

**Submission
No 3**

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

Organisation: Council of Ultimo and Pyrmont Associations

Date received: 29 August 2016

Submission from the Council of Ultimo and Pymont Associations (CUPA) to the Legislative Council Committee of Inquiry into Enrolment capacity in Inner City public primary schools

The Council of Ultimo and Pymont Associations (CUPA) welcomes the announcement of a Legislative Council Inquiry into inner city public school enrolment capacity and, of particular interest to CUPA, redevelopment of Ultimo Public School.

For years we have been alarmed at the failure of all levels of government to provide social infrastructure to serve the explosive growth of the residential population of the inner city, in our area in particular. We are well aware of the sorry history of negotiations between Council and the NSW Government over the Wattle Street Council depot which was to be the site of a new Ultimo Public School. We see the history of decisions about the Ultimo school over the past couple of years as one more example of the incompetence of both the Department of Planning and Infrastructure and the Capital Works and Planning & Demography units within the Department of Education and Communities Asset Management division which has been so well documented by Stephanie Croft and described by Ceridwen Dovey ('Schoolyard crush: Why Sydney's schools are so overcrowded', The Monthly, February 2015).

While lamenting the Department's past record, can we look with optimism to the future? It has been estimated that Government schools will need 10,000 additional classrooms by 2031, as stated in a recent presentation which also outlined the Department's strategic plan for meeting this target (Requirements for School Provision: School Assets Strategic Plan, by Anthony Perrau, Executive Director of the Asset Management Directorate and Murat Dizdar, Executive Director Public Schools NSW [who has been the Departmental contact person with the Ultimo School and P & C during recent negotiations], at the Public Schools NSW: School Operations and Performance Division January 2016 Conference, online). The situation in the inner city is particularly dire: population projections/estimates sourced from the NSW Planning and Environment website indicate that in the City of Sydney LGA, the percentage of 5-9 year olds will have increased from 2011 to 2021 by 72% (2500 extra children), 10-14 year olds by 51% (1450). We are half-way through that 10-year period now.

The Department's strategic plan appears to consist of a good deal of planning and consultation, but if progress in the inner city is any guide, including but not only the Ultimo school, the outcomes so far have been negligible. And given the following:

- The debacle of planning for the Ultimo school;
- The underestimation of population growth in particular areas that has characterised Departmental projections;
- The continuing adoption by families of high-density living;
- No evidence of change in high levels of migration;
- Current and projected enormous residential development (eg in Darling Harbour, Haymarket, the Bays Precinct, Green Square, Barangaroo), with no provision for schools;
- there can be little hope that the target number of classrooms will be met, even if the Department's projections turn out to be correct.

The Government is clearly failing in its historic and statutory duty to provide free universal public education. We respectfully suggest that the Committee of Inquiry consider including in its report recommendations along the following lines:

- The prescribing by law of mandatory standards per population density for the provision of social infrastructure, including but not limited to schools, to be met by the appropriate levels of government (state and local);
- A requirement that the Department provide an annual report to Parliament on its progress in building the schools needed for the children of New South Wales.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this submission.

Leone Huntsman

On behalf of the Council of Ultimo and Pyrmont Associations (CUPA)