



TRANSCRIPT OF MEETING

RE: MINARAH COLLEGE (SSD-30759158)

PUBLIC MEETING

PANEL:	CLARE SYKES (CHAIR) MICHAEL WRIGHT
OFFICE OF THE IPC:	KENDALL CLYDSDALE CALLUM FIRTH
COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES:	ALAINE ROFF (Urbis) MOHAMMED YASIN GAVIN MCCORMACK MAURICE CAMILLERI CAMDEN COUNCIL (Mayor Therese Fedeli, Andrew Carfield, Jamie Erken, Nicole Magurren and Vanessa Luck) LOUISE CIAPPARA EMILY GALVIN RENEE V ABDUL SHARIFF (Minarah College) CYNTHIA META DOMENIC PEZZANO GEORGINA HAN HOLLY BEHRINGER (Leppington Progress Association) KERRY EYLES (Catherine Field Community) TASHA CANDERLE BRUNO COSTA SARINA CATANZARITI

TREVOR GREAVES
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GEORGE SMIROLDO
STEPHEN SMITH
ZIYAAD ALI (Minarah College)
JAMIE YOUNG
EMAN SOLIMAN
APPLICANT'S RESPRESENTATIVES

DATE: 10:00AM – 2:00PM

TUESDAY, 3 FEBRUARY 2026

LOCATION: ONLINE

<THE MEETING COMMENCED

5 **MS CLARE SYKES:** Well, good morning and welcome to the Independent Planning
Commission's public meeting into the state significant development application for the
Minarah College (SSD-30759158). I am speaking to you from Gadigal land. I
acknowledge the traditional owners of all the countries from which we meet today. I
pay my respects to their Elders past and present and to the Elders from other
communities who may be participating today.

10 I'm Clare Sykes and I am the Chair of this Panel. Joining me is my fellow
commissioner, Michael Wright. No conflicts of interest have been identified in relation
to our determination of this development application.

15 We have a limited and specific role at the end of the planning process. We decide if an
application should go ahead, and if so, on what conditions. We consider the
Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure's Assessment Report, the
application, your written and oral submissions, and other materials that the Planning
Law requires us to consider. All of these materials are either already publicly available
20 or will be made available on our website.

25 In making a decision on this case, the Commission must obey all relevant laws and
consider all applicable policies and the public interest. We are also obliged to consider
public submissions and that is the purpose of today. We want to hear what you think
about the merits of this application. This is not a forum for submissions on whether
you like or approve of the Applicant, the laws we must obey, or the policies we must
consider.

30 Should any speaker raise matters that are not relevant to the Commission's functions,
we might ask you to redirect and refocus your submission. Every speaker will have
been provided with the Commission's Guidance for Speakers, and as Chair, I will
apply that guidance.

35 The application has already been assessed by the Department on our behalf. Many of
you may have already participated in the Department's processes. Thank you for your
participation. There is no need to repeat your previous submissions; they are all
available to us for our consideration. The Applicant and the Department have
considered your submissions and taken them into account in the application,
assessment and conditions we're considering today. At today's public meeting, we
40 want to hear your response to the Department's assessment, recommendations and the
recommended conditions.

45 Even if your submission today objects to the application being approved at all, we
encourage you to tell us whether any of your concerns could be addressed, either
wholly or in part by the imposition of conditions. Your consideration of alternatives
does not in any way compromise your submission, and it enables the Panel to consider
all options.

First, we will have from the Applicant's representative. The Commission has directed the Applicant to focus its contribution on any aspect of the application that may have changed since the Department exhibited the application in 2022 and 2024.

5 We will then proceed to hear from our registered speakers. While we endeavour to stick to our published schedule, this will be dependent on registered speakers being ready to present at their allocated time. I will introduce each speaker when it is their turn to present to the Panel. Everyone has been advised in advance how long they have to speak. A bell will sound when a speaker has one minute remaining. A second bell 10 will sound when a speaker's time has expired.

15 To ensure everyone receives their fair share of time, I will enforce timekeeping rules. Extensions, however, may be granted on a case-by-case basis by the Panel Chair. However, in the interest of fairness to other registered speakers, an extension may not be granted.

20 If you have a copy of your speaking notes or any additional material to support your presentation, it would be appreciated if you would provide a copy to the Commission. Please note that any information given to the Commission may be made public. The Commission's Privacy Statement governs its approach to managing your information, and it is available on the Commission's website.

25 Then at the conclusion of the public meeting, we may ask to hear from the Applicant to answer any questions or respond to any issues raised during this public meeting.

25 So, with that, we now call for our first speaker, Alaine Roff. Alaine Roff, who is the Applicant's representative.

30 **MS ALAINE ROFF:** Thank you, commissioners, and thank you for the opportunity to address yourselves and the members of the community online today. I have been the Planner for Minarah College since 2021 and I can honestly say that in my career as a planner, I've never worked with an applicant so committed to delivering education facilities for the students of Western Sydney, and so open to working with the 35 Department of Planning, government agencies, and the community to deliver that infrastructure and mitigate any impacts.

40 Next slide, please. Since its inception, Minarah College has been a critical piece of educational infrastructure needed in Western Sydney. It's a changing area, significant population growth. It's also a community and cultural piece of infrastructure – it's not just a college, it will be available for use by the community. And in listening to agency feedback, Department of Planning feedback, and community objection, the college has significantly reduced its building envelopes and its student capacity, resulting in a site 45 and a development that is suitable for the location.

45 There is significant enrolment demand for a school in this area, but that has been balanced with the reduction in the scale of both the building, the building envelopes, and the student and staff capacity.

5 Next slide, please. The proposal has been amended over the last couple of years. We started with five stages, that's been reduced to four. We've reduced the number of students quite significantly down to a total of 980, but we're still maintaining a primary school, a high school, a school for specific purpose and early learning, creating a really fantastic educational campus. Staff has also been reduced, and gross floor area. And I think the important thing is that in reducing all of these things, we're reducing the potential impact of the scale of the development, and staging infrastructure and delivering infrastructure on site as well as off site to cater for a school of this size.

10 Next slide, please. As you can see, it's been a long journey, nearly five years. But throughout the process, the Applicant and its project team have worked really well with the government and the community to scale back the development and address the issues that have been raised. And I think that's reflected in the next slide, which shows 15 we've really flipped from a large amount of objections to a large amount of support. I know we'll have some balanced submissions from the community shortly, but this really reflects the work that the Applicant has done to address the issues.

20 And in terms of amending the proposal – if we move to the next slide – as I've said, the scale's been substantially reduced. Hours of use of facilities has been revisited and to manage noise impact and traffic impact, use of the hall has been reduced to 9:30 p.m. The site has been subject to a biosecurity assessment, which really supports the fact that the land uses in the area are changing and any impact from this school can be managed.

25 The Applicant is also delivering infrastructure on site and then off site in terms of car parking and road upgrades, which have all been developed to support the 980 students. And as I said, the scale has been reduced in terms of buildings, the setbacks have been increased to manage visual impact and privacy.

30 Finally, traffic and flooding – on the next slide. Thank you. As I said, road upgrades will be delivered and also flooding will be addressed and mitigated through a Flood Emergency Management Plan.

35 **MS SYKES:** Alaine, sorry, if I could interrupt you there. I don't know that the – oh sorry, my error, yes, the traffic and transport has come up.

40 **MS ROFF:** Just in the interest of time, we'll just flip to the final slide, which is really showing that this area has undergone significant growth and development. The southwest growth area is very much developed. The site adjoins a residential area, as you can see, to the south there. And whilst Catherine Field hasn't been released for planning, there is a planning proposal in the south corner for 900 dwellings. So, the whole area is undergoing growth. There's a significant lack of social and educational infrastructure, and the Applicant is really hoping to plug that gap. Thank you.

45 **MS SYKES:** Thank you. Thank you very much, Alaine. Is Alaine still on ...?

MS ROFF: I'm still here.

5

MS SYKES: Yes, okay. Alaine, I just had one question just on your slide where you noted the change in student numbers and staff numbers between the first application and now the application currently under determination. You mentioned that demand exists for both sort of sets of numbers. Did you have any further comment on that so there's confidence in that demand being met, in terms of the revised student numbers?

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MS ROFF: Yes, that's right. The demand is there. Minarah College is the secondary campus to Green Valley, which is already over-subscribed. So, the college has done a significant amount of work in understanding the demand. And with the increase in residential density and development in the area, the college is confident that the student enrolments will be taken up quite quickly.

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MS SYKES: Thank you.

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MS ROFF: And Stage 4 – actually, it doesn't have any increase in enrolments, that's all happening across Stage 1 and 3 because there is that demand.

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MS SYKES: Thank you. Michael, did you have any questions? Okay. Thank you very much, Alaine.

MS ROFF: Thank you.

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MS SYKES: So, now we'll move onto our next speaker, Mohammed Yasin. Oh, not ... Okay. We will now move to Gavin McCormack. Thank you, Gavin, and thanks for being available a few minutes earlier. Over to you.

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MR GAVIN MCCORMACK: Hello, good morning, everybody. I just wanted to explain my experience with Minarah College, which is one that I have for the last couple of years. Firstly, I'm a school teacher (30 years), I'm a school principal from Sydney and I've worked with a lot of schools around the world. Currently, I'm running an organisation called Upschool where we consult with schools doing what we call "big work" projects. They can potentially give students a chance to have voice, agency and autonomy around the way that they operate.

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My experience with Minarah College has been absolutely phenomenal. In fact, I'm a keynote speaker around the world in many domains when it comes to education, and I often speak of Minarah College because what has happened at their school in the last two years that I have known it, has been phenomenal. Innovative, student led, with academic, emotional and social development with all the children. Extremely positive – and I've been there many, many times.

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My experience with Upschool correspondence with Minarah College has proven to me that what they deliver is authentic. In actual fact, many schools around the world, they have words and mentions and constitutions on their website that say, "student led, child agency," you know, "project-based learning, XYZ". But quite often I'm yet to see all of those take place in full complement with any school. However, at Minarah College, in my experience, has been exactly that, so everything has been evident.

One particular project that I'd like to bring to the attention of all the people here is, we know that literacy is a huge part of the educational journey for all students, all the way from pre-school to the HSC. We have a project called 'Write a book to change the world' where students basically write, illustrate and publish their very own picture books. Obviously, it sits within the curriculum, but the concept behind this project is it gives full autonomy, full agency and they get to see that, the evidence of it, in their hands, they get to receive an actual book, a real hard-back book which you might find in a Dymocks or any book store.

Minarah College has run this course for two years consecutively. In the first year, they published 40 books, entire community to that book launch. This year, they published almost 100 books, and I think the Mayor of Liverpool attended with a huge congregation of parents, and I was there to meet those students.

What was evident there, which I rarely see in schools, was that it was actually true that the children had full autonomy and full agency over the work that they did. And they had a voice – their stories were told, what they wanted to get out into the world, they were able to do so. It takes a certain type of school to be able to achieve something like that.

In fact, at that book launch, it inspired the Mayor of Liverpool to meet with me and say, "I'd like to roll this out in the whole of the Liverpool Council." So, that was amazing – an amazing inspiration, and I loved that.

One particular case was a child who had come from overseas, and he had – he was a selective mute because he'd been through trauma overseas for some reasons, and he decided not to speak. During this course with the teachers at Minarah College and the students around him, and throughout writing that book and following through on that project, he spoke for the first time. And I've spoken at the World Literacy Summit in front of lords and professors, some all around the world, and I brought them to tears because of this story.

It takes a certain calibre of school to be able to achieve that of a nervous little boy, his name is Osman, I'm allowed to say his name. And, you know, it takes a certain type of school to be able to do that, and Minarah College certainly does that. When it comes to opening a new campus at Catherine Fields, I wish there were a hundred Minarah Colleges around. I literally love going there, the children are fantastic, the teachers are driving change and doing phenomenal work in the world. And yes, I could advocate for this school to grow and grow a far as possible.

So, there's my five minutes, I could talk for an hour if like, but I thank you for having me at this meeting, and I hope everything goes well.

MS SYKES: Thank you very much, Gavin, and we appreciate your submission. We now have – we'll move back to our second scheduled speaker, Mohammed Yasin, who will be dialling in on the phone. Over to you.

MR MOHAMMED YASIN: Commissioners, thank you for the opportunity. My name is Mohammed Yasin. I address you today as a member of the community and a dedicated supporter of Minarah College. However, I speak not just from personal conviction but to provide support for the Department's Assessment Report.

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In exercising your function under this section 4.151 of the Act, you are tasked with evaluating the suitability of this site. As a community member, it is my submission that this development is a critical infrastructure anchor. While some focus on the rule of past, we must facilitate the state infrastructure strategy and the transition towards our region's desired future character. This project is in perfect strategic alignment with the future we need.

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A primary concern raised by some in our community relates to traffic and the conditions of local roads. But as a community member, I see this through a different lens. A reading of the recommended conditions of consent reveals that this project is 15 actually the solution to those concerns.

By approving this state significant development, the Commission triggers significant developer funded infrastructure upgrades, including road widening, signalised 20 intersection that Camden Council currently lacks the budget to deliver.

This is the alternate cost benefit. To refuse this school is to leave Catherine Field Road in its current sub-optimal state. To approve it is to secure a safer, professionally engineered transport corridor for every resident, funded by private capital rather than 25 the taxpayer. The school doesn't create a traffic problem; it provides the funding mechanism to fix one.

Regarding the wastewater and environmental management. The Department's 30 Assessment Report confirms that the proposed on-site waste management system provides a high-tech regulated interim solution. As a community, we must apply the precautionary principle carefully. Currently, our present relies largely on aging, unmanaged rural septic systems. This SSD replaces that uncertainty and with a state-of-the-art monitored system.

We are effectively trading unmanaged runoff of a sophisticated, unsustainable water 35 cycle. From an engineering and biosecurity perspective, this project represents a significant net environmental upgrade for the catchment area we all share.

Finally, as a supporter and a community member, I want to address social capital. The 40 southwest is currently an educational desert. Existing schools are operating at capacity and the demand for this college is at a documented necessity.

Furthermore, the college is committed to a shared facility framework. This means the 45 sporting fields and libraries are designed for as community hubs for all of us to use, in an area where infrastructure has struggled to keep pace with growth. This private investment provides a multi-million-dollar community asset and zero public cost. This is the definition of efficient land use that serves the entire public interest.

In conclusion, the Department's Assessment Report has successfully mitigated every technical challenge through its recommended conditions. To reject this proposal based on amenity concerns that have already been technically resolved would be to ignore the evidential basis of the New South Wales planning system.

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I urge the Commission to uphold the Department's recommendation and approve Minarah College to secure the infrastructure, safety and educational future of our community. Thank you.

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MS SYKES: Thank you very much, Mohammed, for your submission. Did you have any questions? Yes. Thank you. And I didn't have any questions either. We'll now move to number four, Maurice Camilleri. Maurice, you're online, you're ready to go.

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MR MAURICE CAMILLERI: Okay. Apart from the general reasons of objections such as safety risk, pedestrian danger, significant noise, inadequate site servicing and wastewater management, and the list goes on, I want to point out my week-to-week experience that I've had over the past several years.

20

Two days a week, my wife and I pick up our two grandchildren from Oran Park Anglican School. My grandson gets out at around 3 p.m. and my granddaughter is released around 3:10 p.m. We'd arrive at the school at around 2:50 p.m. as there is often a queue of cars waiting to get in line. It may take up to 3:25 p.m. by the time we pick up both our grandchildren.

25

Upon arrival we witness other parents and grandparents scrambling to get a spot in the line as close as possible to the exit gate. Some of them sit on and block off the roundabout while others block off entry and exit driveways into nearby properties to the school. This makes it impossible to drive through the drive-through vehicles that aren't there to pick up children to pass. So, these vehicles may have to wait up to 10 minutes to get through. Often is the case that innocent drivers get out of their vehicle, hurling abuse at law breakers. Either they don't know the road rules or it's just sheer arrogance. We get the feeling that there is a serious incident that will occur.

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Oran Park School has several entry and exit avenues, whilst Minarah would only have one, being Catherine Fields Road, which would make it a dangerous bottleneck, to say the least. Hence, it's another reason why Minarah College should not go ahead.

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So, I guess what I'm saying is that we've given enough good reasons why it shouldn't go ahead. I'm surprised that it's got as far as it has now. So, that's about it.

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MS SYKES: Thank you very much, Maurice, for your submission. I would now like to call Camden Council to the floor. Okay. Welcome the representatives from Camden Council. Over to you.

