

Hastings Secondary College – Port Macquarie Campus Upgrade Project: Individual Submission

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission regarding the Hastings Secondary College Port Macquarie Campus Upgrade.

I note that while I have marked on the website submission form that I object to the project, please be advised that there is only one element of the upgrade that I object to, being Stage 3 of the proposal in relation to the development of a shared use multi-sports facility in partnership with the Police Citizens Youth Club (PCYC) at the proposed site on the Port Macquarie Campus.

I support all the other elements of the Hastings Secondary College Campus Upgrade Proposal and welcome the improvements suggested.

I also welcome the reintroduction of a PCYC facility in Port Macquarie, in a suitable location, where it is demonstrated that this facility also provides the optimal social and economic return on government investment and the best prioritisation of resources, given the important priorities requiring funding by the New South Wales Government.

The reasons for my objection to Stage 3 of the proposal at the site proposed are:

- The activities conducted at the proposed shared use multi-sports facility (PCYC facility), as well as the associated movements to and from the venue will cause unacceptably significant ongoing noise and disruption to the social amenity for nearby residents, including myself, during weeknights and across weekends, especially given the facility has proposed operating hours as stated in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) of 6am to 10pm, 7 days per week.
- The proposed PCYC facility at that site will be intrusive, given the bulk and scale of the building and does not fit with the aesthetics of the area, which is recognised as a welcoming, scenic open parkland corridor by the Port Macquarie community and is regarded as one of the attractive features for tourists of the Town Beach and Oxley Beach areas of Port Macquarie. These scenic features are regularly promoted as part of tourist campaigns for the area. The scenic nature of the area is a contributing factor as to why local community markets and other regular outdoor events are attracted to the area.
- Further to the above, the proposed PCYC facility impacts on my and other neighbour's views, with significant adverse visual impacts for residents, including myself, at 11 Owen Street, Port Macquarie in particular. I note that the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) refers to the visual impacts for residents at 11 Owen Street, Port Macquarie, particularly on Levels 3-5. The EIS states that the residents of the building have up to 180-degree views from Town Beach to Windmill Hill. This is misleading and not the case, as the building at 11 Owen Street, Port Macquarie has 2 residential units per floor. Residents on the southern side of the building who do not have access to views to Town Beach will be more adversely impacted by this development in the current location than recognised in the EIS document and residents occupying Levels 1-2 as well as Levels 6-8 will also have significantly detrimental visual impacts from the proposed facility, which are not recognised in the EIS.

I also highlight that the EIS notes that extensive consultation has occurred with relevant stakeholder groups including the community. At the time the EIS was developed, no consultation in relation to the significant impacts, including the significant social amenity impacts of the proposed PCYC development in the proposed location had occurred with residents at 11 Owen Street Port Macquarie.

- The increased traffic and congestion in Owen Street, Port Macquarie that a PCYC facility at the proposed site will result in. Owen Street is a very busy suburban residential street. I am concerned not only by the increased traffic in Owen Street should a PCYC facility be developed at the proposed site, but also have concerns in relation to the potential safety and noise issues associated with the increase in traffic in the street for residents, school students and the large numbers of community members and tourists currently using Owen Street to access Hastings Secondary College Port Macquarie Campus (Port Macquarie High School), Port Macquarie City Bowling Club, Port Macquarie Town Beach and Oxley Beach precincts, as well as the residences in this area.

- Further to the point above, should the proposed PCYC facility be developed at the proposed site, there will be significantly increased parking congestion and parking capacity constraint issues in the precinct. Parking in Owen Street, Port Macquarie in the residential precinct containing the Port Macquarie High School and Port Macquarie City Bowling Club is currently very often near or at capacity. Increased parking constraints and congestion in Owen Street will also exacerbate significant and concerning issues in relation to the safety of pedestrians and school students in this area.
- The development of the PCYC building on the proposed site will result in Port Macquarie High School losing a significant portion of the school's northern field, which school children utilise for sports activities, as well as during breaks for recess and lunch outside during the day.
- Locating a PCYC facility next door to a licenced premise (Port Macquarie City Bowling Club) may create a higher likelihood for poor social outcomes, given a core activity of the PCYC is to work with at-risk youth to break the cycle of disadvantage.
- Locating a PCYC facility at this residential, geographically constrained and busy location does not provide easy accessibility to the facility for the Greater Port Macquarie – Hastings community and the key focus groups the PCYC is aiming to reach. As such this proposal does not align with providing the optimal social and economic return on government investment and the best prioritisation of resources, given the important priorities requiring funding by the New South Wales Government.

Alternative Site Options for a PCYC Facility in Port Macquarie, providing Improved Community Outcomes

As mentioned above, I welcome the reintroduction of a PCYC facility in Port Macquarie, in an appropriate location, where it is demonstrated that this facility also provides the optimal social and economic return on government investment and the best prioritisation of resources, given the important priorities requiring funding by the New South Wales Government. As such, listed below are more suitable alternative site options in Port Macquarie for a PCYC facility.

