

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

**Organisation:** Pymont Ultimo Chamber of Commerce

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## **SUBMISSION TO THE NSW UPPER HOUSE INQUIRY INTO ENROLMENT CAPACITY IN INNER CITY PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

The Pymont Ultimo Chamber of Commerce is of the opinion that the State Government's decision to demolish and rebuild the existing Ultimo School on its existing site, rather than build a new, world class educational facility on a much larger parcel jeopardises our precinct's ability to attract employees from interstate and overseas. In a dynamic, global economy, businesses in our precinct must compete with companies from around the world in order to attract and retain the best workforce possible. We believe our area's standing as a global powerhouse in communications and high tech industries could be compromised by the government's lack lustre investment into educational infrastructure in Pymont-Ultimo.

Pymont-Ultimo is the fifth largest employment hub in NSW according to the Grattan Institute, generating \$5.8 billion worth of economic activity in 2011 and 2012 alone. Pymont-Ultimo's top five ranking by the independent think tank is impressive considering the region was outperformed only by the production powerhouses of (in order): the CBD, North Sydney, Macquarie Park and Parramatta. <http://media.smh.com.au/featured/gittins-where-is-theeconomy-made-5615402.html>

Businesses in our area contribute substantially to the public purse. We believe that an investment into a new primary school in our area is warranted and reasonable. Since 2001, the Pymont-Ultimo economy has been far and away Sydney's fastest growing area and the second fastest growing hub in all of Australia, expanding by a massive 173 per cent, with an output increase of \$4.97 billion according to PriceWaterhouseCoopers <https://www.pwc.com.au/consulting/assets/analytics/understanding-economy-ground-upjun15.pdf>

Over the last twenty years our local precinct has exploded. The government's investment in educational infrastructure has not kept pace. In the 1990's the area's population had plummeted to less than 3,000 as many of the industrial jobs associated with wool, manufacturing and shipping disappeared. Today 30,000 people work next door to 20,000 residents in the City's most densely populated precinct. The current school site dates back to 1914. One hundred years later it is time for a larger site.

Pymont-Ultimo is Australia's equivalent of Silicon Valley with the highest density of technology start-ups in the country. Ultimo in particular has become the hot house for young and talented Australian software developers trying to create the next global technology company. Ultimo's

success as the No. 1 place for startups in Australia was confirmed by a recent national survey which measured the number of start-ups per square kilometre in every Australian postcode. The latest ranking puts Ultimo well out in front with 51.9 start-ups per square kilometre, followed by Melbourne's CBD with 16.5 and Sydney's CBD with 15.4.

<http://www.afr.com/brand/chanticleer/little-fish-in-sydneys-silicon-valley-20150306-13xj2c>

The precinct's growth in digital companies has led to an overall 46 per cent increase in new jobs in the area, bringing the total from 19,869 in 2007 to 29,010 in 2012, making it the fastest growing village economy according to the City's floor space ratio survey.

<http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/newslocal/city-east/surge-in-jobs-business-growth-in-new-hightech-hubs-pyrmont-and-ultimo/story-fngr8h22-1226851490426>

In addition to a large number of high tech start-ups, a wide range of creative industries such as media, advertising and design firms are based in the precinct including Google, the Ten Network, Fairfax, the Macquarie Radio Network, the ABC, the global advertising agencies OMD and J Walter and Thompson Reuters.

Canadian based academic Richard Florida has extensively researched the changing face of the global workforce, finding that today's highly educated employees eagerly move between cities. He has termed these workers the Creative Class, finding they are particularly prevalent in high tech, communications and other creative industries which are prevalent in Pyrmont-Ultimo.

Highly educated and mobile, today's skilled workforce chooses to locate in global cities based on a range of factors. These twenty first century nomads seek urban experiences rather than a traditional suburban lifestyle. Sebastian Zenker from the Institute of Marketing and Media at University of Hamburg found that the mean age of the Creative Class is 33 years and that 26 per cent had children.

In order to attract and retain this workforce, businesses in Pyrmont-Ultimo need to provide world class facilities and infrastructure such as a primary school here in the City; and particularly one that is large enough to cater to a diverse range of cultural and language requirements that cannot be looked after in a smaller school. With the nearby Bay Precinct project promising to bring tens of thousands more residents and workers to Pyrmont and the adjoining bays in the coming years, the Pyrmont Ultimo Chamber of Commerce urges the government to rethink its small plans and limited vision for a primary school in Ultimo.

Lawrence Gibbons,  
President  
Pyrmont Ultimo Chamber of Commerce

15 September, 2016