45

MR ANDREW CARFIELD: Good morning, commissioners. Thank you for the opportunity present Council's submission on this proposal. I'd just like to acknowledge that within this meeting room, I've also got the Mayor Therese Fedeli

and senior council officers including Jamie Erken, Nicole Magurran and Vanessa Luck.

I'd like to just firstly outline Council's position, and I want to be very clear that Council's position is that the proposed site is not suitable for the development. I'm going to ask Jamie Eken in a moment to just run through how Council's reached that assessment. But I'd also like to acknowledge that this and Council's submission was formally considered by Council on the 12th of November in 2024. Our elected members, who are a very diverse group, carefully considered the proposal and unanimously resolved not to support this development.

And I'd just like to hand over to Jamie Erken now; he's going to present Council's assessment. Thank you.

MR JAMIE ERKEN: Thank you, Andrew, and good morning, commissioners. The site is an un-sewered rural property located on a rural road with no footpath, lighting or piped underground stormwater system. Although the land sits within the southwest growth area, it has not been released for re-zoning, and it will remain rural for the foreseeable future. It does not hold any strategic or site-specific merit that would make it an appropriate location for a school. And there are other precincts within the southwest growth area either re-zoned or progressing through re-zoning that are far better suited for the proposed school.

In our view, the proposal seeks to take advantage of comparatively cheap rural land ahead of precinct planning, providing a private commercial benefit at the expense of broader community planning outcomes.

One of the primary concerns relates to wastewater management. The Council's professional assessment is that the system cannot meet the required performance standards for a development of this scale.

We have significant concerns that the system has not been sized correctly, leading to a smaller irrigation area than would be required. There are risks to children being exposed to treated effluent, given the proposed use of the effluent management area as a sports field. There is a risk of damage to the effluent management area from the high traffic and sporting use, and there is no reserve area available. So, if there are performance issues, there is no alternative effluent disposal area.

While the Department's Assessment Report suggests that wet weather storage and downtime policies will mitigate this risk, in practice this may leave the school with a sports field that is unusable for extended periods or create pressure to use it when conditions are unsuitable. Council staff are of the opinion that Stages 2 to 4 should not proceed until reticulated sewerage services are available to the site.

Another significant concern of Council is the impact the development will have on traffic and transport networks. The site's rural location and lack of pedestrian and cycling infrastructure means that access will almost be entirely car dependent. The Department's Assessment Report acknowledges that the development will worsen

delays at Catherine Field Road and Camden Valley Way intersection, which already operates at level of service F, adding a further 36-second delay. This highlights that the road network is not capable of supporting a school at this location.

5 Given the site's isolated location, the Assessment Report notes a commitment to operate a private chartered service, but this does not commence until Stage 3, and there are no enforceable conditions requiring it. Given the isolation of the site, Council considers that the chartered bus service must commence in Stage 1, capacity must increase as student numbers grow, and the conditions must be clear, specific and enforceable.

10 Another concern of Council relates to the timing of the required road upgrades. In the Assessment Report, the Department agrees with Council's position that the road widening and upgrades should be delivered in Stage 1. However, recommended 15 condition B20 does not reflect the assessment and includes a requirement for the road networks to be carried out as part of Stage 2. Should the development be approved, Council would request the conditions be amended to require all roadworks to be completed as part of Stage 1.

20 In terms of the built form and urban design, the assessment acknowledges that the proposed development will alter the rural surrounding, and this negative impact is justified as it will unfold progressively over a 12-year period. In Council's view, the site will remain rural for the foreseeable future, and the development will have a negative impact on the area's established character.

25 One of the built form concerns relates to fencing. Rural fencing controls only allow post-and-wire and post-and-rail fencing. And the proposal seeks to install 1.8 to 2-metre height Colorbond fencing around the perimeter of the fencing, which is inconsistent with the rural environment. To address this issue, the Department has recommended a condition that states, "The boundary walls must be of a neutral and recessive colour and designed that is sympathetic to the natural environment."

30 The recommended condition is highly ambiguous and does not provide sufficient direction for the person acting on the consent or the certifier enforcing it. In Council's view, a more appropriate response would involve a landscape boundary treatment, with any solid fencing located internally within the site.

35 So, in closing, the site lacks strategic merit and the infrastructure necessary to support a school. The proposal imposes unreasonable burdens on an already-failing road 40 network. The wastewater system presents significant health and operational risks, and the development will result in adverse impacts on the rural character and amenity of the area.

45 For these reasons, Council does not consider the site suitable for the proposed development. I thank you for your time.

MS SYKES: Thank you very much, representatives from Camden Council, for your submission. Michael, did you have any questions? Thank you very much. We will now move to the next speaker, Louise Ciappara.

5 **MS LOUISE CIAPPARA:** Yes, hello?

MS SYKES: Hello, Louise.

10 **MS CIAPPARA:** Good morning, members of the Panel and Council and the public. My name is Louise Ciappara, and I am a resident of Catherine Field and have been living here literally my whole life. We are a rural community and for me this is home.

15 My concerns for the Minarah College development application as the same as many other members of our local community. I have seen many changes over the years living here, such as acreage being developed into one-acre lots, our previous local shop, local pre-school, local community hall, fire brigades, sporting and playgrounds, all fitting and adaptable developments to our existing environment. And I honestly believe these developments are welcoming and necessary for our community. Many of us have benefited from these changes in some way.

20 25 But this new development application for Minarah College, I believe, is not at all going to benefit or even be feasible for Catherine Field as it exists today. It is inevitable that changes are coming to Catherine Field in the future, as far as development and infrastructure are concerned. But we are a long way from any of that today.

30 There is no evidence to suggest that the infrastructure needed to cater for this development is going to be put in place even after the development is built. The existing roads are already in terrible state, and we just do not have the water or sewerage infrastructure to cater for such a large number of people who will be accommodating this facility.

35 40 The amended application and infrastructure noted by Minarah College will still not be enough for its proposed development. They claim they will meet, invest and build infrastructure, but it will still not be viable. There will be a negative impact to Catherine Field in the way of major traffic on our already-unmaintained compromised roads as well as the safety factor to be considered, given the proposed number of children that will be pedestrians in and out of car pick-ups and drop-offs, and buses that will be used for transportation.

45 45 This school will almost definitely attract large amounts of extra traffic from outside of Catherine Field and add to the existing road issues we already encounter. The major congestion this will cause on our rural roads will be in no doubt inevitable. We will have daily congestion, longer commuting times, a 40-kilometre school zoning that will have to be put in place, and an unsafe environment with no infrastructure to cater for this.

5 There is also the issue of lack of sewerage infrastructure. There is no evidence to suggest that the proposed development will have enough waste infrastructure put in place to be feasible, given the large number of people accommodating this facility. In the event of heavy rain and flooding, the neighbouring properties will be majorly comprised with no foresight as to how this will be maintained or dealt with.

10 Myself and our community have many concerns for the health and safety with such a large number of students, staff and visitors who will be attending this school. Not to mention the safety of the public in general. The risk of a child being hurt or even killed must be considered with the increased traffic and lack of pedestrian and kerbside infrastructure.

15 Unfortunately, a development of this size with the number of students, staff and visitors who will be attending, and also given the fact that it will be operating seven days a week and outside of school hours, is not suitable for this proposed site. The development needs to be built in a much more suitable zoning where its size and use is more suited. We have so many other surrounding areas close by with much better infrastructure suited and zoned for its purpose.

20 Schools are always in need and welcomed. My daughter is a school teacher. But they need to be built on an appropriate developed site that will be safe and suitable to the environment. This site in which the proposed development application is asking to be built on currently, is unfortunately, in my opinion, not a feasible location.

25 I hope this will be considered for the wellbeing of everyone affected. I thank you all for listening to my concerns. And hope this application will be given imperative thought as to how unfeasible it will be should approval be considered. Thank you.

30 **MS SYKES:** Thank you very much, Louise, for your submission.

MS CIAPPARA: Thank you.

MS SYKES: I would now like to call Emily Galvin.

35 **MS EMILY GALVIN:** Hi, good morning.

MS SYKES: Good morning.

40 **MS GALVIN:** My name is Emily Galvin and I'm a resident of Catherine Field, and a parent.

MS SYKES: Emily?

45 **MS GALVIN:** Yes.

MS SYKES: Just letting you know, you're very welcome to turn your camera on.

MS GALVIN: Oh yes, I'm having a few issues with it. I apologise for that.

MS SYKES: Oh, okay, that's fine. Thank you.

MS GALVIN: Sorry. I'm writing this submission to formally and strongly object to the proposal of the Minarah College development. My objection is grounded in a deep concern for the safety of my own children, the children who would attend the proposed school, and the broader Catherine Field and surrounding community.

This proposal introduces an intensive, high traffic land use into an area that is fundamentally unprepared, unsafe and unsuitable for a development of this scale. Road safety is just an unacceptable risk. The roads servicing the proposed site are unequivocally unsatisfactory and unsafe. Our roads are just not good enough to support the daily traffic volumes associated with such a large educational facility.

Our roads are barely good enough to support our current traffic conditions, and they never have been. I've lived in Catherine Field quite literally my whole life. When I was young, my brother riding his bike on Catherine Field Road was hit by a car not far from the proposed school site. It wasn't safe then, and it's not safe now.

There are no footpaths, forcing children and pedestrians onto the roadway. No street lighting, reducing visibility during early morning and late afternoon school hours. No kerbing/guttering, creating drainage issues and edge-of-road hazards. Poor lines and unsafe intersection and narrow roads with limited ability for vehicles to pass safely.

Introducing hundreds of additional vehicle movements twice daily would dramatically increase the risk of serious injury or fatal accidents and further worsen the conditions of our roads. The development application for Minarah College relies on traffic assumptions that do not reflect the lived reality of Catherine Field residents.

The proposal fails to adequately account for peak hour congestion caused by parent drop-off and pick-up behaviours, queueing and illegal stopping when traffic capacity is exceeded, overflow parking into residential streets, and the one-way-in/one-way-out intersections on both ends of Deepfields Road that will consequently become a whole other safety concern.

Increased congestion also raises serious concerns about emergency vehicle access. Delays to ambulances, fire services or police, whether responding to the school or nearby homes, could have devastating consequences. The application does not adequately demonstrate how emergency access will be protected during peak congestion periods.

The application does not convincingly demonstrate that the local road network can safely absorb this increase, without substantial completed infrastructure. Promising future upgrades does not protect children or residents today. As a parent, I find it deeply distressing that this proposal would knowingly place children in harm's way. Children would be expected to walk along unlit roads with no footpaths, cross unsafe intersections, and navigate traffic congestion created by frustrated and hurried drivers. It's not a theoretical risk; it's a predictable and preventable danger. No development

should be approved where children's safety depends on drivers behaving perfectly under pressure.

5 Personally, I would love to have a school so close my kids could walk every day. But it's just not safe. I wouldn't even consider walking to the current pre-school in Catherine Field in our current traffic conditions, let alone if conditions and safety drastically change for the worse.

10 This proposal asks Catherine Field community to accept unacceptable safety risks for the benefit of a development that the area is not equipped to support. Until road upgrades are completely, safe pedestrian infrastructure is delivered, traffic impacts are honestly assessed, and the scale of the development is reduced to suit the locality, this development should not be approved. Children's lives, community safety, and basic planning integrity must be the first priority.

15 For these reasons, I strongly object to the proposed Minarah College development at Catherine Field. Thank you for taking the time to hear me out.

20 **MS SYKES:** Thank you very much, Emily, for your submission. I just had one point of clarification. You mentioned that the traffic plan doesn't account for peak hour congestion, queueing and illegal stopping. Could you clarify whether you're referring to peak hour congestion, queueing and illegal stopping that currently occurs?

25 **MS GALVIN:** Definitely more referring to, like, the school's peak hour, when the school or if the school comes into action. But it's all in the same – at the moment, it's barely adequate, so how is it going to be adequate when we have pick-up and drop-off for a school of this size.

30 **MS SYKES:** Thank you, Emily, for clarifying that point. Are you right, Michael? An thanks very much for your submission.

MS GALVIN: Thank you.

MS SYKES: I'd now like to call Renee V.

35 **MS RENEE V:** Yes, I'm here.

MS SYKES: Thank you, Renee. Good morning.

40 **MS RENEE V:** Good morning. I'm speaking as a long-term resident of Catherine Field Road to express my deep concern and strong opposition to the proposal to build a school on this street. I have lived in this area for the past 17 years, and like many members of our small community, I chose this area very deliberately for its peace and quiet and semi-rural character where families expect calm, safety and a sense of escape from the congestion and noise of suburban living. If a school existed or even been proposed, I would never have purchased the home here.

5 A development of this scale is entirely incapable with our environment and the current zone for land use. Catherine Fields Road is not designed to safely support the level of traffic and pedestrians that a school would generate. With the opening of Luke's Lane into Springfield Road, traffic from the large Oran Park estate has already increased significantly.

10 Navigation apps such as Ways and Google Maps are now directing drivers through Catherine Field Road as a shortcut heading north, turning what was once a quiet local road into a growing thoroughfare. This traffic already passes directly by the proposed school site and through surrounding rural streets, including Anthony Road which is also regularly closed during flooding.

15 Just yesterday on my way to work, the traffic at the intersection of Bringelly Road and Fourth Avenue, Austral, was completely at a standstill. This congestion is a direct result of the grammar school already approved and open on Fourth Avenue.

20 25 At one of our community meetings, a family member shared with us that they had elderly parents who live right by this grammar school their entire adult lives, now faced with daily distress due to traffic congestion. They also describe people parking across their driveways, preventing them from leaving their home and even parking inside their property as if it was their right. This behaviour is unacceptable yet is now a daily reality for them. This is the future being proposed for our street.

30 35 Barramurra Public School already experiences unsafe traffic congestion due to afternoon pick-up, with vehicles queueing on the road and again at a standstill for up to an hour. This proposal would bring the same conditions to our street but at a much larger scale due to the numbers.

40 The physical condition of the road further amplifies these risks. Catherine Field Road is already difficult to navigate, with many potholes that require constant attention just to avoid vehicle damage, which often requires you to veer to the other side of the road.

45 50 There is also ongoing water runoff and flooding due to natural water flow, which regularly pools in front of the proposed site. After only a small amount of rain two weeks ago, I personally recorded footage showing water flowing like a river along the road in front of the site. I am more than willing to provide this. If light rainfall already causes this level of flooding, I struggle to understand how construction vehicles or emergency services would safely access the site, let alone with all the traffic later on. This flooding would only increase with all the concrete, and the roofs of the school would bring more water runoff.

55 60 As someone who works in a school, I understand that firsthand how noisy and disruptive the school environment can be. This proposal states that sporting facilities and hall will be used every day, including weekends, with activities continuing until 9:30 p.m. This will place an enormous burden on a community that currently experiences no street lighting, minimal noise and a generally peaceful lifestyle. The thought of all this changing is deeply distressing. Who would realistically enforce these promised time limits? This represents an even greater intrusion into the lives of

local residents than initially expected and would erase any sense of peace in our community.

5 There are also serious health and environmental concerns due to the absence of a sewer system. When I wash my sheets at home, my backyards become saturated due to our irrigation. I cannot comprehend how irrigation on a sporting field for over a thousand people from 7 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. could be managed without causing effluent water overflow. This poses a potential health hazard not only for students and staff but also the wider community. It would also severely impact local flora and fauna, including the birdlife and possums that are a valued and cherished part of our community.

10
15 Most concerning of all is the safety. I do not allow my children to walk down the street because it's simply not safe, despite the posted speed limits, drivers treat Catherine Field Road like an open country road. There are no footpaths, no gutters, no pedestrian crossing. There's long grass, uneven, rocky ground, and in summer, the real presence of snakes. Expecting students to walk or travel safely in these conditions highlights the complete lack of essential infrastructure.

20 This proposal threatens the safety, wellbeing and character of Catherine Field. It places an unfair and irreversible burden on a small community that lacks the infrastructure to support it. I urge you to genuinely consider the real-world consequences for residents who live here every day and who will be directly affected by this decision.

25 We are not opposed to education. We are opposed to an inappropriate development in an area that can simply not support it. Once this damage is done, it cannot be undone. Furthermore, the lack of teachers in our community is a big issue. So, taking these teachers to work in this school rather than a local public school, I think, is a huge issue that should be addressed as well. Thank you.

30 **MS SYKES:** Thank you very much, Renee, for your submission. You did mention that you had some footage available relating to water runoff and flooding.

