

# **Consultancy Report**

## **Proposal to relocate Gosford Public School**

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## **Acknowledgement**

Mr Alan Wort and Ms Elizabeth Trefry have both provided leadership to their school communities through a period of uncertainty.

I wish to acknowledge the support provided to me by the staff, parents and students of Gosford Public School and Henry Kendall High School throughout the consultancy period.

Their willingness to engage in this process has ensured the views of a wide cross section of the school community have been considered.

## **Abbreviations Used Throughout**

GPS - Gosford Public School

HKHS - Henry Kendall High School

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## Summary of the Proposal

Key features of the proposal as presented to school communities are as follows:

- ✓ Gosford Public School and Henry Kendall High School will remain and operate as separate schools
- ✓ Approximately 2.15 Ha of land will be taken away from the current 7.4 Ha of the western (tennis court) side Henry Kendall site



- ✓ On the existing Henry Kendall Site Blocks A, B, C and H would be demolished creating a separate undeveloped site for a new Gosford Public School (See below - shaded green)



- ✓ Construction of a new state of the art primary school including:
  - 21 classrooms
  - library
  - administration
  - student toilets, drinking facilities
  - canteen and assembly areas
  - storage areas
  - playground
  - pedestrian / vehicular circulation including car parking and services
- ✓ The existing multipurpose centre and sports oval would become shared facilities (providing Gosford Public with access to a total of 2.85Ha)
- ✓ Redevelopment of the remaining Henry Kendall High School including:
  - new special education facility
  - new learning spaces (Science labs)
  - new performance and fitness learning units
  - new games court and outdoor learning spaces
  - back conversion of some existing buildings

## **Terms of Reference**

To provide advice to the Minister for Education and Training, through a report and recommendations, on the proposal to relocate Gosford Public School to a site within the current grounds of Henry Kendall High School.

The report and recommendations should include:

- Implications for both schools in relation to the proposed relocation;
- Advantages that may be delivered to each school as a consequence of the proposed relocation; and
- Disadvantages that may arise for each school as a consequence of the proposed relocation

## Consultancy Design

The consultancy period extended over five weeks from Monday 26<sup>th</sup> July until Friday 27<sup>th</sup> August 2010.

In structuring the consultation the overarching imperative was to engage as broad a cross section of the school community as possible whilst respecting the views of the broader community. Consultation is by nature a qualitative process of sharing as well as gathering information.

Gosford Public School indicated that they had a proportion of their parent population from non-English speaking backgrounds. Two groups, Korean and Chinese native speakers were identified. The Senior Administration Manager was nominated as having knowledge of parents who would be likely to need translation services. The school does not currently provide its regular communication to parents in translated form and support is arranged when required. This was offered as part of the telephone survey process. Families from both Korean and Chinese speaking background participated in the consultation.

The key elements of the consultation were:

### Written Submission

An advertisement was placed in the *Central Coast Express Advocate*, Wednesday, July 28, 2010 inviting written submissions on the proposal to relocate Gosford Public School. These submissions were required by Friday 20 August. Issues raised have been included within the themes, discussion and findings of this report.

### Email

An email account was established [gosfordconsultation@gmail.com](mailto:gosfordconsultation@gmail.com) specifically for the consultation. Throughout the consultation period 48 separate email trails were established. Issues raised have been included within the themes, discussion and findings of this report.

### Telephone Survey

A telephone survey was conducted using a random sample of the parent lists of both schools. 100 parents were selected from Henry Kendall High School (1:10 sample) and 78 (1:5 sample) from Gosford Public School. A further seven families were sampled from pre-schools. Care was taken to offer translation services for parents of a non-English speaking background. One of these was taken up, and the survey conducted face to face with a support person to assist.

This survey was designed to test parent awareness of the proposal and to gauge the level of agreement with it, along with key issues influencing their current position. The survey instrument was not designed as a vote on the proposal.

The telephone survey and findings are reported separately.

### Focus Groups

Nine focus groups were conducted as part of the consultation process. These groups were selected to provide representation of the school communities. Focus groups were as follows:

GPS – Day time parent (Pre-school and K – 2)  
GPS – Night time parent (3 – 6 and OC)

GPS – Staff  
GPS – Student Parliament  
HKHS – Night time parent (7 – 12)  
HKHS – Support Unit (Teacher, Parent, Support Staff)  
HKHS – Staff  
HKHS – Student Leaders  
Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (held at HKHS)

#### Meetings with individual staff, staff groups, parents and community members

Throughout the consultation period individuals and groups of staff, parents and community members were able to make appointments to discuss the proposal.

An opportunity was provided to speak at whole school staff meetings at both GPS and HKHS.

Ongoing input was sought from school leaders Mr Alan Wort (Principal GPS), Mr Murray Townsend (Deputy Principal GPS); Mrs Jennie Newton (Assistant Principal GPS); Ms Elizabeth Trefry (Principal HKHS); Ms Jan Gillespie (Deputy Principal HKHS) and Mr Peter Yates (Head Teacher Administration HKHS).

At HKHS, discussions were held with the PD/Health/PE; Creative Arts; Science; Middle School; Support Unit and TAS faculties. These faculties are significantly impacted by the proposal. The AECG Focus Group was held in room F1 at HKHS. Mr Gary Cooper (General Assistant HKHS) provided site specific knowledge. Ten other staff members and five parents made individual appointments. Mr Rob Wilcox (P&C President) and Mr Stephen Thomas (P&C Vice President) discussed the proposal and consultation process. A school based *moodle* and staff common room *thought tree* were established to share information and views on the proposal. Views of these were reflected in the school's written submission.

At GPS, discussions were held with sixteen individual staff members, three of whom are also parents of the school. A group of staff representatives met to consider the proposal. Mr Stephen Thomas (P&C President) discussed the consultation process. Eight parents made individual appointments. Two *Face Book* groups have been in operation. Views of these were presented in the Gosford Public School P&C written submission.

Individual meetings were held with Peninsula Community Centre; Mr Gary Jackson and Mrs Merril Jackson; and Mr Rod Hollingsworth.

## Telephone Survey

This survey was designed to test parent awareness of the proposal and to gauge the level of agreement with it, along with identifying the key issues influencing their current position.

The survey instrument was designed for administration by telephone rather than written form.

