

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

Name: Mr Marcus Peterson

Date received: 15 September 2016

Dear Committee

As resident of Pyrmont and a parent of a child who attends Ultimo Public School and one who will attend next year, I appreciate you investigating the redevelopment plans for Ultimo Public School.

I have the following concerns with the way this redevelopment has been mismanaged and the current undesirable outcome:

1. The black flip on the promise to the community to build an adequate school on the Wattle St site was galling and to most reasonable people seen as a purely political response from the Liberal Government not winning the State seat from the incumbent independent member.
2. The Wattle St site was identified as the only suitable and available site for a new Pyrmont and Ultimo School by the Inner Sydney Schools Working Group. The site was planned to provide 1000 places for school children, an 80 place childcare centre and community sports and recreation space. Currently school children are walked over to Wentworth Park but are constrained to a small pocket and aren't allowed to play on equipment due to the already limited public space available.
3. The City of Sydney council was prepared to sell this land to the Government at a reduced price knowing that the land have some level of contamination, as does most of inner Sydney, in order that remediation could be undertaken and the community would have a much need school to keep up with capacity. The remediation was budgeted to be in line with the Governments own "contaminated land management act" and EPA guidelines.
4. Following the election the Government withdrew their promise to purchase the land stating that the cost of remediation had doubled. This increase in remediation costs was due to the Government changing the goalposts and budgeting for remediation at levels in excess of their own guidelines, those recommended by environmental protection agency and the recommendations of the consultancy firm, Douglas Partners, who carried out the initial testing for contamination.
5. At no point have the parents or community been invited to submit their views regarding the undesirable redevelopment and temporary school, instead the Department of Education directs their unilateral decisions through the "Ultimo Pyrmont Public School Development" website administered by their contracted consultant McLachlan Lister. In fact initial approaches to have the government's contamination report of the Wattle St Depot site were meet with a blunt response of "no, this information in in commercial confidence". This is a worrying mentality for a democratic government to employ.

6. The Government ploughed ahead with their plans to demolish the current school (announced in June 2015) without any plans for alternate provision of education for the students. This was merely an after thought, as evidenced by the lack of an announcement on a temporary site until May 2016.
7. I fail to understand the Government's mentality that contamination without remediation at the temporary site is somehow acceptable while contamination followed by rededication conforming with EPA guidelines at the Wattle St Depot site is unacceptable?
8. The redeveloped school with 650-700 places is estimated to be at capacity by the year 2020. This is surely not a responsible use of public funds. Children will continue to inadequate space for play and recreation and the Wentworth "overflow" option is unacceptable.
9. The State Government receives several billion dollars in stamp duty each year, yet says it is too expensive to build a school that will meet demand in the most densely populated suburb in Australia while still accepting the stamp duty from the families that move into this community.

I believe the only reasonable solution with a positive outcome for the children of the community is for the State Government to honour their undertaking to build the Ultimo School at the Wattle St site as promised.

I thank you again for investigating this important issue that will affect the lives of our Children

Marcus Peterson