MS RENEE V: Yes, I did.

35 **MS SYKES:** We'd certainly welcome that to be sent through as part of your submission, should you wish to do so.

MS RENEE V: Yes, I will be doing that, yes, thank you.

40 **MS SYKES:** Thank you, Renee. Did you have any questions, Michael?

MS RENEE V: No, I'm fine.

MS SYKES: Thanks very much, Renee.

45 **MS RENEE V:** Thank you so much.

MS SYKES: So, now welcome Abdul Shariff from Minarah College.

MR ABDUL SHARIFF: Good morning, madam Chair.

MS SYKES: Good morning.

5

MR SHARIFF: Respected panel member, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I begin by acknowledging the traditional custodians of the land on which the proposed Minarah College campus in Catherine Field is located. I pay my sincere respect to the Elders past, present and emerging.

10

Minarah College is first and foremost an Australian school. It is a faith-based school like many others operating across New South Wales and Australia. It is not a [unintelligible]. It is an enlisted, regulated Australian school that delivers the Australian curriculum and upholds Australian values. Enrolment at Minarah College is open to all students, irrespective of colour, gender or faith, and to families from local and far away.

15

Our values align strongly with Australian principles and are captured in our college values known as ROCKS – respect, opportunities, care, knowledge, and safety. Our college motto, *rabbi zidni ilma*, meaning “My Lord, increase me in my knowledge” reflects our deep commitment to lifelong learning and academic excellence, a message that resonates universally.

20

For over 24 years, Minarah College has proudly served the Green Valley community, educating students from Kindergarten to Year 12. We’re recognised as the centre of multiculturalism, harmony and educational excellence. And we have a big, strong respectful relationship with the local community. It is our intention to do the same – to build the same positive relationship in Catherine Field.

25

I’d also like to highlight that the founders of Minarah College and the current board members are all of Fijian background. Their parents and grandparents established 24 multi-racial schools in Fiji and lived in peace and harmony with iTaukei, the Indigenous Fijian community, for over a century. This lived experience of co-existence and inclusion is deeply embedded in our ethos and continues to guide our work here in Australia. We believe there is no better place than the school system to nurture respect, understanding and unity among young Australians.

30

Turning now to the issue of capacity and community need. The Green Valley campus has reached its approved maximum capacity of 1,185 students and there is no physical space whatsoever for extension. Demand has continued to grow. At the end of the 2025 school year, approximately 150 students were placed on our waiting list, many of them with siblings of existing students. A difficult and disappointing outcome for families, as we just couldn’t help them.

35

In 2026, we are also forced to reduce our Kindergarten intake from four streams to three because of classroom constraints, resulting in a further 30 or more students missing out on enrolment.

5 Catherine Field is the most appropriate and closest location for expansion. The proposed campus will relieve this pressure and help Minarah College to meet the genuine community demand while continuing to operate reasonably, responsibly and sustainably. The new campus will include modern built facilities supporting early and childcare, contemporary education, student wellbeing and community engagement. Benefits that extend beyond the wider community of Catherine Field.

10 Minarah College is committed to ongoing consultation and cooperation with local residents, Council and authorities. The school seeks to be responsible and a positive contributor to the Catherine Field community.

15 In closing, the proposed development responds to a genuine educational need, aligns with planning objectives, and supports inclusive, high-quality education for the growing community. I thank you for your attention and consideration.

20 **MS SYKES:** Thank you very much, Abdul Shariff. Did you ...?

25 **MR MICHAEL WRIGHT:** Just one question, Abdul. The proposal we have in front of us would accommodate 980 students. You talk about the Green Valley campus being at its limits now. Do you have a view in terms of the proposed student capacity for this new campus, and the extent to which that would actually meet the demand you're talking about to access the campus?

30 **MR SHARIFF:** I'm sorry, could you repeat the question.

35 **MR WRIGHT:** My question is whether in providing a facility which would accommodate 980 students, that facility will be able to effectively meet demand going forward?

40 **MR SHARIFF:** Yes, we are positive about that, yes.

45 **MR WRIGHT:** Okay, thank you.

MS SYKES: Thank you, Abdul. We'd now like to welcome Cynthia Meta.

35 **MS CYNTHIA META:** Good morning.

40 **MS SYKES:** Good morning, Cynthia.

45 **MS META:** Okay, sorry. My name is Cynthia Meta, and I have been a Leppington resident for 25 years. In this time, I have seen a lot of change in the area – some good and some bad. I personally welcome schools of any denomination to the area, provided that they are in suitable locations and that have services that can cope. And also, that don't compromise safety for the general community and for their own students.

Being in this area for a very long time, I've witnessed what can actually happen when a school is built where the site is not (what I would call) ready. So, Amity College on Fourth Avenue is quite close to my home – it's at Austral – and it's a prime example of

how a school that was initially catering for a small number of students, how it can negatively impact an area.

5 So, traffic from this school blocks Fourth Avenue for two hours twice a day, whereby local traffic cannot even enter or use this road. It even spills over onto Bringelly Road, causing obstruction. The school has been operating for a number of years and yet there has not been a road upgrade, even while the school has expanded, I believe, to maximum capacity.

10 I feel that the same gridlock is inevitable if the Minarah College development is approved. Catherine Fields Road is a rural, single lane, potholed road with no plans for an upgrade. And important question is whether it will be upgraded by the time Minarah College has a thousand students, teachers, and other visitors attending. And also, a question of concern to me is what would happen if there is an emergency, and the road is obstructed? I don't feel that this has been addressed, and it can't be addressed because it's a single-lane road and Minarah College does not have the capacity to improve the whole road.

15 Okay, that was my first point. My second point being, precinct planning with its accompanying community consultation process, is best practiced when developing an area. Building a school on rural land without wastewater and road infrastructure, in my opinion, is simply poor planning, it's not sensible, and it's detrimental to the community. I ask, why should our community be negatively affected to cater for students from other areas of Sydney?

20 25 Local landowners have been waiting for years for re-zoning to occur, and yet Minarah College is presuming to have rural land re-zoned to suit their timeframe without regard for community expectations, and whether the land suits a school. State planning has released plans for lots within the Leppington growth area for the provision of schools, and these are more suitable with infrastructure already built or currently being built.

30 35 I'm concerned also that even if a smaller school was built, it will stress local infrastructure and the school's growth will be very difficult to monitor and enforce. Camden Council will have little recourse to stop negative impacts and enforce how many students are actually attending at the site as it grows.

40 Ultimately, Minarah College does not have the financial capacity to upgrade Catherine Fields Road or wastewater lines in Catherine Fields. Minarah College, as far as I know at this point in time, has not secured special state road funding at the time of this application. It may well come in the future, but as far as I know, they haven't secured any of this special funding that has been mentioned by previous speakers.

45 So, in summary, I do not support the current application, and I also believe that any submission variation will still not be able to meet and satisfy good planning criteria and, more importantly, safety issues that have been previously mentioned.

The many opposition submissions indicate that our community opposes the construction of a school at this particular location. I ask the Panel to please seriously

consider the impact of approving Minarah College at this location. Thank you for listening to me.

MS SYKES: Thank you very much, Cynthia, for your submission.

5

MS META: Thank you.

MS SYKES: I would now like to welcome Domenic Pezzano.

10

MR DOMINIC PEZZANO: Good morning, Panel members and community members. I did provide you a copy of my submissions, so I hope you've got it.

MS SYKES: Thank you, Dominic, I can confirm that I have received that.

15

MR PEZZANO: Oh, terrific. Okay. Well, look, my name is Domenic Pezzano. I am a long-time resident within the Camden LGA, residing in Leppington which is very close to Catherine Fields Road and the proposed DA site. I commute along Catherine Fields Road weekly. I have family members that reside in that area and travel along this stretch of road to access through Oran Park.

20

I have provided a submission in relation to my objections to the DA for the college. Without having to go over the detail that are obvious to everyone and all is concerned is its distinct absence of essential infrastructure and services within this location. These issues have been detailed specifically by the community members and our local government authority, Camden Council.

25

It is pleasing to see that Camden Council have objected and not supported the DA. They are the expert authority, and when you have the LGA not supporting and objecting to a DA, this must be taken into serious consideration. We, as the public and the local community members, have expressed and detailed our concerns. So, from a public interest perspective, we also rely on our LGA to be guided by.

30

I want to concentrate on three specific points within my discussion. They are: one, precinct planning; two, the local community concerns, what is the public interest; and three, the unfair advantage that these types of isolated DAs pose to adjoining landowners and the local community.

35

Number one, precinct planning. This DA and similar others are in direct breach and often non-compliance with precinct planning principles. The purpose of precinct planning and having a precinct plan in port is to support the planning processes by documenting and integrating the environmental analysis undertaken in support of the indicative layout plans and summarised in the proposed approach to development. However, there needs to be a location that's especially been identified as a new precinct. The areas that are important and so require significant investigation and assessments are: riparian corridors; water cycle management; the interface between rural, residential and employment land; biodiversity; land capability; traffic and transport; noise attenuation; provision of open space and community facilities.

By simply allowing these types of commercial-style developments to be constructed on rural zoned land without any type of significant infrastructure services and appropriate assessments being undertaken, is a recipe for disaster.

5 Some points of note are: without matching an increase in local infrastructure, this then places intense pressure on existing, often inadequate services, which is in the case in this area. Without integrating planning, this area becomes highly car dependent, resulting in traffic congestion, high emissions, and limited options for walking or cycling. Inadequate, indirect and unsafe connections for pedestrians and cyclists are a 10 serious concern; the need to have active transport within this location is a significant factor.

15 This type of development is totally out of character within this rural zoned location. Without proper precinct planning, this school could end up being located next to a future industrial area where there is a need to have adequate buffer zones in order to not have future issues with noise, odour and health risks from over-spraying chemical sprays to drift, which is currently as a rural zoned area and farming area.

20 The future concerns that there will need to be remodel and overhaul of infrastructure after the fact, becomes much more expensive than planned, which is not in compliance and removed from a coordinated planning module.

25 The current inadequate road network, Catherine Fields Road, is a two-lane, un-serviced, no footpaths and no guttered rural road. This also becomes a safety hazard for emergency services response and access, thus creating a significant public safety risk.

30 In essence, without precinct planning, this type of individual commercial-sized development is then disjointed, it becomes a fragmented development, it is a reactive project rather than proactive, it impedes community focused growth, resulting in higher long-term costs for taxpayers and ratepayers.

35 Essential resources will be diverted to provide services to this development, which has not been identified within the LGA of Camden Council, and taken away from where there are identified high-priority areas that are re-zoned and under development. It must be noted and considered by the various planning panels that when there has been a collaborative approach involving precinct planning and zoning of rural land for either residential, industrial, commercial, community and recreational development, that these would take particular large lots of land which are in the hundreds of acres in size 40 and no way to be connected to adequately construct the stormwater systems, wastewater systems, upgraded energy grids, road corridors, transport networks and hubs, upgrades to various road networks, which have all been established to cater for the increase in population and traffic within the newly zoned and released area.

45 This also takes into consideration the significant amount of remediation works and the excavation of the land that is required to create compliant land use, housing estates, commercial areas, industrial estates, and community and recreational areas.

Unfortunately, this DA bypasses all these established and necessary requirements and guidelines.

5 Two. The local community concerns; what is in the public interest. I've been made aware that there are a number of submissions that are in support of this DA, as there are a high number of local community and general public submissions that are not in support, and along with our local government authority, Camden Council.

10 Can I ask that the Panel pay very careful attention to the actual locations of where the external submissions are based from. The fact is that it is the local community members and general public within the Camden LGA that will be impacted by this development, and not those that would travel from long distances to either work at the location or drop off their children and/or attending events. The external submissions and individuals which are out of area are not those ones that are then faced with 15 numerous disruptions to their local area and community of Catherine Field, which is their place of abode.

20 As I previously mentioned, the best gauge in direction and advice in this decision provided by our LGA, Camden Council, by the best placed authority in assessing and determining the identified issues and risks within this type of DA in this location. I respectfully ask the Panel to take into consideration what is the best public interest in this matter, and that is to listen to the concerns of the local community and our LGA, Camden Council.

25 It is easy to be persuaded by the fact that there are supporting submissions, but the majority of these do not reside within the local area or the local government area of Camden.

30 Three. The unfair advantage that these types of isolated DAs pose to adjoining landowners. As I have mentioned earlier in relation to precinct planning and its principles, it must be pointed out that the LGA, Camden Council, have very actively detailed the significant fact in all of this process, and that is, the Applicant is seeking to develop relatively cheap rural land prior to precinct planning and re-zoning. This provides a private benefit for the Applicant at the expense of the wider community.

35 This statement alone accurately describes the situation currently before us. There are local landowners and adjoining landowners that have been residing in this location and surrounding area for the past 20, 30 and 40 plus years. They have patiently been waiting for the eventuality that in the future, this area location would be identified for 40 future release and have holistic precinct planning approaches implemented, and involves what I have described previously in detail.

45 The individuals and groups have purchased rural land knowing that it is rural land in specific zoning capabilities and objectives are attempting to circumvent the entire precinct planning process in order to obtain a significant financial and community advantage.

5

I am not questioning in any shape or form that any groups, as in this case, should not be permitted to purchase rural landholdings. However, as Camden Council have stated very specifically, these landowners should not be able to develop cheap rural land prior to precinct planning and re-zoning, as it provides a private benefit for the Applicant at the expense of the wider local community.

10

The majority of landowners and community in this area have been waiting patiently with a future hope that their land and the surrounding areas will be identified by state planning and local government area, Camden, and that all stakeholders would be given an opportunity to provide their input and feedback and decide on how the precinct would be shaped and look.

15

20

Until such time that this fair and equitable process of precinct planning occurs, the landowners and the DA applicants should be advised to wait until this is confirmed by the various state planning authorities and LGA, Camden. To allow this DA to be approved is providing an unfair and distinct disadvantage to all the surrounding landowners within the vicinity. The envelope of rural land that the DA refers to would incorporate that entire property without consideration for future planning, where adjoining property owners will be affected by subdivision and road designs through their property.

25

This is just one example of an unfair advantage that the Applicant would have over the adjoining property owners, and it is this very reason why a coordinated approach involving precinct planning should be place first, before these types of developments are approved. Thank you.

30

MS SYKES: Thank you very much, Domenic, for your submission and also for the submission of your written submission.

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MR PEZZANO: Thank you.

MS SYKES: I'd now like to welcome Georgina Han.

MS GEORGINA HAN: Hi.

40

MS SYKES: Good morning, Georgina.

45

MS HAN: Hi. My submission to oppose this, an overwhelming amount of residents – sorry, I'm getting feedback. I'll keep on going; I don't know if – okay. I'll start again, if you don't mind. Are you there?

MS SYKES: Yes, please. Please start again, thanks, Georgina.

50

MS HAN: Okay. An overwhelming amount of residents of the Catherine Fields oppose this proposed large-scale school development, Catherine Fields. We have been going at this since 1921, twice presented at the state planning where it had been knocked back, not allowed. This area of Catherine Fields is not even in the planning stages of any type of planning.

The developers have completely ignored, overlooked the grand size amount of infrastructure needed to be done while well before any type of project can be seen the light of day. They have or want to put the cart before the horse.

5

Catherine Fields Road, which Council refer to as a “narrow rural road,” no footpaths, no streetlights, kerb and guttering, like most roads around the area, won’t be able to handle the influx of 800 to 900 daily car movements, morning or afternoon. It will be nothing but a nightmare repeated day after day after day, twice a day, seven days a week, as per the school operating hours. Trying to cater for the amount of people, cars, where there is only one exit from Catherine Fields Road, will cause numerous amounts of accidents just waiting to happen, with patience wearing thin because of the project.

10

The land in question is zoned RU4 (Protected Primary Production). It is of poor quality, cheap land, prone to over-land flooding, putting students and staff at risk whilst inadvertently pushing floodwaters onto neighbouring properties as well as properties downstream from South Creek. The area is already prone to flooding in high-rainfall periods.

15

Camden Council has told the developers that there is better quality land available for them with most infrastructure already in place, planned, including sewerage connection. They plan to manage waste for over a thousand people a day on the site in a rural area which will be an environment cause for alarm. Who will be held responsible for this?

20

The land is of poor quality – what about the soil? Is it high permanently to absorb a large volume per day? If not, the system will fail, causing the surface effluent continuous flow to be overwhelmed by sudden massive influx of water. Non-stop use of water, like a huge event, being used, excessive water use could push the system beyond its capability, leading to backups, slow water drainage, and even failure.

