



WILLOUGHBY  
CITY COUNCIL

*City of Diversity*

Submission  
No 10

**CORPORATE SERVICES DIVISION**

20 July 2004

The Committee Manager  
Standing Committee on Public Works  
Parliament House  
Macquarie Street  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Sir/Madam

**Re: Inquiry into the Joint Use and Co-Location of Public Buildings**

Please find attached Council's submission in relation to the above inquiry.

Yours faithfully

Nick Tobin  
CORPORATE SERVICES DIRECTOR

Enclosure

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# **WILLOUGHBY CITY COUNCIL SUBMISSION**

## **INQUIRY INTO THE JOINT USE AND CO-LOCATION OF PUBLIC BUILDINGS**

### **HISTORY OF JOINT USE AND CO-LOCATION OF PUBLIC BUILDINGS IN WILLOUGHBY CITY COUNCIL AREA**



## WILLOUGHBY CITY COUNCIL SUBMISSION

### INQUIRY INTO THE JOINT USE AND CO-LOCATION OF PUBLIC BUILDINGS

#### HISTORY OF JOINT USE AND CO-LOCATION OF PUBLIC BUILDINGS IN WILLOUGHBY CITY COUNCIL AREA

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Council has one major facility which has been jointly funded by the State Government through the Department of Housing and Willoughby City Council. This site is the Dougherty Apartments which is now run through a tripartite agreement between Willoughby City Council, NSW Department of Housing and the Uniting Church.

Council has also facilitated the construction of two playing fields linked to Willoughby Girls High and Chatswood High. The Willoughby Girls High playing field was created through the closing of a roadway and leasing to the Department of Education.

Council is currently working on a joint venture with the Department of Education on the construction of a basketball/multipurpose hall on school land with construction costs to be met by Council at Chatswood High School.

In relation to the four areas, the Committee is particularly interested in examining, the following comments are made:

#### **1. Options for retrofitting and adaptive reuse of existing state and local government public buildings.**

One of the major issues associated with retrofitting and adaptive reuse of existing buildings is the ability to create functional space for the new use. Council has looked at converting a number of buildings into other uses, including Masonic halls to a local library and residential cottages to a children's Literature Centre. In both cases, the cost of converting the buildings has been excessive and functionality of the building compromised.

In relation to State Government-owned buildings, there has been little opportunity to look at reuse of excess land holdings as they have been generally placed on the open market for sale eg DMR Depot Mowbray Road, Lane Cove and Naremburn Public School.

#### **2. Options for design and construction of new public buildings with joint uses.**

The development of buildings which can be jointly used by both State and Local Government agencies make great sense. Areas which should be carefully considered are the joint location of Local Government seniors' facilities with State Government health facilities. Examples in Willoughby include the State Government health facilities in Hercules Street, Chatswood and the Council-owned services on Victor Street and Brown Street, Chatswood, together with youth services in Victor Street. Joint use of a single facility for these agencies would create economies of scale for both levels of government and create a unique one-stop service centre for the community.

Other areas where new public buildings could achieve excellent results for local communities is the location of recreational facilities on school sites where feasible. Construction could be funded jointly or even fully by Council, depending on the tenure offered. These facilities would enable greatly needed sports halls, arts centre, libraries

and community meeting rooms to be built. At present, Council cannot afford to build these facilities, due to the land acquisition costs and the State Government cannot afford to construct and maintain facilities, due to competing financial needs.

As previously stated, Council is working with Chatswood High on a jointly funded sports complex.

In order for Council to commit to financing or jointly financing projects, it needs to ensure long term tenure for the sites and have a facility to gain full ownership of the site, should the State Government agency need to vacate the site. Unless the community can be guaranteed that the money invested by Council (including S94 contributions) will remain available to the community as an asset there will be major legal and perception difficulties in achieving jointly funded facilities. Council will be facing these issues with the Chatswood High School project.

### **3. Issues arising from co-location of State and Local Government public buildings with private buildings.**

Council has over the past 10 years granted bonus floorspace to developers in exchange for the provision of community facilities in their development. Issues which have arisen from these arrangements include:

1. Inability to expand the community facility when operational, due to the fact that it is part of a Body Corporate.
2. Difficulty in getting changes of use approved by the Body Corporate.
3. Difficulty in achieving the dedication of functional space ie areas transferred to Council are hard to use.

### **4. Other Related matters**

Joint use and co-location of public buildings should be encouraged at all levels of government. Whilst this submission concentrates on mainly services for the aged and recreational facilities, there are many opportunities to locate general services in a central location. State Government trading enterprises should also be encouraged to look at co-location with Local Government. Some examples where State Government agencies/enterprises could co-locate service facilities include the RTA, Sydney Water, and EPA. These opportunities are particularly encouraged in regional centres such as Chatswood.