

**Submission  
No 122**

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

**Organisation:** Wentworth Point Public School Parents and Citizens Association  
**Date Received:** 6 July 2022

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## **Parliamentary Inquiry into Schools Infrastructure Submission - 13th July 2022**

Witness: Clement Lun (President, Wentworth Point Public School P&C Association)

### **CONTEXT - WENTWORTH POINT, A RISING SUBURB**

Wentworth Point is a unique suburb which has arisen over the past decade. It consists purely of apartments on a peninsula adjacent to Sydney Olympic Park and Parramatta River. In 2013, the State Government designated Wentworth Point as one of the first Urban Activation Precincts (UAPs) to accommodate for population growth in NSW [1]. Residential densities were then drastically increased from 8 storeys to now 40 storeys. Due to the affordability crisis of housing in Sydney, Wentworth Point is a suburb favoured by young families as although it is apartment living, it is centrally located, relatively close to public transport and surrounded by parklands. In 2011, the Australian Bureau of Statistics Census recorded a population of 2,759 with the 0-4 year old age group comprising 6.2% [2]. The 2021 Census showed 1,019 in the 0-4 year old age group comprising 8.0%, markedly higher than the NSW average of 5.8% [3].

### **WENTWORTH POINT PUBLIC SCHOOL**

Wentworth Point Public School was first announced in 2011. It wasn't until 7 years later, in 2018, that the school was opened. The school was originally planned for 1000 students but was only built for 400. Within 3 years, student capacity was reached. It is clear that the Urban Activation Precincts designation was not taken into account in the decision to open a school at less than 50% of planned capacity.

In 2022, there are 610 students enrolled, with enrolments growing by over 100 per year. There are now 14 demountables taking up the school's limited playground area. At present, the utilisation rate is one of the most unfavourable in Sydney [4]. The school anticipates an additional 3 to 4 demountables per year over the next 4 years. As a consequence, there will be no remaining open space for the students of Wentworth Point Public School. Enrolment numbers are anticipated to reach 1000 within another 4 years. The community is still waiting on Stage 2 Upgrade which will take a minimum of 2 years to complete. While this will increase the capacity to 1000 students, it renders the school a construction site, taking away any open space that is not already taken up by demountables.

### **WENTWORTH POINT HIGH SCHOOL**

This high school was originally named 'Sydney Olympic Park High School'. It had been earmarked to be located within the suburb of Sydney Olympic Park, which is a more centralised location with better public transport links. Two sites were dismissed due to red tape. In late 2020, the Department suddenly announced that a high school would be built on the final piece of public land at Wentworth Point. This high school is expected to not only serve Wentworth Point, but also Newington, Sydney Olympic Park, Carter St Precinct and Concord West.

Construction is planned in stages, with the first only accommodating 850 students. The second stage will add capacity for another 700 students.

There are a multitude of problems with this proposal.

1. Location: Wentworth Point is a poor location for a high school. Wentworth Point is on a peninsula with one road in and out that often floods during rain events which are increasing in frequency in Sydney. The site chosen is also adjacent to Wentworth Point Public School and this will only result in traffic congestion in a suburb with narrow privately owned roads. There will only be 29 off-street car spaces for staff. The proposal which expects staff and students to travel via active transport is unrealistic. The 2021 Census shows only 219 secondary high school students live within Wentworth Point. This means the majority of the anticipated enrolments will be from out of the area [3].
2. School oval: The high school will not have a dedicated oval. Instead, it will be shared with the community under a Joint Use Agreement. According to the proposal, the oval will not be delivered until Stage 2 meaning that in the interim 850 students will have no open space for physical education classes or team sports.
3. Misappropriation of public lands: This high school takes away land which had been earmarked for Peninsula Park, a large public park facing Parramatta River and Homebush Bay promised since 2014. Peninsula Park will be Wentworth Point's only public park - although Wentworth Point is surrounded by Sydney Olympic Parklands, these do not include amenities such as playgrounds, open playing fields or courts for community sports. The original proposal was for a 3.9 hectare park but the proposed high school oval will reduce this by 25%, taking 1 hectare away from it. This public space is vital for a suburb upon which further urban density has been forced upon, with buildings slated up to 50 storeys.

The total land area of the high school site (including the oval) is 1.8 hectare. According to the School Assets Strategic Plan from the Auditors General Report, the land area for a secondary school should be 2.5 hectares in an urban area. However, the land area of the site (excluding the oval) is only 1 hectare. It has limited room for expansion should the need arise in the future.

References:

[1] - Wentworth Point Urban Activation Precinct Finalisation Report by NSW Planning & Infrastructure  
<https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/-/media/Files/DPE/Reports/wentworth-point-urban-activation-precinct-finalisation-report-2014.pdf>

[2] - Wentworth Point 2011 Census All persons QuickStats  
<https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2011/SSC12458>

[3] - Wentworth Point 2021 Census All persons QuickStats  
<https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/SAL14244>

[4] - Sydney Morning Herald - Revealed: The Sydney schools running out of space  
<https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/revealed-the-sydney-schools-running-out-of-space-20211221-p59jct.html>