Initial survey questions were:

1. What grades are your children in?  
P K 1 2 3 4 5 6 OC 7 8 9 10 11 12 SU
2. Do you know of the proposal to relocate Gosford Public School to a new site within the current grounds of Henry Kendall High School?  
Yes No
3. Do you know that this proposal is to build a brand new primary school as well as new special education and some new and refurbished teaching areas at Henry Kendall High School?  
Yes No
4. How do you rate your current support for this proposal?  
Strongly in Favour For Neutral Against Strongly Against
5. Rate from 1 to 8, where 1 is most important, these issues to you in deciding your support of the proposal.  
Parking Transport Heritage Safety Location  
Identity Before/After School Care Site

Following testing, the survey item 5 was revised to:

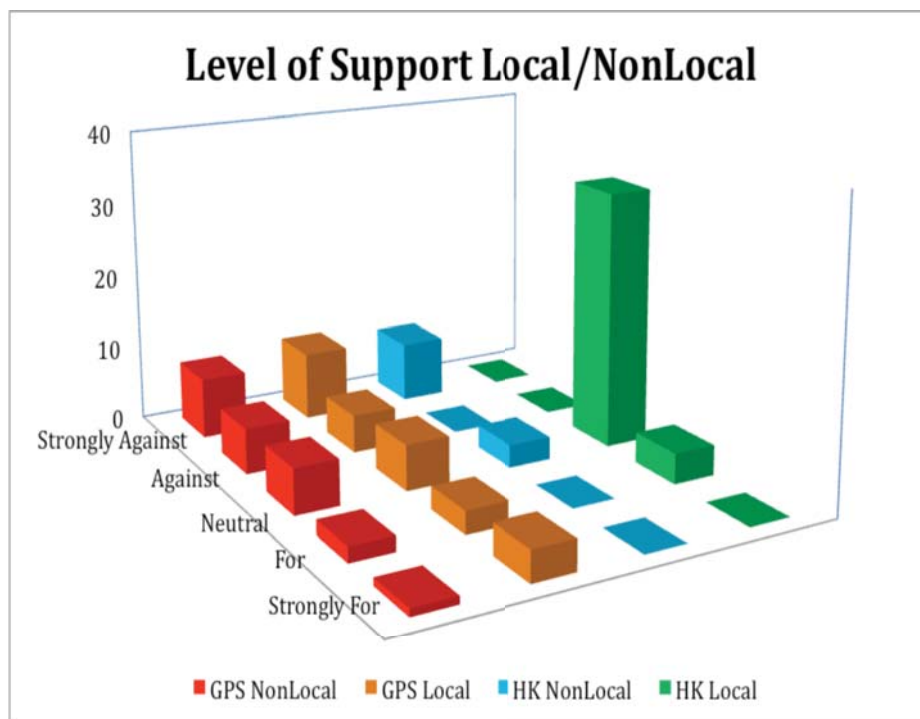
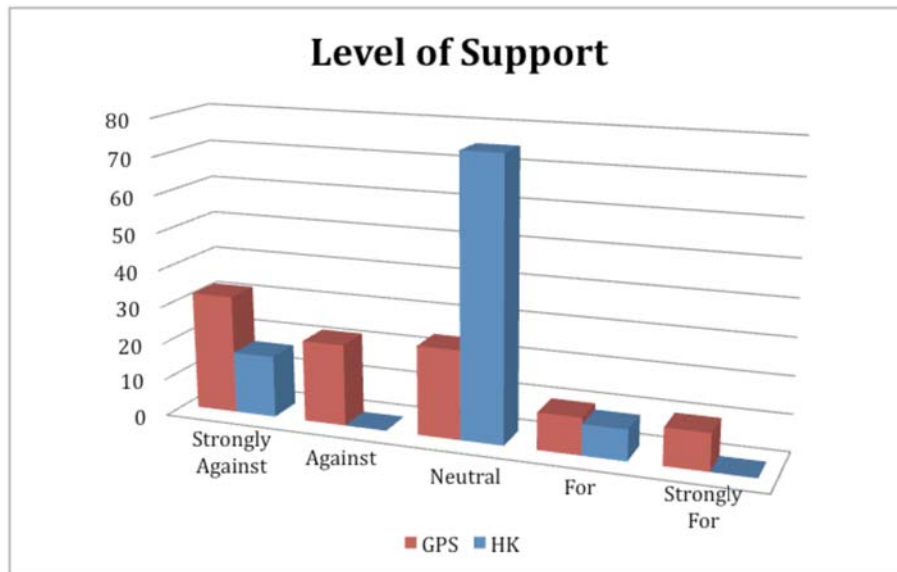
5. When deciding your level of support for the proposal, what were the most important issues to you?

When administering the survey, the respondents had the opportunity to nominate a more appropriate time to call and to request interpreter assistance if required.

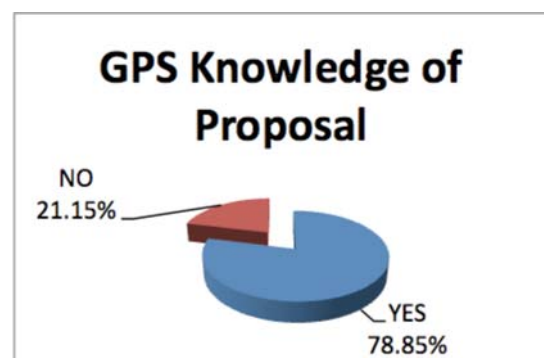
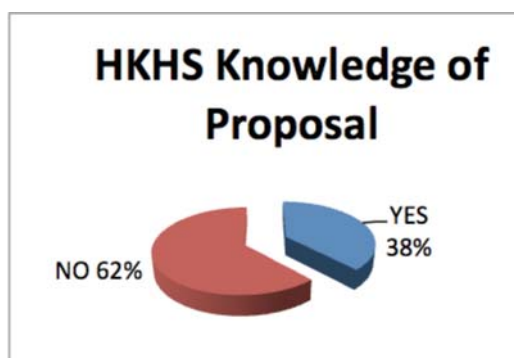
The survey instrument was not designed as a formal vote on the proposal as this is outside the Terms of Reference of this consultation. Complex proposals, such as this, do not lend themselves well to a simple majority vote. If a simple yes or no response was asked, this would have provided no way of knowing how far away from agreement with, or rejection of the proposal the respondent was. A five point scale was used intentionally which, along with identification of key factors influencing the level of support, allowed a more detailed analysis.

The overall response rate to the telephone survey was 65% of the sample.

The graph below provides a comparison of the levels of the levels of support (percentages) for the proposal amongst the pre-school, Gosford Public and Henry Kendall parents who participated in the survey.



The graphs below indicate the level of awareness amongst each school community of the proposal.



<b>Comparison of Issues Raised (most common response at top)</b>	
<b>Gosford Public</b>	<b>Henry Kendall</b>
<b>Positive</b>	<b>Positive</b>
Poor Existing Location 13	No issue 27
Traffic 12	Code Facilities 9
No issue 11	
Code Facilities 9	
Motivation for Move 4	
<b>Negative</b>	<b>Negative</b>
Co-location High / Primary 14	Site Size 4
Traffic 9	GPS not relocate 4
Poor proposed Location 9	Heritage 3
Motivation for Move 9	Subject Choice 3
Future use of GPS Site 8	Parking 3
Site Size 8	Lack of information 2
Not in CBD 8	Integration 2
Transport 4	Traffic 1 *
Substation 4	Substation 1 *
Pedestrian Safety 3	Motivation for Move 1 *
No advantage 2	Student Welfare 1 *
Shared Facilities 6	Quality of Education 1 *
Parking 5	Staff Morale 1 *
Student Welfare 1 *	
Build smaller school on GPS	Note: * Separate Individual
Site 1 *	Responses

The comparison of issues raised reflects the relative overall knowledge of the proposal and the length of engagement of the GPS community in proposals to relocate from their current site.

