

Primary Schools for the Twenty First Century

Submission from

Coogee Public School P&C Association

Contact Us

Postal Address C/O Coogee Public School Byron St

Coogee NSW 2034

Rowena Fox
President, Coogee Public School P&C

Submitted to:-Committee Secretary Senate

Education, Employment and Workplace Relations Committee

PO Box 6100 Parliament House

Canberra ACT 2600 Australia

Phone: +61 2 6277 3521
Fax: +61 2 6277 5706
Email: eewr.sen@aph.gov.au

About the submission writers

Coogee Public School Parent and Citizens Association (hereafter referred to as CPS P&C) representing the family members of Coogee Public School.

About the organisation

CPS P&C is a not-for-profit incorporated, membership based organisation. Membership is made up of parents/guardians at Coogee Public School.

CPS P&C aims to:

Promote the interests of the school by bringing parents, students and teaching staff together to work in collaboration ensuring the best outcomes for all parties involved in the school.

Appearing before a hearing

Yes, representatives from the committee would be happy to do so.

Submission purpose

To highlight the experience of the CPS P&C in relation to the Primary Schools for the 21st Century program (P21).

Coogee Public School P&C welcomes the government's initiative to invest in public schools providing much needed facilities upgrades, however; this cannot be achieved successfully without an adequate planning/consultation process. This has not been the experience of CPS P&C in relation to funding received under the P21 program for a new school hall at Coogee Public School (CPS)

CPS P&C provides the following submission in the hope that we might be able to engage in a consultation process where the whole school community has information on the proposed development and is able to give comment & feedback. In particular, the one-size fits all templates (employed by the NSW Department of Education and Training) do not work within school communities situated on a complex site with historic significance, and CPS is one of these sites.

The submission will make reference to:

(i) The conditions and criteria for project funding.

Timeframe

The timeframe has been inadequate to allow for whole school community consultation on the projected outcomes of the BER funding for CPS.

The timeline did not allow for due consideration of the option to self-manage the BER grant received by the school, to ensure optimal outcomes from the proposed infrastructure upgrades.

The P&C is concerned that the NSW Department of Education and Training is proceeding with planning and construction of a new school building without adequate consultation with the school community on the purpose, design and location of the building. This is a significant development opportunity for CPS and CPS P&C want to ensure a positive outcome for the school community.

CPS is a complex site. The program criterion does not consider the individual circumstances of schools and the different sites they operate from. All schools have the same deadlines to meet. CPS is on a sloping site, which is complicated for development.

Use of building templates

In NSW, the use of templates for new school buildings does not allow flexible delivery for sites that are difficult and historic as is the case in CPS, to ensure that the maximum benefit is achieved without impacting negatively on existing amenity.

The use of the Department's template in this circumstance does not meet CPS requirements in terms of:

- **Size of proposed hall for school population**
- **Current and future educational activities** that extend children outside of the current restrictive classroom space. (Due to the historic nature of CPS, most classrooms are under recommended code). The school community believes that any development should be a multi-purpose space enriching children's needs in areas including: creative and visual arts, science activities, dance and drama and sporting activities – there has been little consideration of the building infrastructure required including wet areas.
- **Potential whole community use** where basic kitchen or food preparation facilities would be required. The current template does not allow for a food preparation area – this is shortsighted.
- **Full assessment of the proposed location** to ensure that the site is optimal for the building development in relation to; pupil congestion and foot traffic, relocation of demolished buildings and facilities for Coogee Care Centre (CCC) relocation of lost play space and play infrastructure.
- **Demolition of existing care centre**, which has become the “community hub” over the years. CCC requires adequate facilities to operate a high quality program. The new development offers a replacement facility that is a reduction in the amenity of the current centre, which cannot meet current and projected demand.

(ii) **The use of local and non-local contractors**

CPS P&C is concerned that the engagement of large, non-local managing

contractors has not allowed the engagement of local contractors to enhance the job creation/stimulus aims of the program.

(iii) The role of state governments

In the case of the role of the NSW State Government, this has hindered the proposed aims and objectives of the P21 program including:

- “Creating Community Hubs”; because it has not consulted with local communities with regard to intended use of the facilities, or mapped the potential users.
- The proposed proportion of the funding allocated to management fees is excessive.
- The Department of Education and Training has a Sustainability Unit. Insufficient information on the sustainability measures have been provided and it would seem that the building templates used have not given full consideration to potential sustainability outcomes including energy efficiency and generation, design and materials, light and air-flow considerations.
- Local Council planning provisions are “locked out” of the process and therefore the application of planning considerations. The expertise and knowledge of local council has not been utilised.

(iv) Timing and budget issues, including duplication

CPS P&C welcomes the funding and the community has talked for many years about a new school hall, however this needs to be thoughtfully planned out and designed to take into consideration the:

- Unique environment
- The users of the space
- The facilities required
- The location
- Sustainability options

The timeline has not allowed for this process.

(V) Budget Issues

CPS has not had sufficient infrastructure spending on school buildings for many years and this is a very large funding allocation, which has the potential to achieve great facilities for the school.

However, the proportion of the P21 budget allocated to management fees suggests that budget allocations direct to school communities could have been a more cost effective way of maximizing the funding outcomes. Local

communities have a vested interest in gaining the most for each dollar spent.

Management fees (projected 25% of budget) are in excess of current industry practice.

The CPS P&C has not been able to see draft budget proposals to assess the proposed spend. Lack of information on budget breakdown is disempowering communities to make effective budgetary decisions.

The P21 program conditions have not given consideration to the needs of individual schools with all schools, including very new school developments, allocated the same budget.

(v) Requirements for school signs and plaques,

CPS P&C is concerned that the amount of money spent on plaques is excessive and wasteful and could be utilised for the purposes of educational outcomes for school children.

(vi) The management of the program;

The timeframe does not allow for good management practices discussed under point (I). The State Government's role in management has been discussed under point (III) above.

(b) Other related matters.

CPS is confronted with record population growth, which increases the need to maximise its indoor space whilst minimising any loss of outdoor space. The program has not allowed any scope to engage children (the primary stakeholders) in learning about and contributing to the process or outcomes from the facility upgrades to their school including; building sustainability, design elements or intended use.