- **Option 1 – Redevelopment of current Port Macquarie Olympic Pool Site, Gordon Street when the new Port Macquarie Aquatic Centre is completed at nearby Macquarie Park, Gordon Street**

With plans for Port Macquarie Olympic Pool to move to a new Aquatic Facility at nearby Macquarie Park on Gordon Street Port Macquarie, the current Port Macquarie Olympic Pool site would provide an ideal location for the PCYC development.

This site would provide the following benefits:

- The site provides the opportunity to develop suitable parking infrastructure that will be safer and larger than that available at the proposed PCYC site to meet the capacity needs of facility.
- The site is serviced by Gordon Street, a 4-lane arterial road that can safely manage large volumes of traffic and has safer pedestrian infrastructure at the current Port Macquarie Olympic Pool site, including wider pedestrian footpaths and grassed areas, as well as a traffic light pedestrian crossing nearby at the corner of Gordon and Grant Street.
- The site would be near the proposed new Port Macquarie Aquatic Facility, which includes Olympic Pool and fitness amenities that would complement a PCYC facility, creating a recreation hub in that precinct, when also considering the nearby Players Theatre, Netball Courts and Library facility as well. As such, this site would provide a higher social and economic return on investment for government funding than the proposed site.
- The site is only approximately 700 metres from Hastings Secondary College, Port Macquarie Campus and closer to the Hastings Secondary College, Westport Campus, as well as being more easily accessible from Port Macquarie Town Centre than the current PCYC proposed site.
- The site would not create social amenity impacts for the local neighbourhood. Noise impacts from the facility would be minimal, if any, given the distance of the facility from residences and this site would also result in no detrimental visual impacts for local residences and would be a good fit with the aesthetics of the area.

- **Option 2 – Locating the new PCYC facility at a Central Business District Location, taking the opportunity utilise a site to make the location a destination for tourism and a meeting place for the Port Macquarie community, with the opportunity of creating increased ongoing jobs for locals**

It was previously demonstrated that a PCYC facility is well suited to a Central Business District location in Port Macquarie, where the activities identified for the facility can be undertaken 7 days and nights a week without disturbing residential neighbourhoods, in a setting with significantly better-established and safer parking and traffic management infrastructure. The Central Business District is more easily accessible by the wider Port Macquarie community and is serviced by a broader public transport network than the proposed location.

A key opportunity in the Port Macquarie Central Business District which could be considered is the current Short Street Car Park site, also known as the Plaza Car Park area. A PCYC facility developed at this site would also allow for the development of significant undercover car parking to service the facility as well as the Central Business District and enable the inclusion of other facilities in the development such as eateries, small retailers and other hospitality providers alongside the river, helping make that site an attraction for tourists, as well as a meeting place for members of the Port Macquarie community. Use of this site would also result in no detrimental visual impacts for local residences and would be a good fit with the aesthetics of the area.

Considering the wide use this opportunity provides, and the associated ongoing jobs created, this option is significantly more closely aligned with providing the optimal social and economic return on government investment and the best prioritisation of resources, given the important priorities requiring funding by the New South Wales Government, compared to the proposal at the Hastings Secondary College, Port Macquarie Campus site.

- **Option 3 - Locating the new PCYC facility at Sovereign Hills, Port Macquarie to provide the best accessibility and service to the Greater Port Macquarie and Hastings Districts**

This location offers the Greater Port Macquarie-Hastings community significantly improved accessibility to a PCYC facility compared to the proposed location and the opportunity to optimise the PCYC's ability to achieve a core aim of working with at-risk youth to break the cycle of disadvantage.

This location provides a significantly improved geographically centralised location of the PCYC facility for the region, considering the major centres of Port Macquarie, Wauchope and the Laurieton/Camden-Haven region, as well as other nearby areas, given the neighbouring access to the Pacific Highway.

The development of a PCYC facility at Sovereign Hills enables greater utilisation of the facility, as it will be centrally located to support the Hastings Secondary College, Wauchope High School and Camden-Haven High School, which are all within a 20-minute drive of this location, a significant difference to the Owen Street, Port Macquarie proposal for the students of the Greater Port Macquarie-Hastings community. This location could also service the nearby St Joseph's Regional College, a major Catholic High School with over 1,000 students.

Given the improved accessibility to the Greater Port Macquarie-Hastings community, this option is significantly more closely aligned with providing the optimal social and economic return on government investment and the best prioritisation of resources, given the important priorities requiring funding by the New South Wales Government, compared to the proposal at the Hastings Secondary College, Port Macquarie Campus site.

This location has capacity for improved parking infrastructure and would also have no noise and disruption impacts for neighbours from the facility. This location also would prevent the associated increased traffic congestion, parking capacity and related safety issues in the very busy Owen Street, Port Macquarie residential precinct mentioned above.

A PCYC facility at this location provides much easier access for those travelling from outside the region to attend the venue (for example, those travelling to the location to participate in competitions) given the neighbouring Pacific Highway and as mentioned above, prevents increased traffic congestion, parking capacity and related safety issues in the very busy Owen Street, Port Macquarie residential precinct mentioned above.