In general support for the proposal was stronger amongst secondary parents. In particular, parents of students from Years 9 – 12 adopted a mid way position usually stating that it would not impact on them as their children will have finished before the relocation takes place. This changed amongst the Year 7 – 8 parents, who more closely reflected the views and issues of parents of Years 3 – 6.

Support amongst GPS parents was divided overall, with 50% against the proposal, however there was a difference between families living within the designated school zone and those outside of it. Support is significantly stronger than in the survey conducted in December 2009 and could be explained by the consideration of a single proposal.

Some of the respondents who wanted GPS to relocate expressed a desire for a better location than the current one and up to date facilities for their children. The proposal was not seen as achieving this. The main issues of opposition revolved around the proposed location – site size, location next to a high school, parking, sub-station, traffic and transport. Some of these can be addressed in the design phase whilst others require commitments from Gosford City Council.

The sharing of facilities was an issue for primary parents, particularly the hall due to the high demand for access within and outside of school hours on the current site.

# Themes That Emerged Through the Consultation Process and Discussion of Them

## Proposal Least Preferred Option and “Out of the Blue”

In his presentation to Gosford Public and Henry Kendall High School Communities, Dr David Cullen School Education Director provided details of the survey findings from December 2009 along with qualitative analysis. In this presentation the results below were provided:

4. If Gosford Public School were to be relocated ,the <b>High School s’ Agricultural Farm</b> site proposed by The Gosford Challenge is the best alternative.	SD 54%	D 17%	A 18%	SA 6%	Unsure/Don’t Know 5%
5. If Gosford Public School were to be relocated ,the <b>Gosford High School and Victoria Oval</b> site proposed by The Gosford Challenge is the best alternative.	SD 46%	D 17%	A 20%	SA 12%	Unsure/Don’t Know 5%
6. If Gosford Public School were to be relocated ,the <b>North Gosford Education</b> site proposed by The Gosford Challenge is the best alternative.	SD 51%	D 17%	A 14%	SA 11%	Unsure/Don’t Know 7%
7. Recently it was proposed that vacant space on the Henry Kendall High School site could be an option for school relocation. If Gosford Public School were to be relocated vacant land at <b>Henry Kendall High School</b> is the best alternative.	SD 60%	D 17%	A 13%	SA 4%	Unsure/Don’t Know 6%

It was acknowledged that the Henry Kendall site as now proposed had received the least support. It was also not considered during the Gosford Challenge Design Charette.

Claims that this proposal came from “out of the blue” were common amongst the GPS community. This can be partially attributed to the speed with which things now appear to be moving, compared with previous proposals.

Included within the written submission from GPS P&C Association are copies of notes of meetings held with Deputy Regional Director Maree Roberts and written correspondence dating back to 20 March 2009. Reference is also made to a presentation to a P&C Meeting on 25 March 2009. These indicate that GPS P&C have been engaged in this process from an early stage.

## Schools Coping With Uncertainty

Both schools have been through extended periods of uncertainty about their futures.

HKHS has experienced an extended period of uncertainty in the lead-up to the construction of Kariong Mountains High School. The impact of this will not be fully realised until 2015 as the school is shrinking enrolments from Year 7 upwards. School faculties that have been impacted in 2010, such as Middle School and PE/Health/PE, utilise buildings and areas of the school labelled for demolition under this proposal. The critical issue for HKHS is its need to provide facilities and stability for large senior school cohorts through 2014.

GPS site has been subject to successive community proposals when the future of Gosford CBD has been considered. With the exception of a proposal of combining a new school with a performing arts centre on the existing site, all have involved relocation. In 2009 State

funding was allocated to plan for redevelopment of GPS. A proposal was also made to the Commonwealth for BER P21 funding. A six classroom block was approved but this has since been placed on hold.

A common view expressed in both school communities is for someone to just make a decision so that we can get on with it and plan our way forward.

Refer to Recommendation 1

## **Maintenance and Refurbishment Needs**

Both schools have significant identified maintenance and upgrade needs. These have been identified through previously developed Major Capital Works programs for a major refurbishment of GPS and Stage 3 of HKHS redevelopment. Both of these have been placed on hold.

The teaching and administrative staff at GPS have been definite in stating their desire to have a school with current facilities such as storerooms, wet areas, adequate workroom space and access to staff facilities.

This proposal addresses these issues on both sites. A new GPS school should have minimal maintenance costs. The demolition of blocks A, B, C and H at HKHS removes what have been redeveloped in Stage 3. Each of these buildings is experiencing significant maintenance needs including major re-roofing, plumbing works and the refurbishment of Science laboratories. Facilities such as the Support Unit for Students with multiple and severe physical disabilities are in urgent need of bringing to current code.

## **Gosford Challenge**

The *Masterplan for the Renewal of Gosford City Centre, Our City, Our Destiny* was viewed with much scepticism by many. A common view expressed within the GPS community was that they had had little input into the plan and that based on Gosford City Council's history, it is very unlikely that it will ever come to fruition. They are worried that they might be relocated and that the existing school buildings will slip into decay like many surrounding buildings.

There is a strong feeling that Gosford City Council has wanted to get their hands on the school site for years and the Gosford Challenge Design Charette did not consider any redevelopment of Gosford Public on its current site. The redevelopment of Ray Maher Oval, also known as Leagues Club Park, is also viewed as simply an attempt to squeeze the school out.

Some submissions and focus group participants viewed this proposal as a state government cash grab. This is clearly refuted in the proposal presentation and DET submissions, which quote the Minister as having fully committed any proceeds from the sale of the existing GPS site to the proposal.

Concern about the future use of the site is strong. This in part flows from comments by the Mayor where he indicated the site would be used for car parking. The draft master plan designated its future use for a performing arts centre. Council has since supported the Central Coast Leagues Club redevelopment proposal to provide this.

The alternate view expressed by some is that the current GPS is an eye sore and that it should be relocated to allow for the development of the city centre. The same people regard a school within a CBD as being less than ideal.

There is little understanding of the strategic importance of the Gosford Public School site to achieving the vision of *a world class regional waterfront city*.

In the DET submission, Dr David Cullen notes that *In the near future the Council also intends to extend Baker Street so that it runs adjacent to the school (this road is already officially Gazetted), in between the school and the current playing fields. Surveying for this work has already commenced. According to the Council the extended Baker Street will connect the city centre to the water and will be developed into a boulevard encouraging entertainment and retail development, pedestrians, cyclists, buses and cars. The construction of this road and the associated development will have a significant impact on the school, not only in terms of increased traffic, both human and vehicular, but the increased development around the school will further marginalise the site.*

It should be noted that the official launch of this strategy and subsequent major community consultation is not planned until after this five week long consultation period, so information is limited.

## **Heritage**

Gosford Public School celebrated 100 years of primary school education in 1965. It commenced operation in buildings on the current TAFE site and after many years of parent and community agitation was relocated to its current site, opening in 1954. It is claimed that land swaps were made between the then Department of Education and Gosford Council with regard to the closure of Baker Street and Henry Parry Drive. This arrangement is now seen as being ignored.