25

The proposal to disperse treated sewerage beneath the playing fields which more than likely put the students and the teaching staff at risk. I would not want to put my child or let my child play on a field that could and will leak effluent, when either not maintained or to the letter or the system fails because of the inability to handle such a volume day-in/day-out. Who will be held liable for this if this happens?

30

How do you evacuate a thousand people if they need to, to get to the nearest community hall? Walk on the road? The community hall won’t even hold a thousand people.

35

Noise and consideration. The school has stated it will be operating seven days a week, day and night, from 6:30 to 7:30. Sorry, from 9:30 at night. Floodlights will be used, shining on the neighbouring properties, with constant noise going.

40

This project does not fit the rural setting. Where’s the consideration given to the local community who enjoy a tranquil, peaceful, quiet lifestyle. I’ve only got a couple more lines to do.

MS SYKES: Thank you, Georgina, yes, that's fine, if you would like to continue on.

MS HAN: Yes. Okay. There are so many issues wrong with this development. You have in front of you all the reports, information opposing this development. Let common sense prevail. Lastly, in closing, sorry, Camden Council, state representative and the Catherine Fields community all oppose this development. Thank you.

MS SYKES: Thank you very much, Georgina, for your submission. And now, according to the schedule, we are – and I'd also just like to thank all submitters for keeping generally to time. We're now up for a 20-minute break, and we will commence again at 11:39 with speaker 13, Holly Behringer. Thank you very much.

MS SYKES: Okay, well, welcome back. And our next speaker is number 13, Holly Behringer from Leppington Progress Association. Welcome, Holly.

MS HOLLY BEHRINGER: Thank you very much. I am here to represent the Leppington Progress Association, and we are making this application on behalf of the residents of Leppington and Catherine Field, and we strongly object to this proposed development.

And the objections are based on the following. The school would be located within an RU4 Primary Production Small Lot Zone, to which it is incompatible with the zoning objectives. While Catherine Field remains RU4 Primary Production Small Lot, it is a rural area with insufficient infrastructure to support a development of this size.

Catherine Fields Road is a rural road with no footpaths, kerb and guttering, streetlighting, etc., and the area is not connected to the sewerage. The school is located within the Catherine Field precinct of the southwest growth area (SWGA) which has not been re-zoned, and there is currently no timeframe for re-zoning.

Leppington stage 3 and 4 of the SWGA have been re-zoned but not released due to the inability of Sydney Water to service these waters at the present time. Precinct planning needs to be undertaken, the area zoned, and infrastructure in place to support a development of this size. Until that takes place, we urge the application to be denied.

Secondly, Catherine Fields Road, which fronts the proposed site, is a rural road which is unable to cater for the increased traffic generated by this school. Catherine Fields Road is narrow and caters for local traffic only. Transport NSW has indicated that there is no future upgrades planned for Catherine Fields Road. The traffic generated by a school if 980 students would cause considerable damage to the road service, where the cost of the repair would fall to ratepayers and negatively impact the lives of the residents that live along Catherine Fields Road, and this is unacceptable.

There is the potential for an increase in traffic accidents caused by the increased volume of traffic on a rural road. The trip numbers provided by the Applicant based on surveys conducted at Minarah Green Valley campus, which is in an established residential area, and are therefore flawed, place an enormous strain on the wellbeing of

the residents that live around the school and will greatly impact their ability to move freely around their community at specific times of the day.

5 The school is located on Catherine Fields Road with no close feeder roads – one road in, one road out. When the community is zoned and developed, there will be a greater number of roads around the school that would better cater for the volume of traffic. Residents move to Catherine Field to enjoy a quiet, rural lifestyle and this will be shattered if a school is allowed to precinct planning and re-zoning.

10 Thirdly, the school is not connected to the sewer as the area is unzoned and there is no capacity to service a school at this time. Camden Council has concerns regarding the establishment of a new school without connection to reticulated sewerage. Irrigation of treated effluent onto the school sports fields has the potential to cause health issues to the staff, students and residents, particularly during periods of heavy rain, where the soil would become waterlogged and overflow may occur into waterways that are close to the site. The area, the residents that live there, know the issues of septic tanks and water and they are against this school being built without sewerage in place.

15 Fourthly, the Environmental Impact Statement as it relates to this development, is developed on the premise that Catherine Field will be re-zoned and redeveloped and will change from a semi-rural area to a residential precinct in the near future. When looking at the areas around Catherine Field that have been released and re-zoned, growth has been very slow.

20 25 Leppington North precinct is an excellent example. It was re-zoned in 2008, now known as the town centre. Eighteen years later, this precinct has a rail line at the southern boundary – sorry, has a rail line and at the southern boundary, a Woolworths complex that opened in 2023, a McDonalds which opened in 2024, a service station in '25, and a childcare centre – and that is all the development that has taken place in that precinct in 16 years.

30 Catherine Field North, Catherine Field and Rossmore are yet to be zoned and released. A great deal of development will happen in the other re-zoned and released areas before Catherine Field will be re-zoned.

35 40 Fifthly, a school of this size has the potential to negatively impact the precinct planning process. The school, if approved, has the potential to dictate the planning process around the school and not allow the precinct planning process to operate independently, fairly and sustainably, and could negatively impact the surrounding landowners' future zoning of their properties.

45 As stated by Camden Council, the proposed site does not consider the precinct planning process which may ultimately reveal that this location is not the most appropriate or desirable location for a school and/or is a highly desirable location for a different land use. There are already released and/or zoned areas or precincts currently being re-zoned within the SWGR which would be more appropriate locations for the proposed school.

Finally, the school is not in the best public interest. Until Catherine Field is re-zoned and infrastructure is delivered, a school of 980 students should not be supported, as the impact on the existing residents is significant and therefore not in the public interest. The Applicant is seeking to develop relatively cheap rural land prior to precinct planning and re-zoning. This provides a private benefit for the Applicant at the expense of the wider community.

Leppington Progress Association on behalf of the residents of Leppington and Catherine Field strongly oppose the development of the Minarah College and urge that the application of this development be denied until precinct planning and re-zoning and therefore the provision of infrastructure is in place. Thank you.

MS SYKES: Thank you very much, Holly. Michael, did you have any ...?

MR WRIGHT: Yes. Thanks, Holly. Just one question. I think you mentioned that your association is of the view that the trip numbers put forward by the Proponent are flawed. I'm just wondering if you could expand on that point a little further, thank you.

MS BEHRINGER: Yes. With the trip numbers, they worked on the premise that 90% of parents would drive their children to school, and they worked on the premise from the Minarah Green Valley school. The Green Valley school is already in a well-established residential area. It has footpaths, walkways, everything, for children to be able to catch public transport.

But yet, 90% of those parents drive their children to school. I think the figure was something like 4% catch public transport and 6% walk or ride a bike to school. They used those figures when looking at Catherine Field. They are flawed because if 90% of parents drive their children to school and in an established area where there is infrastructure – Catherine Field has no infrastructure. It has very limited bus service, only school buses, that's it. And they're telling, they're basing their information on 90% of people will send their children, and I think the figure was 97% of staff. It would be 100% because there is no infrastructure to support them.

MR WRIGHT: Okay. Thanks for that clarification, Holly.

MS BEHRINGER: Okay, thank you.

MS SYKES: Thank you very much, Holly, for your submission. I'd now like to call the next speaker, number 14, Kerry Eyles, and I note there will be a PowerPoint and a video at the conclusion of that presentation as well. Thank you, Kerry.

MS KERRY EYLES: Thank you, commissioners, for this opportunity to speak. I represent the residents of Heatherfield Close in Catherine Field, the street with the closest intersection to the proposed school site.

The residents of Heatherfield Close, hereafter referred to as "the residents", have major concerns about the proposed development of a 980-student school on this rural

block in our village with no infrastructure or services. And we oppose the development.

5 Next – yes. The key issues to be discussed in my report are traffic generation, access and road safety, parking, flooding, site servicing constraints, and environmental constraints.

10 Given the small local population and that there are no walking paths, cycleways or trains, and limited buses in the Catherine Field area, almost all the 980 proposed students at Stage 3 and 4 will arrive at the school by car from an expansive catchment area. The Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure Assessment Report estimates that at least 88% of students will be drop-offs, accessing the school via a single-lane entry and utilising 30 kiss-and-ride spots. The time that this will take and the resulting traffic queueing is unacceptable to the local community.

15 All vehicular access to the site is provided via a single entry point and a single exit point onto Catherine Fields Road, with no alternative access and a left-only exit from the school. This will produce extensive congestion to Catherine Fields Road that will extend to all intersections in the local area.

20 Heatherfield Close is a cul-de-sac joining Catherine Fields Road approximately 400 metres south of the school entrance. Residents are concerned the egress from Heatherfield Close will be severely restricted if not impossible between 7:30 and 9 a.m. and 2:30 and 4 p.m. All traffic exiting the school will come past this intersection due to the left-only exit from the school. There will be a huge risk of traffic accidents due to the sheer volume of traffic and the restricted vision onto Catherine Fields Road from Heatherfield Close due to the slight right-hand bend to the right when you're coming out of that street.

25 30 At the IPC meeting held on the 15th of January 2026, a question was asked by one of the commissioners about drivers having to turn left out of the school and the possibility of them doing a U-turn at the end of the median strip, or "20 metres down the road" (quote). The reply from the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure was that this had not been considered as a possibility at all, and it might (quote) "might easier for people to turn left into the small lane and do a U-turn back," (end quote).

35 40 I urge the Department to take a much closer look at this. There is no small lane. There is a private driveway into Lot 254 Catherine Fields Road, and the next left is Heatherfield Close. This clearly shows that the traffic situation has not been adequately assessed, hence the concern of residents.

45 In most places, Catherine Fields Road falls away to irregular drains and culverts, making parking along the side of the road either impossible or dangerous. Note that the proposed development only documents upgrades to the road directly in front of the school site. Safe street parking for visitor access to the proposed school is extremely limited on Catherine Fields Road due to the lack of kerb and guttering, the uneven road surfaces, the limited verge areas, the culverts and the drains running parallel to the road.

There's no visitor parking included in this proposal at all, and we all know that schools hold events where parents and family come along, and sporting events on the weekend where you have a lot of visitors.

5

The residents have concerns over the parking for the parents and community at the school, as there is little on-site parking for visitors and no planned street parking at all. As a small village, we don't have blocks that you can drive around to find a park. I think it's something like 6 or 7 kilometres to do the loop around what we would consider the block, the rural block, to get back to that school if you're just staying on the one side of the road.

10

The wastewater management plans are totally unacceptable to a local community who have used septic and enviro-site systems for years. A development of this scale, 15 intensity and duration of use is not appropriately serviced by interim or private infrastructure solutions. And we believe that this will have negative impacts on the community, including ongoing unacceptable odour issues.

15

The absence of guaranteed, fully delivered essential infrastructure at the time of 20 operation demonstrates that the site is not suitable for the proposed development. And that the proposal represents premature development.

20

Flooding on the proposed site and in surrounding areas is a major concern to the 25 residents, as is the impact that the development of this school would have on the natural flow of the floodwater and water levels on surrounding lots during heavy rain. Lot 268, one of the school lots, is seriously impacted every time we have heavy rain, and the lot is indicated in the Upper South Creek Flood Study Review. And you can see that in that last slide, that was the front of that block during rain.

25

30 Note the yellow area on this slide indicating the flooding on the southern side of Lot 268, the same area as shown in the image on the next slide. Now, the video for this slide will be played at the end of the presentation, so we'll just move on from there. And when you see that at the end, you'll know that that video was taken from number 12 Heatherfield Close, which is a property at the end of our cul-de-sac, and it shows 35 the extent of the flooding in Lot 268 after a heavy downpour.

35

40 Camden Council acknowledge Lot 268 as a flood fringe area in 2021 and stated the land is subject to flood risk management development controls. Yet there seems to be little planning in the proposal around how the stormwater will be managed and what measures will be put in place to protect neighbouring properties.

40

45 I will finish by citing the New South Wales Government document, "Design Framework: Site selection and development – A guideline for determining appropriate school sites", last updated in December '24. And ask how a site can even be considered for a school when it contravenes so many of the State Government guidelines, including:

- Fully serviced site with water, natural gas, sewer, power, local traffic infrastructure. No.
- Road frontage ideally on three, but at least two sides. No.
- Safe pedestrian and vehicular access onto the school site. No.
- 5 • Walking distance to public transport. No.
- Located within a well-structured movement network that provides appropriate road infrastructure and safe pedestrian pathways. No.
- Free from environmental constraints, including floods and bushfire. No.

10 Thank you everyone, and you will see the video shortly.

[Video played 02:01:39 to 02:02:08]

15 Thank you.

20 **MS SYKES:** Thank you very much, Kerry, for your presentation as well as the video. I just had one clarification point. You mentioned that you're representing or that you're speaking on behalf of the Heatherfield Close residents. Could you confirm the locality of Heatherfield Close? I assume that's when you said 400 metres south of the site?

25 **MS EYLES:** That first slide that I put up shows the locality. If you leave the school, the proposed turn left and [unintelligible] 400 metres down the road.

30 **MS SYKES:** Yes. And then you also mentioned that in terms of your comments around visitor parking, that to do the block would be quite a significant endeavour, moving south and in – could you just provide a little bit more detail on that?

35 **MS EYLES:** Okay, so you would just go past the fire station and the next left, which is Chisholm. You would go across to Chisholm and then you would have to turn left onto Deepfields Road for 2 or 3 kilometres until you met up the T-intersection, turning left [unintelligible].

40 **MS SYKES:** Thanks, Kerry. I think there was a little bit disjointed, but I think we got the bulk of that. So, left onto Chisholm. Yes, okay. Thank you very much, Kerry, for your submission. And I would now like to welcome Tasha Canderle.

45 **MS TASHA CANDERLE:** As a local of Catherine Field for over 30 years, I strongly oppose this development application. The project is incompatible with the rural character of the area, and the site lacks the essential infrastructure to support a development of this scale. This project doesn't serve the local community and those living closest to the site are extremely concerned. We need a thorough assessment that prioritises the feedback of local residents who live here and who have actually read the technical documents.

5 The drop in submissions for the second round isn't due to lack of interest. It's because the planning portal has been difficult to use. Many people were locked out by the login issues or simply couldn't navigate the account setup. Restricting feedback to an online portal while banning email or postal submissions excludes many voices in our community.

10 The site is located on a narrow road which lacks streetlights, kerb and guttering and stormwater drainage. It's already deteriorating due to the heavy traffic. Planned housing and the Camden Valley Way intersection will push capacity to a dangerous level. How will traffic be managed when hundreds of cars from both directions try to enter one narrow driveway? There's no question that there will be queuing in both directions of Catherine Field Road.

15 The single exit point is on a dangerous bend, which will further obstruct, sorry, further be obstructed by buses in the parking bay. Most concerningly, this traffic chaos will block emergency vehicles as the narrow roads offer no room for bypass congestion. The installation of a concrete island and the right turning lane will not only restrict vehicles from turning right out of the exit driveway, it will also restrict the immediate neighbours from turning right out of their own driveways. 20 Yet the claims that the development is beneficial to the community, community, sorry, but I do not think that is correct.

25 Another key concern is the absence of any footpaths needed to support the local school. Pedestrian footpaths around New South Wales schools are essential to the increased student safety by separating pedestrians from traffic, reducing fatal injuries. With no further plans of footpaths being installed other than the frontage of the site, this proposal should not be approved.

30 Another key concern is the – sorry, Catherine Fields currently lacks a connection to the sewer main, with no confirmed timeline for completion, making the proposed subsurface irrigation and pump out system entirely inadequate. This system poses a significant environmental and health risk as heavy rain could trigger effluent overflows. Such failures could likely contaminate local land and vital water sources like South Creek, potentially violating strict environmental regulations.

35 The water management plan shows that the proposed storage tank will only service the school for less than one day at full capacity, requiring constant refills. This ensures that residents will be forced to endure heavy trucks filling onsite tanks during sensitive hours, before 5 a.m. and after 9 p.m. This creates a constant disturbance to the community.

40 The proposal seeks to redirect flood hazards away from the site, yet replacing absorbent soil with extensive handstand surfaces will generate significant runoff that the planned pit and pipe system merely diverts onto other properties across Catherine Field Road. While the overflow assessment labels these impacts as minor and acceptable, it simultaneously acknowledges that the localised increase in flood levels for a specific neighbouring property, raising serious concerns about

the fairness of safety of the development that prioritises in its own protection and at the direct expense of downstream residents.

