



## **\$123-MILLION BOX HILL SCHOOL PROJECT GIVEN THE GO-AHEAD**

21 April 2020

Plans for a new Catholic college in Sydney's northwest have received the tick of approval from the state's Independent Planning Commission.

The Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta sought approval for the construction and operation of the new co-educational Santa Sophia College within Box Hill North Town Centre.

The \$123-million project features a four to six storey building, comprising learning areas, creative and performance hubs, open space and sporting facilities, for up to 1860 Kindergarten to Year 12 (K-12) students and 130 full-time staff.

There are also plans for an on-site childcare centre for 60 children.

The NSW Department of Planning, Industry & Environment finalised its whole-of-government assessment of the state significant development (SSD) application in March this year and it came to the Commission for determination because the Department received more than 25 public objections (69).

Three Commissioners were appointed to consider the application and make a final decision: Dr Peter Williams (Panel chair), Ms Carol Austin and Ms Wendy Lewin.

The Panel met with the Applicant and the Department via videoconference; however, a planned public meeting was cancelled due to COVID-19 (Coronavirus) restrictions and the Commission instead invited interested individuals and groups to submit their comments in writing. The Applicant also provided the Panel a narrated video tour of the site.

Key issues raised in submissions to both the Department and the Commission related to site suitability, built form and urban design, traffic and transport, and safety.

After careful consideration of all the evidence, the Commission has today (Tuesday 21 April 2020) determined to approve the SSD application, subject to conditions – concluding the provision of additional school infrastructure in a growth area “is in the broader public interest”.

In its Statement of Reasons for Decision, the Commission acknowledged “the positive outcomes of locating a school in the emerging Town Centre of Box Hill North, including the efficient use of transport and service infrastructure, providing an activated and vibrant “hub” for the community and meeting demand for educational facilities in the growth area.”

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The Commission imposed conditions of consent which are designed to:

- Prevent, minimise and/or offset adverse environmental impacts
- Set standards and performance measures for acceptable environmental performance
- Require regular monitoring, and
- Provide for the on-going environmental management of the development.

**The Commission's Statement of Reasons for Decision can be read in full here:**

<https://www.ipcn.nsw.gov.au/projects/2020/03/santa-sophia-catholic-college-ssd-9772>

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