



New South Wales Government
Independent Planning Commission

TRANSCRIPT OF MEETING

RE: MINARAH COLLEGE (SSD-30759158)

DEPARTMENT MEETING

PANEL: CLARE SYKES (CHAIR)
MICHAEL WRIGHT

OFFICE OF THE IPC: KENDALL CLYDSDALE
CALLUM FIRTH

DEPARTMENT OF DOUGLAS WALTHER
PLANNING, HOUSING & KAREN HARRAGON
INFRASTRUCTURE: MADELINE THOMAS
INGRID ZHU

LOCATION: ZOOM VIDEOCONFERENCE

DATE: 10:00AM – 11:00AM
THURSDAY, 15th JANUARY 2026

<THE MEETING COMMENCED

5 **MS CLARE SYKES:** Yes, I think that's everyone. Well good morning and welcome everyone to the Department. Before we begin, I would like to acknowledge that I'm speaking to you from Cammeraygal land and I acknowledge the traditional owners of the lands from which we virtually meet today and pay my respects to their elders past and present.

10 Welcome to the meeting today to discuss the Minarah College state significant development application, SSD-307591158, currently before the Commission for determination. The applicant Green Valley Islamic College Ltd proposes to construct and operate a new two storey kindergarten to Year 12 school, Minarah College, for 980 students and children that includes a 30 place school for special purpose and a 60 place early learning centre. The project includes tree removal, demolition, bulk earthworks, an onsite wastewater management system, including a sewerage treatment plant, sports field, landscaping, public domain and infrastructure works. The project is proposed to be developed in four stages.

15 20 My name is Clare Sykes. I'm the chair of this Commission panel and I'm joined by my fellow Commissioner Michael Wright. We are also joined by Kendall Clydsdale and Callum Firth from the Office of the Independent Planning Commission.

25 In the interests of openness and transparency and to ensure the full capture of information, today's meeting is being recorded and a complete transcript will be produced and made available on the Commission's website. This meeting is one part of the Commission's consideration of this matter and will form one of several sources of information upon which the Commission will base its determination.

30 35 It is important for the Commissioners to ask questions of attendees and to clarify issues whenever it is considered appropriate. If you are asked a question and are not in a position to answer, you know, we would request that you please take the question on notice and provide any additional information in writing which we will then pop up on our website. And I request that all participants today introduce themselves before speaking for the first time and for all members to ensure that they do not speak over the top of each other to ensure accuracy of the transcript.

40 So we will now begin. Welcome and happy new year and yes, we're looking forward to a good discussion today on the Minarah College state significant development. You've all received an agenda, a meeting agenda with some items for discussion today but in the first instance we invite the Department to make any opening statement or presentation regarding the development application.

45 **MS KAREN HARRAGON:** Thank you. Good morning. My name is Karen Harragon. I'm the director of social infrastructure assessments at the Department of Planning. I would like to thank you for the opportunity for the Department to speak to you on the state significant development application and I'm accompanied today by Doug Walther, our Executive Director Infrastructure

Assessments, team leader Madeline Thomas and also Ingrid Zhu, who's the project lead for this application and who will also be sharing presentation duties with me today.

5 This is a short presentation that the Department has prepared in acknowledgement of the agenda that has been provided by the IPC and we seek to provide an overview of the amended proposal which was lodged on 10 September 2024, the key issues, the Department's recommendations and we are happy to take any questions either at the end or during our presentation. I will now get Ingrid to move to the second slide.

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15 The amended application and the proposal of the site. The project was amended by the applicant to provide a reduced scale in response to concerns raised by the community, the Council and the Department during consideration of the 2022 EIS exhibition. Specifically, this related to the site suitability, the infrastructure needs, the rural character, traffic flooding and noise. The amended proposal involves the staged construction of a two storey school for up to 980 kindergarten to Year 12 students and this includes a 30 place special school and a 60 place early learning centre. There's also associated tree removal, bulk earthworks, onsite wastewater systems, a sports field, landscaping and other infrastructure works.

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25 The site is in the unreleased or deferred area of the Catherine Field precinct within the South West Growth Area within the Camden local government area. The site is unsewered in a semi-rural setting with limited urban infrastructure surrounded by rural, residential and small scale agriculture and rural and associated uses. Next slide, please.

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35 The updated site and surrounding land uses. This figure on the left shows the current South West Growth Area status map from Camden Council, which also indicates the statuses of ongoing precinct and rezoning activities and the location of the site within this growth area. The two figures on the right show the recent updates to the site's surrounding land uses, that it's particularly relevant to understand there's been some considerable change since the application was originally lodged and this highlights the ongoing changes in the precinct, the broader precinct, the broader area, including the recently rezoned – I think I'm going to pronounce this wrong – Pondicherry area to the west of the site.

