



St Catherine's School
Waverley

Founded in 1856 | An Anglican day and boarding school for girls | Kindergarten to Year 12

28 September 2015

Dear Parents and Guardians

You may have read *The Sydney Morning Herald's* online article this weekend about our proposed RPAC development (Research, Performing Arts and Aquatic Centre) and master plan. The article also appeared in print on page 6 of Sunday's *Sun Herald*. If you missed it, the online article can be found at <http://www.smh.com.au/national/education/education-st-catherines-school-in-war-with-council-residents-over-69m-expansion-20150923>

We were dismayed by the negative tone of the article and are working with journalist Eryk Bagshaw to address the misinformation in it, which appears to have been supplied in the main by one of our local residents. For your information, I address the article's main comments below:

The school has “breached its student cap by more than 20 students” and is “seeking to increase its student numbers by 25 per cent”: We have a historical student cap which applies to an area of the school campus that has increased in size due to land acquisition over the years. To bring the cap up to date, and remedy any ambiguity, we have requested a cap of 1,200 students for the whole campus, as part of our master plan application, envisaging student numbers growing gradually between now and 2029 – i.e. over the next fifteen years.

The request to increase our student cap is a separate issue from the building of the RPAC. We do not anticipate an increase in student numbers as a result of a new RPAC; the RPAC facility is replacing our existing old and outdated facilities.

Submission from NSW Police to our development application: We have worked closely with the Eastern Suburbs Local Area Command (Police) in relation to their feedback from our RPAC development application. We have met with our appointed Police representative on the school site on two separate occasions, taken him round the entire campus and investigated his suggestions. Through this additional work, the Police and relevant Councils are able to provide additional feedback to our application.

The school has been “arrogant in its consultation with the community”: At every stage of our development application we have consulted with our local community. This has included hosting general community meetings at the school, meeting individual residents directly affected by the development and attending meetings of the Charing Cross Precinct. After feedback from these groups, we amended our original RPAC plans to take on board some of their recommendations. It was these amended plans that were submitted to the NSW Department of Planning and Environment for approval.

Headmistress **Dr Julie Townsend**

BA (Hons) Cert Ed PhD MBA (Ed Ldship) MACE MACEL

We appreciate that there will be a diversity of views on any development, and try to consider these views in the context of the benefits of the development and the impact on the local community.

We are “the latest in a line of rapidly expanding private schools”: Our RPAC development proposal is not part of a gratuitous expansion program; it is designed to upgrade and modernise our existing facilities. Our current swimming pool is 40 years old and is no longer adequate for the requirements of our girls. Our current theatre is over 20 years old and too small and basic for our girls’ needs. We wish to update our library so that it reflects the needs of 21st century learners.

We are proud of being an independent school serving our local community and mindful of the responsibility it brings; we work hard to build a strong and respectful relationship with our residents.

The proposed RPAC development will be an important facility for the education of our girls, and we hope it will also be an important asset to the local community. We will continue to consult with our neighbours and local residents beyond the requirements of our DA application.

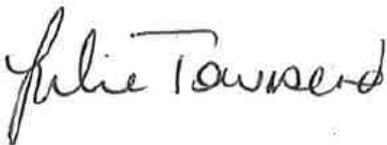
We have a website dedicated to the RPAC building submission on which you can find the most up to date information on the progress of our DA application. The site can be found at <http://www.stcatherines.nsw.edu.au/rpac>.

I do hope this information gives you a clearer picture of our plans and the process we have followed.

If you have any specific questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or Mrs Marilyn Rickard, our Director of Community Relations. We always appreciate hearing from you.

I hope you enjoy the rest of the break, and look forward to seeing you back at School next Tuesday.

Yours sincerely



Dr Julie Townsend
Headmistress