

**Submission
No 120**

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

Organisation: Marsden Park Public School Parents and Citizens Association

Date Received: 29 June 2022

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The Hon. Mark Latham, MLC
Committee Chair
Portfolio Committee No. 3 – Education
Upper House Committees
Parliament of New South Wales

Dear Mr Latham

RE: Inquiry into the Planning and Delivery of School Infrastructure in New South Wales

I refer to the NSW Legislatures Council's inquiry into the planning and delivery of school infrastructure.

The community is concerned about the lack of a high school in our area. There is no nearby high school for the combined student total of approximately 1600 at our two local public primary schools, Marsden Park Public School and Northbourne Public School. The only way to get to the local high school, Riverstone High School, which would take an hour and twenty minutes to walk to, is by bus or car.

Given that two new primary schools were built in the Riverstone catchment area (Northbourne Public School and Gulungara Public School) to accommodate the rising student population, it is obvious that a new high school is urgently required.

The local community has been let down in the past by School Infrastructure. I can give at least two examples of time and money being wasted as a result of poor planning and a lack of community consultation.

Prior to Northbourne Public School being built, Marsden Park Public School was well over capacity and the school was having issues with all utilities, eg overflowing septic tanks and power outages. To alleviate this issue, we were advised that there was works already taking place to build a satellite school for Marsden Park Public School on the grounds of Riverstone Public School. The plan was for the students to attend Marsden Park Public School for roll marking and then be taken by bus to Riverstone Public School for lessons and returned to Marsden Park Public School at the end of the day. They had already built an office block, toilet block and some classrooms when this plan was proposed to the local community. This plan was rejected in such a strong way that the idea was scrapped. The local community objected to the time taken away from learning due to the additional transport during school times.

Although I have limited understanding about the construction of demountable classrooms, I have heard over the years it can cost up to and even more than \$100,000 to transport a demountable classroom/office and/or toilet block and set it up with the necessary utilities such as power, plumbing and site works.

A second ill-considered plan was when Northbourne Public School was being built and Marsden Park Public School was experiencing capacity issues, School Infrastructure developed a plan (again without

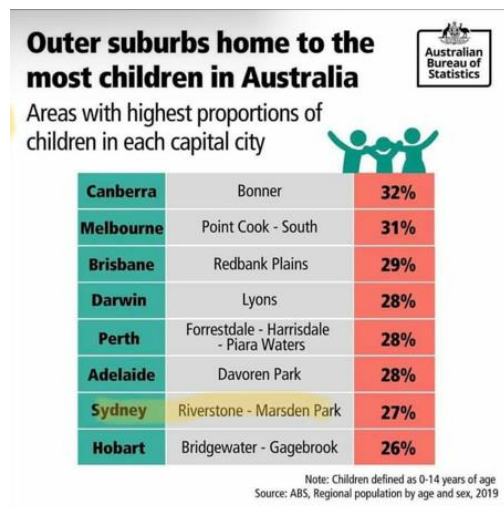
consulting the community) to relocate some students to the portion of the new school that was already built before returning to the bus idea to relocate other students from Northbourne Public School to Marsden Park Public School. The demountable classrooms were already there, but new paths and fences were constructed. For the same reasons as when this concept was originally proposed, the community once more rejected this idea. Again, money and time was wasted on this idea. While the 12-month construction of the permanent facilities was underway, Northbourne Public School was established as a demountable school.

I assume it would take longer to construct a high school than a primary school given the technical aspects of building kitchens and science labs etc and this would not work as a demountable school whilst permanent facilities are constructed.

There are already developing plans in place for a new school next door to the proposed high school as this area is growing so rapidly. I cannot understand why a high school has been overlooked.

The Catholic Education system had a school up and running before this area boomed. Why is School Infrastructure so behind in the planning for a new area expanding with young families?

The Australian Bureau of Statistics released the attached information showing that the Riverstone/Marsden Park area had the *'highest proportions of children'* in Sydney. This information is gathered to assist the government departments in their planning. Why is there still no commitment date for a high school?



I thank you for the opportunity to submit this letter and look forward to discussing this with you in person.

Sincerely

Libby Clarke
Marsden Park Public School
Vice President, P&C Association