
School Infrastructure NSW

Community Consultation Summary Report

Centre of Excellence in Agricultural Education

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1. Introduction

School Infrastructure NSW's (SINSW) mission is to provide school infrastructure solutions by working collaboratively with all stakeholders to create learning environments across NSW that serve future needs and make us proud.

As part of our transformation in the way we plan, develop and deliver schools across the state, we are committed to openly sharing information. This will show how one school compares with its neighbouring group of schools. It also explains the challenges we face in the complex world of schools planning. Part of this transparency means that we will let the community know which schools will be worked on and at what time. It will take time since we have over 2,200 schools across the state, so we will address high growth areas within each district and region across the State first.

As we develop a range of options for addressing school infrastructure requirements, members of the community will be able to see and comment on our proposal before it is finalised. Feedback is important and helps us refine our planning process. Whilst we cannot commit to implementing everything suggested, engaging with the broader community ensures we've considered what's important to you, and balanced this with practicality and cost to deliver sustainable and relevant solutions for schools.

This report summarises the consultation and communication activities that have been undertaken in relation to the proposed Centre of Excellence in Agricultural Education. It forms part of the Environmental Impact Statement required for the State Significant Development (SSD) application (SSD-15001460) as specified in the Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs).

This report summarises the engagement undertaken for this stage of the proposed upgrades by outlining:

- the SEARs for stakeholder and community consultation
- the consultation process undertaken, including key meetings with stakeholders
- a summary of feedback received, and issues raised, by specific stakeholders, and
- how feedback has been considered in the development of the SSD application.

2. Background

The NSW Government is investing \$7 billion over the next four years, continuing its program to deliver more than 200 new and upgraded schools to support communities across NSW. This is the largest investment in public education infrastructure in the history of NSW.

The NSW Department of Education is committed to delivering new and upgraded schools for communities across NSW. The delivery of these important projects is essential to the future learning needs of our students and supports growth in the local economy.

The Centre of Excellence in Agricultural Education (CoE) is a project that was announced by the Minister of Education on 10 December 2019. The CoE is proposed to be co-located on the Western Sydney University (WSU) Hawkesbury campus. The CoE is currently in a pilot phase operating without premises, on a smaller scale with no residential accommodation.

In 2015, there was a previous announcement to move Hurlstone Agricultural High School from its existing site in Glenfield, to Hawkesbury, and build a new agriculturally focused, boarding, selective high school on the WSU site. This project did not progress, and the new CoE project has superseded this previous announcement.

The current proposal for the CoE will involve farming enterprises, learning facilities and a residential facility to support teaching and learning to students in agricultural education. In addition, the CoE will support teaching and learning for industry, overseas students, and educators in NSW. This will be delivered through programs facilitated directly through the CoE with other schools in NSW.

The CoE, alongside a neighbouring project at Richmond High School (RHS) will establish “Richmond Agricultural College”. An operational model that will encompass the educational streams at RHS and the new CoE. For students wishing to access the educational streams at RHS, they will enrol directly through RHS and will access the CoE on the WSU campus on a tailored basis through their course of study. Students from other schools across the State will access the CoE through their school initiating engagement in an agricultural (AgSTEM) program or project-based learning opportunity managed by the CoE.

The CoE will support high-quality educational outcomes to meet the needs of its students and deliver:

- Agriculture labs and science labs
- Aboriginal farming enterprise (in partnership with community and industry)
- Pods for partnership work with industry (e.g. vertical farming)
- Flexible learning and collaborative spaces
- Food technology space
- Short term accommodation facilities for visiting students and teachers
- Administrative facilities
- Agricultural enterprises.

2.1. Project description

The proposed development involves the construction and operation of a new CoE on a leased land parcel within the Western Sydney University (Hawkesbury Campus) site, Richmond NSW.

The CoE will provide new agricultural / STEM teaching facilities with general learning and administration spaces to be utilised by rural, regional, metropolitan and international school students. The CoE will accommodate up to 325 students and up to 25 full-time employees consisting of farm assistants, administration staff and teachers and up to five itinerant staff members. The CoE will also include short-term on-site accommodation facilities for up to 62 visiting students and teaching professionals from regional and rural NSW.