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45 These updates reflect the transitional nature of the precinct and the wider area, which is evolving from rural to more developed uses. The deferred part of the Catherine Field precinct is still in the early stages of precinct planning and the future land uses, the road hierarchy and infrastructure provisions are yet to be finalised in terms of planning. The certainty and the timing of the delivery of the planning outcomes for the remainder of the deferred Catherine Field precinct has not been determined at this time and we acknowledge the statements that have been made by the council as part of its presentation. Slide four, please.

A little bit more about the project background. The original EIS was exhibited in 2022. It received 284 public submissions, including 188 objections, along with an

objection from Camden Council. Government agencies also provided advice raising concerns regarding the provision of essential services to meet the scale of the development. In response to the Department's request in 2023, the amended applications was lodged in September 2024. This included a reduction in the scale of the development in response to issues relating to the adequacy of water, wastewater, stormwater and road infrastructure to service the site and the broader precinct. The amended application provides for four stages of development and reduces the maximum student and early centre numbers from 1,580 to 980 and also incorporates a permanent onsite wastewater system, which did not form part of the original application.

This amended project was exhibited in 2024, receiving 275 public submissions with 96 objections, with Council maintaining its objection to the amended proposal. The IPC is the consent authority for this project due to Council's objection and also there being more than 50 community submissions by way of objection. I will now hand over to Ingrid to continue our presentation on the key issues, a number of which are covered in Council's submission. Thanks, Ingrid.

MS INGRID ZHU: Thank you, Karen. Good morning, Commissioner. My name is Ingrid Zhu. I'm a senior planning officer in the social infrastructure assessments team at the Department. I will provide a brief description of the proposal's staging before we move on to the key issues on the meeting agenda.

As mentioned earlier, the development will be delivered in four stages, corresponding with the projected population growth and enrolment need. Stage one establishes the primary school western wing for 300 students and an early learning centre for 18 children. So, as required by our conditions, the demolition, tree removal and remediation of the entire site will be completed prior to stage one operations. The onsite sewage treatment plant will be built to its full capacity in this stage one with the initial effluent management area to be established as a smaller area at the back of the site. I do note that the location of the effluent management area on the plan is indicative only.

The proposed footpath and two bus bays along the front boundary will also be delivered in stage one, as well as various acoustic fencing around the outdoor play area and site boundaries. I note that there is a discrepancy between our assessment report and the conditions regarding the timing of the right turning lane on Catherine Fields Road Reserve. I wanted to clarify that it is the Department's recommendation to deliver the right turning lane in stage two and the Department will issue a formal statement to this effect after this presentation.

So stage two will add the primary school southern wing, increasing capacity to 600 students and the early learning centre to 42 children. As conditioned, it will also involve the expansion of play space and the further road upgrades, including the road widening within the Catherine Field Road Reserve and the channelised right turning lane, as I just mentioned, and the five additional intended bus bays. More acoustic fencing will be added around the play area.

Stage three involves the high school northern wing, reaching the ultimate education capacity of 920 school students and 60 early learning centre children. By stage three, the effluent management area occupies almost the entire sports field to meet the need of the increased student population. Stage four involves the construction of the high school hall with no change in student or staff numbers. So next, I will move on to the key assessment.

MR MICHAEL WRIGHT: Sorry, Clare, can I ask Ingrid a question just in terms of the staging and the delivery of landscaping? Is the landscaping being delivered in stages as well? Or is it – so, for example, if you go to stage one, is there an element of landscaping involved in the delivery of stage one?

MS ZHU: So the landscaping will be staged as well. So the applicant did provide a staging plan for landscaping, but the tree removal will happen all at once in stage one, and then they will gradually plant more trees. But the full replacement tree scheme should be achieved in stage three.

MR WRIGHT: In stage three. Okay, thank you.

MS ZHU: So moving on to the key issues and how they have been addressed. For site servicing and the land use conflict, sections of the Catherine Field precinct have not been released in part due to infrastructure constraints. So in response to the limited servicing capacity in water and wastewater servicing, the applicant has proposed various interim and permanent measures to ensure the site can be adequately serviced even before public infrastructure is delivered. So reticulated water is expected to be delivered in 2031 and public sewage may be available in late 28 or 29, subject to funding approval.

For the proposed onsite wastewater management system, which is capable of permanently servicing the site, the Department has recommended conditions for monitoring the system performance. Further Council approval is required for stages one and two developments and before stages three and four start operation, a suitably qualified expert must undertake an adequacy review and confirm that the system operation is as expected, including the suitability of the effluent management area, even without the 50 per cent reserve area Council requested.

So moving on to traffic and transport, the Camden Valley Way and Catherine Fields Road intersection will reach a level of service F from stage two. However, this is regardless of whether the school is present. Stages two and three will further increase delays and the degree of saturation of this pre-existing issue. So to mitigate this, the proposal does include onsite and off-site transport infrastructure upgrades, as shown on the consolidated staging plan to the right of this slide.

