

**Submission  
No 67  
Item C, Tab  
27**

**INQUIRY INTO ENROLMENT CAPACITY IN INNER CITY  
PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

**Name:** NSW Department of Education  
**Date received:** 27 September 2016

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Partially  
Confidential



**Inner Sydney public school provision to meet growth**

Following the decision not to proceed with the purchase of the City of Sydney site on the corner of Wattle, Fig and Jones Street Ultimo, for the new 1,000 student Ultimo/Pymont primary school, the Department proposes to activate a number of the recommendations from the Inner Sydney primary and secondary planning strategy, to meet the forecast growth in student numbers across the inner Sydney Local Government Areas. The risk of negative media coverage is significant.

**Key Information**

The relocation of Ultimo Public School to the Wattle, Jones & Fig Street site was recommended by the Inner City Schools Working Party in 2013.

The current situation in relation to the costs associated with remediating the Wattle, Jones & Fig Street site and the risks are explained in DGS15/917 (TAB A). The current total cost of the new relocated Ultimo/Pymont Public School, based on current expert advice regarding remediation options, is estimated at between \$155.3 million and \$177.9 million depending on the type and level of remediation undertaken. These costs would be reduced by approximately [redacted] through sale of the existing Ultimo Public School site.

To meet the forecast growth in public school enrolments across the inner Sydney area, the most expedient course of action is the redevelopment of existing schools identified in the Inner Sydney Primary and Secondary Schools Asset Planning Strategy (2014 – 2026). The first project would be the redevelopment of the Ultimo Public School site to provide a new, significantly larger school. The design work for this can commence immediately.

[Large redacted area]

**Financial Implications**

[redacted] was allocated in the 2014/15 budget for Ultimo Public School. [redacted] Schedule 1, Clause 5

**Recommendation**

That the Minister:

1. Notes the Department's intention to terminate negotiations for the Wattle, Jones & Fig Street site and signs the attached letter to Mr Jamie Parker MP;
2. Endorses the redevelopment of Ultimo Public School on its existing site; and
3. [redacted]

Endorsed [redacted] 10/6/15  
Tony McCabe, R/Executive Director, Asset Management, [redacted]

Approved [redacted]  
Peter Riordan, Deputy Secretary, Corporate Services, [redacted]

SECRETARY  
11/6/15

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33 of 128

## Inner Sydney public school provision to meet growth

### Rationale

#### Redevelopment of the other schools in the cluster

If the preferred option is the redevelopment of Ultimo Public School on its existing site, planning and detailed investigations for the cluster of seven schools which Ultimo Public School is a part of, with the goal of increasing capacity to address demand in this area up to 2031, would be expedited.

Item 1(f) & 4(a), (c), (d) & 5(e)

Item 1(f) & 4(a), (c), (d) & 5(e)

If the preferred option is the construction of a new 1,000 student Ultimo/Pymont primary school on the site of the greyhound racing track at Wentworth Park, redevelopment of other primary schools in the cluster would not be critical. Detailed planning for future growth within the area of the cluster of schools would still occur.

*Some of the issues likely to be raised by the community in response to the announcement that Ultimo Public School is not relocating are addressed below:*

#### Why did we not know the 'true' level of contamination?

The Department was aware that there was serious soil and groundwater contamination at the Wattle, Jones and Fig Street site. The site investigation undertaken in 2014 was to determine the type/level of contamination and remediation options/costs. At the time bore hole investigations were conducted at 25 locations to a depth of 6 metres only; and 10 groundwater wells were tested at depths between 3 and 6 metres. The remediation method under consideration at the time was site encapsulation, not removal/disposal of all contaminated soil. The remediation cost of \$23.27 million related to the site encapsulation methodology.

The Department became concerned that the site encapsulation methodology did not provide the best protection for human health. Consequently further options were requested to include fully remediating the site by removal/disposal of all contaminated soil and groundwater off site. This methodology would ensure a clean site and provide security to the school's future staff, students and visitors. **This site remediation methodology has been estimated to cost \$53.9 million.**

Council had originally allowed \$5 million for remediation costs and eventually allowed \$19 million. However Council's view is that the Department's preferred remediation method is unnecessary, as the site encapsulation methodology provides a similar outcome in terms of safeguarding human health. The Department does not agree with this assessment.