The CoE will include five science laboratories, ten general learning spaces, practical activity teaching areas, seminar, botany room, administration block and accommodation facilities. It will also include covered outdoor learning areas, dining / recreation hall, canteen and kitchen, agricultural plots, significant landscaping spaces, car parking and provision of necessary infrastructure.

The proposed development has been designed to be well integrated into the Western Sydney University site, having due regard for scale, bulk and orientation of existing buildings. The educational facilities will display linear open building forms in single story design with open spaces and lightweight construction techniques. The site is benefitted by views Blue Mountains to the west and the building and landscape plans have incorporated viewing opportunities into the design.

The project will deliver:

- Three academic blocks (Block B, C and D).
- Short-term, dormitory site accommodation with capacity for 62 patrons (Block F).
- Dining hall, Conference space and canteen (Block E).
- Administrative building (Block A).
- Support facilities for management and maintenance of site.
- External works to accommodate circulation and covered walkways between buildings.
- Pedestrian walkways.
- Student and staff amenities.
- Covered Outdoor Learning Areas.
- Staff car parking area and mini-bus drop off and pick up area. The parking located in front of block A is for visitors
- Short-term accommodation car parking area. The parking near block F is for staff.
- Green house.
- Various agricultural and animal plots and associated agricultural workshop.
- Provision of waste facility area.
- Installation of all essential services including stormwater management devices where required.
- Operation of the CoE site.

2.2. Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements

The Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) for the State Significant Development were received on 19 March 2021. An excerpt can be found below.

"During the preparation of the EIS, you must consult with the relevant local, State or Commonwealth Government authorities, service providers, community groups, relevant special interest groups, including local Aboriginal land councils and registered Aboriginal stakeholders and affected landowners. In particular, you must consult with:

- the relevant Council.
- Government Architect NSW (through the NSW SDRP process).
- Transport for NSW.

Consultation should commence as soon as practicable to inform the scope of investigation and progression of the proposed development.

The EIS must describe and include evidence of the consultation process and the issues raised and identify where the design of the development has been amended in response to these issues. Where amendments have not been made to address an issue, a short explanation should be provided.

Targeted consultation in accordance with the draft Social Impact Assessment Guideline 2020 (Department of Planning, Industry and Environment) must also occur where there is a requirement to prepare and submit a Social Impact Assessment."

3. Consultation Approach

3.1. Consultation objectives

As set out in the Community Engagement Plan, the following community engagement objectives have been identified for this proposal:

- Promote the benefits of the project
- Build key schools community stakeholder relationships and maintain goodwill with impacted communities
- Manage community expectations and build trust by delivering on our commitments
- Provide timely information to impacted stakeholders, schools and broader communities
- Address and correct misinformation in the public domain
- Reduce the risk of project delays caused by negative third-party intervention
- Leave a positive legacy in each community.

3.2. Description of consultation and communication channels and activities

The table below describes the consultation and communication channels and activities that have been undertaken and the strategic intent of each activity.

Activity	Strategic intent
School community engagement (Project Review Group, Meetings, workshops and design user group sessions)	Project Review Group meetings, ad-hoc meetings and workshops comprise representatives from the Centre of Excellence in Agricultural Education and Richmond High School to discuss aspects of the design, consultation and construction approach and seek feedback and input from members. Design user groups seek input from end users including staff about the proposed design and its applicability.
Community information sessions	Provide an opportunity for face to face engagement between the school communities, residents and staff, and members of the project team, and allow for Q&A and concerns to be raised. Information sessions are widely advertised through the communication channels listed in this table. A community update regarding a new state-wide agricultural model be found at Appendix 1. Sample display board material can be found at Appendix 2.
Communications (Project webpage, Information Pack, Project Updates and Works Notifications)	Publication of project information. A screen print of the project webpage can be found at Appendix 3. A sample information pack can be found at Appendix 4. Sample FAQs be found at Appendix 5.
Contact channels (Emails and 1300 project information number)	Direct responses to stakeholder and community contact.

