

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

Name: Ms Maggie Lum

Date received: 15 September 2016

To Whom It May Concern,

I understand that there is an Upper House Inquiry taking place regarding the enrolment capacity of inner city public schools which focuses on Ultimo Public School. As a deeply concerned resident of Pymont with two young boys who I plan to send to this esteemed school, this inquiry affects my family directly.

I am strongly in favour of the NSW State Government's original proposal to purchase and develop the Wattle Street Depot into a school that is fit for the future. The decision to renege this promise is a huge disappointment, if not a slap in the face, to local families who see it fit to send their children to a local public school. This is a huge failure and letdown to the children in Pymont and Ultimo, who have a right to attend a school which can accommodate their ever growing numbers.

Pymont is already the most densely populated suburb in the country, and with further population increases in the area due to high density development of Darling Harbour and the Bays Precinct, a rebuilt school on the current site will reach its capacity in no time, which will inevitably require further action and spending to address what is an ongoing problem.

The proposal to transplant the school to Wentworth Park as a temporary measure is a substandard solution. It is not good enough to expect the students to attend a makeshift school housed in demountables. I still have bad memories of attending a school with demountable class rooms; these were the classes that everyone dreaded. The cost of a temporary Wentworth Park solution, which is ultimately a waste of money, would be much better invested in a new school on the Wattle Street Depot site.

The spending so far on consultants, meetings, negotiations etc in relation to alternative solutions has been a waste of money. This is money that could have been spent on the purchase of the Wattle Street Depot site from the City of Sydney and the remediation of its contamination. The State Government's own reports reveal that its projected costs for development were overstated, having ignored the advice of their own consultants, McLachlan Lister Hill, to adopt a \$31 million remediation solution which would have saved \$20 million. Instead the State Government chose to publicise a \$53 million remediation option to justify their broken promise.¹ Our community has essentially been lied to. The City of Sydney had also heavily discounted the price of the land to help with lowering the cost of the remediation and development.

The State Government needs to listen to the people of Ultimo and Pymont and do the right, moral thing for the children of this community by developing the Wattle Street Depot site. It needs to provide a school that is fit for the future; a school that provides world class education and an environment to nurture creativity and a sense of community. We want this State Government to provide a legacy we can praise them for and be thankful for.

Yours faithfully,

Maggie Lum