So recommended conditions include a school travel plan with an initial audit after operation to verify the assumptions, a road safety audit and an operational traffic and access management plan in consultation with Transport for New South Wales and Council, implementing measures such as staggered school times and the future shuttle bus services. So to clarify on the shuttle bus, so the applicant has proposed

from stage three, one school shuttle bus will run from the nearby train stations, accommodating up to 60 students. So preliminary school travel plan has assumed 5 per cent of students will use the bus from stage three. The finalised school travel plan will also be reviewed and updated annually.

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MS SYKES: Ingrid, just a quick clarification on that shuttle bus. So it's stage three that the shuttle bus will commence?

MS ZHU: That's the current proposal as included in the school travel plan.

10 However, they do have the flexibility to update the school travel plan to provide more if the future bus uptake is actually more than expected.

MS SYKES: Okay, thank you.

15 **MS ZHU:** Thank you. So moving on to built form and urban design, the State Design Review Panel has reviewed the proposal and the proposal incorporated the government architect's advice, the design complies with the Camden local environmental plan height control and provides quite substantial setbacks from all site boundaries. As a large non-rural development, however, the school will 20 change the local character. However, building in stages means the visual impact will happen gradually over time, allowing smoother integration to the area.

25 The Department has recommended planting additional canopy trees along the southern boundary of the southern car park to further mitigate direct visual impacts on the residential dwellings to the south. Regarding Council's concerns about the boundary Colourbond fencing, the Department considers that the 1.8 metre high fencing is not uncommon on rural residential properties. During a site visit, the Department has also found a similar Colourbond fencing in the 30 surrounding area. For this project, the Colourbond fencing is functionally required for acoustic and bushfire reasons. To mitigate the impact we have recommended a condition requiring a choice of recessive colour and design for the Colourbond fencing. So I will now pass it over to Karen to discuss the remaining issues.

35 **MS HARRAGON:** Karen Harragon. Thank you, Ingrid. I'm talking to you now about the overland flooding. The site's southern boundary is affected by overland flooding, which flows towards the Western Road Reserve. All buildings will be flood free during the 1 per cent annual exceedance probability through to the probable maximum flood events.

40 The applicant's primary response to flooding is horizontal evacuation on foot to the Catherine Fields Community Centre, with the second response being shelter-in-place. The Department has recommended conditions that require a final flood emergency response plan be prepared in consultation with New South Wales SES and Council, and that this be informed by detailed flood risk assessment 45 along the evacuation path. And by way of background to that, the Department is not satisfied that evidence that we've seen in the flood report that the fine grain nature of that flood work along the road has been to the same standard that has been undertaken for the site. And we think it's quite critical to understand at a very

fine grain detail what the depth of those flood waters are before you determine the appropriateness of sending an entire school, including a childcare centre and a special education unit along the road.

5 So the applicant has also given appropriate consideration to how it manages its out-of-hours activities should there be overland flooding that will occur without much notice. Its shelter-in-place supplies and powers, and the occupants are to remain in flood free areas until waters recede. We're proposing a testing and review schedule and confirmation of structural integrity for all buildings and structures so that they can withhold additional forces up to PFM, although we acknowledge that the depth of the flood water will not place a significant burden 10 on the structural integrity of those buildings and will be an easy to achieve outcome.

15 **MR WRIGHT:** Sorry, Karen, can I just clarify what you were saying about the granularity or lack thereof of floodwater depths and velocities along the road? Can you just please explain that?

20 **MS HARRAGON:** The Department's view, if we were to look at the level of the modelling activity that occurred for the flooding and the overland path and the identification of depth of water and the hazard risk for the site is quite different in the work that they've undertaken for the evacuation path, which for the 25 Department's view, appears to be just a capture of the larger model that would have been prepared by the Council for the more broader area.

25 **MR WRIGHT:** Okay. So do you think more work needs to be done in this space? Is that what you're suggesting?

30 **MS HARRAGON:** Look, the Department's view, if this was the only option that they were providing as an appropriate flood emergency response, then it would need to come in now. But the fact that this is the two flood emergency responses that they're providing, the other being shelter-in-place, the shelter-in-place is not a 35 very high risk event. Given that it's overland flooding and it's not a flood event that you're going to get a lot of hours of notice about, and it will predominantly be from very short bursts of intense rainfall, I think it's highly likely that the dominant use for this is going to be a shelter-in-place activity anyway. And the 40 conditions of consent that the Department has recommended is basically getting that evidence base prepared by a qualified person to confirm that this secondary, you know, the evacuation along the road reserve should potentially not be continued.

45 And can I say to the IPC, the Department recognises that the site and the precinct in transition, that that circumstance would highly likely to potentially change once the road reservation is updated as part of a future precinct work, probably including a footpath. And then at that stage, it would be an appropriate time for the applicant to continue to have a review process for their flood emergency response, to go back and visit whether that's a more appropriate response than sheltering in place.

5 **MS SYKES:** So just following from Michael's question, Karen, and it's really just to sort of fully clarify this point that in the event of sort of extreme flood events, is the concern around emergency, you know, the shelter-in-place and then therefore safe emergency access or that the level of granularity of the modelling could potentially be improved?