#### What have we offered to Council as a trade-off - anything?

The Department is not in a position to offer Council a trade off at this stage as the project costs are already significantly higher than for the delivery of an equivalent primary school anywhere else in the state. The Department has previously agreed to provide a childcare centre on the site as part of the development of the new school. It is noted that in general a primary school costs anywhere between \$15 million to \$30 million. The current projected cost for building a new school on the Wattle, Jones & Fig Street site is estimated at between \$155.3 million and \$177.9 million depending on the type and level of remediation undertaken.

## Inner Sydney public school provision to meet growth

### Why didn't we go with the rebuild option from the start?

The relocation of Ultimo Public School to the Wattle, Jones & Fig Street site was recommended by the Inner City Schools Working Party in 2013. The Minister established the Working Party and determined its initial composition in 2013. The Department was represented on the Working Party by an Executive Director, a Director Public Schools, NSW, two community representatives, two Council representatives and two representatives from the Asset Management Directorate's Planning Unit. The rebuild was considered as an option by the Working Party but it was not the most strongly supported option.

### How will the Ultimo Public School operate if the site is to be completely redeveloped?

To minimise time and disruption, the Department has commenced investigations into the possible temporary relocation of the 320 plus students that currently attend Ultimo Public School to an alternative location while the new school is under construction on the existing site.

Item 1(f) & 4(a), (c), (d) & 5(e)

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Following the Minister being briefed; a decision to proceed with terminating the acquisition of Wattle, Jones & Fig Street site and proceed with the redevelopment of existing schools, the communication timetable below would be implemented:

| Action                                       | Timeline     | Responsible person                          |
|--|--------------|---|
| Advise Ultimo Public School staff and P&C    | 11 June 2015 | Anthony Perrau, Murat Dizdar, Sylvia Corish |
| Advise Ultimo/Pymont Project Reference Group | 11 June 2015 | Anthony Perrau, Murat Dizdar, Sylvia Corish |
| Advise Jamie Parker MP                       | 11 June 2015 | Minister (letter attached)                  |
| Advise General Manager, Sydney City Council  | 11 June 2015 | Anthony Perrau (letter attached)            |
| Advise Media Unit                            | Complete     |   |

Item 1(f) & 4(a), (c), (d) & 5(e)

## Inner Sydney public school provision to meet growth

### Context

The Department undertakes school asset strategic planning at a cluster level. The cluster of schools which Ultimo Public School is a part of includes the following seven schools, details of which are provided below:

Ultimo Public School is on a 0.54 hectare site. In 2015 the school has 311 student enrolments which are projected to rise to 352 enrolments by 2020. The school currently has 14 permanent and one demountable classroom on site.

Glebe Public School is on a 0.8 hectare site. In 2015 the school has 220 student enrolments which are projected to rise to 245 enrolments by 2020. The school currently has 13 permanent classrooms on site and a demand for 10 classrooms.

Fort Street Public School is on a 0.22 hectare site. In 2015 the school has 159 student enrolments which are projected to rise to 204 enrolments by 2020. The school currently has 7 permanent classrooms on site and a demand for all 7 classrooms. The proposed upgrade of the school and the Observatory Hill EEC included in the 2016/17 Total Asset Management Plan will provide the school with 6 additional classrooms taking the number of permanent classrooms to 13 and the school's capacity to 340 students.

Plunkett Street Public School is on a 0.79 hectare site. In 2015 the school has 53 student enrolments which are projected to rise to 66 enrolments by 2020. The school currently has 4 permanent classrooms on site and a demand for 3 classrooms.

Crown Street Public School is on a 0.62 hectare site. In 2015 the school has 270 student enrolments which are projected to rise to 324 enrolments by 2020. The school currently has 12 permanent classrooms on site and a demand for all 12 classrooms.

Forest Lodge Public School is on a 0.56 hectare site. In 2015 the school has 316 student enrolments which are projected to rise to 331 enrolments by 2020. The school currently has 13 permanent classrooms on site and a demand for all 13 classrooms.

Darlinghurst Public School is on a 0.59 hectare site. In 2015 the school has 286 student enrolments which are projected to rise to 398 enrolments by 2020. The school currently has 11 permanent classrooms on site and a demand for 12 classrooms.

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| <b>Author</b>  | [Redacted] Director Policy and Support Services  |
| <b>Consultation</b>                                  | Murat Dizdar, Executive Director Public Schools NSW<br>Sylvia Corish, Director Public Schools NSW  |
| <b>Media release/<br/>Communication<br/>Strategy</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> Not required <input type="checkbox"/> Media Unit briefing attached<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> This briefing sent to <u>Media Unit</u><br><input type="checkbox"/> Communication Strategy attached |