



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND COMMUNITIES

Advisory Notes for Developers and Consent Authority for Master Planning New Education Facility Sites

These advisory notes should be considered in master planning for new communities and development projects where demand dictates that a new education facility is required to be built and/or an existing facility requires alterations and additions. The notes are considered flexible broad guidelines which may vary with individual developments.

These advisory notes set out the minimum expectations of the Developer/Consent Authority from the Department of Education and Communities when seeking Departmental agreement for planning education facilities in response to demand generated by new development.

Note 1 – Obtaining agreement from the Department of Education and Communities

What YOU are responsible for to obtain agreement

You should consult with the Department of Education and Communities throughout your development process from feasibility, concept planning, EIA, development application approvals, post development application and constructions works.

The onus of consultation rests with the proponent to undertake and organise as required.

In this respect it is your responsibility to ensure your proposal considers and respects Government education needs and requirements.

What is the Department responsible for to determine agreement?

The Department of Education and Communities will,

- Assess proposals in a fair, impartial and unbiased manner with consideration to overall development needs and objectives,
- Seek to efficiently and effectively resolve issues that may arise,
- Enter into negotiations with good faith and intent on positive outcomes for all.

Note 2 – Establishing demand for Government education facilities

The School Provision Thresholds for new schools in Greenfield areas are generally:

1. One primary school site per 2000-2500 new dwellings,
2. One high school site per 6000-7500 new dwellings, and
3. One School for Specific Purposes per 17,000 dwellings.

Demand for a new education facility or augmentation to an existing facility will be also generally influenced by:

- (a) Possible diversion of some students in new areas to existing schools;
- (b) The impact of existing or proposed non-government schools;
- (c) The type and speed of residential development;



- (d) The possible need for additional sites in large developments to cater for temporary enrolment peaks; and
- (e) The nature of the population.

The specific demand analysis should always be discussed with the Department of Education and Communities' Planning Unit.

Note 3 – Establishing a suitable site for Government education facilities

Selecting sites for a new education facility or augmentation to an existing facility requires careful consideration and land use analysis. The table below indicates the Department's ideal master planning requirements for new education facility sites.

The Department acknowledges that sites may exhibit one or more of the following characteristics in the table below. In which case, the proponents of development and/or land use changes should always discuss with the Department of Education and Communities Planning Unit of such constraints and opportunities on case-by-case basis to determine acceptability.

| Item | Description | Check List Y/N |
|---------------------------|--|----------------|
| Statutory Criteria | | |
| General | Support strategic policy goals of NSW State government as identified in State Plan, Metropolitan Plan and Sub Regional Strategies. <i>Reason: support the integrated land use and infrastructure planning processes of NSW Government.</i> | |
| Existing Planning | Support and be consistent with existing approved urban plans as identified in State Environmental Planning Polices, Local Environment Plans, Development Control Plans or Master Plans. <i>Reason: avoid replanning existing urban frameworks and delays in seeking planning approvals.</i> | |
| Land zoning | Must not be within land zones not prescribed for Education under <i>State Environmental Planning Policy (Infrastructure)</i> . <i>Reason: to avoid statutory rezoning</i> | |
| Schools Consultation | Obtain agreement from Schools Group on Education Model to be provided, general school suitability, school community needs and school operation needs. <i>Reason: to obtain school community endorsement and support.</i> | |