10 **MS HARRAGON:** If they are going to continue to propose two methods of emergency response, the shelter-in-place or their preference at the moment is the early evacuation prior to the water depth being pooled at the front of their site, if they're going to continue to put forward that as an option, it needs to be backed up by evidence that that model or sorry, that the flood plans and maps that they've provided to support that path along the road are absolutely correct.

15 As you drive along, you can see it's not like an urban environment. It's quite undulating. And I would want to be certain that if children were about to encounter a depth that was not expected because it wasn't done granularly, that it should be discounted straight away if they find – because the applicant's proposing the entire school, including an early childhood centre, where I'm guessing there would be an expectation there could be babies and there's also a number of children with special – in the special education unit. So I think there can't be a "We hope it's a good path of travel." It needs to be quite clear that it's an appropriate path of travel. So our condition set that we're recommended is that it should be shelter-in-place unless they've demonstrated that the path of travel is a suitable one.

20 **MS SYKES:** Thanks, Karen. That's very helpful. And what current triggers in terms of the responsible conditions related to flood emergency response – are there current triggers around the review of the flood emergency response plan to be updated at a particular time over the life of the development or –

25 **MS HARRAGON:** So all flood emergency response plans by default need to continue to have a continuous improvement and revisit, whether it occurs after flood events or whether it's just a periodic review. And ultimately, the success of a flood emergency response plan is fully on the shoulders of what would typically be your principal, who is a nominated flood authority on the site, to make the decision about whether you're going to put the school on notice or to actually start evacuation and the timing of that.

30 **MS SYKES:** Thank you.
40 And can I also just say that these were all referred to SES. SES isn't fundamentally raising any concerns with what they saw. The Department just takes its role very seriously about making sure that the condition set that we put together where there is an implicit endorsement of the FERP is a sound one so that ultimately the safety of all occupants, whether they're visitors to the site at the time or children or staff, is one that there is no surprises that are going to occur when that that activity happens.

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MS HARRAGON: Okay, so we've provided here a series of maps just so you can get an understanding of the depth of water and the colour coded in the flood assessment in terms of where that deeper water starts to pool adjoining the road.

5 And that's, I guess, the area and the quickness of that rise that becomes ultimately a necessity for a very competent principal to understand the duties of them in terms of recognising what is an intense rain event that will lead to the scenarios of a flood event happening. Okay, Ingrid, thanks. I'll just get to the next slide.

10 I'm just going to go through this quickly and particularly because they cover also a number of the Council concerns as well. So just to have clarity that the full contamination will be – remediation will be completed prior to stage one operating. There are noise and vibration matters that we've continued to look to have better outcomes for and they include operational ones and they include 15 construction ones. So the applicant's staggering the play times, they're restricting the use of the school hall as part of out of hours activities. There's a detailed noise management plan, the sound barrier walls, which are the boundary fences and the construction specifications are in line with noise assessment recommendations.

20 The short-term noise monitoring post operation to make sure that the validation of the model is the correct one and the condition set has a process by which if it doesn't meet that expectation that was set by the model, that they need to look at how that is going to be mitigated as part of future work. So we're also asking for them to do a more detailed dive on the site onsite water management plant. You know, they've had regard to it but we're not satisfied that there's actually – once 25 the plant is chosen, the nature of the plant, we would want to make sure that if there's a need for additional noise mitigation to be installed as part of that as well. And equally we've applied a number of recommended conditions relating to the construction.

30 We have also had a number of conversations around not just the noise with the applicant but also things such as the landscaping about what opportunities there were to bring forward all of the works that might bring value to the adjoining 35 owners as well as the general community, whether they – what can be brought earlier into the stages. So when I'm talking about the construction, we have asked and we've recommended a condition that where possible that all of that boundary fencing be undertaken before the noise happens. That's a fairly standard approach that the Department takes so that there's some mitigations, as per the industrial noise policy, by the provision of that boundary fence where possible. Obviously if 40 there's got to be work under the fence that would need to occur before the fence can go in.

45 The storm management has been provided and will meet Council's water quality targets and the post development runoff will not exceed the pre-development flows. So the early learning centre, there's a requirement that this satisfies the provisions of the SEPP in relation to unencumbered indoor and outdoor space and that's been assured will all be completed by the stage one. So all of those open space areas will be ready for subsequent increases through the next stages.

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We had many conversations with the applicant about their intended community use there's some duality around what these conversations are because ultimately there is great benefit that's provided by a school providing the community access to its infrastructure and that's accepted by most councils.

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But there's also a need to make sure that that impact outside of the school hours is of a scale that it's not so significant that one, it wasn't assessed as part of this project, and also that it doesn't have consequential impacts for noise and particularly for this site for the sustainability of the treated effluent area, which is going to be located underneath the actual recreation sports field. Which is probably for me the most critical thing of all of the matters that we're looking at in terms of making sure that the treatment of the wastewater for this site is going to be platinum optimal outcome and that might include the site and the sports field not being used during wet weather areas or during highly impacted times during winter.

