

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

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Inquiry into the redevelopment of Ultimo Public School

Children, indeed a community, needs a local school. This submission regards the building of adequate facilities for the children of Pymont and Ultimo.

Since Ultimo Public School was built, the population in the area has increased significantly and will continue to do so with the developments in Darling Harbour and the Bay Precinct. There are many more apartments being built in an area which already is one of the most densely populated areas in Australia - yet there is only one, inadequate primary school.

My submission is based on a number of issues

Prior to the election, the State Government had negotiated with the City of Sydney to buy a site on which to expand the school. The announcement gained wide publicity and was welcomed enthusiastically by the community. Within a very short time after the election, the same State Government reneged on this promise. The only reason was supposedly the contamination of the site. This claim rings hollow as

1) wouldn't the condition of the site have been known at the time of the earlier, and much publicised promise

2) sites around the city such as Barangaroo are being remediated - so one wonders why this would have been an impediment in this situation.

The Government is now proposing to rebuild a school on the existing site which already is too small. The new school will not accommodate as many children as the original proposal - hence what is the point of the disruption and cost if there is so little benefit.

Children benefit, indeed need, adequate space for learning and playing. This should not be the prerogative of children who attend private schools but the right of all. The children of the district are entitled to safe playing and sporting facilities in their own venue.

It is proposed that a public facility, ie Wentworth Park, is to be taken over for several years with demountables whilst the Ultimo site is redeveloped. With this plan, ALL the community will miss out on the use of this land.

The children of Pymont/ Ultimo deserve a public school worthy of the 21st century - not some cobbled together second rate plan. Parents in the area should be able to send their children to a local school and not have to look for alternatives - either a long way away or to a private school.

The parents and friends of Ultimo Public School have had to fight for years for an adequate solution to the overcrowding and inadequacy of the existing site. They were titillated with success prior to the last election and then bitterly disappointed afterwards. Parents should be working with Government to educate their children - not fighting for a basic right to have their children.

A Government's basic role is to look after the health and education of its citizens. There are currently insufficient public schools, both primary and secondary in the inner city and surrounding suburbs. To date, this Government is failing the citizens.

Manuela Epstein