At that time the water frontage as it exists is today did not exist. The school buildings were faced away from the mangrove creek mouth to avoid what might have been described as an unattractive view.

Since its opening on the current site, Dane Drive has been constructed for the Central Coast Highway and Leagues Club Park created. The McGowan Bridge was officially opened on 10th December 1995. Much of what people now point to is man made in the recent past.

Notwithstanding, some families have a deep connection with the current GPS site spanning three generations. They hold strong opinions that the school should remain where it is, even if this means completely rebuilding what is already there to modern standards. For them, any move is heart wrenching and seen as trading away our heritage for short-term gain. They passionately ask, “what signal are we sending out when we say development is more important than our children’s education?” and “why shouldn’t our children enjoy this magnificent view as much as tourists?”

Others hold the view that what a wonderful vision our forebears had to locate GPS where it is with good transportation and convenient access to what the centre of the city offers.

It is claimed that some trees on the existing site of GPS have significant heritage value. These were not formally identified. There is a strong desire that these be preserved.

## **Identity**

Arguments have been made in both GPS and HKHS communities that this proposal will lead to a loss of their identity.

GPS suggest that the families which currently use the school will not relocate with it to the HKHS site, lowering the socioeconomic status, reducing the numbers of high achieving students whilst at the same time cutting off access to funds from ventures such as parking which provides a rich resource base for classes.

HKHS suggest that their site will return to being a construction zone and that families will not want to come there while this is happening, this in turn leading to poorer HSC results and an erosion of confidence in the school. Predications of a shift away from academic towards VET type course offerings have been made, with a concern that this proposal will limit the school's capacity to meet this need.

School identity evolves and changes over time. The challenge for school leadership, should this proposal go ahead, is to redefine the school they want to be and to capitalise on the educational advantages of this proposal. They will however, face the challenge of some staff and families who will initially feel quite disenfranchised.

## **Local and Non-Local Enrolments**

Current DET policy is to provide primary schools predominantly for a student population within a 1.6km walking radius. An analysis of GPS current parent addresses indicates that 68 families are residing within the school zone and that 206 are residing outside of the school zone. It should be noted that within the 206 there are 53 families of the selective OC classes.

Some parents have stated that if the school was relocated that they would make arrangements to send their child to their local school. This should be contrasted against the seven pre-school respondents who all indicated that the site location of the school would not impact on their decision to send their child to GPS.

This leads to three questions:

Firstly, who is the school being provided for?

Clearly for a large proportion of families the answer to this question is for children of workers employed within proximity to the CBD and or people who access public transport for employment and/or study.

Secondly, what are the real demographic projections for GPS?

The DET written submission provides the following demographic projections for GPS:

Year	K	Yr1	Yr2	Yr3	Yr4	Yr5	Yr6	Total
2010	84	61	69	72	79	87	102	554
2011	72	82	60	68	73	115	90	560
2012	73	71	81	59	69	107	118	578
2013	69	72	70	79	60	101	110	561
2014	70	68	71	69	80	88	104	550
2015	71	69	67	70	70	117	91	555

These projections are based on currently enrolments and trends. If the current level of non-local enrolments is factored out and OC families included as local enrolments, you could anticipate a within-zone enrolment of 224 in 2015.

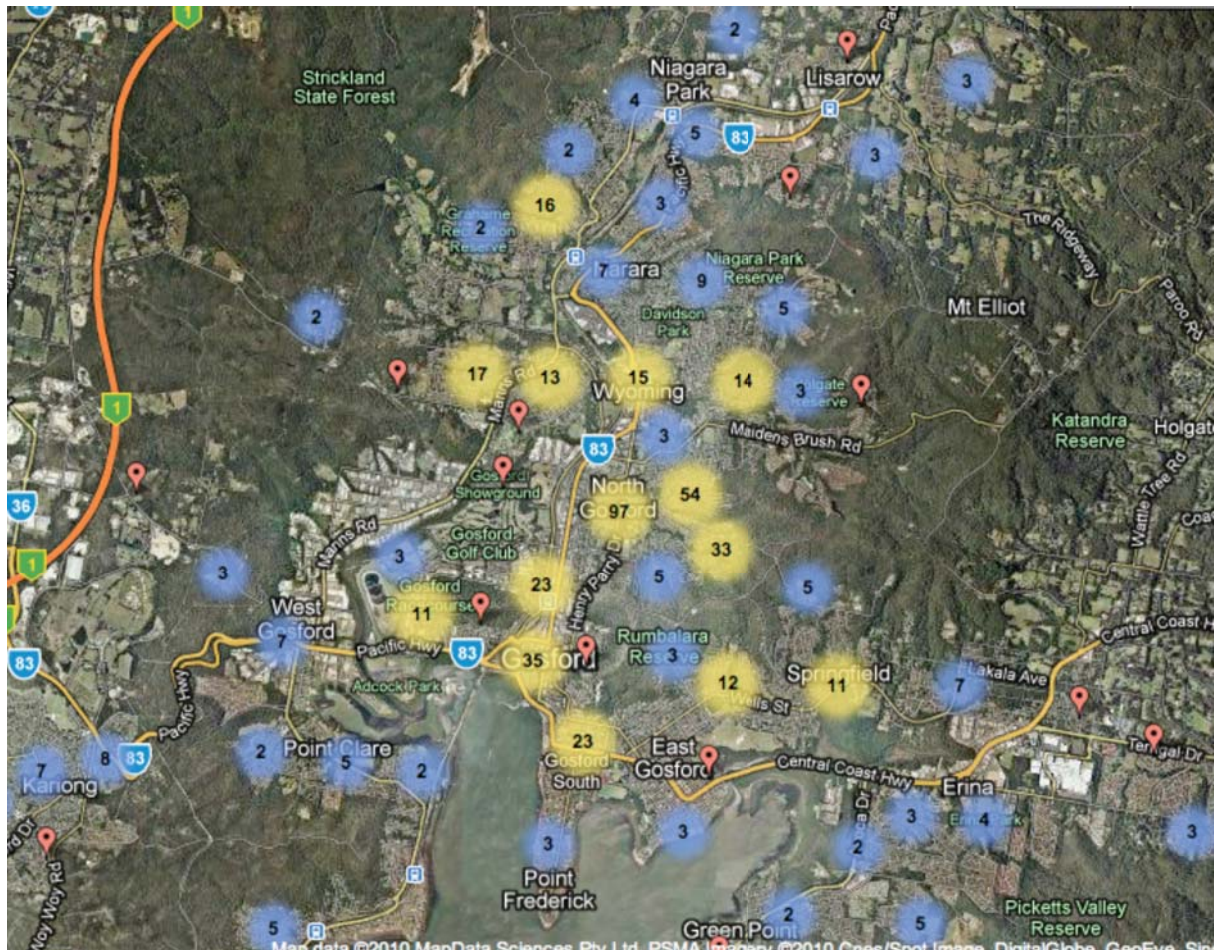
Thirdly, is the proposal to construct a 21 permanent classroom primary school justified?

