

Objection to Mod 8, Wahroonga Estate, 7.11.19

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We all know that we have a youth mental health crisis in our country. Lifeline states that suicide remains the leading cause of death for Australians aged 15-44. And of course there is much more to the mental health crisis than suicide.

I oppose the development, which appears to be the love child of a long series of bad decisions, for many reasons, but today I will attempt to curtail my heartbreak and focus on how the increased height and bulk of the buildings, along with the clearing of trees along fox valley road will eliminate ALL views of leaves from the classrooms and adjoining outdoor areas. Mod 8 relies on this widening of the road for the private road and associated intersection.

The redistribution of apartments from Block D does not solve this issue of visual connection to green space as there are no classrooms or student spaces on that small NE corner.

The only benefit of redistributing (not deletion) of Block D is that it will enable students to filter from their concrete bunker of a building down through a concrete underground tunnel onto a useless sliver of undulating land – much of which will be taken up by the concrete exit from the tunnel, to access the inadequate patch of grass that is referred to in the department's report as 'playing fields'. I can assure you that there is not even one playing field that is large enough to play any official field sport. There is certainly not 'playing fields' (plural).

I will also point out that the original concept many years ago was marketed to the community as providing shared community green space and recreational areas. This was well before the school was relocated here.

I can assure you as the teacher of young children that many children will find this convoluted underground journey anxiety inducing. And they will choose not to take it.

Back to the views of greenspace. There is an every growing raft of research that shows that views of green space are ESSENTIAL to human health. Professor [Kuo](#) at the University of Illinois, this year, stated that views of green space have the benefits of a longer lifespan, improved cognition, reduced ADHD, and better interactions. Conversely, "humans living in landscapes that lack trees or other natural features", as we will have at our school, "undergo patterns of social, psychological and physical breakdown similar to animals who are removed from their natural environment".

The increased height and bulk of the buildings along with the removal of all trees on the other side of the school seeks to do this to our children.

If you'd prefer Australian research, The University of Wollongong has recently [published](#) research from a longitudinal study of 10,000 Australian children showing the importance of greener neighbourhoods with measurable differences in mental and physical wellbeing.

Additionally the new apparent increase of the boundary of the apartments right down to the APZ line blocks access to the currently used green space by the churches and there is no direct route for the churches to access the outdoor school space for their children's programs. I believe in all likelihood that the body corporate will fence off this space with swipe card access and become a gated community. This means that for my children, this development will impact them in a big way 6 days, sometimes 7 days, per week.

We as residents have made great sacrifice to live in Sydney's leafy Upper North Shore because we value the leafy environment and this research backs up exactly why it is desired and valuable. This modification further destroys the students and church members connection with green space and the peaceful enjoyment of this neighbourhood. As the development has no direct residential neighbours, I ask that you consider the submissions of church members and school parents as seriously as you would direct residential neighbours. This modification (and each of the other many modifications) makes this dire situation worse and further destroys our community.

I would also like to add that the community drop in information session in Aug provided inaccurate and misleading information and images. When questions were asked, conflicting answers were given from various representatives. They showed outdated, incorrect and out of scale maps of the development and the estate. They also showed an artists impression of the new four lane road, private road and intersection that actually only showed an empty two lane road, no traffic lights or roundabout and where the private road should be was a stand of mature trees. These deceptive acts have likely minimised the objections that you have received to this modification.

References

Kuo

https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2009/02/090217092758.htm?fbclid=IwAR3mdF95eFyeKBYyFWjF10EnInrlgcG_2nJsuxqOrpsQIE-i4ZwkxjdZ3a8

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<https://www.uow.edu.au/media/2017/green-space-crucial-for-a-healthy-start.php>