3.3. Consultation activities

A key factor of the project is the governance provided through the Project Reference Group (PRG), which provides feedback on critical design elements and the overall project direction. PRG meetings commenced on 31 January 2020 and has met on 11 occasions to date. PRG membership comprises school principals (Centre of Excellence and Richmond High School) and project team members.

Date/s	Targeted stakeholders	Consultation activity	Attendance
2020			
31/01/20	SINSW and COE leadership team	PRG #1	Regular PRG meeting
19/02/20	Richmond High School community (and Centre of Excellence)	Community information session	39 attendees
21/02/20	General Public – Richmond Market Place	Information stand	16 attendees
27/02/20	SINSW, COE leadership team and architects	PRG #2	Regular PRG meeting
05/03/20	SINSW, COE leadership team and Western Sydney University	PRG #3	Regular PRG meeting
09/06/20	SINSW, COE leadership team and Western Sydney University	PRG #4	Regular PRG meeting
07/08/20	SINSW, COE leadership team and Western Sydney University	PRG #5	Regular PRG meeting
06/10/20	SINSW, COE leadership team and Western Sydney University	PRG #7 (note there was no PRG #6)	Regular PRG meeting
21/10/20	SINSW, COE leadership team and Western Sydney University	PRG #8	Regular PRG meeting
09/11/20	SINSW, COE leadership team and Western Sydney University	PRG #9	Regular PRG meeting
10/12/20	SINSW, COE leadership team and Western Sydney University	PRG #10	Regular PRG meeting
2021			
27/01/21	SINSW, Project Managers, Centre of Excellence Leadership team and architects	Design Consult Meeting #2	Design workshop meeting
16/02/21	SINSW, Project Managers, Centre of Excellence Leadership team and architects	Design Consult Meeting #3	Design workshop meeting
09/03/21	SINSW, Project Managers, Centre of Excellence Leadership team and architects	Design Consult Meeting #4	Design workshop meeting
12/03/21	SINSW, Project Managers, Centre of Excellence Leadership team, architects and Technical Stakeholder Group	Design Consult Meeting #5 – Concept design presentation with TSG	Design workshop meeting
19/03/21	SINSW, Project Managers, Centre of Excellence Leadership team and architects	Design Consult Meeting #6 – Concept presentation with School	Design workshop meeting
23/03/21	SINSW, Project Managers, Centre of Excellence Leadership team, architects and Western Sydney University	Design Consult Meeting #7 – with Western Sydney University	Design workshop meeting
29/03/21	SINSW, Project Managers, Centre of Excellence Leadership team and architects	Design Consult Meeting #8	Design workshop meeting
31/03/21	SINSW and Centre of Excellence Leadership team	PCG #1	Project Control Group Meeting
01/04/21	SINSW, COE leadership team and Western Sydney University	PRG #11	Regular PRG meeting
28/04/21	SINSW and Centre of Excellence Leadership team	PCG #2	Project Control Group Meeting

3.5. Communication actions

The table below outlines the communication actions undertaken to keep stakeholders and communities informed about this proposal.

Date	Targeted stakeholders	Communication channel and action
2019		
December 2019	School community, nearby residents	A new state-wide agricultural model – Community update
2020		
February 2020	Community information session attendees (Richmond High School)	Information pack, Information Boards, FAQs
February 2020	Community information session attendees (General Public – Richmond Market Place)	Information pack, Information Boards, FAQs
September 2020	School and local community	Community engagement outcomes report
2021		
May / June 2021 (specific date TBC)	School and Local community information session (General Public – Richmond HS)	Project Update, Information pack and Information Boards

4. Stakeholder and Community Feedback

Stakeholder and community feedback have been integral to the development of this proposal. Feedback was sought from stakeholders and communities through the consultation activities and communication channels listed in Section 3.

The project team has held 2 community information sessions for this project, which resulted in approximately 55 attendees, 45 feedback forms, and numerous face-to-face comments to project team members. The project team has also responded to 2 direct emails and 1 phone call about the project.

Consultation identified key issues of community interest for consideration during the preparation of the Environmental Impact Statement.

