

I object to this proposal for a new high school in Bungendore.

People have chosen Bungendore for many decades as a preferred place to live because it is located in a picturesque, rural setting offering rural activities, employment and enjoyment. The proposed plan takes away a large swathe of green space in the village, already deficient of parkland, and gives it a greater percentage of hard surfaces which impacts flooding, and heat retention in summer.

Furthermore, it involves exponential disruption in the middle of the village because of the huge amounts of demolition of buildings and infrastructure required, the proposed associated works on- and off-site, as itemised in your “New High School in Bungendore” document

It seems, for short term savings on services available in the town centre, and the possibility of recouping extravagant spending on a Council building, Bungendore village’s three precious green spaces will be compromised if this planning application is approved.

Therefore, in the face of climate change and our planet warming, when responsibly we should be planting trees and protecting our green spaces, I want to explain why I am so against building our high school in this proposed location.

1. Bungendore Park

Objections:

- This Plan removes the refreshing green at the heart of our village, which is the outlook for children at the primary and pre-schools, citizens who use the library, School of Arts and Post Office, and local residents. It instead, proposes hard surfaces.
- It removes scores of trees with their shade and shelter, along with their varieties of colour, shape and texture.

2. Recreation Reserve

Objections. The proposed agriculture plot

- is too small for a 21-century visionary agricultural school with no direct access from the site to agricultural land
- it allows no opportunity for further expansion on the site
- is a designated much-loved recreational reserve which serves the community well

Argument:

- It is essential that in a rural environment, an agricultural school, or, even a high school with an agricultural option ,should be on a site which allows for seamless interplay between agricultural land, and the school

3. Bungendore Common (Frogs Hollow)

Bungendore Common is a beautiful, green open space. Its tree lined creeks define the western limits of the Village, and breaks in the canopy present long views to the hills beyond.

Objections:

- I strongly object to the relocation of the Rotunda and Bush Balladeers stone memorial to the Common, because these will encroach upon and diminish the

value of the open space of the common. Furthermore because the Common is a floodway, hard structures such as these would be affected by water damage and potential subsidence. These structures would collect debris, obstruct water flow and exacerbate flood damage in nearby businesses and homes.

- It is not suitable as a performance place because heavy vehicles rattle or rumble along Molonglo Street continuously, stopping conversations.
- Specifically, I am concerned that regular activities at the gazebo, such as boot camps, might be relocated along with the gazebo, and participants would expect adjacent facilities, which could not be built in a floodway
- It is vital that the current space is kept as an open, versatile green space where now, for example, RFS and SES can train, and test their equipment. In 2019 cattle overlanding from Gundagai to Rossi paused here while traffic was diverted to allow their passage across town. I remember a very popular motor vehicle show, and an evening screening of "Ned Kelly".

4. Public Hearing

Objection:

- I strongly object that we have not had the opportunity for a public hearing. This proposal will have a huge impact on our village, and it is inconceivable that robust public discussion, alternative sites, and visionary imaging of a school for the future has not taken place.

Conclusion

As a Bungendore resident for over 40 years, I urge you to respect our trees and public green spaces. There are only these three green spaces in central Bungendore which serve a rapidly growing population. In the age of Covid, the importance of a connection to nature for humans to thrive, and the equally important connection to each other have been highlighted as essentials for humanity. These green spaces have not come easily; many of the trees have been planted by the community when they saw the need for shade and shelter from the Bungendore winds.

Our world is in rapid change. Our climate is out of control. The future which the children attending this school will face will be very different from anything we have faced before. This is a golden opportunity to build a space which will have versatility, and connection with community, industry, agriculture and environment. The proposed site is grossly inadequate for this challenge.