

# Strengthening the future provision of public secondary education in the inner Sydney area

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## Background

On 16 May 2014 the Inner City Schools Working Party launched its community consultation on the provision of public secondary education in inner Sydney to assist the Department in its ongoing consideration of public education.

The consultation is designed to explore a range of possible solutions for addressing the predicted growth in the number of school-aged children living in inner Sydney.

Initial analysis has identified that in the short term:

- there are some schools in the area with higher enrolments than others; and,
- there is additional teaching and learning space available within the majority of existing public secondary schools in the short term.

In the longer term there is a shortage of teaching and learning spaces to meet the projected demand.

## Community consultation – the story so far

Prior to making any recommendations about possible options to strengthen public secondary education in the inner Sydney area the Working Party is consulting with the wider community.

The consultation process is being conducted by Straight Talk an external provider and has been designed to gather information from a range of interested stakeholder groups.

Over 250 people participated in one of the following face to face facilitated consultation activities;

- 1 x workshop with Principals
- 3 x workshops with teachers

- 3 x workshops with invited P&C representatives
- 3 x general community workshops.

Each event commenced with a presentation from a Working Party representative to provide a context for the challenge, followed by a presentation from the Department showing the projections for public secondary schools demand in inner Sydney.

Participants were then guided through activities to gain valuable feedback on three discussion areas:

1. Options for managing public secondary educational needs in the short term (1-4 years).
2. Options for managing the secondary educational needs in the medium to long term (5-10 years).
3. The best way to create public secondary schools that meet current and future educational demands, in a highly urbanised environment with finite resources.

In addition, there have been 350 comments posted on the online forum in response to these questions. The online forum, accessible via the Department and Communities website [www.dec.nsw.gov.au/sydneyhconsultation](http://www.dec.nsw.gov.au/sydneyhconsultation), has received over 2,500 visits from people who are observing and participating in the online discussion.

Preliminary analysis has identified the following solutions should be considered:

- How educational offerings at schools influence parents' choice of school – should these be adjusted, broadened and/or specialised?
- Whether the public school 'brand' can be improved through advertising and marketing?



- Whether selective schools can take on comprehensive students, giving all schools a selective stream?
- Can schools collaborate more closely to strengthen transition programs?
- Should a 'College model' be introduced to improve educational offerings across schools?
- Can the hours that a school is open and operate provide another avenue for more efficient use?

Straight Talk is in the process of collating the feedback from the workshops. A series of publicly available issues summaries will be posted on the online forum in the coming weeks.

## Have your say

It is not too late to join the discussion; the consultation is open until Friday 27 June 2014!

There are multiple opportunities to get involved in the consultation.

Visit the online forum at  
<http://dec.engagementhq.com>

- Participate in the online discussion forum
- Find out more about the consultation
- View and download information and resources.

## Host a Kitchen Table Discussion

Invite your friends or colleagues to attend a Kitchen Table Discussion – this is a self-directed opportunity to discuss the complex issues surrounding the provision of public secondary school education in the inner Sydney area.

We have developed a guide to help you plan for and host your discussion. The guide can be downloaded via the online forum at <http://dec.engagementhq.com>.

## Next steps

A summary of the feedback received during the consultation will be reported in a series of publicly available issues summaries identifying the matters raised.

The Department of Education and Communities will consider the outcomes of community consultation, along with the needs and capacity analysis, to help shape its recommendations.

This is an important project which will have far reaching consequences for the provision of public secondary education in the local government areas of City of Sydney, Marrickville and Leichhardt and the input of parents, teachers and students will ensure that the Working Party is considering the broadest range of options possible.

For more information visit

[www.dec.nsw.gov.au/sydneyhsconsultation](http://www.dec.nsw.gov.au/sydneyhsconsultation)

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