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And that's the role of a highly qualified person and the Council as part of their section 68 approval to determine what the conditions of that approval will impose on that approval. So we've also staged the payment of contributions as per council's section 7.12 contribution plan. Thanks, Ingrid.

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Okay, so that finalises our formal, I guess, presentation. So I think if we can go back to the agenda that the Department's been asked to speak to in relation to the overarching Council's concerns. So I guess the principle of it is a permissible use on the site. The Department was equally concerned about the scale. It is important to recognise that the land is still zoned rural. There were lots of conversations with the applicant about the scale of the original application.

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It is a challenging space because it's not just a – it's this zone and therefore the building needs to look like a rural building. You will note from many of these maps that the Council have already rezoned the immediately adjoining land. It's no longer rural land and it's actually a small lot zoning. So you've actually got an intensity of buildings along that which start to reflect almost like an urban form rather than a rural form.

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The inspections that we've done at this site since 2022 have shown a change in I guess the uses of the rural land, not surprisingly, as the other precincts have started to roll out and quite high densities, particularly across the creek, have started to occur, which are visible from these sites. We found there to be quite a low level of what I – well, the Department would consider to be rural activity on the site that's just not rural housing on the site. A lot of the properties in this area appear to be now being used for logistics trucking depots, so it would be quite a challenge, the Department considers, to say that the scale of this development, its operation cannot be reasonably mitigated to be appropriate or suitable for this part of the precinct.

5 MS SYKES: Okay. No, thanks for that overview, Karen. In our meetings with Council, you know, obviously one of their sort of broader concerns is that the school is proposed in – I mean they referred to this, that Catherine Fields is this missing middle sort of precinct where there has been limited or no precinct planning in place. And, you know, their concern is that it's premature in terms of the timing of that precinct planning. Just from – I mean I know when you – sort of at the initial part of the meeting you said that has been acknowledged, could you perhaps expand a little bit on that in terms of – and it's probably building on what you've just mentioned actually in terms of reconciling that strategic uncertainty in terms of that precinct planning and –

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MS HARRAGON: Yes.

15 **MS SYKES:** – you know, in other comment in terms of beyond acknowledgement whether there is sort of that consideration around that disconnect or timing of that broader planning?

20 **MS HARRAGON:** I've read Council's comments and their statements around the piece of work that the Council would prefer to have occurred for this precinct prior to there being any developments approved of this nature, you know, I guess is one that I can recognise and understand the outcome that they would like to see, where there's a fully developed and evolved master plan for the entire precincts. The challenge becomes that I'm not aware of there being any master plans in the time the Department's been dealing with schools where there's been the recognition of private schools in master plans. There's certainly always often a function where they determine the suitable location for government schools because it's a requirement to meet the catchment and the population growth.

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30 So the Department is quite used to dealing with the permissibility issue where schools without a scale limitation are permitted, in my personal view and I think the Department's, we're not aware of them being prohibited in any rural zones and in fact the SEPP makes it permissible even if the LEP chooses to. And I think it's important to even unpack the fact why that SEPP has done so to basically facilitate schools in all the urban zones and the rural zones.

35 Yes, so it would be a perfect situation for a master plan to have been done before we had to consider this application but we do have to consider the application, we've had to have regard to it. The Department recognise that it's important to understand the nature of how this site is within the precinct but the broader catchment and I think if we go back to that diagram on the left you can see just how close it is to quite intense development that are occurring in other precincts, which is not the reason why we're recommending approval but it's one of the many factors that we've had to have regard to.

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45 It's important that we – in determining whether the suitability of this development is deemed to be appropriate, to have made a very deep dive to all of the impacts including the suitability of the functioning of the school for the occupants and for the Department to form the view at each of those instances separately whether

there's a reasonable expectation for appropriate mitigations to be achieved by the development either proposed by the applicant or conditioned through the recommended conditions that we've put on. And the Department considers it can be appropriately mitigated at that scale.

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MS SYKES: Thank you. Thanks, Karen. And Michael did you have any further questions on –

10 **MR WRIGHT:** Yes, thanks, Clare. Just in terms of – and I understand where Council is coming from because it would certainly be preferable to have a master plan for the precinct in place. That's not going to happen for some years by the sounds of things, Karen. My question was more about – again it's probably speculative, hypothetical, but we've got this proposal sitting in a primary production small lots precinct. I'm just curious to know what the Department's view is – I know there's been a lot of discussion about Sydney's food bowl shrinking. Is it likely to be the case that this Catherine Fields precinct will convert to R2 low density residential, so that sort of shrinking amount of primary production left in the Sydney basin will shrink further in this precinct?

15 **MS HARRAGON:** The Department's being careful not to make a decision that this school is appropriate because it's a foregone conclusion that this site will be delivered and rezoned the precinct. So all we can work with as an assessment group is to have regard to the pieces of work that we know are underway where government more broadly is looking to look to resolve some of the predeterminate conditions for whether the next stage of – you know, because I guess there's a big difference between this land just being rural and it not being part of a growth area as compared to it is part of a growth area.

