

# The new Inner West Primary school location

## Community engagement report

May 2021



## Executive Summary

This report provides an overview of the feedback received from community consultation activities undertaken by the Department of Education (the department) in January and February 2021 regarding the location of a new primary school in Brisbane's inner west.

In July 2020, the Queensland Government announced a \$65 million funding commitment to build a new primary school in the inner west. This consultation formed part of the early planning for the new school.

The department's consultation process offered the community the opportunity to share their feedback on the possible location of the new school on the grounds of Indooroopilly State High School (ISHS) and nominate alternative sites for consideration. The consultation process included an online survey, face-to-face sessions, stakeholder briefings and written submissions via email.

Throughout the consultation the department heard that, regardless of the specific location of the new school, the key issues for any potential site included:

- concerns about traffic and safety;
- the need for a new school in the area;
- requests for more time and information;
- a desire to understand how the department planned for the future; and
- the preservation of access to green space for school students and local residents.

The feedback detailed in this report has been considered by the department as part of the next steps for this project.

Based on the community feedback received, this report recommends that the department:

- further investigates and assesses the Perrin Park Precinct, which includes the former Toowoong Bowls Club, relative to the ISHS site;
- undertakes further community consultation to ensure the new school, regardless of location, contributes to and has a positive impact on the local community; and
- defers the delivery of the new school until 2024 to allow time for community consultation and investigation of the Perrin Park Precinct.



## Contents

Executive Summary .....	2
Introduction .....	4
Purpose .....	4
Background .....	4
Department of Education site selection guidelines.....	4
Community consultation process .....	5
Key themes .....	5
Traffic and safety .....	6
Need.....	6
More time and information.....	7
Planning for the future .....	7
Green Space .....	7
Further insights.....	8
Site Selection .....	9
Indooroopilly State High School (ISHS) .....	9
Alternative sites .....	9
The way forward .....	10
Next steps .....	10
Appendices .....	12
Appendix A – Online survey .....	12
Appendix B – Drop in sessions.....	15
Appendix C – Stakeholder briefings .....	16



# Introduction

## Purpose

This report provides a summary of the community consultation process undertaken as part of the site selection process for a new primary school in Brisbane's inner west.

The report also recommends actions for the department to progress the delivery of a new inner west school based on the feedback received.

## Background

The Queensland Government is investing \$65 million to build a new primary school to relieve enrolment pressure at Indooroopilly State School and Ironside State School, in Brisbane's inner west.

The new primary school will increase the long-term enrolment capacity in the schooling network and enables the department to provide the facilities required by sustained, local enrolment growth. It will ensure all families who wish to send their children to local state schools are able to do so.

As part of planning for the new school, the department engaged with the local community in early 2021 to seek feedback on the possible location of the new school on part of the of Indooroopilly State High School (ISHS) site and seek nominations of alternative sites.

Community consultation regarding the location of the new school is an important part of the early planning for the project. Given the scarcity of land in the inner west region the department appreciates the community's interest in this project and the public's feedback on the location of the future school.

## Department of Education site selection guidelines

In order to enable the community to provide informed feedback on location choice, the department provided some guidance on key location selection criteria. A suitable site would:

- be located in an area that provides catchment relief for Indooroopilly State School and Ironside State School;
- be of a size to provide sufficient building platforms;
- provide access to greenspace and play space for students;
- support safe student travel to and from school;
- be developable in the short term;
- support active transport;
- provide opportunities for community use and access; and
- provide a value for money outcome.



## Community consultation process

The community engagement process sought feedback on the potential location of the new school on part of the ISHS site, as well as allowing for nominations of alternative sites for consideration. The engagement program included stakeholder briefings, an online survey that ran for eight weeks, four drop-in sessions and written submissions via email.

The department invited the community to participate in the consultation process through social media advertisements targeted to inner west suburbs and a postcard mailout to households in the Indooroopilly State School, Ironside State School and ISHS catchments. Additionally, the department provided information on its website and via posters and newsletters for school distribution.

More than 1,200 interactions across eight weeks

929

Online survey responses

88

Written submissions

168

Community members attended

4

drop in sessions

6

stakeholder briefings

## Key themes

There is significant interest in the local community regarding the new inner west primary school. As covered in more detail below, there is broad support from the community for the new educational facility.

However, following the department's review of all feedback received it is evident that there are significant concerns regarding the possible location of the new school on the grounds of ISHS, particularly among neighbours of the secondary school.

