

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

Name: David Green

Date received: 17 September 2016

I wish to request for the new Ultimo school to be built on the empty council depot site on Wattle Street between Fig St, Jones St and the light rail line with Wentworth Park Light Rail Stop.

This site appears from Google Maps to be about twice the size of the existing school site at Wattle, Quarry and Jones Streets and is this most suitable for expected increased capacity demanded by the growing number of residential developments in the area, including the Darling Quarter precinct with perhaps 1400 residential units currently under construction nearby.

The new Darling Square residential units are about 640 metres from the potential school site on Jones/Fig Sts Ultimo – or 10 minutes by light rail from Paddy’s Markets Light Rail stop to Wentworth Park Light Rail Stop – an easy commute for parents and/or children which would also add patronage and value to that light rail system - see <https://goo.gl/maps/DNvEX7SBoPM2>

In 2012 the NSW State Government created the Inner City Schools Working Party.

‘In 2013 the first task of the working party was to consider the public education needs for growing numbers of primary-aged school students in the Ultimo/Pymont area.’

‘The consultation included:

- 12 workshops - reaching 261 principals, teachers, P&Cs, parents with Aboriginal background, councils and the wider community.
- 12 focus groups - reaching 97 primary and secondary students, primary and secondary CALD parents, 'future' secondary parents and 'unengaged' community members.
- Numerous self-directed kitchen table discussions.
- Visits by over 4,000 community users who have observed or participated in online discussions’

<http://www.dec.nsw.gov.au/about-us/news-at-det/announcements/inner-sydney-high-school-consultation>

Just before the last NSW State election, the government promised to build the new school on the Wattle/Fig/Jones St site - <http://www.smh.com.au/national/education/sydney-city-council-and-department-of-education-finally-agree-on-new-inner-city-school-20141215-127dzg.html>

Just after the election – the NSW Government dropped it like a hot potato – ‘oh – too expensive’

This was seen by the public as **a cynical trick, blatant dishonesty and abuse of public trust** – which **will be remembered** for the next election – unless you build the school as promised in December 2014.

A mother of a child attending Ultimo Public School has expressed her dissatisfaction with this broken election promise:-

‘I am also part of the Project Reference Group charged with the design of the new Ultimo Public School, which was promised to our community by Education Minister Adrian Piccoli just before the last election.

The minister had the opportunity to provide a school for 1000 primary students, childcare and community facilities on the council-owned depot site at Fig and Wattle Street in Pymont (the most densely populated area in the whole of Australia). But after the election he canned the promise, citing greater than anticipated remediation costs. They could have built a K-12 school here which would solve the inner city school crisis in the area once and for all. But frankly the education department seems to be only interested dollars and cents and selling sites to the highest bidders.’

<http://www.smh.com.au/comment/as-apartments-spring-up-lack-of-new-schools-forces-inner-city-student-flight-20160413-go59uw.html>

As a local resident, I know that **the Liberals have campaigned for years to 'Get [rid of] Clover'** – Sydney's Lord Mayor – but even an attempted gerrymander by forcing two votes for business in the recent council elections **backfired on the Liberals – with a swing to Clover increasing her majority!**

Suggestion – if the Liberals want to be seen as a viable alternative for Sydney City council – given many years of trying to remove her has failed – in fact increased Clover's popularity – you could perhaps **try working WITH Clover** to improve the lives of resident citizens might actually make the Liberals appears as a reasonable alternative for next council election. A word to the wise.

Clover offered a discount price for the value of the now unused council depot site defined by Wattle, Fig, Jones St and the light rail line.

The Liberals agreed and promised to build a new school in Ultimo prior to the last state election. They were **duly voted back in** – to build the school as recommended and everyone expected. Straight after the election, the Liberals came up with 'oh – now too expensive !' and reneged. This was seen by locals as a flat-out lie – corruption – abuse of public trust to win election – and voters will remember – voter anger is hardening every day against Baird's high-handedness – 'nothing to see here while we steal and sell off all your public assets.