In the short term the answer to this question is no. Based on within area enrolments, a 14 core primary school is all that is justified. Some members of the school community expressed a preference for a down sized GPS on its current site to any relocation. A new school could be constructed in a manner sympathetic to the Gosford Challenge objectives maximising the green space within the existing 1.6 ha.

In the longer term, however, the proposed 21 core school combined with surplus capacity in schools within a 5km radius, would allow substantial increase future primary school enrolments.

### **CBD Location School**

Many parents and staff of GPS have referred to it as a CBD school. This has been allowed to develop through application of the current DET non-local enrolment policy where 60% of students are residing outside of the designated school zone. The diagram below indicates where most families reside.



The diagram clearly indicates the wide spread of residential addresses of students currently enrolled at GPS. Typically these families have employment in Gosford City Council, Work Cover, Gosford Hospital, Centrelink or access train transport from Gosford station.

Whilst decisions made to accept non-local enrolments could be considered consistent with current policy, these were only possible due to a surplus of permanent accommodation, which remains under this proposal. Over time, this policy will need revision if the anticipated demand for within zone enrolments outlined in the *Masterplan for the Renewal of Gosford City Centre, Our City, Our Destiny* eventuate.

The notion of a CBD school was further strengthened through the visit of a delegation to Christchurch New Zealand and Melbourne Victoria from 2 - 4 December 2007. This delegation specifically observed inner city schools, joint use of facilities and partnerships between local government and schools.

The proposal provides similar distances for these families as the existing GPS site does. Some parents indicated that if the school were relocated they then would make arrangements to enrol their children in their local school. This could reduce student numbers.

Some respondents, including principal and staff at GPS indicated that the proposed location would lead to a loss of walking access currently available to them, eg. Gosford Olympic Swimming Pool and Kibble Park.

## **Parking and Traffic**

Parking and traffic were the most commonly referred to issues. Many survey respondents pointed out the poor parking and difficult traffic management around the current GPS site. Obviously in any relocation there is an expectation that this situation would be improved upon.

The area adjoining HKHS has Gosford High School, Gosford Hospital and Gosford Golf Club. Parking is limited for hospital and existing HKHS staff and students. Contrary to some assertions, most of the parking on Race Course Road and Faunce Street West can be attributed to HKHS. Faunce Street West also varies in width and in its current state contributes to the parking and vehicular traffic flow problems. This is emphasised as the current bus parking areas are located on the Faunce Street West and Batley Street boundaries of HKHS.

While the number staff and senior students of HKHS is anticipated to halve before GPS is relocated, it can be reasonably assumed that this will be replaced by GPS staff and parents who require parking. HKHS currently has two bus zones along its Batley Street and Faunce Street West boundaries. It anticipates that it will not require its current bus zone in Batley Street from 2011. It might be preferable to continue to use Batley Street and to decommission the Faunce Street West zone. This could allow for redevelopment of Faunce Street West.

Considerable analysis of traffic and parking issues has been undertaken. Recently Dr Cullen met with senior Council officers to look at several options to resolve any potential traffic and vehicular access problems. In this meeting several options were discussed. One option was to construct a new road running down the western side of the site connecting Faunce Street with Racecourse Road. In this option the new road would be one-way with vehicles travelling down Faunce Street and using this new road for student drop off. After drop off, vehicles would re-enter traffic at Racecourse Road. This option would allow vehicles to do a loop with no need to enter traffic black-spots, like the Etna Street Bridge. A recent analysis of student enrolment data at Gosford Public School revealed that over 60% of families live outside the intake area and their logical route from their home to the Henry Kendall High School site would be via Central Coast Highway – Racecourse Road – Faunce Street – potential new road – then back onto Racecourse Road.

To assist parking the Department has suggested that Faunce Street could be widened to provide street parking for approximately 250 cars. This parking space is additional to any parking that will be constructed for the new Gosford Public School and what currently exists on the site.

Both of these options are currently being scoped and costed by the Council.

Refer to Recommendation 7

## **Transport**

The key issues raised about transport were the re-routing of bus runs, the linking with the Gateway Centre/Railway Station interchange for OC students and the unsuitability of primary and secondary age students travelling on the same bus.

Currently there are no specified school bus runs. All buses can be used for public transport. The SRC of HKHS found the concern of some parents and the GPS P&C that it is unsuitable for primary and secondary students to travel on the same buses somewhat puzzling, as that is what happens now.

An upgrade of the bus interchange at Gosford railway station is currently underway. Busways, the company who operates the bus runs to GPS and HKHS, have indicated that they would need to review the existing routes prior to any relocation. They are confident that bus routes can be re-scheduled to meet operating hours of both schools and to the Gosford railway station interchange so as not to increase travelling times of students.

Refer to recommendation 8

## **Safe Walking to School**

A lack of footpath along the south side of Racecourse Road, and uneven and missing footpath on the steep and narrow Faunce Street West walk to Gosford railway station are the main issues raised.

Currently, the principal of GPS encourages a policy whereby students who do not travel by bus are dropped off by car. As a consequence, few students currently walk to GPS. Over a month of observations no more than ten students were observed walking to school on any one day. This increases considerably in the afternoon where up to 120 students walk from school to meet their parents within the CBD area.

Access from the proposed site to the CBD would typically be via Faunce Street West and Gosford railway station. Distances are comparable to those currently followed by students, however, footpath infrastructure is not to standards of the existing site. Some issues have been made of the steepness of Faunce Street West, however, this is also comparable to Georgianna Terrace, which students walk east on after using the student crossing to access Mann Street.

Any relocation to proposed site would need to be accompanied by adequate footpaths along Faunce Street West. The existing School Crossing *lollipop* officer could be transferred to the school crossing near the Racecourse Road and Batley Street intersection. This would allow parents and students from the North CBD area to utilise safely the existing Gosford High infrastructure.

The upgrade of the Etna Street Bridge is being considered by Gosford Council and State Rail Authority but is not considered critical to the relocation.

Refer to recommendation 7

## **Site Size, Topography and Building Footprint**

There is an issue of the site sizes for both GPS and HKHS following the proposed relocation. Current DET site acquisition policy is to acquire 3 ha sites for new primary and 6 ha for new secondary schools.

Current site sizes are:

GPS 1.6 ha; and  
HKHS 7.4 ha comprised of 4.65 ha plus a 2.7 ha Agricultural Farm.

The site sizes following this relocation would be:  
GPS 2.85 ha comprised 2.18 ha plus 0.67 ha shared oval; and  
HKHS 2.47 ha including 0.67 ha shared oval plus 2.7 ha Agricultural Farm.

The Gosford P&C position is that the site size is not significantly increased. The current site has large on-site asphalt parking areas that are not accessible for student use. When this is taken into account, this proposal increases significantly the site size for GPS.

The proposed block shape at HKHS facilitates effective use of the site, enabling new buildings to be constructed on the diagonal, which in turn assists with shadowing issues and connection between buildings. This also maximises the green space available for students. Contrary to view presented by GPS P&C, this site is not particularly steep and will allow for large open play areas. It also ignores the question of where level land could be found to relocate the school that is not in a 1:100 year flood zone. It also ignores the critical issue that access to Leagues Club Park will soon be lost to GPS, leaving students with no green playfield access. Dr Cullen in his submission outlines further the impact of the loss of playfield space on the existing site to the PD/Health/PE syllabus implementation and sports program.