The key themes identified during the consultation process were:

- Traffic and safety
- Service need
- More time and information
- Planning for the future
- Green space



## Traffic and safety

*“Once the proposed new school is built, there will be significant traffic problems as a much larger group of families will need to access both the primary school and ISHS”*

The number one issue raised by the community was concern about traffic congestion and the associated safety of students and drivers. The department received multiple requests for information about what traffic studies had been conducted and requests that further studies be undertaken before finalising a location.

In relation to the ISHS site, there was a high level of concern about the possibility of locating a fifth school in close proximity to ISHS, St Peter’s Lutheran College, St Brigidine’s and Holy Family schools.

Concerns regarding traffic also focused on the recent medium and high-density residential developments in the area. Community members noted that often these developments are delivered without sufficient upgrades to the local road network, public transport or active travel facilities.

Community members feel that the existing road network does not cope with the current level of traffic and that the new school would further stress the local network.

## Need

*“I respect and acknowledge the need for more early years of schooling facilities. The sooner a new facility is ready the better.”*

The enrolment pressures at Indooroopilly State School and Ironside State School and the consequent need for additional primary school facilities in the inner west were widely acknowledged by the community. Notwithstanding this acknowledgment, the department received multiple requests for information regarding enrolment growth.

This issue was particularly common at the two drop-in sessions at Indooroopilly State School and Ironside State School. Attendees at these sessions spoke about ongoing crowding and the importance of relieving these schools.

There is also a perception that the two existing state schools are not appropriately managing their out-of-catchment enrolments and this is driving the enrolment pressure.



## More time and information

*“I am also concerned about the timing of the delivery of the school and that it doesn’t leave enough time for proper discussion about alternative sites. It’s more important to do this right than to do it quickly”*

Many community members felt the consultation was being rushed by the department based on the 2023 delivery timeline. The community would like more time and information so they can be genuinely involved in the planning for the new school.

Many community members were concerned that the 2023 delivery timeline would result in a rushed process and therefore not deliver the best outcome for students or the community.

Some community members acknowledge that the ISHS site could be viable, but noted they were not being given enough information to properly consider the issues or the department’s proposed solutions.

## Planning for the future

*“It seems that choosing this location is a short-sighted solution to a complex and long-term problem”*

There was strong sentiment from the community that co-locating the new school on the grounds of ISHS demonstrated a lack of forward planning for the growth of the both the high school and the new primary school.

There was a sense that co-locating the schools on the ISHS would constrain the future growth of both schools, to the detriment of both schools.

## Green Space

*“There will be too much green space lost for the current students and community”*

The local community has strong attachments to the green space at ISHS, both as an asset to students and the local community. Many people spoke of its importance as place for walking, community sporting associations and recreation.

It was mentioned that few inner-city high schools have such green space. This is seen as a strength of the school, with tangible benefits for students and the broader community.



## Further insights

In addition to the themes mentioned above, recent developments in the local area – by all levels of government – have created mistrust between the local community and government agencies.

This can be seen in community sentiment regarding the Renewing our Schools (ROS) hall and the 6 Full Cohort (6FC) learning centre, delivered at ISHS in 2020 and 2019 respectively. The local community feels that it was not consulted or considered by the department in the delivery of these projects. Many neighbours also feel that these projects have decreased the amenity of the residential area and/or their properties.

An additional issue that was frequently raised is the perception that government agencies are not appropriately planning or collaborating on a long-term vision for the inner west.

The department acknowledges that these are important views and recognises the importance of appropriate consultation with the local community.

Further, there was unhappiness amongst some members of the community with the amount of development that has taken place in recent years and a sense that the area is being irrevocably changed without their input.

The department acknowledges that, while this is an important issue, it speaks to a larger more complex matter than the establishment of a new school, which is in some sense necessitated by these developments and the area's population growth.



## Site Selection

### Indooroopilly State High School (ISHS)

The department sought feedback on the possible location of a new primary school on the grounds of ISHS - the only site the department had identified for the consultation process.

As noted above, many concerns were raised regarding this location. However, it was also acknowledged by some community members that it would be difficult to find an ideal site in the inner west given the urban nature of the area. Some community members were also explicit in stating that they simply did not want the development “in their backyard”.

Whatever location is selected there will be a need for detailed investigations into traffic management, traffic mitigation design solutions and community use of the new facilities.