20 **MR WRIGHT:** Yes.

25 **MS HARRAGON:** There's already been to some extent a decision made at a point in time by Council and by government that there was going to be more considered thought to reasons why and when it can be made as part of the growth area release. So until such time we can see evidence that there was a decision made that it shouldn't be, we can only go on the base of that evidence that published.

30 **MR WRIGHT:** Yes, no, it's a fair point, Karen. The fact that this is part of the South West Growth Area suggests that indeed it was at some stage and there was a sort of a high level strategic intention for uses to intensify here probably towards the residential uses.

35 **MS HARRAGON:** Yes, and I think I'd probably like to draw your attention to the amount of effort the Department went to to make sure that the operation of this school would not compromise the validity of a rural pursuit and an agricultural pursuit occurring on adjoining land or more broadly. So you'll see that we actually even referred it to the Department of Primary Industries and there's a management plan to make sure that the things that occur on this site would not result in the

immediately adjoining neighbour saying, "Well, now I can't even grow my market gardens on this site because of the impact of this use." So we took that very seriously.

5 And I think if the IPC, in having looked at the area, in terms of what I was anticipating when the Department first received this application, there would be a proliferation of market gardens and as I said, from 2022 up until now, the evidence of the dependency on this deferred precinct contributing to agricultural pursuits that contribute to food supplies appears to be very limited. Which, and again, I 10 don't want to discount if in future years that changing, but again, back to the challenge of it being a permissible use in the rural zone.

MR WRIGHT: Yes. Thanks Karen. That's good.

15 **MS SYKES:** Thanks. Thanks, Michael and Karen. I mean, the next item on the agenda was the land use conflict but I think we have covered that. Michael, did you have any further –

MR WRIGHT: No Clare, I think we've covered – I agree, yes.

20 **MS SYKES:** I was keen to sort of move to the site servicing, in particular water and the sewer onsite treatment systems. Council have raised some concern around the particular system, the system sizing and how it would account for the various uses as well as sort of the surge capacity and in particular the concern around the 25 effluent disposal area and in the event of risk of failure as well.

They also sort of raised or noted that it is of a fairly large scale in terms of their LGA. And I just wanted to invite any further comments on or response on the wastewater system from the Department. In particular, interested in your 30 comments around the risk of failure and whether you would wish to raise anything in this meeting or have any further comments on the Council's concerns there.

MS HARRAGON: Yes. Thank you. The Department would probably like to 35 make the analogy to some extent between the level of information that the Department receives for its state significant development applications and this is probably appropriate also for local DAs in terms of the level of information that we often get for road upgrades and intersections and right-hand turn bays and such as that, that ultimately works inside of a road reservation, we don't get what would be referred to in the roads authority part of the world as, you know, your 75 per 40 cent design plan and then your 90 per cent design plan. We have a generalisation about their ability and their intention to comply with the Australian standards and the Roads Act.

45 And obviously there's a subsequent application for road applications where the roads authority, whether it's Transport or Council then goes and has a very deep dive and very often including the local traffic committee, where your 138 application under the Roads Act becomes the point of the evidence base of compliance with the critical requirements to meet appropriate standards.

5 So it's a little bit different for the section 68 for the Local Government Act. So can I just mention the Roads Act actually has a provision that says determinations under 138 can't be inconsistent with decisions relating to the DA. So there's sort of an implied obligation that if the Department's approved a right-hand turn bay that's compliant has to be approved by the roads authority.

10 So that particular clause doesn't exist in the Roads Act. So we have been given a package of information prepared by an appropriately qualified person and we've asked a number of questions about that in terms of that effluent system that they're proposing. Ultimately, the level of detail that the Council is going to need to make and have regard to under their powers under the section 68 will require very detailed consideration of exactly the plant that's going to be used in terms of the proprietary name of it because there's a number of factors that are going to lead 15 into the successful delivery of a functioning to a high standard effluent system on this site.

20 And for me it's the nature and the quality of the plant that they're installing and the number and level of treatment levels that they're going to include in that. It's about the installation of it. It's about the upkeep of it. It's also about the key role of the principal in understanding the duties to prioritise the functioning of the irrigation areas to the benefit of the treatment plant and not necessarily to the benefit of the recreation needs of the children.

25 So all of those are very contingent upon there not being failures. So Council would be better able to speak to you about what its expectations would be about alarms. So the Department would expect that a modern day plant, and you will see that they've made reference to it, would have alarms for escalation of issues that are happening with the plant for it to actually require someone to come and deal with that. So might also suggest as well that the applicant's intention in terms of the 30 backup arrangements where if there is continuous periods of rain or that as a backup should the plant not be operating to the standard that we expected, that they would be implementing on site disposal where there would be a truck servicing the site.

35 Obviously the applicant doesn't form the view that that's going to be necessary but the Department's taken the view of being approaching it from the point of view of it being – considering all factors that could be on the control of the operators for this site so that there is a backup scenario so that there is no need for 40 there to be an outcome that's going to cause issues for the adjoining properties or for the operation of the site.