The remaining site proposed for HKHS is quite small and even with the projected student population of half what it was a decade ago, will place pressures on footprint. The proposal to retain blocks I, P, O and G as currently configured may not be the best use of available teaching spaces.

Block B contains the current Support Unit and General Assistant Spaces  
Blocks A, C and H contain 17 designated General Learning Spaces, 6 Science Laboratories, Print Room and staff facilities.  
Blocks F and J contain only 10 designated general learning spaces for conversion or reconfiguration. Blocks I, P, O and G contain 13 designated general learning spaces. Combined these fall significantly short of the 35 general learning spaces code for a 4 stream high school.

New play courts, science centres, support unit physical and drama/dance performance spaces have large floor areas and will place pressure on the remaining HKHS site.

Refer to recommendation 5

### **Shared Facilities**

HKHS PE/Health/PE faculty have significant concerns with regard to the sharing of the school oval and multipurpose centre (MPC). There is also an issue with regard to the use of the MPC and examination scheduling, currently close to 25% of the school year. GPS staff and parents have also raised concern about the sharing of the MPC.

The utilisation of this space by HKHS is not anticipated to reduce significantly with its falling enrolments. It is anticipated the tight building footprint on the remaining HKHS site will place even further pressure on its use.

The MPC is a very large building, which would enable GPS to accommodate large school functions. The current GPS hall, although quite small, is extensively utilised including before school band rehearsals and community users out of school hours. The use of the school hall would be a suitable venue for before and after school care following the relocation.

In reality, the remaining HKHS oval will have limited potential, once the section for the new primary school playfield is taken, for use for major sporting activities. It could be used for in-school sport and some PSSA activities such as knock out competition games. Timetabling with use in conjunction with HKHS could prove difficult.

Refer to Recommendation 3

### **Chapman Trust Fund**

Some have raised the issue of loss of the Chapman Trust Fund which provides approximately \$80000 per annum to GPS. Advice from the trustees is that provided GPS retains its name, it will continue to receive dividends from the trust fund.

### **Loss of Income**

Apart from the Chapman Trust Fund discussed elsewhere, GPS raises significant amounts of money through parking on the grounds for special events and Iguanas. Advice from the school is that Iguanas have a 10 year contract with the school to provide 32 spaces. They request the income from this after any relocation until the expiration of the contract. These funds are used to purchase teachers aide time to support literacy development throughout K-2 classes and to support students with special needs.

Some teachers have expressed a view that the loss of this income will lead to a reduction in the quality of education offered by the school due to a loss of current support staff. An alternate view amongst staff is that resources are currently wasted and that the external income sources have led to many of the fund raising activities which typically unite school communities missing from current GPS culture.

The GPS P&C submission also requests guarantees surrounding maintenance of the current performance of GPS. Above like-school NAPLAN Year 5 results are cited. It should be noted that these results include 30% highly selective OC students in the cohort and results, as acknowledged by some parents, are as much a reflection of this as any additional resource. Many factors influence student performance. The quality of teaching and quality management systems are widely recognised a major contributing factors to school performance. There is no reason to suggest that these would change due to relocation.

### **HKHS Room F1 Aboriginal Place of Significance (AMS GR0001, GR0002, GR0003)**

Rooms F1 and connected storerooms are considered as an Aboriginal Place of Significance.

The Gosford AECG welcomes the relocation proposal for GPS. It sees strong educational benefits flowing from potential new programs and teaching pedagogies across Years 5 - 8. Access to the Aboriginal resource of F1 is also seen as beneficial to all GPS students.

When redeveloping the remaining HKHS site, the importance of GR0001, GR0002, GR0003 to Aboriginal people must be considered. It is necessary to maintain the full internal structure of these intact, so as not to destroy the connection with the land.

Refer to Recommendation 6

## **Before and After School Care**

Many parents are concerned that the train carriage will not be relocated and that before and after school care will not continue to operate on the proposed site. Currently the service provides for between 15 and 40 children of a morning and 40 to 80 of an afternoon.

A meeting was held with the CEO and staff of Peninsula Community Centre who operate this service within the current grounds of GPS. Their current Out of School Hours Care (OOSH) Licence Agreement commenced on 27 December 2007 and runs for a period of five years with a three year option to renew. They remain committed to providing this service for students attending GPS throughout Licence Agreement period.

In the meeting it was stated that they have no objection to the relocation of Gosford Public School and that they did not want to continue to use the train carriage or have it relocated. They intend to provide a single school service for students attending GPS only and sharing school facilities as they do in other centres. The current bus, which brings students from other schools to GPS will be discontinued in the near future due to its high operational cost.

## **West Gosford Sub-Station**

Many written submissions cited the close proximity of the proposed site to West Gosford Sub-Station and its potential long-term impact on the health of students.

It should be noted that current Henry Kendall High buildings are of the same distance from the sub-station as the new primary school. Over its forty years history demountable classrooms have been located on the western boundary now proposed for GPS. There has been no increase in adverse health of staff or students recorded at HKHS, which has been attributed to the proximity of the sub-station.

The scientific evidence does not firmly establish that exposure to 50 Hz electric and magnetic fields found around the home, the office or near power lines is a hazard to human health. The general solution for limiting exposure is to increase distance from the source. International studies place the effect of electro magnetic fields (emf) at 40 metres as similar to that of a typical household living room. The proposed new school would be constructed with building blocks being constructed at a minimum of 122 metres from the eastern side of the sub-station.

DET has a policy of prudent avoidance regarding high-voltage transmission lines and requires that electromagnetic radiation generated by electrical infrastructure near school not exceed the Australian Exposure Guidelines. It should be noted however, there are currently no Australian standards regulating exposure to these fields. The National Health and Medical Research Council has issued *Interim guidelines on limits of exposure to 50/60 Hz electric and magnetic fields*. These guidelines are aimed at preventing immediate health effects resulting from exposure to these fields. The recommended magnetic field exposure limit for members of the public (24 hour exposure) is 0.1 millitesla (1,000 mG - milligauss) and for occupational exposure (whole working day) is 0.5 millitesla (5,000 mG). Reference [http://www.arpana.gov.au/radiationprotection/factsheets/is\\_emf.cfm](http://www.arpana.gov.au/radiationprotection/factsheets/is_emf.cfm) 13 August 2009

The GPS P&C submission formally requests that DET conducts scientific research into the emission levels from the adjoining sub-station and assess the associated health and safety risks. As this area is subject to extensive scientific research, it is considered unnecessary for the DET to undertake its own scientific study. It is considered prudent to measure the magnetic fields on the proposed site to determine if they are below recommended levels above.

If these levels are above the recommended levels, an alternative site such as the Agricultural Farm may need to be considered.

It would also be prudent to consider the electro magnetic field exposure in the current HKHS Support Unit and other buildings to be demolished under this proposal and appropriate follow-up planned if appropriate.

