

Reference to:

Application No SSD-17424905 Location 20 Avon Road, Pymble (Lot 1 DP 69541) Applicant Pymble Ladies College Council Area Ku-ring-gai Consent Authority Minister for Planning and Public Spaces or Independent Planning Commission

To Whom It May Concern,

I wish to express my concerns regarding aspects of the proposal concerning the latest development application of Pymble Ladies College. While the College has been a good neighbour in many ways, traffic and parking congestion remains a key negative feature of living in our neighbourhood.

I have provided some selective observations concerning traffic congestion in the area and the implications of the addition of 90 childcare places in the proposed development. The intention for further future expansion of the College as indicated in their School Plan requires a rethink of current and future Traffic Management and Parking.

It is clear that the implications of adding to the traffic congestion in the area bounded by Pymble Ave, Avon Road, Avon Close, and Beechworth Road have not been given due consideration. The data in the Traffic Management Plan has been selective and key elements of the data have not been revised since 2012, yet the level of traffic in the area has increased substantially.

The following changes in the area were not present at the time of previous traffic management assessments. The following substantial changes have taken place since that time, (or are due to change):

- The Ironbark (Meriton) development at the roundabout located at the junction of Avon Rd, Everton St and Pymble Avenue (driveway exits into the main roundabout adding to the local gridlock during peak traffic periods)
- The 98 apartment Cascade Gardens development at the same intersection across from the Meriton Development
- The apartment development (6 apartments?) at the same intersection on the other side of the roundabout adjacent to the historic police station
- The 165 unit development at no. 1-5 Avon Rd
- The 12 unit development adjacent to the apartment block at No. 7 Avon Rd
- The increase in total student numbers at PLC (according to MySchools enrolment information there are 500 senior students (Years 11 & 12); a substantial majority would be in possession of a drivers' licence and adding to the number of cars in the area and on the streets. Students and casual teaching staff now park along Lonsdale St and Barclay Close, Avon Close and Arilla Ave on school days
- Increased traffic on Pacific Highway (B double trucks and semis bypassing NorthConnex)
- The only right hand turn from north along the Pacific Highway into Livingstone Ave for cars going to PLC and towards West Pymble (this results in cars blocking the lane leading to the right hand lane from Pymble Hill on the Pacific Highway during morning peak hour)
- An additional loss of that lane will occur in coming months as the only vehicular entry to the new **Bunnings** development on the corner of Ryde Rd and Pacific Highway is via Bridge St for cars coming from the North which will result in traffic backing up along the highway to Livingstone Ave and beyond during morning peak hour. The right turn lane and the right-hand lane heading south along the Pacific Highway will become congested by cars and trucks seeking to enter **Bunnings** via its main entrance in Bridge St (one of the largest **Bunnings** stores will open during 2022). The Pymble fire station is located at this intersection from the North and must not be blocked at this turn – there is no alternative access to Bunnings from the Pacific Highway. Traffic will back up to the Livingstone Ave intersection during the morning peak hour, blocking the Pacific Highway.
- The traffic controller outside PLC already allows large groups of students to cross the pedestrian crossing outside the school unaware when cars are backed up to and including along the Pacific Highway during the morning peak hour

As the school has expanded, so have local streets become more congested and parking has become a major problem in residential streets. Students cannot park cars within the College grounds and now they park their cars in the only local streets near the school – Avon Rd, Avon Close, Lonsdale St and Barclay Close, Arilla St on one side and Pymble Ave on the other. Casual teaching staff also park outside the school grounds adding to the congestion.

The issue which still needs to be addressed is vehicular access to and from the school. Increased numbers of students attending the school site will result in further congestion unless there is more work done to ease traffic flow to, from and within the school site. While parking on the school site does not cater for the large number of student cars, it is the poor circulation of cars into and out of the school which is a particular problem.

The younger the student, the more likely the parents will wish to drive into the school grounds for drop-off and pick-up – the new development does not seem likely to cater for the additional traffic it will generate.

RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER INVESTIGATION BY PLC AND KURING-GAI MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

Kuring-gai Municipal Council and PLC should jointly investigate the opening up of pedestrian access from the south-western end of the school in the area behind and leading to the proposed development from furthest end of the school and adjacent to **Golfers Glen Bush Reserve**. (see photos and map below)

Adjoining PLC school at the lowest south-western end is a bush reserve called **Golfers Glen** which has a wide firebreak along much of its extent between the reserve and behind neighbouring houses. It is worth investigating the creation of a pathway along the existing firebreak between Greenway Drive in West Pymble and PLC. This would allow some of its students and parents, even students on buses, to enter the school from West Pymble and avoid the steep inclines of Pymble Ave.

It has the added value of providing an accessible exit into West Pymble away from the inevitable congestion around the school in the event of bushfires. The area from PLC and including the area around Avondale Golf Club and local housing is currently classified as Bushfire Prone land. Pedestrian access to West Pymble could serve as an important emergency exit in the event of bushfire.