| Item | Description | Check List Y/N |
|-------------------------------|---|----------------|
| Site criteria | | |
| Lot size | New Primary School / Special Purpose School – 3.0 Hectares <i>Reason: optimum size to enable flexibility in eventual site layout and function. Note: co-locating school sites with Council playing fields may reduce surface area required.</i> | |
| | New High School – 6.0 Hectares <i>Reason: optimum size to enable flexibility in eventual site layout and function. Note: co-locating school sites with Council playing fields may reduce surface area required.</i> | |
| | Alteration and addition to existing schools - Consider the best available sized additional lot size | |
| Shape of site | Shape of the site should be substantially rectangular. <i>Reason: optimum size to enable flexibility in eventual site layout and function and allow for recreational / sport free areas</i> | |
| Buildability | The site should be physically and technically easy to build on. <i>Reason: to reduce design and construction difficulties and costs</i> | |
| Topography | Not located on land that has a slope greater than 1 in 40 or requires substantial cut and fill. <i>Reason: to comply with AS 1428 Access to premises standards</i> | |
| Land forms, geology and soils | Not located on land identified as being contaminated/waste filled, high soil erosion and/or stability concerns, mapped as high probability of Acid Sulphate Soils occurring. <i>Reason: protect Students and staff/personnel health, reduce construction and land remediation costs burden</i> | |
| Ecology | Not located on land that supports: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Endangered Ecological Community, 2. Threatened or endangered flora and fauna, 3. Sensitive areas (wetlands, bushlands etc). <i>Reason: to reduce construction and operational costs burden and protect ecological significance.</i> | |

| Item | Description | Check List Y/N |
|---------------------------|--|----------------|
| Indigenous Heritage | <p>Not located on land identified as a declared Aboriginal Place, a site of cultural significance or subject to a Native Title claim.</p> <p><i>Reason: to reduce construction and operational costs burden and protect places of Indigenous heritage significance.</i></p> | |
| European Heritage | <p>Not located on land identified as an archaeological site, within a heritage and conservation area or has a Heritage Item.</p> <p><i>Reason: to reduce construction costs burden and protect European heritage significance.</i></p> | |
| Student Safety | <p>Site considers need to protect student population from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unwanted visual surveillance that increases risks of paedophile behaviour (e.g. multistorey residential apartments overlooking school play grounds etc) • Traffic and transport issues (Speed Zones, Bus Zones, Pedestrian Crossings) • Ability for appropriate fencing and security. | |
| Services and drainage | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The site is fully serviced for roads, footpaths, traffic intersections, water, electricity, sewage, gas, telecommunications etc to appropriate capacity for education facility use, • The site is well drained to ensure waterlogging and consequent instability (slippages) would not appear to be an issue. <p><i>Reason: to reduce construction costs burden and ensure essential services are provided for.</i></p> | |
| Location criteria | | |
| Siting general | <p>Located relatively central to residential catchment area</p> <p><i>Reason: to encourage students to walk to school and to minimise the costs of school student transport.</i></p> | |
| Siting distance | <p>As far as possible, a school should be within 1.6 kms road distance of the bulk of its likely drawing area.</p> <p><i>Reason: to minimise the demand for bus transport</i></p> | |
| Existing school proximity | <p>Schools should not be located within close proximity of other existing schools.</p> <p><i>Reason: to spatial distribute schools in an efficient manner</i></p> | |

| Item | Description | Check List Y/N |
|---------------------------------------|--|----------------|
| Existing school capacity | <p>Schools should be located nearer to other existing schools that have limited operating and expansion capacity.</p> <p><i>Reason: to spatial distribute school capacity in an efficient manner and ease pressure of schools with limited capacity</i></p> | |
| Traffic, transport and access | <p>The school site should be located and designed to meet the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not located on or near a major arterial road or freeway. • Located on or near a distributor or collector road to alleviate traffic congestion problems. • Not located on cul-de-sacs or roads without thoroughfare. • Provide three street frontages to enable hierarchal management of bus zone, kiss and drop, pedestrian corridors and school vehicle access. • The main street frontage should not be located opposite a T-Intersection, to reduce the potential for risks to student safety. • Easily accessible from a range of transport modes that include: walking, public transport, private vehicle and bike riding. <p><i>Reason: Ensure student security and promote transit orientated development and healthy living communities</i></p> | |
| Bushfire | <p>Not located within or adjacent to land mapped as Bush Fire Prone or on a site that requires an Asset Protection Zone (APZ).</p> <p><i>Reason: ensure students and staff/personnel fire and life safety, community use of schools for evacuation space during State Emergency, increase in building costs, APZ construction and maintenance requirements.</i></p> | |
| Hydrology, flooding and water quality | <p>Not located within or immediately adjacent to land mapped as being within 1 in 100 year flood levels.</p> <p><i>Reason: ensure students and staff/personnel life safety, community use of schools for evacuation space during State Emergency, increase in building costs, Flood Planning evacuation requirements.</i></p> | |
| Socio-economic | <p>That site is suitable to result in social inclusive outcomes (e.g. publicly accessible at suitable times, election days, community markets etc) and as a temporary refuge, emergency shelter and/or meeting points in times of emergencies such as natural disasters.</p> <p><i>Reason: provide communal focus points for villages and towns and emergency evacuation space during times of natural disasters or emergencies.</i></p> | |

