

To whom it may concern,

RE: Major Projects, Department of Planning, Industry and the Environment, NSW Government

We write to express our support for the International Chinese School (ICS) proposed relocation to 211, Pacific Highway, St Leonards.

We live in Chatswood and have 3 daughters, 2 of whom are attending ICS Kindergarten and Year One commencing year 2020. Our youngest daughter will also be enrolled there in the next few years. We are both doctors in NSW and we realise the significant need for a Chinese bilingual school to meet the needs of the growing community. Even now in our clinic/hospitals we noticed the importance of speaking Mandarin in order to communicate effectively with the public and for foreign export /import and trade affairs. A quick look at the recent 2016 census, of the 30,000 residents in the Chatswood and St Leonard area, 21% 33 % are attending educational institutions, of which 21% are attending primary schools. The median age group of this population is in the 30's with growing families. Furthermore, 34% of this population has a Chinese ancestry. The majority of this population was born in Australia (32%), followed closely by 26% of people born in China, Taiwan and Hong Kong. The majority of the parents of these children (73%) were born in China and 76% of homes in this area speak both English and Mandarin. With these staggering figures I hope you will not take likely our plight. We fall into this category, we are both Malaysian Chinese and were granted permanent residency here in Australia, our children are born into this country, we want to offer them a place where they can be free to live as Australians and yet able to express their language and culture in equal measures. We believe that this will be a great opportunity for our future generation regardless of their native and cultural heritage. We want to provide these opportunities to all Australians. We want them to be able to speak Mandarin so that they are able to travel the globe as Mandarin is also the second most widely spoken language in the world after English.

Despite stating all these facts and figures, we are the only Mandarin school in NSW. We believe we are filling this much needed gap.

Naturally we should focus our investments into family and community building here with access to greater educational institutions and healthcare. We as Chinese immigrants to Australia are considering our children's future as their heritage and language is important to be preserved. We are grateful that we have been able to continue to blend into the wonderful diversity of Australia and hope to further enhance it. This school is very unique in that the teachers are well trained in their ability to create students that are both fluent in writing and speaking Mandarin and English. This is led by a very dedicated and committed principal Mr Peter Jamieson who has set high levels of excellence. We also have a strong parent and teacher community. We enjoy bringing Chinese arts and culture to the community by celebrating the Chinese New Year, Spring Festival, Mid-autumn Festival, Dragon Boat Festival, etc. This is evident by seeing our high academic scores in examinations. The students also ardently participate in other extra-curricular activities such as track, hurdles, athletics, gymnastics, swimming, Chinese chess, Chinese Calligraphy, Chinese painting and arts. We know that ICS will bring a positive impact in society growing strong young academics who excel in arts, history, literature, culture, dance and sport to the glory of NSW and Australia.

We believe we need a larger space and better facilities to enhance our children's growing needs. Our school is expanding and we already have so many new recruits for the academic year 2020 already thus the longevity of our school is important as well as our ability to cater for these expansions. Many current students including ourselves have younger siblings that will continue to attend the school. Our current premise is much too small and cramped and unsuitable. We have engaged in many fundraising efforts and are equipped to build a bigger and better school. We have builders and many volunteers ready to make the building of ICS at 211 Pacific Highway successful.

For the last 5 years we have been tirelessly searching for a perfect location to build ICS, we have finally found this very good site that is the right size and close to public transport so that the school is assessable to all students. As mentioned previously, ICS is the first bilingual Mandarin school in NSW thus we have students who live quite a considerable distance away commuting daily to attend. We need to be close to public transportation. We feel it is important to make ICS an all inclusive school. The site at 211 Pacific Highway is easily assessable by car, bus and train. These are all within walking distance. Also this site is green and leafy with beautiful surrounding parklands which we feel will be a suitable learning environment for our children. There is also a nearby access to the oval and parklands which will make the school a more holistic establishment. These amenities will ensure that our youth will be in a safe place where they can play, be relaxed and exercise fitness. As the growing trends of Mandarin speaking families in this area, we will serve a greater purpose as well by easing new mandarin speaking immigrants to Australia into the wider community enabling these newly arrived children a school that can bridge the cultural and language gap.

Please approve the building of ICS at 211, Pacific Highway as soon as possible so that we can prepare for the move we expect for School term 2020. We urge you to be a part of our mission bringing bilingual Mandarin education to our communities. We know that this project will be very worthwhile, we are very committed to it. We should invest in the education of our future generation.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely