engage with Councillors, only limited school community engagement.
11. At an information session held at the School on the 4th November 2019 figures presented by representatives of the Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta (CEDP) stated that by 2028 the Site would reach a capacity of 5,800 students. There are genuine concerns that the current high standards of education and strong performance results of Parramatta Marist High in the last few years cannot be maintained with such a large increase in volume of enrolments taking the school from 4 streams, 1,000 students to 8 streams and 2,000 students.
12. There are concerns with the proposed locality of the new Parish Church being built within the School precinct and within close proximity of the school building, it is likely to impact on normal school activities when the Parish Church is required to hold ceremonies such as Mass, Funerals, etc. during the school week.
13. Parramatta Marist High will potentially lose 2 sporting fields (refer stage 2 plans). Representatives from the CEDP at Parramatta suggest jungle gyms and indoor climbing facilities are being incorporated in the new integrated facilities to be shared by all schools on the site. Not sure how this improves the open space green area or adds value to the boys and young active men of Parramatta Marist High.
14. What will happen to the inter school sporting events such as the weekly MCS competitions, and seasonal athletic and swimming carnivals. Where will teachers and students be able to conduct Physical Education Classes in the future?

15. It is proposed that the Olympic size swimming pool which is currently out of use will be demolished. No plans currently indicate a replacement for the pool such as an aquatic centre that could be shared by other schools on the site.
16. The closure of the school pool over recent years due to lack of investment from the CEDP has meant that swimming activities including learn to swim classes have not been delivered to students.
17. Parramatta Marist High will lose the existing Morley Centre Hall that is to be demolished. The current plans are vague and have little detail as to how and what type of structures and facilities are to be built that can hold an entire school assembly, mass or awards ceremony including students and parents of Parramatta Marist High.
18. The plans are very vague and little explanation has been provided as to the future use of the "grey area" illustrated on the proposed plans. When representatives from CEDP were questioned about this on the 4th November suggestions of future commercial and residential applications will look to be incorporated – this is very concerning that specific plans are not being expressed to residents and parents.
19. The lack of foresight for the safety of students, parents, teachers and the public around an already very busy Health precinct is alarming. The State Government is continuing to invest and expand Westmead Hospital and the Precinct. Traffic and the safety of the wider community is not being considered.
20. In what can only be described as disrespectful the new plans also fail to recognise the existence of the Parramatta Marist War Memorial on the site to those that served in war and conflict around the world.
21. Parramatta Marist and Catherine Macauley High Schools should maintain their independent and uninterrupted inhabitancy in all future plans for the Site and strongly disagree with moving the Parish Church of Sacred Heart and its primary school from their current location to Darcy Rd Westmead. If the WCC and the CEDP had carried out a genuine consultation process relating to their development proposals – then local residents and parents of the Schools believe that the following alternate development proposal at Westmead which would achieve the objectives of the Parish Church and the Parramatta Catholic Diocese, could have been considered.

Traffic related comments

22. Traffic congestion and mobility of students to and from the site are heavily reliant on any transport improvements in the area. Representatives from the CEDP could not answer what it would look like with students filed some 300 - 400 deep at multiple sets of traffic lights, intersections and crossings each morning and afternoon.
23. The amount of extra traffic generated would add to the already congested traffic conditions of the existing education and expanding health precinct
24. Need to consider the cumulative traffic impact of this development along with the expansion of the University of Sydney and Western Sydney University and everything else that's happening or is proposed. University of Sydney and Western Sydney University development itself will double Westmead's workforce by 2036.
25. Ongoing issues around traffic (both pedestrian and vehicle) on Darcy Road.
26. The area is already very congested both for car traffic and pedestrian flow during school morning and afternoon peak time period. If the students' population is to be doubled, traffic issue and pedestrian safety needs to be carefully considered.
 - a. There is, at least, a fourfold increase in primary students alone. This is phase one. This will extend later to the high schools, going from circa 2000 students to over 6000. This does not include the increased numbers of the proposed Early Learning Centre which will be accessed by parents/carers from outside the primary and secondary cohort.

