

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

Organisation: NSW Teachers Federation

Date received: 23 September 2016



NEW SOUTH WALES TEACHERS FEDERATION

23-33 Mary Street, Surry Hills, NSW 2010

Phone: (02) 9217 2100

Fax: (02) 9217 2470

Email: mail@nswtf.org.au

SUBMISSION TO

General Purpose Standing Committee No. 3

ON

**Inquiry into inner city public primary school enrolment capacity and
redevelopment of Ultimo Public School**

Authorised by

**John Dixon
General Secretary
NSW Teachers Federation**

22 September 2016

Introduction

NSW Teachers Federation represents over 50,000 members in Primary, Secondary, Special Schools, Juvenile Justice Centres and TAFE Colleges.

The Australian Education Union New South Wales Teachers Federation Branch (Federation) welcomes the opportunity to lodge a submission to the *Inquiry into inner city public primary school enrolment capacity and redevelopment of Ultimo Public School* and notes the terms of reference:

- a) the total costs of the project to date including consultancy fees
- b) the estimated costs of the alternative sites for a new Ultimo Public School
- c) the reasons the alternative sites were dismissed by the Government
- d) the costs of rehousing Ultimo Public School students in Wentworth Park while the school is rebuilt
- e) the impact of the Bays Precinct development on future enrolment capacity in the inner city, and
- f) any other related matters.

The Federation is not in a position to comment on the details of costs of any of the proposals; our concerns are that the State Government, through the Department of Education, provide sufficient funding so that all students in the Inner City area have access to schools which meet the learning needs of their schools and communities now and into the future. Therefore, the Federation lodges this submission on (f) other related matters.

Related matters

Patterns of increasing student numbers in the inner city will lead to a need for the Department of Education (the Department) to provide for increased school enrolment capacity in both Primary and High School settings in the short to medium term. Federation's position is that these newly furnished or newly constructed learning environments must be fit for purpose and provide quality learning environments, with an understanding that student learning takes place in a wide range of settings in schools, not just classrooms. These environments must also include spaces which support and develop a professional learning culture for all staff to support student learning. Space and facilities that support teachers to work individually and collaboratively must also be provided.

Federation's present policy as endorsed by our Annual Conference in July 2015 in part states that:

The NSW Government's primary responsibility is to direct urgently needed capital investment to the public school system, which enrolls the largest number of students and supports the vast majority of students with the highest level of educational need.

Funding for Public School should provide for:

- *the diverse learning styles and needs of students*
- *the building of accommodations to support students with disability*
- *access to, and use of, a range of technologies by teachers and students and facilitate a variety of pedagogies and*
- *safe learning environments with effective heating and cooling systems, appropriate furniture, lighting, noise reduction and space.*

The Department has provided an overview of the “educational guidelines”, which must be incorporated in the design of new learning spaces and schools. The guidelines include reference to the need to focus on the needs of learners and learning, build community and identity, be aesthetically pleasing, provide contemporary sustainable learning, support a full range of teaching strategies, provide seamless access to ICT and integration of resources, maximise the use of the natural environment, enable the building and outdoor spaces to be learning tools which are age and stage appropriate.

Schools and learning spaces must be designed as quality environments for teaching and learning. The test of these guidelines and the “future focussed learning spaces” will be that they provide quality learning environments and are not developed as cheap, quick fix solutions to the rapid growth in student enrolments.

Federation strongly asserts that consultation with teachers and the school community is essential in the redevelopment of a school. Learning spaces must be able to facilitate a range of pedagogies and teachers are best placed to comment on the development of learning spaces. The input of teachers in a school’s design is also critical due to the effect participatory decision making has on staff morale and teacher attitudes and behaviours in the use of space and learning outcomes.

In regard to the situation of Ultimo Public School being in the inner city of Sydney, due consideration of site specific aspects must be taken into account. This includes:

- Access to parking facilities for staff and visitors which enables the transport of teaching and learning materials and the ability for consultants, advisors, and specialist teachers and staff to easily come and go from the site in personal and work vehicles.
- Access to appropriate outdoor areas allowing for students’ play and learning
- Noise remediation strategies due to local traffic, such as, double glazing and noise minimisation insulation.
- Access to reliable public transport facilities.
- Ensured access to natural light.