A small number of respondents indicated support for the ISHS site or acknowledged that it could work if appropriately designed and operated. The feedback also noted operational changes that may assist such as staggered start times, dedicated school buses, strict enrolment management plan enforcement at all schools and appropriate separation between primary and secondary students.

With specific regards to ISHS there is a perception that:

- the local road network cannot accommodate additional traffic, given the proximity of four schools already located near the ISHS site;
- pedestrian and active travel safety needs to be expanded and improved around the ISHS site;
- the ISHS site is not the “right” site as enrolment demand is being driven by development in other areas, such as in the Toowong State School catchment;
- the existing green space is a community asset that cannot be compromised;
- the department will rush this project through as they did with ROS and 6FC;
- that ISHS needs the space for growth and cannot afford to lose its oval; and
- building over a new car park and drop-off facilities is a waste of tax payer funds.

### Alternative sites

The community consultation process also provided a method for community members to nominate alternative sites to the department for the consideration and investigation, relative to the ISHS site.

Across the consultation period between 4 January and 28 February 2021, 62 alternative sites were nominated for consideration by the department.

Across all consultation methods, the most popular alternative sites nominated by the public were:

- Perrin Park - 56 Josling Street, Toowong
- Toowong Bowls Club - 59 Gailey Road, Taringa
- QASMT Campus - 78 Bywong Street, Toowong
- Tricare site - 52 Seven Oaks Street, Taringa
- University of Queensland – identified as general option, multiple sites nominated



## The way forward

The department's consultation process has identified more time is needed to investigate the location of the new school. Regardless of the site chosen, the department must further consult with the impacted communities before finalising the site.

Further community consultation is important in listening to the community and acknowledging community concerns.

## Next steps

### Need for the new school

#### *Feedback*

There is acknowledgement within the local community that a new school is needed to service the inner west.

There are some individuals who acknowledge that it will be difficult to find a site in the inner west that is not impacted by traffic, flooding and/or loss of green space.

There are a number of planning, approval and practical considerations that require further investigation, regardless of which site is chosen.

#### *Next steps*

It is important the department is able to deliver a new school for the inner west which acknowledges and responds to the concerns of the local community.

Regardless of which site is chosen the department will need to work the local community surrounding that site to design the new school in a manner that responds to their concerns and is supported locally.

The new school will also require the support of stakeholders from across government, both state and local. The department will need to work with these stakeholders to ensure the design and delivery is collaborative and solutions focused.

The department recommends that the delivery of the school be deferred to allow this important, collaborative work to be undertaken.

### Traffic

#### *Feedback*

With four existing schools (ISHS, Holy Family, St Peters and Brigidine College) in a small radius the local road network cannot cope with another school and the associated traffic movements.

The current traffic situation is dangerous for pedestrians and adding a new school will only make the situation worse.

#### *Next steps*

Further traffic studies are required to understand the traffic situation around ISHS and any viable alternative sites.

Based on the outcomes of these studies, traffic mitigation measures can be developed to ensure the new school has minimal impact on the road network.

The design and approval of the new school will require collaboration with other



government stakeholders and provides an opportunity to look at cross government solutions.

## Green space

### *Feedback*

Green space is an important educational and community asset in inner city neighborhoods.

Green space is highly valued by students and community members alike.

### *Next steps*

More time is required by the department to develop a design solution which has minimal impacts on green space.

More time is also required to understand the community uses of green space and develop a design solution that seeks to accommodate community uses of department facilities.

## Future Planning

### *Feedback*

There is concern that ISHS has been chosen as a possible site without regard to how ISHS or the new primary school may need to expand in the future.

### *Next steps*

ISHS has a high level of out-of-catchment students. It is suggested that the region work with ISHS to reduce out of catchment enrolments to ensure the school can accommodate in catchment students within existing infrastructure.

Master planning should be completed for ISHS parallel to the new primary school to demonstrate the ongoing viability of the ISHS facilities to service in catchment students.

## More time and information

### *Feedback*

The local community requests that more information is shared regarding

- Traffic
- Enrolment growth
- Site selection

The community has requested more time to allow for appropriate planning of the new school.

### *Next steps*

In the future rounds of consultation, the department will share sufficient data with the community to demonstrate the need for the new school, the viability of each site under investigation and possible design solutions to address key challenges.

The department will also share throughout the project the traffic analysis and mitigation options.