A development in this area also provides greater social infrastructure in a newly developed area and better services the demographic targets of the PCYC, to optimise the aims of the organisation across the region.

Given the above, particularly the considerations of improved accessibility to the Greater Port Macquarie-Hastings community, this option is significantly more closely aligned with providing the optimal social and economic return on government investment and the best prioritisation of resources, given the important priorities requiring funding by the New South Wales Government, compared to the proposal at the Hastings Secondary College, Port Macquarie Campus site.

- **Option 4 – Redevelopment of Port Macquarie Indoor Sports Stadium or Players Theatre Complex**

Another alternative to the proposed site would be to reconsider upgrading and utilising current facilities available in the Port Macquarie area including:

- Reconsidering the redevelopment of the Port Macquarie Indoor Sports Stadium Complex on Hastings River Drive, Port Macquarie. This option would maximise the investment of government funding at that existing facility. As such, this option is significantly more closely aligned with providing the optimal social and economic return on government investment and the best prioritisation of resources, given the important priorities requiring funding by the New South Wales Government, compared to the proposal at the Hastings Secondary College, Port Macquarie Campus site.
- Redeveloping the Players Theatre Complex on Gordon Street Port Macquarie, to incorporate the PCYC facility in a renewed multi-purpose complex to service a diverse range of community activities, maximising the social and economic return on investment of government funding at a location that will not impact residential neighbourhoods and associated social amenity.

- **Option 5 – Consideration of alternative PCYC sites at the Hastings Secondary College Campus**

A fifth alternative for consideration is that the proposed PCYC facility at the Hastings Secondary College Campus is to either:

1. **Locate the proposed PCYC facility to the eastern side of the Hastings Secondary College Port Macquarie Campus, on Upper Oxley Oval (Oxley Oval Reserve) Pacific Drive, south of Oxley Oval.**

This site would allow for the development of improved traffic management via Pacific Drive, Port Macquarie, and the development of improved parking infrastructure on the land south of Oxley Oval, which would service:

- The proposed PCYC facility at the alternative site to the eastern side of the College
- The Hastings Secondary College, Port Macquarie Campus
- Oxley Oval
- Oxley Beach, including in future, members of the public utilising the proposed Oxley Beach Ocean Pool development
- Local Markets and other events held on the grounds of the Port Macquarie Maritime Museum.

This option would significantly mitigate noise and disruption issues for neighbours in relation to the PCYC facility, as well as the associated traffic congestion, parking capacity and related safety issues in Owen Street mentioned above.

The proposed PCYC development at this alternative location would also be a significantly improved fit aesthetically for the area compared to the current proposal, being far less obtrusive and prevent the loss of most of the northern field at the Hastings Secondary College, Port Macquarie Campus, used by students throughout the school day.

This site also prevents the detrimental visual impacts incurred in relation to the proposed site for nearby residents, particularly residents at 11 Owen Street Port Macquarie, as well as the overall loss of social amenity impacts faced by the current proposal for residents at 11 Owen Street, Port Macquarie.

Or...

2. Locate the PCYC facility on the southern or western side of the Hastings Secondary College, Westport Campus

This alternative would allow for the development of improved traffic management either via the southern end of Findlay Street, Port Macquarie, which is serviced by traffic lights and / or a possible south western entrance to the facility directly from the Oxley Highway.

This location has capacity for improved parking infrastructure and would also have no noise and disruption impacts for neighbours from the facility. This location also would prevent the associated increased traffic congestion, parking capacity and related safety issues in the very busy Owen Street, Port Macquarie residential precinct mentioned above.

The PCYC facility at this site would also be more easily accessible, given its location on a major 4-lane arterial road that can safely manage large volumes of traffic and has safer pedestrian infrastructure, with wider pedestrian footpaths and grassed areas, as well as a traffic light intersection and pedestrian crossing as mentioned above at the corner of Findlay Street and Oxley Highway, Port Macquarie.

The PCYC facility at this site allows students from the Hastings Secondary College as well as the nearby Westport Public School to utilise the facilities and provides the Westport Campus with a higher profile.

This option also prevents the loss of most of the northern field at the Hastings Secondary College, Port Macquarie Campus used by students throughout the school day.

If the proposed PCYC facility were to be developed at this alternative location, it would also be a significantly improved fit aesthetically compared to the current proposal, being far less obtrusive and not have the social amenity impacts, on residents, particularly at 11 Owen Street, Port Macquarie, described above in relation to the current proposed site.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide this submission.

I reiterate that I do not object to the overall upgrade program being proposed, only Stage 3 in relation to the proposed PCYC facility at the proposed site and welcome the remaining elements of the proposed upgrades to the campus.

As noted throughout this submission I also welcome a shared use multi-sports facility being developed in partnership with the Police Citizens Youth Club (PCYC) in Port Macquarie, at an appropriate location, where it is demonstrated that this facility also provides the optimal social and economic return on government investment and the best prioritisation of resources, given the important priorities requiring funding by the New South Wales Government.

Please contact me using the details I have included on the upgrade project portal to discuss this submission further.