Unless the Baird government improves what they provide to the public – starting with schools – I predict **they will lose in a landslide next election.**

The NSW State Government should **build the new Ultimo Public School – for 1000 students of more – on the Wattle/Fig/Jones Sts/light rail site – and do it soon.**

A public car park could also be provided for commuters who could then simply step onto a tram at the Wentworth Park Light Rail stop – it would also work as additional parking for visitors to the Fish Market, being only 220 meters or 3 minutes' walk from the Fish Market – that site is currently largely car parking – it would allow a redevelopment over the large Fish Market parking space to be done while parking is still provided handy nearby 220 metres away – solving that problem for Fish Market redevelopment !

Given this government is **'Open for Business'** and pro-development, a **public-private partnership** would be ideal for multiple purposes – extracting the **sandstone**, building a **car park** with **school** and **childcare** on top, and providing a **lift** and **walking bridge** access to Jones St which is otherwise relatively inaccessible and a steep climb from Wattle and Fig St.

A lift and walking bridge would also improve pedestrian access from Jones St level to and from Wentworth Park north and the Fish Market for residents of Ultimo – currently a steep climb for residents in the Jones, Bulwara, Harris Sts area – again increasing customers for the Fish Market and healthy access to Wentworth Park. NOTE – this is the **most densely populated area in AUSTRALIA !!!**

The idea of **temporary relocation** of the Ultimo Public School to the Dog Track building in Wentworth Park is a **recipe for derision** the NSW State government does not need – 'this government has **gone to the dogs !**' – the decision to close dog racing in NSW has angered a lot of

Aussie battlers – to move vulnerable primary school children into a disused dog racing track would leave the government open to such a groundswell of derision that I don't think it would survive the next election.

The **waste of public taxpayers funds – to remediate a temporary site !?** – on the dog track - to a **lower standard than the government said was 'required' for the old council depot site –** (Ha! **You've lost credibility before you start – right there !**) – and then **waste millions on erecting temporary buildings** – on top of what was a **blood soaked abattoir swamp** – bottom of the harbour damp soil - yeah that should be easy to remediate – for temporary use – then make sure you've got good security fences to protect the tiny kids from the drug dealers over the road in the Glebe housing commission – oh you forgot one was murdered under the fig tree next to the dog track ? found with his throat cut ? – that'll make nice fodder for the next election – 'think of our children – this government wants to house them in shacks next to murderous drug dealer hangouts !!!' - <http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/body-found-in-sydneys-wentworth-park-with-throat-cut-identified-as-jacky-ho-20150818-gj1id4.html>

And then the costs of removing the temporary buildings and fences and infrastructure – a waste of public money that taxpayers will remember and use to vote you out next election.

The cost of remediation of the old council depot soil – I just found this suggesting - 'venting of noxious gases would be required for the foreseeable future ... vent stacks up the side or through the buildings ... special filters that would require replacing at regular intervals, likely to be weekly. If it was possible to not locate buildings directly over the residual contamination, venting would most likely need to occur in or around outdoor play areas, via stacks.

The expert consultants have further advised that, depending on the actual concentrations of gas-generating contaminants encountered, a mechanical extraction system may also be required. As it is anticipated that venting would be required in close proximity to school buildings and/or outdoor play areas, the Department has advised the Minister for Education that the only way to feasibly guarantee the health and wellbeing of current and future generations of Ultimo and Pyrmont students and staff is to remove all contaminated soil and groundwater completely' <http://www.dec.nsw.gov.au/about-us/news-at-det/announcements/ultimo-remediation>

At the bottom of the above webpage are links to documents including:

'7 May 2015 - DEC **approves** proposal from Douglas Partners to undertake **drilling** of approximately 30 boreholes and the digging of 7 test pits; soil sampling; drilling, monitoring and sampling of groundwater wells; laboratory analysis; and preparation of a survey report, as recommended in Overview RAP

11 May 2015 - McLachlan Lister **issues diagram to DEC showing three remediation options:** removal of soil to nominated depth and physical encapsulation; physical encapsulation; and full remediation.