Key issues included:

- Interest in the coordination, logistics and relationship between RHS and the COE, as well coordination of all agricultural schools in the area
- Concern about travel time and logistics to transport students between RHS and COE, including teacher supervision, mode of travel and frequency
- Suitability of location
- Incorporation of Aboriginal farming
- Integration with the Aerotropolis plan for Western Sydney
- Practical experience essential, including crop trials and large-scale farming
- Recruitment process for academic staff to ensure best practices are taught.

4.1. Stakeholder meetings and correspondence

This section outlines a summary of the key consultation undertaken with stakeholders, as defined and required by the SEARs.

Stakeholder	Date/s	Feedback topics	Outcomes
Western Sydney University (WSU)	Fortnightly meetings – 21/01/21, 11/02/21, 25/02/21, 11/03/21, 23/03/21, 25/03/21, 01/04/21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sub Station Location • Infrastructure services connection • Landscape • ESD Principles • Landlord Consent Submission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreement on the preferred location of the sub-station- Option 4 – Behind Fire Water Tanks • Agreement in principle obtained from WSU for services connection • SI confirmation to WSU regards ESD targets • Submission of the Drawings and Documentation to WSU 17 March 2021 for approval.
Transport for NSW	16/03/21 13/04/21 27/04/21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffic movements • Site access • Vehicle circulation • Car parking spaces • Vehicle movements • Non-car travel modes • Traffic impacts • Construction Traffic Management Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of the project to the Transport Working Group • Additional information to be provided with respect to the modes of transportation for the students at CoE • Confirmation of the proposed study areas for counts & modelling • TfNSW advised that the status of the Preferred Option Report for the Richmond Bridge Duplication is still under investigation with no preference • TfNSW advised that there is no masterplan for future bus transport services for this area.
Hawkesbury City Council – Transport representatives	16/03/21 13/04/21 27/04/21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffic movements • Site access • Vehicle circulation • Car parking spaces • Vehicle movements • Non-car travel modes • Traffic impacts • Construction Traffic Management Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council requested the addition of Campus Dr- Blacktown Rd intersection to the proposed traffic study scope • Council advised that Council has 10yr projected program re Stage 2 Funding list for pedestrian and cyclist path upgrade but re unable to advise where this is at.
Government Architect (State Significant Design Review Panel)	17/03/21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low-scale rural typology for the built form • Strong presence and connection to existing WSU • Prioritising pedestrian amenity • Landscape species endemic to the site • Connection with Country • Connectivity and access • Masterplan and landscape • Buildings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SDRP requested the project to review and incorporate where appropriate to the recommendations received. • Responses have been addressed within the EIS and Architect Design response.
Special interest groups: local Aboriginal land council	30/03/21 and 20/04/21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilisation of Aboriginal Enterprise • Opportunity for connection through stories, language • Opportunity for artwork on site and opportunity for community involvement • Opportunity for propagating / aboriginal agriculture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project team to explore furniture / seating to allow for gatherings in aboriginal enterprise area • Review artwork opportunities and community artists • School curriculum addressing facets of agriculture practices. • Inclusion of yarning circle and area for dance.

5. Project response

The feedback received during consultation has been considered in the preparation of the Environmental Impact Statement. The table below provides a detailed summary of the key issues that emerged and the corresponding project response.

Key issues	Project response	Relevant report
Interest in the coordination, logistics and relationship between the COE and RHS, as well as coordination of all agricultural schools in the area	The construction of a new Centre of Excellence in Agricultural Education (CoE) was announced by the NSW Department of Education in December 2019, and will be co-located on the Western Sydney University (WSU) Hawkesbury campus. The Centre of Excellence currently utilises WSU and TAFE/industry partnership facilities, delivering a range of programs to support agricultural and STEM education for students from across NSW. The Centre of Excellence received its first cohort of agricultural specialist stream (AgSTEM) students from Richmond Agricultural College in 2021. These students are enrolled through Richmond High School and spend three days a week at the Centre of Excellence campus. In 2022 the first academically selective agricultural (AgSTEM) stream will commence.	Transport and Accessibility Report
Concern about travel time and logistics to transport students between RHS and COE, including teacher supervision, mode of travel and frequency	School Operations have advised that no direct plans have been made at an operational level as of yet.	N/A
Suitability of location (at Hawkesbury Campus)	The CoE will be co-located at the Western Sydney University (WSU) Hawkesbury campus.	Transport and Accessibility Report.
Incorporation of Aboriginal farming	We will deliver Aboriginal farming enterprises (in partnership with community and industry)	Landscape Report and drawings.
Integration with the Aerotropolis plan for Western Sydney	N/A – Not mentioned in project communications	N/A
Practical experience essential, including crop trials and large-scale farming	We will deliver agriculture labs and science labs, pods for partnership with industry (e.g. vertical farming) and agricultural enterprises.	Architectural drawings and documentation.
Recruitment process for academic staff to ensure best practices are taught	The COE will follow standard Department of Education recruitment protocols.	N/A