Refer to Recommendation 2

### **Community Use of GPS**

Due to its convenient location, GPS has extensive community use of its facilities and grounds. Apart from Out of School Hours Care (OOSH) and parking, 13 other organisations utilise the school facilities on a regular basis. Some of these have been using the facilities for over twenty years. Relocation to the proposed site is likely to lead to some of this community use not continuing. It is not clear if these users made any significant financial contribution to the school.

### **DET Use of School Buildings and Grounds**

Currently the Assets Management Unit, Reading Recovery and District STLA utilise the School of Arts Heritage Building within the GPS grounds. This building is maintained under GPS maintenance and funding grants. Will this continue beyond 2014? Fifteen DET cars are parked on the GPS site daily. It has been suggested that this use has not been considered in the relocation proposal.

### **Future Needs for Primary and High Schools**

The size of the sites allocated to both GPS and HKHS under this proposal place significant limitations on both school sites for future growth.

Refer to earlier discussion about GPS enrolments with regard to providing for the future needs of a revitalised Gosford Regional Waterfront City.

The GPS P&C submission refers to estimates made by Dr David Cullen during Gosford Challenge Design Charette workshops that the existing HKHS would be able to absorb any projected growth in secondary students with its surplus capacity. With this proposal, this surplus capacity disappears, and leaves the government with the probability of having to construct an additional new secondary school in the future. There argument is that HKHS should be left alone now and an alternative site sought for GPS.

In the DET submission HKHS enrolment projections were presented as:

	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	SU	Total
2011	106	96	162	217	187	174	55	997
2012	100	104	96	157	184	159	55	855
2013	113	96	104	93	133	156	55	752
2014	107	111	98	101	79	113	55	664
2015	106	105	111	95	86	67	55	625

These are in contrast with the HKHS in-house projections which are:

	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	SU	Total
2011	123	103	162	217	187	156	55	1003
2012	138	121	110	159	184	168	55	935
2013	130	136	126	107	135	165	55	854
2014	125	128	140	138	96	121	55	803
2015	123	123	130	137	124	86	55	778

Based on the above projections, reconfiguration of HKHS to a 4 stream high school might not provide it with sufficient capacity within the medium term. Whilst it is difficult to predict the nature of secondary education 30 years from now, using current structures it would certainly not provide the capacity to take up longer term secondary enrolments as projected through the Gosford Challenge 30 year time frame.

Refer to Recommendation 4

## Middle Years

Within the DET Submission, Dr Cullen writes that "the advantages co-locating Gosford Public School with Henry Kendall High School (and the nearby Gosford High School) to reflect a K-12 learning environment are substantial, particularly in relation to the 'middle years.'

The term middle years refers to young adolescents toward the end of primary school and the early years of secondary school (Year 5 to Year 9). Students in this 10 to 15 years age group have particular interests, needs and focuses that are different from those of young children or older adolescents. Middle years students identify strongly with their peers and experience heightened emotions, progressively seek greater independence and develop their individual identities and value systems. Intellectually they have a growing capacity for reflective and abstract thinking and begin to make decisions about adult roles. Many students progress satisfactorily during the middle years but it is a time when some students switch off from schooling. Showing respect, empathy and an understanding of the variety of ways in which young adolescents develop, learn and think is required to meet their needs."

HKHS has a strong "Middle School" program that has evolved over 13 years. Apart from a reorganisation of the curriculum delivery to better suit the needs of Year 7 students they have utilised available buildings and play areas to suit. This includes utilising general teaching spaces located within close proximity to each other and a staff study as well as access to a dedicated playground. Parents and staff recognise the value of this program and are supportive of its continuation.

This is an example of how current use of buildings and grounds or functionality develops. Any redevelopment of HKHS would provide general teaching and specialist spaces, which would be accessed by the students. It will continue to be a school decision whether or not they timetable some of these spaces for exclusive use by Year 7 or "Middle School".

The relocation of Gosford Public to the proposed site offers a significant educational opportunity for both schools to not only explore transition but to genuinely build a culture of learning across the middle years with a shared resource base, expanded pedagogy and opportunities for differentiation of learning across stages 3 and 4. This will provide both schools with a very real point of differentiation as they redefine their identity if this proposal proceeds.

## **Special Education Support Unit**

The HKHS Special Education facility is located in some of the buildings scheduled for demolition in the south-western corner of the site. The main building also has a large under cover bus bay attached to it and is adjacent to the bulk storage facility of the school. A small parcel of land currently leased from Energy Australia is used for a garden project that provides for living skills development and a relatively private playground area.

The current buildings are of timber construction and were relocated to the site and converted to provide facilities for students with moderate and severe physical disabilities. Classes for IM and Autism utilise general learning spaces within the same area of the school. Facilities are now dated and not to current code although recent refurbishment of bathroom areas has taken place.

Any new facility would be built to the IO/IS physical code. Some of the existing functionality, such as a separate therapy room, is usually only provided in Schools for Specific Purposes. An undercover bus/taxi zone would also be required due to the physical vulnerability of some students. Specialist rooms are not provided under the current code for IM or Autism classes.

The current building code for IO/IS physical necessity occupies a large footprint. When coupled to the ramp requirements of the HKHS site, fitting in a complete unit will present a planning challenge. If done well, this offers HKHS the opportunity to better integrate the support unit students within the main body of the school and for them to access specialist facilities such as those available for hospitality courses.

## **Dance, Drama and Music**

Currently HKHS utilises one of the buildings proposed for demolition as a drama studio. The dance space is within the multipurpose centre and is not considered a practical teaching space. Music workshops are allocated to general teaching spaces.

Any redevelopment of HKHS needs to replace the demolished drama space with code facilities and could consider the future needs of dance and music education.

## **Science Faculty**

Currently HKHS has six science laboratories. Under the proposal this would be reduced to current code of two or three science centres.

This will require a shift in pedagogy from some of the current practice. This is well supported by the Curriculum Directorate and included extensive web-based support materials.

Agriculture teachers have expressed a view that they would prefer the Agriculture Farm to be relocated to the site proposed for GPS and GPS to be built on the current Agricultural Farm site (opposite side of Race Course Road).

The key issue facing the Science Faculty is the need to deliver an extensive range of courses across senior years through to 2014. Any re-development of HKHS will need to be carefully staged so as not to disadvantage students studying these courses.

## Implications

### Henry Kendall High School

The proposal as it stands, effectively caps the school size of HKHS at 680. School projections indicate that this may not be adequate and may not address cohort variations.

Any new or refurbished facilities will be built as close as possible to current code. This code may not allow the current way of functioning to continue. This provides an opportunity to review current pedagogy and management practices.

The school site is likely to be a construction zone for at least three years. The school will need to ensure student safety educational programs are not compromised.

The Special Education Support Unit must have permanent accommodation provided as the first priority. There are high needs students who must be accommodated. This involves classrooms with the required special building provisions and a bus bay.

Up to 2014 there will be large numbers of Higher School Certificate Candidates who will need the current facilities at Henry Kendall High School.

