

**Submission
No 118**

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

Organisation: The Hills Shire Council

Date Received: 18 February 2022



THE HILLS
Sydney's Garden Shire

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18 February 2022

The Director, Portfolio Committee No. 3 - Education
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000
Via email: portfoliocommittee3@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Our Ref: FP142, FP223

Dear Director,

Submission to Inquiry into the planning and delivery of school infrastructure in NSW

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission regarding the planning and delivery of school infrastructure in New South Wales. This submission is not one that is authorised by a Council resolution and has been formed from the experience of Council officers and reflects many of the concerns already raised by the elected Council. This submission made by Council officers may be published on the inquiry website.

The Hills Shire has significant experience with both the greenfield release areas and urban renewal precincts. The Hills Shire is a rapidly growing LGA, containing numerous land release areas (Gables, Box Hill and North Kellyville) and urban infill Precincts around the Sydney Metro Stations. Around 38,000 additional dwellings will be delivered within the Shire's growth precincts by 2036 with potential for a further 38,100 to be delivered beyond 2036. This substantial growth will place significant demand on both local and regional infrastructure, including education infrastructure.

With the amount of growth that is projected to occur within the Shire over the next 20-30 years, there is a need for certainty regarding the location, timing and funding of future schools. The location of a school influences the urban structure of greenfield and urban renewal precincts and the timing of delivery allows families to make the best choice for themselves in terms of education when deciding where to settle.

The current 'just in time' delivery model does not deliver the best outcomes for communities. There are issues with the slow or delayed delivery of infrastructure, unanticipated planning outcomes and ultimately increased costs to the community and Government to provide schools. Furthermore, over-reliance on the private sector to provide school infrastructure in place of Government is not always effective, as the private sector does not have the same capacity as Government to identify, zone and acquire the appropriate land early in the planning process. As a result, schools provided by the private sector in response to development (rather than in anticipation of) are not always located on sites that are well-serviced or located.

Where schools are not accounted for and appropriate mechanisms put in place early in the initial planning and decision making processes, school locations can change without any opportunity to

address the flow on effects for local communities. For example, in North Kellyville the location of the school originally identified in the strategic plans and zoned for acquisition was not utilised and another site acquired instead, with the school now located there. The new school is now located further from the local centre and on a major sub-arterial road. The loss of the opportunity to cluster these uses is regrettable, as it would have provided a strong community focus and accessibility for residents.

Schools provide the most benefit to communities when they are planned around walkable catchments and in a way that promotes active transport, as they generate a significant amount of vehicle and pedestrian traffic. In the context of the Hills Shire (and noting the available public transport options), there is a need for teachers (and some students) to be able to use a car to travel to school. However, new schools in the Hills have been delivered without any car parking provision. This creates a strain on local communities where roads around schools become unsafe, with a significant amount of street parking at drop off and pick up times, and other community facilities being relied on to cater for teachers, such as at Bella Vista Public School, where teachers utilise the parking for the community sports fields across the road. The current position of providing schools with no parking is not acceptable.

There would be benefits to the community and Government if there was a funding mechanism in place to capture appropriate, equitable contributions from developers across broader development precincts towards school infrastructure. More certainty can be provided for all parties through a clear, upfront contributions framework which is linked to the identification and acquisition of land for public schools early in the planning process. This will enable acquisition to occur more efficiently, in advance of development and at a lower cost to Government. This will provide greater certainty to communities with respect to the location of schools and will also avoid any delays to construction of new schools associated with the land acquisition process or protracted negotiations with landowners.

Should you wish to discuss matters relating to this request, please contact Nicholas Carlton, Manager Forward Planning

Yours faithfully

Michael Edgar
GENERAL MANAGER