6. Next Steps

In preparing the SSD application for the CoE, the project team has met the consultation requirements prescribed by the SEARs. The project proposes to deliver positive educational outcomes through investment into agricultural education and has received largely positive feedback throughout community consultation.

School Infrastructure NSW has demonstrated in this report how it has engaged with stakeholders and how feedback has been incorporated into the designs and studies lodged with the SSDA.

Continued engagement will take place with stakeholders and communities during the statutory exhibition of the SSDA, as well as during future stages of the planning and development process.

School Infrastructure NSW will continue to update the project webpage and produce updates at key project stages for stakeholders and communities.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Sample Community update

NSW Department of Education – School Infrastructure

A new state-wide agricultural model

Community update

10 December 2019

A new state-wide agricultural education model

The NSW Government is spending \$6.7 billion over four years to deliver more than 190 new and upgraded schools to support communities across NSW. This is the largest investment in public education infrastructure in the history of NSW.

A new model for state wide agricultural education is being designed. The establishment of Richmond Agricultural College includes a new Centre of Excellence in agricultural education in the Hawkesbury and the creation of a new agricultural specialty stream and a new academically selective stream at Richmond High School. As part of this new model, Hurlstone Agricultural High School will keep its name and stay at the Glenfield site.

Richmond High School

Richmond High School will be upgraded to support an agricultural specialty stream and a new academically selective stream. There will be an upgrade to facilities focused on the delivery of agricultural education.

Students will be able to enrol in the new academically selective stream through the traditional selective schools entry method. Entry to the agricultural specialty stream will be through a rigorous selection process, based on a portfolio and interview, to determine student interest and potential in agricultural education.

Centre of Excellence

A new residential Centre of Excellence in agricultural education will be co-located with the Western Sydney University (WSU) Hawkesbury campus. It will be available for agricultural students from Hurlstone Agricultural High School, Richmond High School and all other schools in NSW. It will also be available for teacher training for TAFE, WSU, industry and overseas students.

Hurlstone Agricultural High School

As part of this new model, Hurlstone Agricultural High School will keep its name and stay at the Glenfield site as an academically selective, boarding, agricultural high school. Boarding facilities will be upgraded and the dairy facilities will be retained.

Keeping you updated

The new plans for Hurlstone Agricultural High School, Richmond High School and the Centre of Excellence will be presented as the preferred option in a business case that will be submitted to NSW Treasury in early 2020.

Before we finalise the business case, we will consult with the community. Information sessions are planned for February 2020 in Glenfield and Richmond. We will provide further information on dates and locations of these sessions in January 2020.



Project overview

Design is underway for a Centre of Excellence in agricultural education offering agricultural and STEM learning facilities to students across NSW. The proposed facilities include:

- Agriculture labs and science labs
- Aboriginal farming enterprise (in partnership with community and industry)
- Pods for partnership work with industry e.g. vertical farming
- Precision farming technology space
- Permaculture and botany facilities
- Flexible learning and collaborative spaces
- Short term residential accommodation for students, up to 60 spaces.

The Centre will offer:

- Teacher training for TAFE and WSU and education for industry and overseas students
- Connections with industry leaders, WSU, and TAFE for research projects, educational events, immersion programs, excursions, transition pathways into agriculture and STEM fields.