Pedestrian access from Greenway Drive should be investigated as a measure to reduce the traffic congestion around the school by reducing cars entering the area of congestion around Pymble Ave:

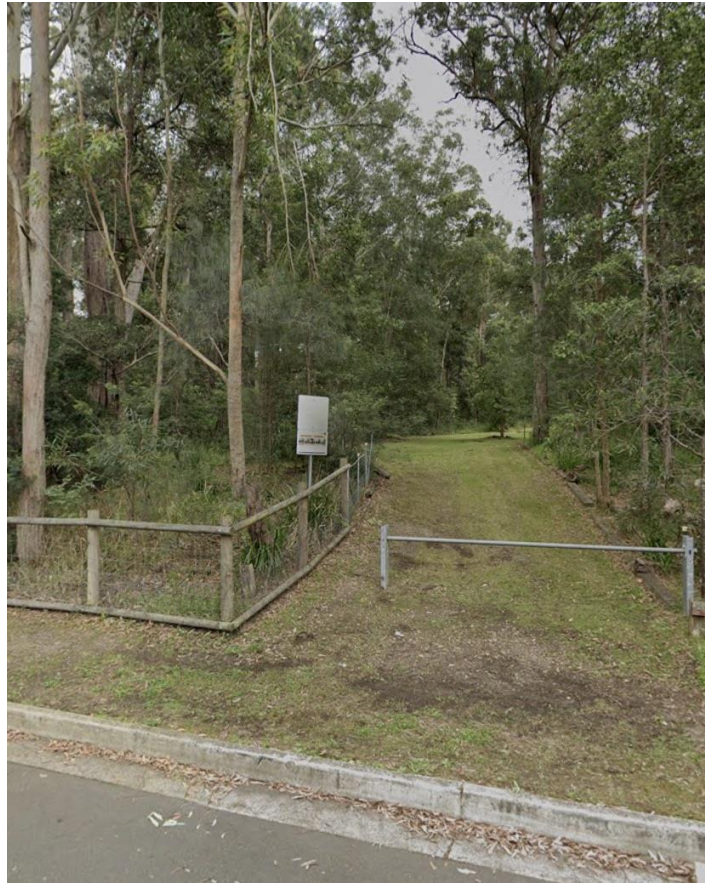
PLC grounds extend down to the boundary with Avondale Golf Course and the bush reserve located on Greenway Drive, West Pymble known as **Golfers Glen**. (see photos and map below). There is shared boundary fence between **Golfers Glen** and PLC. A degraded and partially cleared section of the bush reserve, **Golfers Glen** has ample room for an access path between the south-western end of the school (adjacent to the PLC Agriculture Plot), where they currently locate unwanted debris) and along the boundaries of the park and away from the Park's bush regeneration area. It is currently a grassed firebreak and weed infested area covered in *Tradescantia* etc. An access path here would be gently sloping (unlike Pymble Ave) and provide access to **Greenway Drive** where students could be dropped off by cars or even buses, thereby avoiding the entry of vehicles into the congested Pymble Ave area. Co-operation between Kuring-gai Municipal Council and PLC could even result in local residents affected by PLC traffic congestion having walking access to the West Pymble area and its local shopping Centre, without the steep inclines of Pymble Ave.

Observations and concerns expressed here are based on experience as a resident since 2005 and the worsening of local traffic conditions. During morning and evening peak periods for the school the roads in the area around PLC area have become impassable. (see 2 photos below taken in July 2020). Avon Rd is frequently completely blocked and residents cannot access the streets leading to their homes. Something has to be done. It can take up to 15-20 minutes to enter or leave the area at the start and end of the school day due to blocked roads.

I trust that my constructive suggestions for improved access to and from the school will be considered further.



Traffic banked up blocking Avon Rd on 23 July 2020 during the afternoon of a normal school day

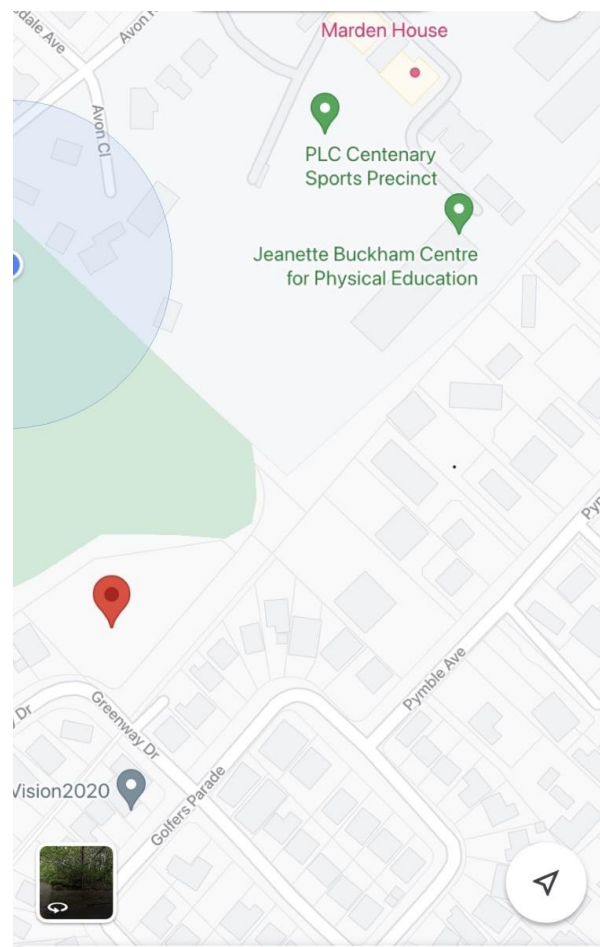


Golfers Glen firebreak from Greenway Drive in direction of PLC and alongside rear fences behind local houses (above); Firebreak alongside bush reserve showing fenced off bush regeneration area (below).





Degraded weed infested area leading to rear of PLC from Golfers Glen adjacent to firebreak (above); Location of Golfers Glen, Greenway Drive, in relation to PLC



Golfers Glen