- b. The infrastructure of the site, internal may be expanded, BUT there is still only access via Darcy Rd.
- c. There are claims of heavy and light rails improving the situation. I don't believe it will reduce the number of parents who drop off their children. The focus is a link to the CBD. This does not help parents.

Alternate proposal for consideration by Applicant:

The Diocese should consider building a high rise Catholic primary school and new church at the current Sacred Heart Parish site in Ralph Street Westmead. This move would ensure the site has much greater permeability and access given it is not situated in the already congested health precinct area/side of Westmead. There would also be an opportunity to focus on developing a traffic plan for Hawkesbury Rd that is primary school friendly and specific to accommodate both this new school and likely redeveloped Westmead Public School (in the future); that is, proper drop off bays, pedestrian overbridge and traffic controls could be implemented.

Benefits to this plan:

- a) Many existing parishioners of the Westmead Parish Church at Ralph St who it is understood are very much opposed to the new Church proposed at the Darcy Rd Westmead precinct amongst the 3 schools would be satisfied
- b) Similarly, local Westmead residents and the Catholic school patrons would be satisfied as it means the Sacred Heart Parish Church and primary school would remain at its current location
- c) There could be economies of scale if the two Catholic primary schools in the Westmead area are co-located to the Ralph St Westmead location as they would have more in common than the current proposals to incorporate with the two Catholic high schools
- d) There could be further economies of scale regarding the planning and management of vehicular and foot traffic in around a much more permeable area of Westmead which can be focused on the safety of primary students. Public transport (including future modes) are also closer and more accessible from this Ralph St site although this is less of a concern with primary students who in the large majority of cases are driven to school by their parents.
- e) The plans from the Diocese involve high-rise schools with play spaces for primary students integrated into the building itself. This maybe appropriate for the age and size of primary school students, however very much less so for high school students
- f) If the two primary schools are combined at a new developed high rise primary school at the existing Sacred Heart site - The students and parents of Mother Teresa primary will then have a new and much enlarged school and easier vehicular access than is currently possible at Darcy Rd Westmead. As the Mother Theresa school is only very young with no parish/church attached - the loss of this school at Darcy Rd will not be felt as deeply as if Sacred Heart moved down to Darcy Rd.
- g) The fact that the Anglican Church owns the playground where the Sacred Heart primary school is current located – this issue becomes irrelevant if this Sacred Heart school was developed as a high-rise school with integrated playground for primary students. It may also be possible for the Anglican Church to be brought into the conversation about these potential plans and their associated role in educating students and / or offering benefits to the community from the neighbouring site as well?
- h) From the point of view of looking after the wellbeing of primary-aged children, the Sacred Heart site would be a more appropriate location for a high rise school rather than being placed with high school and many other adults at Darcy Rd Westmead as is currently proposed.

- i) This would also mean that the Darcy Rd side of Westmead is more focused on adolescent/adult education (high schools and Sydney University), high rise residential, commercial and mixed-use, as well as predominantly health services- with all these people using mostly public transport (or as adults having the option) and NOT a very high level of private vehicle traffic taking primary school children to the Darcy Rd Westmead site which as you know is a very congested traffic area.
- j) This proposal will mean minimal disruption to the learning of any students and less impact on residents when it comes to construction traffic.
- k) This plan is much more cost-effective and achievable in the current economic climate.

This alternate proposal would involve the following:

- a) Temporarily moving Sacred Heart students and Parishioners to the current Mother Theresa School at Darcy Rd Westmead whilst a new high rise Catholic primary school and church are built at the site at Ralph Street Westmead
- b) When the new Sacred Heart high rise school is completed, the then combined Mother Teresa Primary students would be transferred to the new Ralph St primary school to ease the significant traffic congestion which is already encountered at the Mother Theresa school site arising from the high level of primary school traffic with parents delivering and collecting the young children in the morning and afternoon.