# Appendices

## Appendix A – Online survey

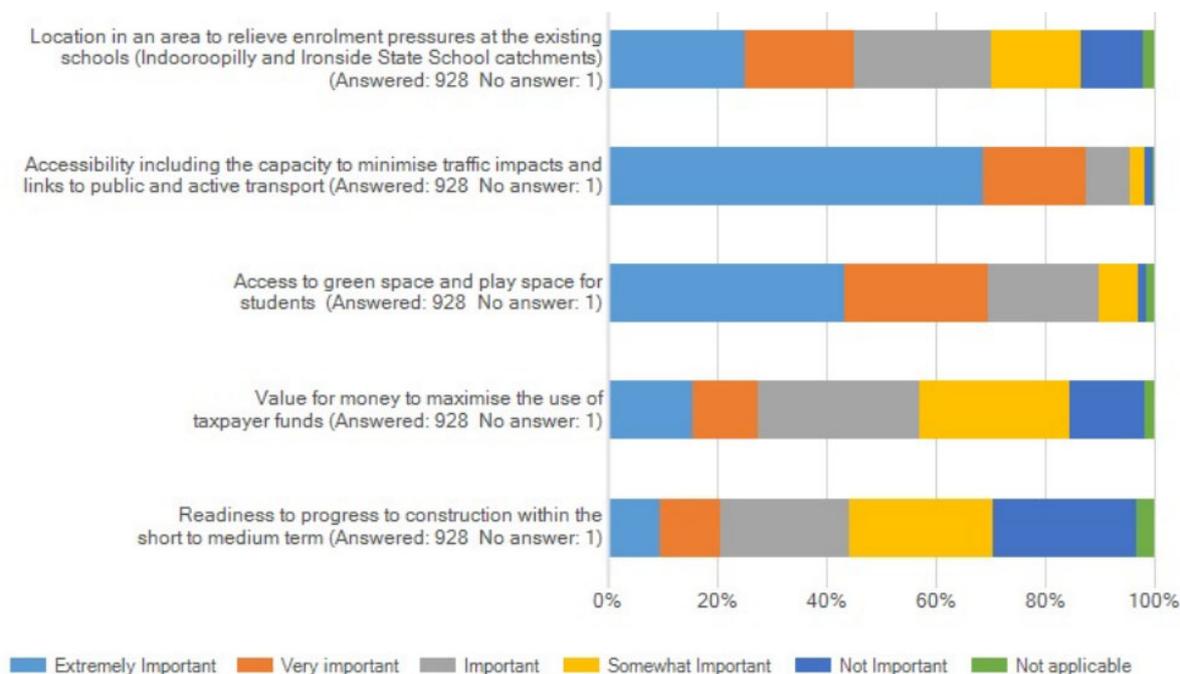
The online survey was live from 5 January to 28 February 2021 and 929 people completed it.

The survey sought to provide the community with an opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed Indooroopilly State High School site and enabled them to nominate alternative sites they wanted the department to consider instead.

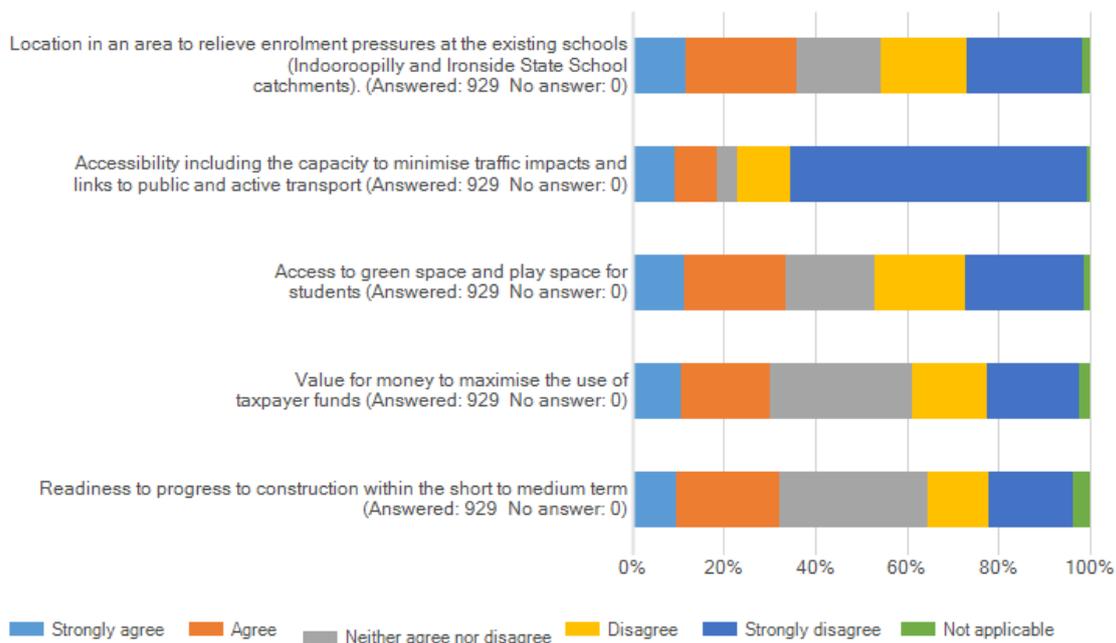
In considering the ISHS or other sites, the department asked respondents to consider the following criteria:

