

Summary Fact Sheet

NSW Planning Assessment Commission Determination: St Catherine's School, Waverley – Master Plan and Stage 1 upgrades

Wednesday, 6 April 2016

The NSW Planning Assessment Commission has provided its consent to the Master Plan and Stage 1 upgrades proposed by St Catherine's School, Waverley, and has provided clear direction to the school about the need to address a number of issues of concern to both the local community and Council.

The Commission has approved this application to restructure and upgrade the School's facilities, as it will provide adaptable and modern education, performance and sporting facilities designed to respond to the different forms of learning offered by the School. The proposal also has the potential to provide for a growing student population, responding to the regions demographic pressures, should it be able to overcome existing traffic and parking issues around the site.

The Commission recognises that the upgrades to the site will impact on neighbouring residents, and that construction traffic and transport arrangements will need to be closely controlled and monitored. Some members of the community urged the Commission at the Public Meeting to reject the project, given the contentious traffic and parking issues associated with the School's existing operations.

Historically, the school has generated substantial traffic and parking demand which has adversely affected its neighbours. Growth in school's student and staff populations also continued unchecked and exceeded agreed consent levels in recent years.

Despite its commitment to a new operational traffic management plan, the Commission found that the community requires a level of certainty that the significant traffic and parking issues at St Catherine's School in Waverley will be addressed by the school. As a result, the Commission has prohibited any further increase in student numbers at St Catherine's School, until such time as the school can demonstrate transport, traffic and parking arrangements are being managed consistent with this consent's requirements.

With a strong and modern suite of construction and operational controls in place, the proposal represents a significant opportunity to improve the school's current traffic and parking problems over the long term. The approval, therefore, provides an incentive for St Catherine's School to improve its performance by including clear and enforceable limits on student and staff populations in order to ensure that further growth only comes with commensurate improvements in transport arrangements. If successful, the traffic model it implements has the potential to become an example for many other schools in Sydney.

Numerous speakers at the Public Meeting expressed concern that there is a lack of communication and engagement between the school and local residents. The Commission noted that the school is not independent of the community it operates in and that it draws students from the local area and has responsibilities to the local community. In order to facilitate open communication between all parties, the Commission has required that the

school establish and operate a Community Consultative Committee. The Committee will be required to operate in accordance with NSW government guidelines, which specify it is to be independently chaired and include three to five community representatives. The Committee will provide a forum for the school, Council and residents to regularly meet to review the school's traffic and transport arrangements and broader operations, environmental performance and community relations. This will ensure that the proposed suite of conditions, relating to traffic and parking improvements, are implemented, and appropriately reviewed and adapted as each stage of the development progresses.

In approving the application the Commission found the proposal represents a real opportunity to introduce a strong and enforceable regime of transport and parking management measures which have the potential to mitigate some of the existing traffic impacts while facilitating upgrades to the school's facilities. In the event that the school can demonstrate an adequate improvement to the existing traffic and parking arrangements, in this locality, it will then be able to increase its student enrolments, above current levels, in order to better service the needs of the region's growing school age population.