

Subject:

Submission to the Independent Planning Commission--Scots College

I thank the Independent Planning Commission for the opportunity to speak about this proposal today.

I can only hope when I see such detailed draft conditions attaching to a draft approval that the commission has not entirely made up its mind.

This submission is not about me it's about the community. However I think it's pretty relevant to start by describing my background.

I built a house in Kambala Rd in 1970. My wife and I have lived in Kambala Rd for 49 years. We have raised a family there. I have seen the significant changes caused by Scots to the areas surrounding the school, most of which have occurred over the past 10-12 years.

I was elected to Woollahra Council and was a Councillor at the Council for 12 years. In that 12 years I was chairman of all the major committees of Council including the building committee and the town planning committee. I was the mayor of Woollahra. I was elected as part of a community based group called the Woollahra Action Committee which was formed to deal with the avaricious developer construction of high rise buildings on Darling Point and elsewhere. We did not accept a salary as Councillors, we changed the town planning codes for Darling Point (and elsewhere in Woollahra) and the organisation later disbanded.

I was on the board of Ascham school for over 20 years. Obviously without remuneration. For 15 of those years I was the chairman of the building committee and was responsible for the construction of over 10 school buildings including a library and a 700 seat theatre. I was also the chairman of several successful Ascham School Building Fund appeals.

I was a councillor of the City of Sydney for 4 years--- again on a basis of community service without pay.

With that background and experience I would like to say

- 1) In all those years working in the community and after seeing the behaviour of Scots over the past 12 years I have come to the conclusion that I have never encountered such a relentless

avaricious applicant as Scots College. And you know what--- Scots was not like this in the past----it's a relatively recent decline.

- 2) We have been told many times over the past 10-12 years, with each application to Council---words to the effect that the current application before the Council will not increase the school student numbers and so there is no increase in traffic and so no need for additional drop off arrangements or onsite parking caused by this development. This has been the clear message to the community and to Woollahra council with each application. The school is a Presbyterian Christian organisation. We in the community, and I can only suppose the Council --for a period of time--- believed them. It would appear that the Commissioners believe them. You have drafted conditions of consent.
- 3) However during that time the school numbers increased from about 1500 to over 1900. And there has been virtually no improvement in on-site parking and no on-site drop off facilities----for an extra 400-500 students arriving and leaving every day. Can you imagine what this has done to the streets nearby. Part of this increase is because the school sends busses to collect students from all over Sydney--- for example there is a daily bus collecting students from as far south as Sutherland that is part of the recent growth in student numbers. I ask again, what ever happened to the reassurance about no increase in student numbers with the various applications to Woollahra Council?
- 4) During the past 12 years the surrounding streets to the school have been turned into a parking lot and Victoria Rd has become a bus terminus. It's worth noting that a government bus comes to a bus stop in Victoria Rd and moves on--- Scots private school buses can sit there for over ½ an hour. The surrounding streets are hazardous for young students, for parents and for residents. Please understand I am not an over protective local resident. For 30 years Scots were an ideal part of the local community. I am not exaggerating, the streets around Scots are in chaos as a result of this uncontrolled expansion of the school over the past decade or so. All because it seems that Scots are focused on increasing student numbers and their business expansion-- and could care less about the infrastructure necessary to accommodate such expansion. And for some reason only Scots get away with it.

Can you imagine any responsible parent suggesting that their son ride a bike into and out of this chaos every day as suggested in the "Green Travel Plan" detailed by the Independent Planning Commission

- 5) You can draw your own conclusion about the truth of comments attached to this application and the truth of the comments attached to applications in the past.
- 6) In a meeting with the headmaster to discuss a very real proposal for a student drop off running from Mansion Rd to Kambala Rd (which was supported by the local community) he said to me he would not consider it because it would inconvenience the school for some months. There does not seem to be any consideration by the school of the enormous inconvenience that its expansion and activities are causing in the community. I understand that the school boasts in its written promotions of having very positive connections with the local community. On paper perhaps, but not in reality it seems.
- 7) It has been suggested that the school cannot raise funds from its school community for off-road parking and student drop off facilities. What utter self-serving nonsense. When I raised the money at Ascham to build a 700 seat theatre it was clearly understood by the donors to the project that any approval from the Council would involve conditions about off street parking and student drop off. Those conditions if attached to any approval at Scots would be part of the building cost. There would be no issue with fund raising if the phantom car park for 80 cars and internal drop off were attached as a condition to this application and any further applications from Scots. Until this proposal is made a condition how likely is it to happen? It seems to me that Scots don't want to spend the money on community town planning obligations they just want to build buildings to accommodate and service more students and more staff.
- 8) Note, it's not just an increase in students, obviously there has been an increase in staff----and deliveries
- 9) How has all this this happened? I think town planners call it incremental creep. The problem has emerged because this process

of repeated building applications—and repeated approvals—no proper consideration of a new Master plan for the school---it has happened by a series of carefully planned incremental applications. This application is just one more incremental creep application. The frog in the heated water analogy. How is it stopped? It's very simple. Defer this application to be considered in the context of a 2019 Master plan for the school. Perhaps we might see built the phantom 80 car car- park and onsite drop-off. A deferral of this application does not interfere with the running of the school. The Commission and the Council need to take time to consider this application in the context of a Master Plan that includes consideration of the numerous applications approved over the past 10 years and their effect on the surrounding community. Then in the context of a Master Plan apply the conditions that have been applied to the 2 other major schools in the area. Ascham has 2 major in house student drop offs and pickups. It has half the number of students attending Scots. Cranbrook's new development in Kent road is an exercise in traffic management and student drop off in a prime residential area. Why them and not Scots?? Cranbrook submitted a major development application to Woollahra Council in 2018 for the main campus in Bellevue Hill (quite near Scots). It included onsite parking and an internal drop off. They received only 1 objection from the local community and that was about garbage collection. This Commission and Woollahra Council have received hundreds of objections to Scots application
Scots and Cranbrook, two large schools in Bellevue Hill, each it seems to me to have a totally different attitude to community responsibility.

10) I would like to conclude by repeating 2 comments

In my recollection I have never encountered such a relentless avaricious applicant as Scots College.

This organisation can be stopped from causing these hazardous traffic and parking conditions that ruin the amenity of the local community by deferring this application so it can be considered in conjunction with a proper contemporary Master Plan for the school. A deferral does not affect the day to day running of the school.