Artist impressions of the Centre of Excellence

schoolinfrastructure.nsw.gov.au


Centre of Excellence in Agricultural Education

For more information phone: 1300 482 651
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Appendix 3: Screenshot of project webpage

Upgrade | **Centre of Excellence for agricultural education**



[About the project](#)[Get involved](#)[Library](#)

Design is underway for a Centre of Excellence in agricultural education co-located at the Western Sydney University Hawkesbury campus.

The Centre of Excellence - Richmond Agricultural College will be used as a state-wide resource, delivering world class agricultural and science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education. Short term residential accommodation is also proposed to enable the centre to be accessed by rural, regional and overseas students and teaching professionals.

Further investment in state-wide agricultural education is planned at [Hurlstone Agricultural High School](#) and [Richmond High School](#).

Timeline

Planning

Design

In progress

Complete

NSW Department of Education – School Infrastructure

Hurlstone Agricultural High School Centre of Excellence in agricultural education Richmond High School

Information pack

February 2020



Example of a new science laboratory

The NSW Department of Education is implementing a new model for state-wide agricultural education, which includes:

CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE (COE) IN AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION

- The CoE will deliver contemporary agricultural, science, technology, environment and maths education facilities to be used by students state-wide.

HURLSTONE AGRICULTURAL HIGH SCHOOL

- The school at Glenfield will be retained at its existing location with an upgrade to boarding facilities and retaining the existing dairy facilities.

RICHMOND HIGH SCHOOL

- New agricultural specialty stream and a new academic selective stream, supported by an upgrade to facilities with a focus on science, technology, environment and maths (STEM) and agricultural education.

NSW Department of Education – School Infrastructure

Centre of Excellence in agricultural education

What is the Centre of Excellence in agricultural education?

The Centre of Excellence (CoE) will be a purpose built education facility that will deliver contemporary agricultural and STEM education programs to students and professional learning programs for teachers. Programs run by the centre will be linked to the NSW syllabus.

Where will the Centre of Excellence be located?

The CoE will be co-located at the Western Sydney University (WSU) Hawkesbury campus.

Who will the Centre of Excellence be available to?

It will be available for agricultural students from all schools in NSW, including Richmond High School, and Hurlstone Agricultural High School. It will also be available for teacher training for TAFE and WSU and partnered industry programs.

The CoE will have short-term residential facilities on site to enable education and training opportunities for students and teachers from rural and regional areas of NSW as well as overseas students.

How much time will my child spend at the Centre of Excellence?

This will depend on the nature of the program that your child is connected to within the CoE. The CoE Principal has managed a number of pilot programs since 2018 from the WSU Hawkesbury campus in partnership with WSU, TAFE and industry. The Principal will determine future syllabus and programs to support the educational delivery of agriculture and STEM education across NSW.

How can I enrol my child in the Centre of Excellence?

You cannot enrol directly in the CoE. The CoE will provide various programs and project based learning opportunities to visiting school groups from across NSW. To attend, your child's school must initiate engagement in an agricultural program managed by the CoE.

What facilities and enterprises will be shared with WSU and TAFE NSW?

Students will have access to shared facilities on the WSU campus, including sports fields, specialist teaching and research areas as part of partnered projects. They will have access to the WSU Living Labs, including the WSU Farm, water management, land management and resource sustainability systems.

Agricultural programs, in partnership with TAFE, will also facilitate access to specialist areas on the TAFE campus, including horticulture, landscaping and animal care facilities.

There are existing farm enterprises at Richmond High School and there will be newly developed enterprises at the CoE. There will be industry enterprises as part of partnered learning programs.

What types of educational programs are being developed with WSU and TAFE?

A variety of projects are being developed including:

- Immersion programs in specialist areas including agriculture, STEM, sustainability
- Partnered programs with specialist schools in the university
- Articulated entry pathways
- Shared delivery of curriculum
- Academic mentoring
- Undergraduate mentoring
- Leadership opportunities
- Teacher professional learning
- Teacher pre-service education
- K-12 programs to tailored stages/curriculum areas
- Shared use of facilities

Who is the Principal of the Centre of Excellence?

Kris Beazley

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