5 Adopting an early closure or evacuation strategy is inherently hazardous, particularly as many parents must travel from out of the area to collect their children. Council confirms that Catherine Field Road is subject to inundation during frequent one-in-five flood events. Consequently, any attempt to evacuate once rainfall begins risks traffic chaos on a narrow corridor, potentially trapping families and staff in rising waters.

10 Should evacuation fail, a shelter-in-place protocol effectively isolates 980 people by ignoring the New South Wales Development Planning's Shelter-in-Place Guideline and isolating the campus. The school assumes any unacceptable risk to life, failing its fundamental duty of care to protect school community from the foreseeable harm.

15 We have called the Green Valley campus to make inquiries about hiring out the hall and were told that the hall was not for hire and public use. If Catherine Field is the sister school to Green Valley, we are led to believe that the new campus would also not be hiring out the hall.

20 The assessment report claims that the estimate development cost is almost \$124 million, yet the Minarah College 2024 annual report claims that the cost will be \$134 million. Which is correct? We need to find out this information.

25 In conclusion, approving this proposal in its current state forces our community to pay the price for a lack of coordination. We cannot allow private development by bypass orderly planning at a local's expense without a coordinated approach and the necessary infrastructure already in place. It is the residents who bear the long-term safety and financial costs of this premature expansion. Thank you.

30 **MS SYKES:** Thank you, Tasha. And we're running a few minutes behind time, but we did have a question from Commissioner Wright.

35 **MR WRIGHT:** Thanks Clare. Just quickly, Tasha, you mentioned that you – with a view that the median strip proposed for this development would prevent right-hand turns from some private residences. Could you please expand on that?

40 **MS CANDERLE:** Yes, so the properties across from the school, they wouldn't be able to turn out of their driveways right. So yes, does that make sense? If there's a median strip in the middle.

MR WRIGHT: Median strip extends beyond the school frontage, yes?

45 **MS CANDERLE:** Yes, correct. So, I think there's three properties that will be in front of Minarah. So therefore, yes, those three properties will be restricted from their driveways.

MR WRIGHT: Understand, thank you so much.

MS SYKES: Thank you for that clarification, Tasha. And now I'd like to welcome Bruno Costa.

5

MR BRUNO COSTA: Hello.

MS SYKES: Hello Bruno.

10 **MR COSTA:** Okay, I'd just like to start. I'm speaking as a long-term resident who cares deeply about how Catherine Fields develops, not just in the next year or two, but over the next generations. My concerns are not ideological. They are not about opposing schools or social infrastructure. They are about whether the 15 proposal is being pushed forward too early in the wrong place and at the expense of good long-term planning.

20 My first concern is the proposal is premature. Catherine Fields is not currently identified for precinct planning and is recognised as being 10 to 15 years away from the process. Yet we are being asked to approve a significant piece of social infrastructure in isolation before the structure of the community is known. The Urbis response suggests this approach is common practice and points to examples like Marsden Park. But just because something has happened elsewhere does not make it practised particularly in the southwest growth area, which has been 25 carefully planned to avoid exactly this kind of ad hoc development.

30 Once the school is approved, its location becomes fixed, roads, traffic movements, land uses and servicing decisions follow it. This reduces future options, limits how centres and communities' facilities can be integrated and ultimately shifts the burden of poor sequencing onto future residents. That's not strategic planning; it is reacting rather than planning.

35 My second concern is that the site is fundamentally unsuitable. This is not my opinion. It is acknowledged in the Department's own report. Paragraph 117 states, "The site is unsewered rural property on a road with no footpaths, no lighting, no kerb and gutter and no piped stormwater drainage." Paragraph 127 notes the absence of pedestrian infrastructure and states, "The pedestrian movement is expected to be minimal with no expectation of further future footpath provision." Paragraph 159 confirms an extraordinary reliance on the use of private vehicles, 40 90% of students and 97% of staff.

40 **MS SYKES:** Bruno, if I could interrupt. If we could, yes, lower your paper, that would be fantastic.

45 **MR COSTA:** I apologise. This is deeply troubling. Schools should be places that children can safely walk or cycle to, where communities gather and where daily life is not dependent almost entirely on car travel. Instead, this proposal entrenches cars dependency from day one on a narrow rural road and requires an extensive

list of traffic conditions simply to manage the risk. Conditions cannot change the reality of this site. They only highlight how unsuitable it is.

5 My third concern relates to the flooding and emergency access. There's been discussion about flooding and while the Department concludes the risk can be managed, I do not believe that adequately reflects the lived reality of the area. A flood affected rural road carrying heavy peak hour traffic for a school is not a theoretical issue. It is a real safety concern, not to mention the panic and chaos during a significant rain event. Recent storm events across the region have shown the weather patterns are becoming less predictable and more severe. In this context, approaching a school that relies on a single rural access route, again points to the premature nature of the proposal.

10 15 The community benefit of this site is extremely limited. The Urbis response itself demonstrates that community access to the site will be minimal. The fact that the Department has had to recommend that condition requiring a community sharing strategy before the school even opens speaks volumes. A school in a growth area should naturally function as a community hub, not require conditions to retrofit community value in isolated location.

20 25 I just wish to point out too, on northern end of Catherine Fields Road, you have Anthony Road Causeway, which is notorious for regular dangerous flooding. It has been the cause of a fatality on at least one occasion. With the new airport opening as well, we acknowledge there will be a substantial increase in traffic on Catherine Fields Road. This needs to be addressed in the first instance before any other infrastructure goes ahead.

30 35 My other concern is the school numbers of students in the submission was 1,580, they reduced it down to 980. Once this opens, we have no guarantees what the initial number will be and what the number size will grow to. The school intends on operating seven days a week, Monday to Friday, 7 to 9 a.m. That's Saturday and Sunday as well, the weekends. And there'll be no – the traffic will be constant seven days a week, noise pollution and traffic pollution for Catherine Fields. The residents will get no rest whatsoever.

40 45 Approving this now risks locking Catherine Fields into poor outcomes for decades. Deferring this decision until precinct planning occurs will allow schools and community facilities to be located where they are safe, accessible and properly integrated, which is what current and future residents deserve.

In closing, I ask the panel to consider not just whether this proposal can be made to work, whether it is the right decision at the right time in the right place. Thank you.

45 **MS SYKES:** Thank you very much, Bruno. I just had one clarification question. You mentioned that the intersection at the northern end on Catherine Hill Road.

MR COSTA: Yes.

MS SYKES: Could you just – the name of that intersection?

5 **MR COSTA:** You've got Catherine Fields Road and Deepfields. You turn left, then Anthony Road to the right. They've actually installed flood gates there because the fatality they had years ago. That notoriously is under water.

MS SYKES: Thank you very much, Bruno, for that clarification.

10 **MR COSTA:** Thank you.

MS SYKES: Thank you for your submission. I'd now like to welcome Sarina Catanzariti. Thank you, Serena.

15 **MS SARINA CATANZARITI:** Am I ready to go?

MS SYKES: You're ready to go, thank you.

20 **MS CATANZARITI:** Good afternoon. I'm a local resident of Catherine Field and I strongly object to the proposal to construct a K-12 school in this location. In my view, this site is unsuitable, unsafe, and completely inconsistent with the intended character and planning controls of our area.

25 Catherine Field is zoned as rural. People choose to live here because it is low density, quiet, and designed to support a rural lifestyle. A large K-12 school is a high intensity institutional development and it simply does not belong in a rural setting. This type of development directly contradicts the purpose of the zoning that applies to Catherine Field.

30 A school catering for up to 900 students would bring an urban level of traffic, activity, and infrastructure demand into an area that was never designed to handle it. Hundreds of students, staff, and parents arriving and leaving every day would place enormous pressure on land and services that are currently limited and rural in nature. This proposal ignores the intent of the planning framework and sets a worrying precedent for future inappropriate development in the area.

35 The local road network is wholly inadequate to support a development of this scale. Roads in Catherine Field are narrow, generally single lane in each direction, and lack basic infrastructure such as kerbs, gutters, footpaths and safe drop-off areas. Visibility is limited in several locations. Introducing peak hour school traffic in the mornings and afternoons would overwhelm these roads, causing congestion and creating serious safety risks for residents, students, and other road users. Without major and disruptive upgrades, the existing road network simply cannot safely accommodate this level of daily traffic.

40 Flooding is another major concern. Catherine Field and surrounding roads are known to flood during periods of heavy rainfall. Placing a school in a flood-affected area raises serious questions about safety, accessibility, and

reliability. Flooded or unsafe roads could prevent access for students, parents, staff, and even emergency services. This is not an acceptable risk for a facility that relies on safe and predictable daily access, particularly when children are involved.

5 There is also no pedestrian infrastructure in the area. There are no footpaths, no safe crossings, and no cycling infrastructure. This makes walking or riding to school unsafe, if not impossible, and forces even more reliance on private vehicles. This only compounds the traffic and safety issues and falls well short of what should be expected for a school environment.

10 Catherine Field also lacks the essential servicing required for a development of this intensity. Rural areas have a limited water, sewer, and stormwater infrastructure, which further demonstrates that this land is not suitable for a large institutional use, such as a K-12 school. The physical scale of the development is also inappropriate. Large buildings, extensive car parking, lighting, fencing, and hardstand areas would dominate the landscape and be completely out of character with the surrounding rural properties and open space. This proposal would permanently change the look and feel of Catherine Field and erode the rural amenity that residents value and have relied upon when choosing to live here.

15 20 I would also like to note that I have taken the time to read many submissions. A significant number of the so-called support submissions are extremely brief and appear to be from people who do not live in or have any real connection to our community, whereas local residents who are directly affected have raised consistent and genuine concerns that should not be dismissed.

25 30 When you consider the zoning constraints, the inadequate road and pedestrian infrastructure, flooding risks, lack of essential services, and the significant impact on rural character, it is clear that Catherine Field is not an appropriate location for a large K-12 school. The fact that the local council itself opposes this proposal speaks volumes. A school of this size should be located on land that is properly zoned, fully serviced, and supported by appropriate transport and safety infrastructure, not imposed on a rural community, and it's clearly unsuitable for it. Thank you for listening to me.

35 **MS SYKES:** Thank you very much, Sarina, for your submission. Did you have any – I'd now like to invite Trevor Greaves. Hello, Trevor, over to you.

40 45 **MR TREVOR GREAVES:** Hi. Good afternoon, members of the Independent Planning Commission. Thanks for the opportunity to speak. My name is Trevor Greaves, and I am a local resident of this area and a member of the Leppington Progress Association. I want to be very clear from the outset, my concerns are not about religion, culture, or education. They're about planning, infrastructure, public health, and environmental safety in a rural residential area that is still awaiting comprehensive structure planning.

The proposal is for a school accommodating up to 980 students, plus staff in an area that currently lacks basic urban infrastructure. We have no kerb and guttering,

limited street lighting, narrow rural roads, and critically no connection to sewerage infrastructure. This is not a minor development. A facility of this scale would function more like a small township, yet it is being proposed in an area that is not planned or serviced to support it.

5

Council has already stated in its assessment that the proposed development does not meet the required performance standards for the operation of a sewerage management. These standards exist for good reason. They are fundamental public health protections. Specifically, the system must ensure the prevention of spread of disease, the prevention of foul odours, the prevention of contamination of surface and groundwater, the discouragement of insects and vermin, that people do not come into contact with untreated sewerage, and the minimisation of adverse impacts on neighbouring properties and surrounding land. Council's own submission states that the development will not be able to achieve these performance standards.

10

Based on the calculations provided, the Effluent Management Area, or EMA, does not demonstrate the correct land area required in accordance with the relevant guidelines. This raises serious concerns about whether the system can safely and reliably manage wastewater generated by nearly 1,000 students and staff, day after day, year after year. In a rural setting, failures in wastewater management don't stay on one property. They impact groundwater, neighbouring land, local waterways, and public health. Once contamination occurs, it is extremely difficult and costly to reverse.

15

We also need to consider cumulative impacts. This area is still waiting for structure planning to determine what type of end scale of development is appropriate. Approving a development of this size before that planning is complete sets a concerning precedent and effectively pre-empts the outcome of that process.

20

In addition, increased traffic associated with nearly 1,000 students and staff will place further strain on narrow rural roads that were never designed for this level of use, raising safety concerns for residents, pedestrians, and emergency services. Good planning is not about stopping development. It is about putting the right development in the right place at the right time, with the right infrastructure in place. If this site cannot meet serious performance standards, cannot safely manage wastewater, cannot support the scale of proposal with the existing infrastructure, then the responsible decision is not to approve it in its current form.

25

I respectfully urge the Commission to give significant weight to the technical assessments, the identified non-compliances, and the long-term risks to public health and in the environment. This is about ensuring that any development, regardless of who it serves, makes planning standards, protects the community, and does not create problems that future generations will be left to fix. Thank you for your time and for considering those concerns.

30

MS SYKES: Thank you very much, Trevor, for your submission. I'd now like to invite Robert Cecere. Just confirming whether we have Robert Cecere. Okay.

While we're waiting for Robert, we might move to the next speaker, Lorriane Smith.

5 **MS LORRIANE SMITH:** Yes. Good afternoon.

MS SYKES: Hello, Lorriane.

10 **MS SMITH:** Good afternoon. I'm Lorriane Smith, and I have lived in Catherines Fields for 32 years on the corner of Springfield and Catherine Field Road. Since they have diverted the traffic out of Oran Park onto Springfield, we have a much bigger influx of traffic that comes up to Springfield. We have incidents of accidents there now nearly every week, constantly, in peak hour of the morning and of an afternoon. We do not have a stop sign on this corner, which is a bad thing because people don't stop.

15 Okay, when Badgery Creek Airport opens, that's only going to increase the traffic on Catherine Field Road as well. And at peak times, with a school traffic, that is not going to be able to cope. At the end of Catherine Field Road, right, there are turning lanes. These are not structural or adequate to be able to cope with the influx of traffic turning out and into Catherine Field Road from Camden Valley Way, which will cause major incidents on Camden Valley Way as the turning lanes there are not adequate to be able to cope with the traffic that's coming into Catherine Field Road.

20 25 I'm not sure if you are aware that we have a fire station in Catherine Field Road. It is a new one that they have just built. It's not quite finished. Now, if there is an incident of a call out from this fire station in peak times of school drop-offs and pickups, the emergency vehicles, whether it's a fire truck or any vehicle, they have to turn off their sirens and reduce their speed to the school zones, if you are aware of that, which in peak times is going to be a major problem for those emergency vehicles to get through, seeing that Catherine Field Road is only two lanes and there is nowhere really for traffic to pull over so that emergency vehicle can get through. This could cause a problem with these being in restructuring, well, that could cause problems and results in the loss of lives, whatever they're going to, whether it be a structural fire or a house fire.

30 35 40 We also have in flood zones at the end of our street and of course in our local area, there is roads that have to be closed during our flood zones. We have already had a fatality at the end of one of them, which has caused an issue because people still drive through flood water.

45 Also, around the proposed school, there's still a lot of bush, right? Now I'm not aware that there will be sufficient area for emergency vehicles to get through to this bush area, it needs be. And also, all children, no matter whether they're dropped off or whether or not they are picked up of an afternoon, there'll be a certain amount of these children that will be walking to school. We don't have footpaths; we don't have kerb and gutter. So, therefore these children's lives are

going to be at risk and they're aware of that because there is no structure for them to be walking along the sides of roads. It's very uneven area and it's just not safe.

5 If the school is going to operate seven days a week, I don't know if you're aware, but we also have a community area just a little bit further where they have sports there every weekend, Saturdays and Sundays, you're going to have the increased traffic from that as well as school if that is going to be continuing seven days a week. Okay, thank you very much for my input into it.

10 **MS SYKES:** Thank you, thank you very much Lorriane. Before you – I just have one clarification question. At the beginning you mentioned an intersection or no stop sign on the corner and it was referring to Oran Park and Springfield. Could you repeat that?

15 **MS SMITH:** There is the traffic that comes out of Oran Park now comes to a roundabout. That roundabout, if they turn left, that's onto Springfield. If they come up to Springfield intersection with Catherine Field Road, there is no stop sign. So, if you've got an influx of traffic, they don't stop at that intersection now because there's no stop sign. The increase in accidents there – because I live on that intersection – is tenfold there. Every week now. Because we're on a slight hill, they do not stop. They don't see them coming over the hill.

