

School plan raises local ire

Rob Bates

RESIDENTS surrounding St Catherine's School at Waverley have said they are furious about a development being pushed through by the Federal Government's Nation Building and Jobs Plan.

The development, including new two and three-storey buildings linked by an overhead walkway, was approved this week by Infrastructure Co-ordinator General Bob Leece, bypassing Waverley Council's usual processes.

One of the residents angered by the decision, Danny Caretti, said they had been completely disregarded from the beginning.

"They didn't even tell us anything about this," Mr Caretti said. "We found out by accident."

"The school is not being a good neighbour. They need to be more community minded, because they're surrounded by residents and we have to live there."

St Catherine's headmistress Lynne Stone said the school had not consulted its neighbours before the pro-

posal had been approved because their "needs and concerns are well known".

"We have designed very carefully to take account of a number of those issues of overshadowing, noise and vehicle access," Ms Stone said.

"We'll be talking to the neighbours extensively and assuring them about how we're intending to proceed."

Ms Stone admitted, however, that "the process has already happened" and that amending the proposal at this point could be a problem.

Waverley mayor Sally Betts said a meeting last week with Ms Stone and the project's architect had allayed much of her concern.

"The impact on the neighbours will not be as bad as they perceive," she said. "I think they have addressed a lot of the issues of concern."

"The process bypassing council is not a good process... having no consultation with residents only increases their anxiety because they don't have an opportunity to have their voice heard. To be left out of the dialogue is extremely frustrating."



Danny Caretti and Waverley residents are angry about a large development at St Catherine's School.
Photo: ALAN PLACE

Mr Betts said residents were lucky the school had employed a reputable architect and come out with a well articulated building.

Mr Caretti disagreed, saying the buildings were far too large for the residential zone.

"They don't have the same rules as we do and seem to be able to do a lot more than we could ever do," Mr Caretti said.

"I feel very vulnerable and frustrated that there's no way that I can improve the situation."