**Talking Notes when speaking to IPC on 18th August 2021**

**Good morning, Commissioner Pilton and thank you for the opportunity to speak with you directly.**

**Summary**

My name is Neil Bettles and I have lived in Holwood Avenue for over 20 years. This is the first time I have objected to development plans of the school, but having reviewed the application felt obliged to do so. I recognise that a school needs redevelopment and upgrade and I have no issue with this aspect as such. I also appreciate that schools must take into account future demand and consider expansion where necessary. However, growth should be calculated based on the demand from student growth and need to create the additional capacity required in the infrastructure.

TGS have based their development on a vision of what the school should look like. If you have unlimited space and there are no impacts to the community with no contribution from government, otherwise it should be based on a methodology which can be validated.

I want to start with what I consider to be fundamental omissions from the development application

**Capacity**

**TGS** state that the proposed development has been designed and orientated to accommodate the forecast student population.

**NRB**

Despite efforts to validate the capacity increase proposed by Trinity, no evidence has been provided to date. The proposed development is therefore predicated on Trinity’s future vision of the school (in terms of size, structure and facilities) rather than a reasonable projection of actual capacity required based on the student population forecast.

Because some of the development expands beyond the current school perimeter and buildings profile there should be evidence that the scale of the development is justified.

In particular, there is no evidence that the Teaching & Learning Precinct requires the scale that is proposed and ….

the top level of this building (The terrace) does not provide a teaching amenity, even though it is earmarked for examinations. It is actually a viewing platform with city views which will be used for entertainment and functions.

**Student Numbers**

**TGS** state that in Sydney’s inner west, it is projected that schools will need to accommodate an additional 6,000 students by 2031, with approximately 1,500 of these in non-government schools. These metrics agree broadly to published information on the NSW Dept of Education web site.

**TGS** then claim that they will accommodate 445 of those 1500 growth places which will make their student population 2100.

**NRB**

The proposed increase in the student population to 2100 students and 321 FTE staff is a key part of the proposal, but there is no analysis of how it is derived.

The growth in TGS’s student population would mean that they anticipate acquiring 30% of the growth for all non-government schools. There are 37 non-government schools in the Inner West (incl TGS) so it would be reasonable to assume that each would have demand for 3% of the total growth (1/37) or 40 places.

Prima facie, the TGS forecast looks grossly overstated which questions the scale of the Teaching & Learning Precinct building in particular as one would expect the scale to be proportionate to the number of students.

**Growth in student numbers should not be approved given they are not mandated, not reasonable, and not supported by any evidence.**

**In Summary**

From the perspective of community, I think it is essential that the scale of the development is proportionate and appropriate. In my opinion I believe this is a serious omission from the documentation and evidence.

I do not believe the scale and size of the development has been logically established and consequently this questions the expansion of the school beyond the existing physical boundary and building profile.

I respectfully ask you **not to approve the scale and current height of the Teaching Learning and Library Building for the following reasons:**

No evidence that the scale is proportionate to the forecast student numbers
The student numbers are overstated in any case
One floor has been designed as an entertainment and function space and is not a teaching or learning amenity which restricts the views of many around the community for the sake of establishing views for a few.

I do not consider the reduction in height already agreed a concession but a small adjustment to ameliorate the community.

**Conditions**

It is pleasing that the Department have recommended conditions, but it is not clear that they will be mandated or enforced. TGS have stated that they keep a register of student attendees in any case to satisfy one of the conditions. However, this did not prevent them exceeding the current authorised limit.

I am ultimately disappointed with the review and approval process undertaken by the Department as it was not as rigorous as I expected. I thought that the metrics which are quoted which underpin the scale and size of this project would be a fundamental review point. Even after the community submissions identified this omission the TGS have avoided responding. The Department have acted in an administrative capacity and monitored progress against a list of action points rather than in a review capacity. They have looked at the final plan and left it to the community to look at the impacts of the proposed development and allowed TGS to dismiss them as not significant.

**Applicant Meeting Transcript**

**Headmaster** No complaint about noise in 3.5 years at school.

In fact current noise and concerns about noise when the student population increases have been mentioned several times and stating issues with noise currently.

**Note**

There were 2 public submissions which approved the development proposal one from a contractor who lives in Chester Hill and is seeking work from the development and the other supported in principle but noted concerns about traffic on particular roads around their abode.

It should be noted therefore that the community is overwhelmingly concerned about the development – particularly its scale. Many of the submissions included this aspect of the development.