20 **MS SYKES:** Thank you very much, Lorriane for clarifying that point.

25 **MS SMITH:** Thank you.

30 **MS SYKES:** Michael, did you have any – and thanks very much for your submission. That's certainly very helpful. I'd now like to invite Amanda Axisa and I believe there is a presentation or some photos at the end of your presentation as well. Over to you Amanda, thank you.

35 **MS AMANDA AXISA:** Thank you, good afternoon. As a long-term resident of Catherine Field, I want to address the concerns that many members of the community have in relation to Minarah College.

40 Slide two. In 2009, the Land and Environment Court rejected the Qur'anic Society's appeal for a school in Cawdor. The proposal was on 5.95 hectares for 900 students. The Commissioner's judgment concluded that the proposal is not consistent with the objectives of the zone in which the site is located. Ultimately, the court found the development failed to meet objective E, which was to not create unreasonable or uneconomic demands on the provision of public amenities and services.

45 Slide three. Camden Council's further amended statement during this hearing noted that some of the main areas of contention included unsuitable provision of sewerage disposal, traffic and safety impacts, unsuitability of the site for the development, visual impacts and the reliance of private transport for students. The

Cawdor site had almost one-and-a-half hectares more land, two-street frontage, but 80 less students and still got rejected.

Slide four. In a recent letter from our Leppington state member, they stated that they have previously raised concerns expressed by local residents about the proposed development directly with the minister's office. The state member reiterates his strong view that until the area is rezoned and appropriate infrastructure is constructed, any application must adequately address local traffic constraints and in this particular case, the flood evacuation concerns.

Slide five. The first video at the end of my speech will give you an accurate picture of the extremity of flooding to the road and the nearby homes of the actual site itself. There is grave concern that the drastic increase in gross floor area will dangerously displace overland flow onto neighbouring properties. Most notably, the overland flow assessment identifies that one specific downstream property will be highly impacted by these changes. The plan to install higher capacity under road piping threatens to accelerate flow rates to the catastrophic levels, creating an unacceptable flood risk for all downstream properties.

Anthony Road and its causeway serves as a key route to Bringelly Road, yet the path has a dangerous history of rapid flooding. The risk was tragically shown in 2016 when a 70-year-old local died after his ute was swept into the Riley's Creek flood waters. Although he had crossed safely once to head home, he was caught by an unpredictable surge while attempting to return to his workplace for shelter.

Slide six shows images of dangerous flooding along extremes of Catherine Field Road.

Slide seven. Our roads are becoming dangerously unsafe as traffic increases. The current infrastructure is inadequate. The roads are narrow with soft edges and lack essential kerbing, guttering or stormwater drainage. Drivers are at risk of being forced toward hidden roadside hazards like swales, which combined with stray livestock, which does occur, could create a high risk of serious accidents or worse. During heavy or long periods of rainfall, Catherine Field Road, Anthony Road, Allenby Avenue and Barry Avenue are often closed for safety by council.

Slide eight. The traffic data is outdated and fails to reflect today's heavy congestion, particularly at the Camden Valley Way intersection. Why hasn't a realistic updated count been conducted for this amended application? If the intersection will be rated at the worst-case scenario at stage two, representing total gridlock with 610 students, increasing enrolment further is inexcusable. Also funnelling all drop off and pick up traffic through a single narrow entry gate is a recipe for disaster. This bottleneck will not only disrupt local communities, but more critically could obstruct emergency vehicles, delaying life-saving access for ambulance, fire crews and police.

Slide nine. The second video will show a news report from 2024 about Pallara State School in Queensland with a similar road network to this site. The queue in

the morning and afternoon peaks often tally almost 100 cars to reach the school drop-off/pick-up zone. Parents say they could be waiting in their car for at least 30 minutes to drop-off and wait at least an hour to pick-up their child. If this project is approved, I believe this will be the future of Catherine Field Road.

5

Slide 10. A common issue identified with on-site sewer systems is that too much wastewater going into the system can cause effluent to flow too quickly through the septic tank before bacteria have a chance to work. Bacterial infections have been linked to players using boggy or muddy ovals, waterlogged dirty fields create an environment where bacteria can thrive, leading to skin infections when players with cuts or abrasions come into contact with the mud.

10

Slide 11. In November 11, the Department of Planning raised its own concerns that the play area from stage three onwards is no longer suitable for both play area and an irrigation area, particularly after rain events. So why are they saying that this proposal should now be approved? Also, the services infrastructure report stated there is no formal guarantee that this infrastructure will eventually become available or an associated completion timeline with the infrastructure.

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Slide 12. The Department reiterates that Catherine Fields precinct is yet to be rezoned or released for urban development. Precinct planning is not being undertaken, nor is it being prioritised in this part of the southwestern growth area. The development is dependent on the delivery of critical and services infrastructure by others. No evidence has been included as part of the application to provide certainty for a consent authority regarding the delivery of the essential services infrastructure that the development would be dependent upon, both during construction and operation.

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Slide 13. In conclusion, the development proposal presents an unacceptable risk to the community, failing to address critical infrastructure gaps, severe flood hazards and unsustainable traffic impacts. With the area unzoned for this intensity and essential services guaranteed by no one, approving this application ignores both expert advice and the safety of residents. I urge you to refuse this proposal and prioritise the safety and character of Catherine Field.

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35 If you could now please play the first video to 23 seconds on mute, followed by the second video.

[Video plays from 02:41:37 to 02:41:50]

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If you put the sound on the second video, please.

[Video plays from 02:41:54 to 02:43:20]

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MS SYKES: Well, thank you very much, Amanda, for your submission and also for the inclusion of the two videos as well. Did you have any – no questions. But I thank you, thank you very much, Amanda.

MS AXISA: Thank you for your time.

MS SYKES: Thank you for your time. I would now like to invite, yes, I'll just check before we move on to our next speaker, whether Robert Cecere is back and would like to make a submission. Great. This is Robert. Welcome, Robert, and over to you. Robert, if you're on mute there, just have a moment. Yes, we'll just take a quick break while we sort out the technical issue.

SHORT ADJOURNMENT

MS SYKES: Yes, we're back on. And I'd just like to invite speaker 22, George Smiroldo. Thank you, George.

MR GEORGE SMIROLDO: Yes. I believe there was supposed to be a call in by Robert before me by phone. I'm happy now and we'll see if Robert to join at some time later.

MS SYKES: Thanks, George.

MR SMIROLDO: That's okay. Firstly, thank you for the opportunity to talk today. I'm going to say that there was no arguments about earlier speakers that talked about the school, its plan, what it would provide other than there are some technicalities around that development plan, as was raised by council. Secondly, then there was the principal and the teacher talking about what they were going to deliver and to me, that is all tremendous. However, as has been noted many times, given that there are missing critical infrastructure items to support such a school in the proposed location, I object to that development going ahead, as I say, as proposed.

An earlier person also spoke to the families that have lived in the area for a long time. I'm one of those. Then other family members that have moved into the area. And they make that decision, as I understand, knowing that I've met many of those families and talked to them, it's for the rural atmosphere, space for families, peace, quiet, shared community spirit, feeling of a safe community where you can walk your children, ride your bikes, walk your dogs, go across to the reserve, which is centrally located just off Chisholm Road and Catherine Field Road. Those are all the appealing factors.

Of course, there's an offset to that, which many people have talked to. That is, there is no sewerage. There's no stormwater management. There are no kerb and gutters. There are no footpaths. The roads are very poor in size and condition and have been for 30 plus years that I've been there. I would also say that it was raised, and I'll come back to it later in more detail, but Catherine Field Road would need to be upgraded. I'd like to say it's not going to be just Catherine Field Road. It would have to be Springfield Road, Heatherfield possibly, but definitely Chisholm Road, which takes you across to Deepfield Road, Deepfield Road, and going further west, Anthony Road.

5 Why do I say that? I'm a driver. I know plenty of people who drive throughout the area. I know truck drivers that drive throughout the area. And they all do the rat run. And I expect that with 300 parents driving in to drop-off their kids, climbing to 1,000, they will also seek the easiest way back home. Now, if that's further to the south, Narellan, Camden, possibly Oran Park, that will impact definitely

10 Springfield Road. I do not see many people driving all the way up to Camden Valley Way to then turn right. Nor do I see them driving all the way up when there is a queue of 100, 200 cars in front of you to turn left on to Camden Valley Way.

15 What they will do is they'll turn left at Chisholm Road, which links into Deepfield Road. They may then turn right up to Camden Valley Way to head up the Camden Valley Way, go left to head towards Liverpool and/or that direction, if that's where they're coming from, or at Chisholm Road and Deepfield Road intersection, they'll go left. They'll follow Deepfield all the way to Anthony Road and take the rat run up to Eastwood Road to get back onto Bringelly Road to head further west. And the school has stated that I understand some 80-odd per cent will be out of area, 80%. In fact, there'll be very few that are in immediate areas. So that in fact, most probably is going to be 90/95%. People driving into the area.

20 So, moving on, reduce, sorry, flooding certainly in certain low-lying areas and it's not just restricted to Catherine Field. There are sections of Deepfield that flood, certainly Anthony Road that flood. Hence why all those roads for the traffic management and for flooding would need to be upgraded before a school goes in.

25 It is for those reasons, in fact, why a school, as proposed in the location it's proposed at, should not go ahead. My own view is that ignoring all those factors, those critical services and infrastructure, represents a failing of duty of care to the local community, the parents and children that would attend the school if it was to be approved. There are the major issues that people raised, but there are the incidental issues that – and consequential, losses, damages and risk to the community and to the school attendees should the school go ahead, that have really been raised. And they raised concerns for me as they raised concerns for the family that live nearby me and having my own family that visit, enjoying the space, peace, quiet, the grounds that are across the road from me, raised with me as well.

30 So, the risk of injury or death from the community due to the poor roads, the way that cars are going to access and exit the school, indicates that many parents will actually drop the kids off 50, 100, 200 metres from the school and let them walk.

35 Now, there's no way in the world you could walk on the current kerb side space. But if they do, they're exposing themselves to danger or twist of ankles risk, those grounds are just rugged, potholed mess. Option, walk on the road. Now you're putting yourself at risk of being hit by a vehicle. People seem to overlook that.

40 45 And of course, congestion from the vehicles, piling up on the side of the road, kerb side, trying to get on the footpaths, as we heard before, most of it's got culverts and/or rugged mess. Certainly when it rains, they become a quagmire. So, people skidding to try and get out in their four-wheel drives or SUVs, or parking on the

roadside, they're now creating congestion for further traffic to get through and/or potential for higher risk of accidents in and either side of the school, but I'm talking hundreds of metres either side of the school entry.

5 Increased bacterial germ risk of the septic tank. Council, I think spoke for that. I cannot see how anyone could accept and as a parent of children, I would not let my children play on a field that has treated effluent being sprayed on it on a regular basis. There's no way. And if we look at Sydney Water, they've got some of the best treatment plants in the world. If we look at how they treat the water, 10 and not only that, they pump it out 4 kilometres through tunnels to ocean, hoping that ocean currents and turbulence, sunlight will kill off any further germs before it comes to the beaches.

15 However, what have we seen over 20 years, 30 years, certainly the last 10 years, even though those plants have had major upgrades, beaches get closed, and more recently we've got fat bergs turning up. Where are they coming from? The study currently shows that it's from additional waste, chemical waste, kitchen-type food waste that bog up the system. So, to say that having an on-site sewerage system is acceptable, to me does not make sense at all.

20 Noise, not much has been said about the noise and the school said, "We'll try and mitigate that.: Has anyone had children and dropped them off at school? Has anyone been there during their playground breaks or when there's announcements being made? The area, literally you can hear your neighbour open and close his door down the road. You can hear a roller door open. You can hear cars starting. I hate to think what it's going be like with 300 climbing to 1,000 students screaming and playing their games, as children should be allowed to do, in the field. What the impact of announcements being made to move students around and/or inform 25 them of what's going on at the school or maybe outside of the school, but the health issues, mental health, is also of great concern.

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MS SYKES: George, if I could just jump in, we've currently run about three minutes over time. Will you be concluding your statement shortly?

35 **MR SMIROLDO:** Most will be done in a couple of minutes. But if you want me to jump straight ahead, I'll just go to two points.

MS SYKES: Okay, thank you.

40 **MS SMIROLDO:** Firstly, and I'm going to revise a submission and send a further one in, because I had reviewed the submission. I've reviewed and talked to family about other concerns and so I've expanded on my original submission and I hope that's okay. But to the point, in a recent meeting here at Leppington Hall, we had our local Labor MP stand up and advise the community that was here in attendance for a variety of meeting topics and there was about 150. The 45 government has learned its lessons and will not allow for any further unplanned development proposals until the critical services deemed necessary for an area have been put in place. Is this still true of the state and the governing bodies? Or is

all logic, community concerns, missing valid factual critical infrastructure and common sense now to be ignored? I'd like to understand.

5 Further, I've worked in industry, I've worked on major plants around Australia, and I had to do proposals for those critical projects that have gone ahead. And I have never heard hope used as a logical, valid reason, argument or strategy to allow a fundamentally flawed development due to its location be approved. Nor have I ever heard the term hope used to mitigate known risks and absolve persons of their duty of care to protect the wellbeing, physical and mental, of anyone that will be impacted by the factors that were raised prior and missing in the area.

10 Thank you.

15 **MS SYKES:** Thank you very much, George, for your detailed submission. I also certainly – well, we certainly welcome you to submit that in writing and any other material that you wish to submit. The submission of course, there's still opportunity to do that and that's still open. In particular, I was very interested in your referral to the rat run for current residents and your list of all of the streets and routes that are taken. So, we will certainly read that with interest.

20 **MR SMIROLDO:** Thank you, I will repeat those.

MS SYKES: Yes, in your submission, that would be wonderful.

25 **MR SMIROLDO:** Yes. Thank you. Michael, did you have any other comments? Okay, well, thank you, George. We'll now just check on Robert Cecere. No, okay. So, we'll move on to our next speaker, Stephen Smith. Hi Stephen, welcome. Over to you. Stephen, you're on mute.

30 **MR STEPHEN SMITH:** Is that better?

35 **MS SYKES:** That is much better, thank you.

35 **MR SMITH:** Sorry about that. There is a slight delay going on here. It's a bit unnerving. I'm a civil and chemical engineer with 35 plus years' experience in the design and treatment of sewerage and effluent reuse schemes in Asia, Pacific, America and Australia and a little bit in the Middle East. I've been asked by Amanda Axisa, who I understand is a nearby resident to the development, to have a look at the effluent reuse and sewerage treatment facilities that are proposed and so my submission or discussion is purely technical. There is no emotive issues here.

40 I've reviewed the two documents provided by Martens, which is an amended wastewater management report and a geotechnical report, the latter one dated 2024. Out of those reports, I've gleaned a fair bit of information from Martens. It gives me the available irrigation area for stage four, which is the stage that I've looked at in detail. The waste contribution flow rates being 980 students, 52 staff, equivalent full times. Martens have established a 20 litres per person per day flow rate of sewerage to be treated and that equates to 20,640 litres per day, five days a

week, which will go to a treatment facility. They have a well collection capacity of slightly less than that daily flow rate, which is statistically appropriate.

5 However, there's no wet weather storage. They're relying entirely upon tanker pump out and I'll get you that in a moment. The reuse application or the effluent disposal application to the field is a sub soil application. The site soils, based on the geotech report, are silty clay with rock varying from 0.6 to 1.3, sorry, 1.3 metres below ground. And that's based on the bores 113, 114 in their report. The perched water table was not observed at the time of the geotech investigation.

10 The regional groundwater is quite deep, so it's unlikely that this proposal will impact the regional groundwater, which is approximately 23 metres below ground level. However, there is a perched water table, which can rise, and it's been reported on, to be to within 0.5 metres below existing ground level. And the 15 source, the geotech report also reports poor drainage and water clogging can occur in low lying portions. So, we've got a situation and I've referenced, if you've seen the report that I submitted, I've referenced where all that information came from.

20 In the effluent reuse treatment, et cetera, for sewerage, there are very few documents published by government departments which one can rely upon. Most of the documentation is private companies or experts in the field who have published their own reports. And I'm referring to people like Wes Eckenfelder and Merv Goronszy, et cetera. These guys I've worked with in the past very closely and have designed treatment plants, which they peer group reviewed, and these 25 have been all over the world.