45 **MS SYKES:** Thanks, thanks Karen. That's very helpful in terms of our consideration. It is noted that the solution around waste water or water treatment is deemed an interim solution until the site is fully connected to Sydney Water. Do you have any further comment on that or do you see any risk related to that in terms of the longevity of the effluent treatment system or water treatment system required during the various stages of the project?

5 **MS HARRAGON:** Yes, so probably worth realising the nature of the methodology of treatment and disposal that they were proposing in the original application where it was definitely recognised as an interim arrangement. So the amended application proposed a permanent facility although the intention is that we are driving that outcome. Sydney Water will drive the outcome that once sewer is available that it stops being used. But for all intents and purposes what is going to be installed on their site is a plant that's capable of being a permanent facility.

10 So and the Department has recommended continued monitoring regime and accountability for that through our instrument. We as a group had a lot of consideration about the depth of those condition sets that would be ongoing. Ultimately, we believe that the detailed focus on the terms of approval under the section 68 are the appropriate location for what the Council would want in terms of the nature of say monitoring or alarms and we thought ultimately in the end it was not appropriate for the Department, who is not appropriately qualified in this area, to start making determinations and imposing itself on what might be in Council's mind not the best way to be managing the installation and operation of that on the site.

15 20 So we did have a lot of regard to the onsite wastewater management guideline that was prepared by the Office of Local Government, which was only published in April 2025. It talks about it being a policy or in a guideline that is to be considered when authorities determine applications under section 68. So it really wasn't for us to do a deep dive into it but we're aware of the commentary that's in there about the need for reserve areas and when you wouldn't need a reserve area and that nature and that's the guideline that the duty of the Council will have to have regard to.

25 30 **MS SYKES:** Thank you. That's great. Michael, did you have any –

35 **MR WRIGHT:** Yes, no, thanks, Clare. Yes, just that section 68 approval which sits with the Council effectively gives Council the final say in terms of configuration of the system. Council's – I'm just thinking if there's not agreement between the proponent and the Council as to what the system might look like, how is that resolved?

40 **MS HARRAGON:** It's going to be a challenging space. I think the Department would be correct in its position that other than the Council not wanting the development to go ahead and therefore the plant not to go ahead, if the school was to go ahead and that is no longer a debate, there is a school that's going to be here, it becomes the point of conjecture is the maintenance of this reserve area, instead of there being a high school hall placed on it, that the high school hall not be placed on it. I think that is ultimately what the Council would be wanting to make sure that there's that continued reservation left there.

45 **MR WRIGHT:** Okay, so would that mean hypothetically, Karen, that the configuration of the development would be different than currently proposed?

5 **MS HARRAGON:** It would be that you would not be able – and the Department has recommended a series of conditions where there's a pre-determinant to moving to stage four, which is just the hall. So it doesn't change the population number, it's just the hall.

MR WRIGHT: Okay.

10 **MS HARRAGON:** So that you would have to reach what the Department considers as a pretty high bar. And potentially maybe the Council could contribute some more criteria to that high bar in terms of the evidence that they would want. More broadly we're aware that you may not need a reserve area if the level of treatment that you're undertaking inside of your plant, you know, the box so to speak, is such a high standard that there is very little, I guess, residue of bacteria that you're actually using for the infiltration.

15 So, and again, we're not able to form that opinion on the quality of the proprietary plant that they're actually putting in in terms of whether it's the, you know, that very, very high standard that they're looking for. The Department, it might be appropriate to mention the Department has dealt with onsite management provisions on a number of sites and SSD applications that we've dealt with. I do believe there might be another school that we had for a similar population because I think it's worth understanding it's all about the scale of that plant to meet the equivalent population on the site.

20 25 Again, it was also in a precinct area that had not yet been rezoned but at some stage might become rezoned and had definitely been identified by the Department and that Council as a future release area. So, we're dealing – we've dealt with schools in those circumstances as well.

30 **MR WRIGHT:** Thank you.

35 **MS SYKES:** Okay. Well, I mean, I just have one more sort of, I guess, item really on the traffic, transport and access and Ingrid, it probably refers back to, yes, there we go, the slides there that you spoke to earlier in the meeting. I mean, I think more broadly we can, you know, assume that the site will be heavily car dependent and there have been concerns raised around the Catherine Fields Road upgrades in stage one. And I was also just in particular curious about, you know, the shuttle bus proposal as a solution for managing traffic and transport and also the

40 staggered school times.

45 I was just interested to sort of raise those two items in particular in terms of your view on the robustness of these assumptions in the event that either uptake is lower on the shuttle bus or that it's not enough or that the staggered school times, et cetera, in a K to 12 sort of environment is not really the appropriate solution. And yes, just whether you had any further comments on the proposed solution.

