

Submission
No 8

INQUIRY INTO PLANNING AND DELIVERY OF SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Organisation: Northern Beaches Council

Date Received: 24 January 2022

21 January 2022

Ms Merrin Thompson
Director Committees
NSW Legislative Council
Email: portfoliocommittee3@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Our Ref: 2022/036065

Dear Ms Thompson

Submission by Northern Beaches Council

NSW Legislative Council “Inquiry into the planning and delivery of school infrastructure in New South Wales”

Northern Beaches Council is pleased to support the work of the NSW Department of Education School Infrastructure Unit in particular Mr Anthony Manning, Chief Executive School Infrastructure NSW and Ms Claire Beattie, Executive Director, Asset Activations School Infrastructure NSW. Council has benefitted over time from a strong collaborative relationship with Mr Manning and School Infrastructure NSW, which has been enhanced since Ms Beattie assumed the role of Executive Director in 2020.

The Northern Beaches Local Government area with a population of over 260,000 includes numerous primary and secondary schools. Council already has strong ties with local school communities through effective shared use arrangements for both sporting and community facilities. Notably sites such as the Narrabeen Sports High synthetic pitch and Barrenjoey High Performance Space have been constructed and are much loved by the local community.

The School Infrastructure Unit led by Ms Beattie has also initiated the “Share our Spaces” program for five (5) Schools in the Northern Beaches area and through collaboration have identified other opportunities to make schools more accessible to the community at times when school operations are not taking place. Examples of successful collaborations include Cromer High School and Freshwater Campus Playing field access agreements.

Senior Council Executives have a regular fortnightly meeting with the School Infrastructure team to discuss progress of initiatives that are focussed on community access, mutual benefit and greater utilisation of public assets by the community. A number of projects are currently in progress regarding increased and equitable access to schools for our local communities. Examples include out of hours access to school buildings for not for profit and charity groups and also additional playing field lighting facilities at Freshwater Campus.

Northern Beaches residents already enjoy significant benefits through access to some school facilities; opportunities to use school community facilities and greater access for local sporting clubs to sporting fields. This in turn provides Council with the ability to facilitate greater participation and utilise assets to their full potential. There are however more opportunities that can be explored in the future such as additional access to Arts and Creative spaces in schools and seamless online bookings. Council is strongly supportive of the need to retain a close dialogue and collaboration with School Infrastructure going forward. Under the leadership of Mr Manning and Ms Beattie this looks set to continue.

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission.

Please contact my office should you require further information or assistance.

Yours faithfully

Ray Brownlee PSM
Chief Executive Officer

Enquiries; Liz Reeves, Executive Assistant to the CEO