

17/10/2021

I object to the above development application.

Bungendore is a fast growing regional town. Clearly it needs a high school and I fully support having a high school in the town. However I strongly object to above development application as I believe it represents a very poor planning decision. There are other sites available around the town centre which appear far more appropriate from a planning perspective, taking into account factors such as the uniqueness of centrally located public open space, the major use of Majara St as an arterial road, the traffic and safety issues connected with a high school, the traffic congestion issues associated with locating the high school close to the primary school, and the value in retaining the existing much loved and well used Bungendore pool.

I consider that the proposed site has very little merit from a town planning perspective.

As Bungendore is a fast growing regional town, it is necessary to retain the centrally located public open spaces such as the Mick Sherd Oval, not reduce them in size and reduce the public access to them. These are needed for a growing population. It is also important to maintain the major arterial route of Majara St north of Kings Highway for Elmslea residents and to avoid overloading Butmaroo St instead. Having the high school and the primary school so close to each other will create traffic chaos and safety issues particularly at drop off and pick up times. Infrastructure built with community raised funds and considerable community pride such as the Bungendore pool is a rarity and it should be protected as such.

Given the nature of Bungendore and the availability of other appropriate greenfields site options with far less negative planning impacts it is very difficult to see why the site proposed was chosen, except perhaps to save money.

I believe that the Department of Education, acting in good faith in making a choice of site, should be prepared to pay market price for the land needed for a new high school. The assessment of options and the choice of site does not appear to have been the subject of a transparent process involving the Department of Education being prepared to pay market price for a site which does not have major negative planning impacts. Rather it appears that the decision making process may have been distorted by the capacity to make use of crown lands (including via the proposed road closure of Majara St) and therefore save money on the purchase of a site. The interests of the Bungendore community in retaining Mick Sherd Oval, their community built pool and their currently functional arterial road network; and in avoiding being subject to unnecessary traffic chaos, may then have been sacrificed in order to save money for the Department of Education.