5 **MS HARRAGON:** Maybe just before Ingrid says any advice, the challenge for the Department and obviously the challenge now for IPC is that the more car parking you provide, the more people who choose to make that an easy solution. So, you know, there's a general expectation that government attempts to drive down that modal use. It's probably a challenging space to do this where you haven't provided enough parking and you now have parents who decide to start parking on that uncreated road shoulder. So we were very thoughtful about that.

10 We're happy to look and revisit the condition set that we've recommended in terms of being more heavy-handed around, you know, what the school can do to start moving parents away from the use of the vehicle and/or adding additional shuttles, very clear criteria for when that has to start. But it's certainly one that we looked at quite considerably.

15 **MS SYKES:** Okay. Thanks, Karen.

20 **MS HARRAGON:** Because in some respects, the need for it is about – a little bit about the model work not being as per that forecast. And it's about putting in very clear intentions around how that trigger works rather than just saying, well, we're confident your model's not going to work, so therefore we're imposing that. So the Department's keen not to be starting out from the point of we don't accept your model because we have. It's been done with due consideration. So it's about setting up that opportunity to enforce the stepping up of commitments for the school to bring on board those alternate solutions.

25 **MR WRIGHT:** Can I just – I've just got two quick questions. One, just in terms of that shuttle bus service, did or has the proponent identified the geographic catchments likely from where the students will come from? I note the shuttle bus would pick up in theory students from Minto and Leppington stations. Is that – but then we have this new population growth occurring to the west – Oran Park. Where are the kids for the school coming from?

30 **MS HARRAGON:** And can I say before Ingrid answers, that's probably a piece of work that the applicant would need to continue to revisit because obviously starting their project in 2022, what would have been operational parts of this, like a walkable catchment or a drivable catchment are probably evolving over time as more and more release areas come online and medium density housing is appearing even across this valley. So I think they're going to have to be quite flexible in understanding and they'll do so quite quickly when they get their registrations for enrolment. Ingrid, can you recall some of the conversations about how they approach identifying the catchment?

35 **MS ZHU:** They've used their existing campus in Green Valley to provide an estimate of the catchment area. It's pretty common for private school to have a much larger catchment than public school. So I would say the information they provided is close to realistic. However, as Karen mentioned again, this is something they're going to update and review constantly as well as the shuttle bus coming from the near railway stations. That will be dependent on the future bus

uptake from stage three. I think that's also one of the purpose why they're only proposing it in the later stages because currently it is very much a car-dependent site.

5 **MR WRIGHT:** Okay. My other question was just in terms of the left exit out of the school site. That's a concrete median. I presume you can only turn – you're going to go south coming out of the site. Is that right?

10 **MS ZHU:** That's correct.

15 **MR WRIGHT:** Okay. So there's not going to be an issue with people going south, then doing a U-turn and causing safety issues. Has that been considered as part of the transport assessment?

20 **MS ZHU:** Yes. Actually, Transport for New South Wales has recommended that median strip to be concrete so that it will prevent people from turning right.

25 **MR WRIGHT:** Yes. No, I was thinking about people just going down the road 20 metres and doing a U-turn to head north. Has that been considered?

20 **MS ZHU:** We do have a road safety audit conditioned as part of the consent. I don't think we have considered that people will do an immediate U-turn. I think there's a smaller lane right down the south to the side and then it might be easier for people to turn left into that small lane and then make a U-turn back. Let me find that map.

25 **MR WRIGHT:** You can take that on notice, I would've thought, Clare, yes, if you want to.

30 **MS SYKES:** Yes.

35 **MS ZHU:** Yes. I can take it on notice.

35 **MS SYKES:** Yes. Thank you for that. That's a very good point raised. And I think we've come up to our allocated time. I did not have any further questions. The remaining agenda item was on the built form and urban design. Michael, did you have any further –

40 **MR WRIGHT:** No, I didn't, Clare. Thank you.

40 **MS SYKES:** – question on that. And then just before we close the meeting, whether there was any final comment from the Department on the application?

45 **MS HARRAGON:** So I'll just say in conclusion, the Department will provide a correction in relation to the delivery of the infrastructure in the road and the timing of that so that there's clarity and at the moment, there's an inconsistent between our condition set and our report. We'll also come back to you on that information that you just sought from us there in terms of people taking U-turns.

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In conclusion, the Department is satisfied that this development is suitable for the site, subject to the imposition of a large set of conditions that will provide ongoing consideration of impacts and how they're managed and how they're mitigated, including where there's a review to come back and to, if necessarily, do better. The Department is also always happy to work with the Department – sorry, with the IPC in terms of looking for opportunities if there are targeted areas that the Department can help in terms of approaching it with additions to the condition set.

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MS SYKES: Thank you very much, Karen. And I just wanted to take a moment to thank you, Karen, Ingrid, Madeline and Douglas for attending the meeting today, some really good discussion on some of the points raised, which will certainly help us to inform our determination of this application. And I now draw this meeting to a close. Thank you.

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MS HARRAGON: Thank you.

MR WRIGHT: Thank you.

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MS ZHU: Thank you.

>THE MEETING CONCLUDED