30 Out of the Australian documentation, the only relevant document that one can refer to is ASNS 1547, 2012, and unfortunately it refers to residential applications, but you can use and people have used and I have used and councils have accepted reference to this document. The document quite clearly tries to indicate that you should not be applying effluent reuse in dense clays as we've got on this site. It also refers to having a depth to groundwater of approximately 0.9 metres below the application rate. So, you're going to need quite a depth of soil before you get the rock. And yet there is a paucity of bores in the proposed irrigation area. 35 There's two bores with quite different depths to rock. And I'm suggesting that that's not enough.

40 And in my dealings with this particular council and a lot of other councils in New South Wales, a minimum of three for most residential users and certainly in a lot of this size, I would expect about five bores in that area and yet we only have two. So, we don't have a clear picture of the rock and the soils, but we do have a summation saying that we're up for dense clays. Now, dense clays are recommended not to be used for effluent disposal and it's because the water tends to lay in the clay and not get away and it relies therefore upon the crop that's put on top of the effluent reuse area. I understand this area may be used for 45 playgrounds or soccer matches, whatever, and that's simply not appropriate on this application because the effluent ground could quite easily become waterlogged.

Now, the consultant who designed this system has come up with a very low application rate, which is commendable. However, I'm sceptical because he's working on 20 litres per head per day. Now, I've worked in Malaysia and a job in Saudi, and I've come to the conclusion after having worked in areas where there is a high proportion of Islamic faith people. And I currently work for two groups that are run by directors who are Muslims and I've checked with these guys and they confirm what I'm about to say. People of the Islamic faith have a custom of washing before and after meals and washing before and after going to the latrines and water application as opposed to toilet paper and I'm getting a bit yucky here, I guess. But the point is people of the Islamic faith use a lot more water than people in Western faith, religious groups.

MS SYKES: Stephen, we're currently two minutes over time. So, if we could please redirect your submission to – I assume you're talking about the flow rate and the figure used there. And if we could start to perhaps conclude your submission.

MR SMITH: The conclusion is that the flow rate is well underestimated and the irrigation area proposed is just simply nowhere near sufficient. And I have done some calcs based on the crop factors, et cetera, and in wintertime, there is going to be an enormous problem with those grounds being continuously wet on the surface. And the flow rates don't take into account some information that I got out of the planning documentation, which simply says that the site will be used on weekends with communal activities and there will be a kitchen or canteen on site and these numbers are not included as well.

So, the final calculation on the flow rate is less than half of what it should be, which means there's nowhere near sufficient land available to dispose of the effluent. That's as close to what I can get. There is a bit more about that, where I go into detail about references and so on, but that's the summation.

MS SYKES: Thanks very much, Stephen. And yes, we certainly invite you to submit that information as part of your submission and we'll certainly be reviewing that as well.

MR SMITH: Thank you. Thank you for your time.

MS SYKES: Thank you very much, Stephen. Great, okay. So, I've just been advised, we do have Robert Cecere on the phone. So, we will flip back to speaker 19, Robert Cecere. Over to you, Robert. Thank you.

MR ROBERT CECERE: Yes, thank you. Sorry for any confusion caused. Good afternoon to the Independent Planning Commission and panel members. I thank you for the opportunity to have a voice. I'm a resident of Catherine Fields Road. I'm a second-generation small business owner in the construction industry, in particular civil excavation. Working on many large tier one government infrastructure projects across Sydney to provide homeowners, sorry, to private homeowners also for some 25 years. I fully understand the importance of all

aspects of infrastructure, its function in communities and necessity in any form of development.

5 In my experience, I've learned the key to any project, large or small, is planning, budgeting and delivery. I grew up in neighbouring Liverpool Council region. I have been a resident of Catherine Fields since 2013, moving here for the rural ambience. I have extensive knowledge of the suburb, its surroundings, along with knowing many local residents for over some 30 years, which is a mixture of family, old and new friends.

10 It came to my attention in 2022 by chance that there was a large-scale school proposed on the street I live, Catherine Fields Road. I did not receive any formal notification to date of what was proposed, which I found very concerning. I found out soon enough from local residents of the scale of the school that was in planning and found this hard to understand why. And with this, I began to investigate further and to inform myself.

15 20 In short, I strongly oppose the school. I arrived at this decision after taking time to view the relevant documents and reports mentioned below, they are not limited to architectural plans, wastewater management plans, overflow and flood plans, reports of infrastructure, engineers and consultants' advice, development application, in particular the Camden Council's own submission.

25 30 I believe fellow locals today are sharing photos, videos, slides of some of their concerns I also have. Without sharing the same, I fully agree and support my fellow locals. In addition to documents I've reviewed, I have personally taken notice of what happens on Catherine Fields Road in recent years, in particular with rain and how this impacts the street. Creates major potholes, are a regular feature after rain with water and loose gravel running over the street during.

35 40 I would like to outline some of my concerns, again, not limited to. Student numbers were originally 1,500 and since being reduced, the Department of Planning had recommended a maximum of 650 students. This is concerning, if approved, who will control student numbers quickly increasing without the necessary infrastructure? Flood mapping of the area indicate the proposed site is subject to flooding. The site sits at the lower point of Catherine Fields Road. It has flooded in recent years, forcing the road to be closed. How will stormwater be handled? It seems there will be more pressure put onto local catchments. Can the catchments handle this? How many properties will be impacted by the additional flow of the catchments?

45 Also, to add in the case of a flood, children are to be walked to Catherine Fields Hall. This is over 500 metres away. How can adults or children walk the distance? This poses a risk to danger for the children, staff, not to mention for the locals. Camden Council has clearly stated there would be no upgrades to Catherine Fields Road in the near future. We don't even have asphalt sealed roads, only a short-term chip-seal fix, with potholes, again, a regular feature and needing ongoing

5 maintenance. In each rain event, more potholes are created with the current traffic, current flow of traffic. How can Catherine Fields Road possibly handle more?

10 The proposed site is on a curve bend on Catherine Fields Road, bringing further danger to motorists. Again, no upgrade infrastructure to suit the hazard is planned. There is no sewer main for the proposed site or the area. Management of sewer seems inadequate for the development of this site. A children's play area will be in the effluent area as per documents, also creating runoff during rain. This will end up in neighbouring properties with the potential to cause sickness for children and neighbours.

15 Traffic issues will be created by the movement of vehicles in and out of the college, in particular at peak times. A short turning lane is not sufficient. This will be a huge load on the local roads. What is the timeline of the first and final stage? It seems very open. What will traffic do or how will Catherine Fields Road handle this until then? In regards to contribution fees, will this be drip-fed over time as per the most recent documents? Contribution fees paid are to cover infrastructure costs directly related to a development. Will we as residents have to foot the bill for any immediate or future infrastructure needs for the school or caused by the school?

20 It has been raised Catherine Fields is not a priority within the southwest growth area. In this case, when will the area have sufficient infrastructure to support a proposal like the college? In this case, Minarah does not pay – in the case Minarah does not pay submission contribution fees sufficient. Current zoning is R4 primary production. We, as residents, cannot by council regulation build a granny flat on our properties to assist in the housing crisis. How can this proposed college be considered, taking away desperately needed homes for people? There are many areas local with appropriate zonings and infrastructure ready in place to allow a development such as this. Just one nearby suburb, Smeaton Grange, a local industrial area capable to handle Minarah's needs. Why do Catherine Fields residents in a rural zoning need to be impacted and burdened?

25 30 A perfect example of what not to do went ahead many years ago in Austral, Liverpool Council, when schools went in before infrastructure and development, the roads were a disaster, creating ongoing road issues. Speaking with many locals and neighbours from the area, we are struggling to see how this will benefit anyone locally. I do not know a single local that is pro-Minarah development. If so, it has not been indicated or any attempts made to become part of the local community we all enjoy. So, the question needs to be answered. If it doesn't support locals, if the local community and local council are opposing the school, if it adds to already stretched infrastructure, what purpose will this serve our community?

35 40 45 I kindly ask the panel to acknowledge these are real concerns from our community. Some residents have gone to great lengths, sacrificing family time at their own expense to raise our concerns. Much more planning and investigation into infrastructure needs to be conducted before any developments can be

considered in Catherine Fields. I thank the Panel and the members for their time today.

5 **MS SYKES:** Thank you very much, Robert, for your submission via phone. Michael, did you have anything? Yes, thank you very much, Robert. We now invite Ziyaad Ali, number 24.

10 **MR ZIYAAD ALI:** Before I begin today, I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land from where I present today, the Cabrogal clan of the Darug Nation. I acknowledge this land was also accessed by peoples of the Dharawal and Darug Nations. I would also like to acknowledge the Dharawal people as the traditional custodians of the land on which Minarah College is proposed to be built. I pay respect to the Elders, past, present, and to all First Peoples within our community.

15 A very good afternoon to the panel members, Panel Chair Clare Sykes, and Commissioner Michael Wright, and all people listening today. My name is Ziyaad Ali, and today I'll be speaking to you about the reasons why I wholeheartedly support the establishment of Minarah College in Catherine Fields. Now, I do currently work at Minarah College, but I'm going to be biased because I am an educator and a lifelong resident of southwestern Sydney and I would like to see more schools in southwestern Sydney.

20 25 I'd like to begin my presentation today with statistics from the Camden City Council website. And I quote, "Camden Council is currently the fastest growing local government area in Australia with our population forecast to increase from the current 127,637 to more than 240,000 by 2036." The campus in Catherine Field aims to serve the burgeoning population in the Camden LGA, which is proposed to double in the next 10 years.

30 35 Our current campus in Green Valley is about 20 minutes from Catherine Field and we do currently have enrolments and employees from the Camden LGA. We have students from Leppington, Rossmore, Gregory Hills, Oran Park, and neighbouring suburbs like Denham Court. The establishment of the campus in Catherine Field will significantly lower the travel time of these students and teachers and provide the social infrastructure to meet the demands of the fastest growing LGA in Australia. We currently have 150 students on our waiting list and this will only continue to grow.

40 45 The reality is our areas for houses are currently full. So, where do our residents go? Our alumni are moving to the Camden LGA. Areas like Gregory Hills, Oran Park, Harrington Park provide the scope for local families to build their dream homes. The southwest and northwest are the only two areas left to purchase residences at reasonable costs. But the reality is in all these new subdivisions, there's a lack of greenery. Backyards are narrow and the provision of public parks are often not meeting the demands of this surge in growth.

5 So Minarah College is proposing a pragmatic approach to provide a solution to this conundrum of the fastest growing LGA in Australia. The school provide ample green areas for students to learn, and as mentioned, will be also available for the community to use. The plan is available for everyone to see online, including a full-size soccer field and an indoor sports facility. This project will significantly enhance the character of the area.

10 I'd like to conclude my presentation with the fact that no site will be perfect for a school. There's always room to improve. Nonetheless, all the concerns have been raised. And as a resident of southwestern Sydney, I would like to see a future for the residents that include world-class facilities for our next generation of 15 Australians. We've always looked at the research of other schools of the Gonski Review as to options as to how to improve our current education and many times, it comes time and time again, smaller classes. Any school – already we've heard that schools in the local area are strained. Another school, if we can open it up, will take the strain off these other schools and hopefully have smaller classes, which will ensure that our students get a world-class education and are active citizens in our society. Minarah College provides a tangible solution to this and I wholeheartedly anticipate the approval of this project.

20 Now, I'd just like to read just one paragraph from the Department of Planning and Housing Infrastructure Report from November, para 247. "The Department considers that the amended proposal is approvable as it will benefit the community by providing additional school placements and childcare facilities in the 25 non-government school sector, addressing social infrastructure needs arising from population growth in a designated future urban precinct within the Southwest growth area, and promote shared use of educational facilities. The proposal will provide direct investment of approximately \$123.7 million, generating approximately 434 construction jobs and 99 operational jobs."

30 I'd like to thank the IPC for providing this platform for the New South Wales residents to air their concerns and support. And I wholeheartedly support and I hope and anticipate their approval to ensure that Camden City Council can have 35 world-class facilities so that our future generations of Australians can be active citizens of Australia. Thank you so much.

MS SYKES: Thank you very much, Ziyaad, for your submission. Do you have any questions? Yes. I'd now like to invite Jamie Young. Jamie?

40 **MR JAMIE YOUNG:** Hi.

MS SYKES: There we go. Over to you. Thank you very much.

45 **MR YOUNG:** Thank you. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Jamie Young. I spent over 25 years as a professional footballer and now I am a high-performance consultant supporting various clubs and organisations, young, aspiring athletes and leaders to reach their potential. Alongside my professional sporting career, I've had the privilege of serving as an ambassador for

community organisations, including Multicultural Australia, supporting asylum seekers and newly arrived migrants in Queensland, and World Youth International, where I worked with children in Nepal and helped establish the first ever Jamie Young Cup.

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More recently, I've completed a PhD in sports psychology and coaching, focused on quality coaching environments in Australian professional football. I share this not to list achievements, but to explain why I care deeply about education, wellbeing and community. I'm honoured to support Minarah College and its vision for a new campus at Catherine Fields. I'd also like to acknowledge Eman Soliman, who introduced me to Minarah College and whose commitment to education and community development I greatly respect.

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I am here because I believe profoundly in the power of education, combined with sport and physical activity to shape lives. But even more than that, I believe it is culture and connection that shapes society. Across my career, I have worked with thousands of young people from diverse cultural, religious and social backgrounds. They have different stories, different starting points, yet the same fundamental needs to feel safe, to feel valued, to feel connected and to feel that they belong.

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Sport creates that space. It brings young people together quickly and authentically. It teaches discipline, teamwork, respect, emotional regulation and resilience. It gives students identity and belonging and for many, it provides something even deeper, the belief that they matter and that they are capable. Importantly, sport doesn't just develop physical ability, it develops character. It teaches how to respond to setbacks, how to collaborate, how to lead, how to persevere when things feel uncomfortable and uncertain. They are not sporting skills. These are life skills.

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What truly stands out to me about Minarah College's vision is that this is not simply a construction project. This is a human development project. It is about creating an environment where young people grow holistically, academically, physically, emotionally and socially. A campus that intentionally integrates education with sport, wellbeing and community sends a powerful message. Every child deserves access to spaces that nurture their full potential while honouring their identity, culture and faith.

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In today's world, social cohesion matters more than ever. Schools are not just places of learning, they are incubators of values. They shape how young people understand respect, difference, responsibility and belonging. When students from diverse backgrounds share experiences through learning and movement, they develop empathy, mutual understanding and a sense of collective identity. Sport accelerates that process. I've seen firsthand how it unites families, strengthens communities and provides young people with structured positive role models and aspiration. I've worked with young people who arrived in Australia barely speaking English. They are withdrawn, uncertain and disconnected and I watched them transform through sport into confident students who began leading others.

That is the power of the right environment, the right support and the right opportunities.

I've also seen how access to quality facilities and programs can fundamentally change the trajectory of a young person's life. For some students, sport becomes their anchor. For others, it becomes their confidence. For many, it becomes their first experience of achievement. That is why this process – proposed campus matters. It represents opportunity, it represents inclusion and it represents long-term investment in young people who will go on to contribute positively to society.

From both a professional and personal perspective, I strongly support Minarah's college plans for Catherine Fields. This vision aligns directly with everything we know about effective children and youth development, integrating learning with movement, community with purpose and structure with care. This is not just about buildings; it is about creating futures. I strongly encourage decision-makers to approve this campus, knowing it represents not just infrastructure, but opportunity, inclusion and lasting community impact. I commend Minarah College for placing wellbeing, sport and connection at the heart of this educational model. Thank you for your leadership. Thank you for your commitment to young people and thank you for allowing me to lend my voice in support of this important initiative. Thank you.

MS SYKES: Thank you, Jamie, very much for your submission. Thanks, Jamie. We'll now move on to our next speaker, Eman Soliman. Just coming online now. Over to you, Eman.

MS SYKES: Thanks, Eman.

MS SOLIMAN: Hello?

MS SYKES: Thanks, Eman, ready to go. Can you hear us? We might just take a short break while we confirm the technical issue.

MS SYKES: Okay, we're back on and now introducing Eman Soliman.

MS SOLIMAN: Hi, good afternoon, everyone.

MS SYKES: Hi, Eman. Over to you.

MS SOLIMAN: Hi. My name is Eman Soliman. I'm the Chief Executive Officer of EduTech Australia and the social inclusion ambassador for the Women in Tech Global Organisations. On a personal level, I'm Australian jet ski champion.

I would like to talk a little bit about EduTech Australia and the relationship between EduTech and Minarah College. EduTech Australia is recognised by the United Nations Association of Australia for outstanding engagement, delivering on the United Nations sustainable development goals, supporting schools,

particularly priority schools and closing the gender gap and the STEAM education gap in Australia.