2011 – 156 HSC students, 210 Preliminary HSC Students

2012 – 210 HSC students, 210 Preliminary HSC Students

2013 – 210 HSC students, 158 Preliminary HSC Students

2014 – 158 HSC students, 103 Preliminary HSC students

While they will not need as many general teaching spaces, there will be a continuing need for large numbers of specialist rooms right up to 2014. eg. Kitchens that meet the code for Vocational Education up to 36 times a week to teach Food and Beverage.

Specialist TAS rooms for senior Design and Technology, Engineering Studies, Industrial Technology and Food Technology. Science Labs for 4 Biology, 2 Chemistry, 2 Physics, 2 Earth and Environment, 2 Senior Science classes and a Marine Studies class.

Facilities such as those used by the GA will need to be replicated.

Timing the uptake of the refurbished section of the school will need to be carefully monitored. Most of the specialist rooms must be available right up to the HSC in 2014. After that time there is an opportunity to take of use out some specialist rooms.

The new site will be of significantly reduced size, placing pressure on the planners to minimise the impact of the building footprint.

The new COLA funded under the National Schools Pride Program would not be able to be relocated elsewhere on the site. The buildings scheduled for demolition have been extensively wired for wireless connectivity under the senior secondary schools laptop program.

Equipment in sections of the school scheduled for demolition such as air conditioning units and smart boards will need to be relocated.

The shared use of facilities will be difficult to timetable. The planning for this will be required in the year leading up to GPS occupying its new site.

## **Gosford Public School**

A real opportunity will exist to strengthen the partnership with its zoned high school. This includes coaching of sporting teams, cultural activities such as dance, and student performances.

Staff will finally have access to school facilities that most schools take for granted such as classrooms with lockable store room, wet areas and withdrawal rooms. With appropriate leadership, this could provide the impetus for a major review of pedagogy leading to improved student engagement.

Disfranchisement of a significant proportion of the school community who feel the process has been flawed and rushed. Years of work to plan for buildings on the existing site have been shelved along with BER without discussion with the school or community.

The sense that primary students don't matter in the big picture as DET are happy to move the school again to suit business and not look at joint plans for the site.

GPS will lose contact with the CBD area and our wider community due to dislocation from the main township areas. There is a sense that they will have been moved from a highly visible location to the backblocks.

The shared use of facilities will be difficult to timetable. The planning for this will be required in the year leading up to GPS occupying its new site.

Loss of income streams from parking on the existing site. Alternate sources of funding will need to be developed to compensate for this.

There is a possibility that the current enrolments could drop if the proportion of non-locals reduces following the relocation.

Equipment installed in many classrooms of the existing school, such as air conditioning units and smart boards, will need to be relocated.

## Advantages and Disadvantages

<b>Gosford Public School</b>	
<b>Advantages that may be delivered</b>	<b>Disadvantages that may arise</b>
<p>New and very modern classrooms for teaching.</p> <p>No interruptions with a building program.</p> <p>Increased land area, closer to current site size guidelines than the existing site.</p> <p>Increased sporting opportunities through coaching provided as part of Stage 3 Elective PE courses.</p> <p>A new start for the school with new buildings, a new vision, a new identity</p> <p>An opportunity to develop better transition plans form Years 6 - 7.</p> <p>An opportunity to develop a closer relationship with partner High School and strengthen teaching across middle years 5 - 8.</p> <p>Opportunities to utilize resources and specialist facilities across K-12, eg. Science</p> <p>Access to greater resource base for OC classes and opportunities for partial acceleration.</p> <p>Strengthened Local Management Group</p>	<p>Loss of current school identity.</p> <p>Reduced student enrolment and staffing entitlements.</p> <p>Noise transference from the MPC use to primary facilities.</p> <p>Dislocation of our students and families who have made decisions to come to this school based on its current location.</p> <p>Potential for an increased reliance on private vehicle transport.</p> <p>Potential loss of space due to extensive ramping for to make the new school fully accessible.</p> <p>Proximity to a major Electricity sub station.</p> <p>Loss of connection to the city and isolation from many places currently used such as Gosford pool and Library.</p> <p>Loss of some local support as no longer close, eg. Legacy House</p> <p>Loss of considerable income from school use by paying community users as well as loss of use by local groups who get free use, eg. Gosford Council Australia Day celebrations.</p>
<b>Henry Kendall High School</b>	
<b>Advantages that may be delivered</b>	<b>Disadvantages that may arise</b>
<p>Completion of the third phase of the school's redevelopment addressing science, drama/dance, and support unit needs.</p> <p>Strengthened Local Management Group and partnership with GPS.</p> <p>Significant opportunities for the redevelopment and sharing of Middle School programs across Years 5 - 8.</p> <p>Supporting professional practice and learning. Henry Kendall has already benefited from support from GPS in establishing a Stage 4 class.</p> <p>Improved transition from Year 6 into Year 7</p>	<p>The possibility no decision is made and the school is left in limbo</p> <p>Possible shortfall in funding to reconfigure the school</p> <p>The long build time 2011 to 2014 leaving the school as a building site. A disrupted school site has parents concerned that the teaching and learning can be affected.</p> <p>The foot print of the new buildings over crowding the remaining Henry Kendall High School part of the site.</p> <p>If the school is reconfigured to accommodate too few students it will</p>

<p>Opportunity to investigate sharing specialist teachers.</p> <p>Opportunity for Stage 6 Elective PE students to coach GPS sport teams.</p> <p>Access for GPS to specialist facilities to enhance their curriculum e.g. the farm.</p> <p>Creating a seamless profile for Public Education K -12 in the local area</p> <p>Improved facilities for students and staff.</p> <p>Improved local infrastructure in terms of parking, footpaths and traffic congestion.</p>	<p>constrict our ability to attract enough students to maintain a broad curriculum.</p> <p>Some important functions of the school are in the section to be demolished. The GA's room, storage for tools, mowers, loading dock and an area for receiving goods will need to be rebuilt.</p>
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## Recommendations

1. Make a definite decision with regard to this proposal so that both schools can move forward with certainty and GPS access its BER P21 funding allocation.
2. Measure the levels of electro magnetic fields on the proposed site for Gosford Public School during school hours (over a period of at least one week) to determine if these levels fall below the National Health and Medical Research Council *Interim guidelines on limits of exposure to 50/60 Hz electric and magnetic fields*.
3. Include an assembly hall within the new Gosford Public School construction.
4. Review demographic projections for Henry Kendall High against population estimates presented to the Gosford Challenge Design Charette with the view to determining if this proposal erodes the secondary student capacity required.
5. A new master plan be developed for the remaining Henry Kendall High school site to accommodate its projected student population, giving regard to building footprint on a tight site.
6. Henry Kendall High School rooms GR0001, GR0002, GR0003 be excluded from any redevelopment.
7. Approach Gosford City Council to provide a definite undertaking to upgrade infrastructure that addresses the parking, pedestrian and traffic issues associated with HKHS site and Faunce Street West.
8. Re-map bus routes to the new GPS site and publish these well in advance of any relocation.