| Item | Description | Check List Y/N |
|--------------|--|----------------|
| Urban Design | <p>The school site should be designed to meet the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desirable to be adjacent to a community playing field • Allows for security and privacy through visibility and appropriate surrounding development • Is not overly overshadowed by surrounding development • Considers future form and structure of centres, towns and future development to anchor community uses, spaces and services in the one location and obtain urban synergies. <p><i>Reason: Ensure student and staff/personnel security and promote quality urban communities. To enable effective separation and hierarchy of bus, vehicular and pedestrian traffic.</i></p> | |
| Air Quality | <p>Site will not give rise to significant issues associated with dust, smoke, odours or the like.</p> <p><i>Reason: protect student and staff/personnel health</i></p> | |
| Land use | <p>Not located within or immediately adjacent to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In close proximity to special uses such as: airports, correction centre, electricity substations, mobile phone towers, contaminated lands, sewage treatment plants, sewage systems, electrical transmission lines, waste disposal facility, waste, treatment or resource management facilities, waste or resource transfer station, water recycling facility, water supply system, wind farms and the like (preferable to be 500m to 2km away). 2. Inappropriate retail and commercial development such as: bottle shops, brothels, home occupation (sex services), methadone clinics, pubs, registered clubs, restricted premises, sex service premises or the like 3. Development with potential undesirable impacts or risks such as: heavy industry, airport flight paths, bulky goods premises, crematorium, depots, freight transport facility, hazardous or offensive development, hostel, hotel or motel accommodation, intensive agriculture, mining and extraction industries, tourist and visitor accommodation, vehicle repair workshops or the like <p><i>Reason: Ensure student and staff/personnel security and health are protected and maintained. Ensure no rezoning.</i></p> | |



| Item | Description | Check List Y/N |
|---------------------|--|----------------|
| Visual aesthetics | Located so that unpleasant visual land uses (e.g. industrial land uses, offensive or hazardous development) are not within short or medium range views. <i>Reason: Provide pleasant and aesthetically orientated learning spaces</i> | |
| Noise and vibration | Site is not located nearby or immediately adjacent to high noise or vibration generating development such as airport flight paths, freeways, rail tunnels or the like <i>Reason: Ensure student and staff/personnel teacher health are protected and maintained</i> | |

Note 4 – What happens when I receive a determination on a proposed site?

A determination on proposed sites will contain either written agreement or a refusal to issue agreement. If a proposed site is refused, the reasons as to why the proposed site has been refused will be given. If a site agreement is reached, the agreement may be conditional.

If the proponent is dissatisfied with the Department's assessment on school sites, written advice as to reasons why the dissatisfaction exists should be forwarded to the Department to consider.

Agreements may be statutorily binding through development consent, conditions of development consent, a Voluntary Planning Agreement, a Special Infrastructure Contribution or the like.

Note 5 – School timing and delivery

The Department will only build and operate new schools based on demonstrated needs. Needs will include analysis of new dwelling occupation and take up rates, development staging, market characteristics, capacity of existing schools, and expansion ability of existing schools, budget availability and priority against other school projects.

Consideration will be given to contributions and/or partnerships to finance or build new schools ahead of scheduled needs and subject to compliance with NSW Government probity and unsolicited proposal guidelines.