I stand here before you today to advocate for the support of Minarah College in the endeavour to build a new schools building campus. Minarah College has been a strategic partner with EduTech Australia since 2023 through our funding for the Education for All STEAM Equity Program. EduTech Australia has been a social enterprise supporting low CS schools since 2018, including closing the STEAM gap and the gender gap in digital education. We do that through designing education ecosystem and in particular the Education for All STEAM Equity Program. The program has been supported by New South Wales Department of Education and the Department of Industry and Science from the federal government.

Between 2020 and 2025, EduTech Australia has been finalist in more than 41 national global business awards, including winning five global business awards in England and about 12 Australian national business awards in support for education. And this is also including a recognition from the Centre of AI Innovation in Singapore for top women in the world in social innovation for closing the gender gap. So, when we partnered with –

MS SYKES: Eman, if I could just briefly interrupt you there. Thanks very much for your submission so far. If you could perhaps redirect some points in terms of the merits of the application itself, that would be wonderful. Thank you.

MS SOLIMAN: Yes. So, when we funded Minarah College back from starting from 2023, the schools, as this is a government initiative through EduTech Australia, the school had joined a large accountabilities in our projects and they had to perform. Therefore, they had to be re-funded again if the school is of a high performance. Minarah College over the last few years, partnering and working with EduTech Australia, has proving that their commitment to improving digital education at the schools, but take it even beyond these initiatives.

Minarah College, their commitment – I've seen the commitment to promoting interfaith dialogue, social inclusion and harmony aligned perfectly with our goals and values at EduTech Australia. The school was active participant in programs that supported women and girls empowerment and steered students away from radical and anti-social behaviour and this is what's so truly commendable. By supporting Minarah College in building a new campus, we are not only investing in the future of students, but also in the future of our community. I urge you all to support Minarah College in their quest to build a new schools building campus.

By investing in education, we are investing in the future of our society. 85% of job requires STEAM skills. Without these skills, students cannot have a job in the future. Minarah College, over the past few years, showed that they have excelled and took every single opportunity that offered to them to actually enhance quality teaching and learning, to support students' engagements and improve students' achievement outcomes in digital education and closing the gender gap. "The future

belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams,” Eleanor Roosevelt said. Let us come together to create this dream, to have more equitable and inclusive world for all students.

5 That particular schools do deserve that opportunity for the amazing work they have been doing and if something – we would love to see more schools like them coming up. So, thank you so much for giving me this opportunity to advocate and to transfer a true picture of actually partnering with the schools over the last few years. Good luck and thank you.

10 **MS SYKES:** Thank you very much, Eman, for your submission. I’d just now like to take a very short break. We’re going to – we’ve finished all of our speaker submissions and we’re going to invite the applicant’s representative back just to have a few more questions and clarifications before we conclude the public meeting today. But we’ll just take a quick break.

15 **MS SYKES:** Okay, well thanks very much. We’ve just come back online again to invite the Applicant’s representative to join the public meeting again just while we’re here to clarify a few points that have been raised throughout the meeting today. We have a couple of topics to cover, traffic and wastewater predominantly, but a couple of other sort of points raised. So, we might just start off with the topic of traffic. Michael, perhaps if you kick off there.

20 **MR WRIGHT:** Thanks, Clare. Some of the speakers today have raised questions about the traffic counts that the Proponent has used. And I think there was a reference to current trip modes at the Green Valley campus and utilising that, I think 90% car drop off-rate and then applying that to the proposed campus. The suggestion being that perhaps the mode was more likely to be 100% car drop-off. So, I’m just wondering whether the Applicant’s representatives can respond to that traffic count, traffic mode issue, so whether the 90% car usage is appropriate for the proposed Minarah campus.

25 **MS SYKES:** Alaine, you’re just on mute there. Or a mic is not working.

30 **MR TIM LEWIS:** I mean, I can probably speak to the answer anyway. Thank you for your time, commissioners. Yes, in terms of the mode share, the 90% or roughly 90% is a very high mode share to car user. The Department’s review has also confirmed that they felt that that was a suitable mode share to apply. There’s a number of factors, including the potential for diversion of public buses or provision of additional shuttle buses to nearby stations and those sort of things that mean that we can definitely achieve those targets. And there are mechanisms within the draft conditions, such as parking management plans and travel plans for the school that will be required that’ll ensure that those outcomes are monitored and then additional mitigations are implemented to ensure that we can achieve those mode shares.

35 **MR WRIGHT:** Thanks, Tim.

5 **MS SYKES:** Tim, just on that loading. So, in consideration of that, there were some points raised around sort of natural congestion that occurs, sort of that two times per day during the school zones and examples of other schools that experience that, as well as the possibility of parking on the street for visitors as well as for school drop-offs. Did you have any comment on that in terms of the analysis and modelling done?

10 **MR LEWIS:** Yes. I mean, it's hard to comment on other sites and I think this is where our assessment is based on this particular site. So, but with a quick review, it appears that a lot of those reference sites have significantly less onsite drop-off and pick-up parking than we have, which allows us to accommodate that demand on the site. We're not relying on the on-street areas around us and that's what the assessment's been based on is that we've modelled a high car use and that car use is accommodated within the queuing and pick-up and drop-off areas on the site. 15 And then we also have the supplementary buses that can help reduce mode share subject to the travel plans.

20 **MR WRIGHT:** Just further on transport, Tim, lots of concerns raised about queuing of traffic. With that right-hand channelised turn once constructed, any views in terms of whether that's going to be – have sufficient capacity to prevent queuing back into the main carriageway?

25 **MR LEWIS:** Yes, thanks for the question. Yes, reviewing the modelling outputs, we've modelled approximately two vehicles queued in that bay. So, it's not like the modelling is suggesting that there's an excessive amount of queuing occurring. I noted the comments from the community around being a bypass and rat running and those sort of things. The surveys definitely show that, whilst moderate volumes are occurring in Catherine Fields Road, they're not excessive at this stage and so certainly I don't see there being huge issues with the right turn bays once 30 they're constructed and obviously we're looking to implement that over time.

35 **MS SYKES:** There was also the point raised around the residents opposite the site that would be unable to turn right. Right. And was that considered as part of the plan and could you expand on that point as well?

40 **MR LEWIS:** Yes, I think the comment was that three residents would be impacted. But from our observations, there's only one access driveway opposite as to the duplex. So, there is an alternative access to the south of that on that site. But ultimately any road, Council has the ability to install medians where they choose and there will be alternative routes that singular residents could undertake if required.

45 **MS SYKES:** Thanks, Tim. I didn't have any more questions on traffic at this point.

MR WRIGHT: Just one question, Tim, in terms of traffic and access for emergency vehicles. That was raised as a potential scenario where you were in a

peak school period and there was a fire emergency, a medical emergency, flooding emergency, and there were lots of vehicles on the road already and then you had the additional traffic from the school peak, that impacting on the ability for emergency vehicles to gain access to the site or to pass the site to get to other sites.

5 Do you have any view on that?

MR LEWIS: Yes, I think broadly in terms of the modelling that's been undertaken, a lot of that congestion is existing congestion occurring at Camden Valley Way and that's evident throughout the assessment and Department's Assessment Report notes that as well.

10 When it comes to the local intersections and the local network, there's far less congestion in those areas. Most intersections being level service A or B. And obviously with the right-turn bay, we're accommodating our turning, queuing vehicles off the carriageway. So, they're not going to impact through movements north and south along Camden – Catherine Fields Road either. So yes, I think the congestion is mainly limited to the periphery of the study area. It's not something that occurs around the school that would impact the locality specifically.

15 20 **MS SYKES:** Thank you, Tim. I think they were the only questions we had on sort of the traffic and traffic modelling. We just had a couple of points that were raised or a number of points are raised around the wastewater system that we hope the applicant representatives could clarify for us while we're here. Specifically, we had some comments from Council questioning whether the system itself will indeed work.

25 30 There also was concern around the performance standards of the wastewater management and sewerage systems. And there was also a submission that was specifically raising the points around the underlying dense clays and the application of effluent reuse on top of sort of dense clay underlay and concern around the depths of that soil and depths of the geotechnical analysis and depth to rock indicates that it is not enough, as well as some scepticism raised around the flow rates or volume predictions in terms of the 20 litres per person per head per day.

35 40 So, there's a couple of questions there. So, more broadly around the system itself, but then also around the geotechnical analysis for the effluent reuse, as well as the broader volume calculations. If we could have some comments around that or clarifications, that would be helpful.

MS ROFF: Thanks, Commissioner. Sorry, Andrew, you jump in.

45 **MR ANDREW NORRIS:** Sorry, I could probably address those questions. I'm getting feedback. I'm not sure if you're hearing me as well twice. It's gone away now. I won't answer them in order. I'll answer them in the order of the information I've written down, particularly when considering some of the comments that Stephen Smith raised. I think they're probably the pertinent, very pertinent ones.

5 The first would be the statement was made that the proposal doesn't include wet weather storage. Wet weather storage is proposed at all stages of the development. So, there is to be provision for the storage of effluent when it's not suitable for it to be applied to the land. So, that is most certainly proposed for each stage. The nature, the geotechnical investigation of the site, it's important to read the soil investigations information that's provided in the wastewater report because they've been prepared using the soil description methodology that's used in, for example, the Australian standard that was mentioned. And it shows that across the site there's a layer of clay loam over the top of the clays of the site and that the underlying clays are then light clay.

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15 So dense clays is a geotechnical term, which doesn't necessarily refer to the texture of the soils. But when using the methodology of the Australian standard, which addresses effluent application, the correct way of reading the information, which is in the wastewater report, is that there's a clay loam topsoil and the proposal is for that clay loam layer to be the – or a topsoil layer, which is the clay loam, to be the top layer of material underneath the playing field. So, it will be where the effluent's applied. So, we won't be applying effluent directly into a 20 clay. It will be into a loam, so a topsoil. And then under that, there's a layer of clay subsoil, as you would expect under any natural topsoil. So, in terms of the geotechnics, there certainly is a suitable soil and that soil layer is going to be provided at the surface where the effluent is being applied.

25 Sorry, Commissioner, that was to the geotechnics, the flow rate. I suppose the flow rate is, yes, it's critical to the design. Based on our experience in our monitoring of other school sites in our report, we refer to 13 litres a day, which is a number which we've developed from monitoring at a number of similar size 30 private schools over many years. Rather than using that number, we've adopted a conservative 20 litres a day. So, that's quite a substantial 50% increase from what's actually been observed at other school sites.

35 Importantly, what's proposed in our report and what's also proposed in the draft conditions is that there would be monitoring through the early stages of the development so that a refinement to the subsequent stages could be made and that's anticipated in the way that the conditions have been structured so that through Stage 1, there'd be monitoring. That would allow for the validation of 40 20 litres per person as an appropriate number and if a change needed to be made, if, for example, the Stage 2 irrigation area needed to be larger, that could be done. Or if necessary, Stage 3 and 4 would have to wait until reticulated sewer was available. So, whilst I would say that the proposed or the adopted wastewater generation rates are very appropriate, there is still mechanism in the anticipated consent conditions to then provide for that to be tested as the development progresses.

45 Associated with that is I'm told by the project team that Sydney Water is currently advising, and I think this was discussed on site yesterday, that the infrastructure to service this site, the sewer infrastructure to serve this site is anticipated to be in

mid to late 2028. When looking at the staging or the anticipated rollout of the development, that would still be well within Stage 1 of the development. Stage 2 of the development's not anticipated until 2031. So, even if Sydney Water was delayed by a year or more, the site would still be in Stage 1 of its operation, which has a much lower generation rate than the ultimate Stage 4, which is when space becomes most constrained.

In Stage 1, there's nearly 2 hectares of land available, so much, much more than is required to service stage one. So that provides for a very high level of redundancy in terms of the irrigation area. And even without that area, even if we just relied on the stage three irrigation area, we'd still have well over 100% reserve irrigation field. So, and again, as I think I discussed yesterday, it's likely that the Stage 1 – at Stage 1, the whole irrigation area would be put in. And if there was a concern, it could be conditioned that all of the irrigation area be put in and that would provide about 150 to 200% reserve for Stage 1 of the operation of the school. So that, I think, would address any residual concerns that the IPC could have.

Did that address all of the questions, Commissioner?

MS SYKES: Yes, thank you.

MR WRIGHT: Just one other matter we wanted to discuss was around the impact of stormwater and floodwater on adjacent properties, both to the north and south, and also on the other side of Catherine Field Road with concerns that water would be displaced onto those properties, potential impacts on the South Creek system during flood events. So, I'm wondering if someone could speak to that on behalf of the applicant.

MR DANIEL DHIACOU: Yes, I can speak to that. Daniel Dhiacou from Martens & Associates. So, we have modelled a few different events, the 100-year, the 500 and the PMF, that's in the overland flow study. And what the modelling shows is that there is a large benefit on Catherine Fields Road as a consequence of the upgraded stormwater infrastructure, which we talked about when we visited the site yesterday, the pipes underneath the road.

MS SYKES: We've just lost sound, Daniel. Your mic might be cut off. Yes, we'll just go for a quick break while the microphone's resolved.

MS SYKES: So, we'll jump back into that with Daniel, was it? Daniel.

MR DHIACOU: Yes, apologies, Commissioner. I'm not sure at what point I cut out, but I was saying that our modelling included the 100-year, the 500-year and the PMF. And what the modelling shows is that as a consequence of the upgraded drainage infrastructure, both along the site frontage, but also the culverts underneath the road that discharge to private property, all of that's being upgraded. And as a consequence, the flood depths and flood levels on Catherine Fields Road are reduced.

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There is also a reduction of the flood levels on the private property where those culverts discharge to. There is a small area of increase and a small area of decrease. And if you look at that map, which is, I can confirm which map it is. It's map 8 in our report, which is on, I think it's fixed now, it's on page 92 of the PDF. That shows that there's a larger area of benefit and impact. Sorry, can you hear me okay?

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MS SYKES: Yes, we can Daniel.

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MR DHIACOU: Okay. Sorry, did that answer all your questions about the flooding and the drainage upgrades?

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MR WRIGHT: Sorry, Daniel, just in terms of properties to the – I think to the south in particular, whether there was any push of stormwater onto that set of properties?

MR DHIACOU: Sure. Now, our modelling shows that there's no impact on those properties. And again, that's on page 92 of the Overland Flow Study and Flood Emergency Response Plan.

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MS SYKES: Thanks, Daniel. And just had another clarification. There was some concern raised around lighting, both inadequate lighting or comments made around inadequate lighting in AM and PM on sort of in terms of Catherine Fields Road, and also concern of floodlights within the school facility itself, in particular, the playing fields. If the applicant representative had any further comment on that or clarification on lighting in particular.

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MS ROFF: Thanks, Commissioner. In terms of street lighting, yes, there were concerns raised and street lighting will need to be addressed by Council, provided by Council. There currently isn't any condition of consent requiring street lighting to be provisioned because there is some lighting along the street. So, that would be something that the applicant will have to consult with Council on through design development.

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In terms of light spill and lighting from the sport field, there will be four floodlights. They're approximately 16.5 metres above ground. The lighting will be turned off at 9 p.m. and there is a condition of consent in the draft conditions of consent to that effect, and they will need to meet the Australian standards in order to deal with the light spill impact.

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MS SYKES: Thank you, Alaine, for clarifying that. I had no further questions of the applicant at this stage. I mean, obviously we have quite a lot to absorb over today's meeting. But Michael, did you have any other –

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MR WRIGHT: No.

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MS SYKES: That's it. Okay, well thank you very much to the applicant's representatives for rejoining the meeting. And thank you, that brings us to the end of this public meeting into the Minarah College SSD-30759158. Thank you to everyone who has participated in this important process. Michael and I have very

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much appreciated your input.

Just a reminder, it is not too late to have your say on this application. Simply click on the 'Make a submission' portal on our website or send us a submission via email or post. The deadline for written comments is 5 p.m. next Tuesday, 10 February 2026.

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In the interests of openness and transparency, we will be making a full transcript of this public meeting available on our website in the next few days. At the time of determination, the Commission will publish its statement of reasons for decision, which will outline how the panel took the community's views into consideration as part of its decision-making process.

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Finally, a quick thank you to my fellow commissioner, Michael Wright, and thank you for watching. From all of us here at the Commission, enjoy the rest of your day and good afternoon.

>THE MEETING CONCLUDED