



Anoulack Chanthivong MP

MEMBER FOR MACQUARIE FIELDS

17 December 2020

Submission on Hurlstone Agriculture High School project

Preamble

Firstly, let me state the obvious. Releasing the plan on 9 December 2020 for comments to close on 23 December 2020 is simply unacceptable. In my experience, the community is already cynical about the planning 'process' and 'community consultation'. Releasing such an important document right before Christmas can only add to this cynicism.

Recommendation 1: The consultation period for matter be extended to at least 1 March 2021.

Retention and expansion of Hurlstone Agricultural High School

There is strong demand for selective high school places across Sydney. As stated by the Liberal Government, only 28 per cent of applicants are able to secure a place. HAHS has a well-earned reputation of providing an outstanding agricultural education to its students.

It is logical to use the existing site at Hurlstone to increase the availability of selective high school places in Sydney.

Recommendation 2: Increase the number of selective places at HAHS to between 1500 and 2000, retain all of the current school land to accommodate increased student numbers and expand classroom facilities as required.

However, if the Liberal Government is determined to sell the land at Hurlstone, I make the following comments on the plans released for feedback.

Oval facilities and playing fields

In relation to page 6 of Frequently Asked Questions, I note the sportsground towards the front of HAHS is to be rezoned and repurposed for housing. As part of this proposal the future of the picket fence will be 'investigated'.

The oval at the front of the HAHS site has high visual amenity and functionality. I understand it has traditionally been used for ball games such as rugby and cricket. I also understand the picket fence was paid for, at some expense, by the parents of the school.

The loss of the oval, such a prominent and important feature of the HAHS site, for the sole purposes of a greedy land grab, is unacceptable.

In addition to a reputation for providing a high-quality agricultural education, Hurlstone also has a proud sporting history.

The current plan to replace Building Z with a sports field is inadequate to allow Hurlstone to carry on its sporting traditions.

Recommendation 3: That the oval and picket fence be retained for school use.

Sheep enclosure

In relation to page 4 of the Information Pack, I note the position and size of the sheep area. Without a scale it is very difficult to deduce the size of the area for sheep. However, it would appear that the enclosure is extremely small for a specialist agriculture school with limited room for perhaps only a few ewes. I also note the enclosure's proximity to the calves which raises, I am advised, animal husbandry concerns.

Recommendation 4: That the size of the sheep enclosure be increased and advice be provided on its location so close to cattle.

Provision for goats

I am advised that the raising of goats has been a feature of the HAHS site for a number of years. Yet there is no mention at all in any of the documentation regarding the future of goats at HAHS.

Recommendation 5: Provision be made for the raising and care of goats.

Project Reference Group

In relation to page 7 of the Information Pack, I note a Project Reference Group will be formed.

A former Principal of the school, Mr John Norris, has indicated to me his willingness to sit on the PRG and I can think of no one more qualified.

Recommendation 6: That consideration be given to appointing Mr John Norris to the PRG.

Protection of the school land with green buffer

In relation to page 3 of the Information Pack, I note the new proposed farm layout indicates HAHS will be surrounded by rezoned land. The Information Pack provided by School Infrastructure gives no further detail on this development. Further information on the proposed development around HAHS is provided in the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment's Draft Glenfield Place Strategy. Incidentally, this document was released on the same day as the Hurlstone document.

Details provided in the Draft Glenfield Place Strategy show the Hurlstone site will be surrounded by high rise development. Indeed, Hurlstone will be swamped and dwarfed by the adjacent overdevelopment. This is unacceptable from both an educational and environmental/planning perspective.

An agricultural school of Hurlstone's reputation should not be overwhelmed by high-rise development.

Recommendation 7: That the visual representation on page 3 of the Information Pack showing the new proposed farm layout be modified and re-released to accurately represent that HAHS will be surrounded by high, medium and mixed residential development.

Recommendation 8: That the location, nature and height of the development around HAHS be modified so that it is limited to low density housing with a maximum of two storeys.

Recommendation 9: A green buffer be implemented where the school is to interface with residential development.

Southern stock route

I note in the Draft Glenfield Place Strategy that land is to be made available to HAHS on the southern boundary of the investigation area – adjacent to the Edmondson Park/Leppington railway line. I applaud this initiative. Yet, there is no dedicated link to proposed HAHS campus site. How are students to access the proposed site? How are cattle going to cross the railway line to access the area?

Recommendation 10: A dedicated stock route, including a cattle underpass, is incorporated in the plans for Hurlstone and the Glenfield Place Strategy to allow students and livestock to safely access the grazing site to the south of railway line.

Closing remarks

I wish to reiterate my first point that a consultation period between December 9 and December 23 is appalling. If the Liberal Government truly values the input of the community, it will extend the consultation period significantly.

The future of HAHS has been a source of angst in my community for many years. I am proud that my campaign to retain Hurlstone at its Glenfield site was successful. However, students and local residents have been concerned that selling a large chunk of land at Hurlstone will negatively impact on the agricultural education at the school, as well as the availability of green open space.

I urge School Infrastructure NSW to implement my recommendations for the betterment of HAHS and my community.

Yours sincerely,



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Member for Macquarie Fields