15 May 2015 - McLachlan Lister issues letter to DEC, summarising the process to date on remediation costing, noting that while the **information was preliminary**, the team had **sufficient confidence in the order of magnitude of the costs** to provide indicative numbers to DEC.

18 May 2015 - **DEC instructs McLachlan Lister to put a hold on any further work while they consider the remediation options.'**

<https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/media/downloads/news/yr2015/794-DEC-Consolidated-Report-Contamination.pdf>

OK – how to analyse the above – **drilling is approved** to find out what contamination exists, yet **4 days later they issue the remediation options** – wow – **did they really drill 30 boreholes, dig 7 test pits, sample groundwater, get it lab-analysed, and prepare a survey report – all in 4 days ?** Wow.

Or not – 4 days later again – they report the ‘information was preliminary’ but they have ‘**confidence in the order of magnitude of the costs**’ – let me see – ‘**order of magnitude**’ – means ten times – so **an estimate of \$54M – they’re pretty sure it would be correct within the range of \$5.4M to \$540M** – wow – **money well spent on that expert’s report !!!**

I suspect they **did not actually carry out any test drilling** – the government had already changed its mind. So it looks like **politically motivated BS** – we don’t want to do it anymore – make up a reason.

Next document -

‘Previous assessments at the site encountered heterogeneous filling to depths to greater than 9 m bgl [below ground level], overlying sandstone bedrock and/or alluvial sand and clays. These results are consistent with the published mapping, considering the site’s previous use as a sandstone quarry that was subsequently backfilled with various types of filling material to present ground levels.

Observed filling during the previous investigations included silty sands, clays and gravels with frequent sandstone boulders, crushed sandstone and igneous rock (likely to include ballast based on site history information), buried concrete and asphalt pavements. **Petroleum, tar and creosote odours, free petroleum product and an unidentified black liquid with a diesel odour were observed**’

‘The main contaminants of concern identified to be present at elevated concentrations at the site are polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH), total petroleum hydrocarbons (TPH) 5 , benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene and xylenes (BTEX), phenols, arsenic, lead and chromium’

<https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/media/downloads/news/yr2015/Appendix-A-Remediation-Action-Plan,-Douglas-Partners,-March-2015.pdf>

OK – this report from March 2015 sounds scary – about venting for petroleum vapours.

But then – **two months after** that ‘terrible’ report – a 15/5/15 report suggests **remove 3m of soil and add clean cap** – as the recommended ‘optimal approach’

<https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/media/downloads/news/yr2015/Appendix-D%E2%80%94Letter-of-15-May-2015-and-Summary-Diagram-of-Options.pdf>

costing \$31/34M - <https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/media/downloads/news/yr2015/Appendix-E-Ultimo-Remediation-Option-2.pdf> - significantly less than the

So claims that ‘full remediation of the site, plus costs for site acquisition and construction would cost **more than \$177 million**’ appear to be artificially made up to say ‘it’s all too expensive’.

‘The Sydney MP, Alex Greenwich, said the government had broken a promise to the Ultimo and Pyrmont communities. "The local community and parents will be extremely disappointed that the promised 1000-student facility is not going ahead," Mr Greenwich said. "The government assessed the land and **the City of Sydney discounted the price to address contamination; now the government does not want to pay for remediation.**"

<http://www.smh.com.au/national/education/ultimo-plans-dumped-amid-contamination-fears-20150612-ghmepw.html>

To sum up – given it appears that the **broken promise** to build the new school at Fig St appears to be **based on no new drillings or test pit investigations but merely ‘previous assessments’** – and is **highly suspicious of being motivated by a ‘Get Clover’ resentful spitefulness** in that a **promise made just before an election was then broken immediately after the election**, the public has a right to suspect your motives and demand a fuller new investigation into the offered site on Fig St before any money is wasted on temporary remediation of a derisory site of an abandoned dog track.

In the most densely populated area in Australia, which should therefore be one of the best serviced, **please do not send our vulnerable children to the dogs !**