- Accessibility – including the capacity to minimise traffic impacts and links to public and active transport.
- Readiness to progress to construction within the short to medium term.
- Access to green space and play space for students.
- Location in an area to relieve enrolment pressures at the existing schools (Indooroopilly and Ironside State School catchments).
- Value for money to maximise the use of taxpayer funds.

**Question 1:** A number of criteria are considered when selecting a new school location. How important are the following items to you in the selection of a location for the new state school in Brisbane’s inner west?

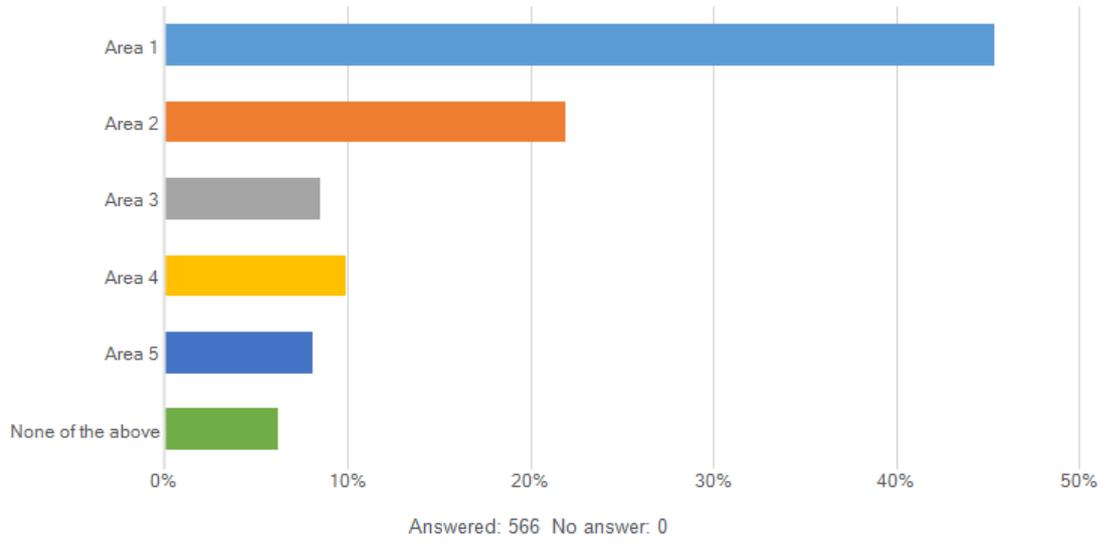


**Question 2:** To what degree do you feel locating the new school at Indooroopilly State High School meets the following criteria:



**Question 3:** If you would like to nominate an alternative location, please select one area from the map below to indicate the general location of your nominated site.





**Appendix B – Drop in sessions**

The department's consultation team hosted four pop-up feedback sessions at Indooroopilly State School, Ironside State School and Indooroopilly State High School which 168 community members attended.

These face-to-face sessions provided an opportunity for interested persons to talk with members of the project team, provide their feedback to the department, nominate alternative sites and learn more about the project.

Display boards were used to invite discussion about issues such as the state schools in need of relief, possible site locations, site selection criteria and information about where a new school might be located within Indooroopilly State High School. The sites nominated and comments were recorded in the conversation feedback forms.

The department also took feedback about alternative locations by capturing alternative sites nominated by the local community. As mentioned above the most popular sites nominated were: Perrin Park, the Toowong Bowls Club, QASMT, TRICARE and the University of Queensland.



## **Appendix C – Stakeholder briefings**

Departmental staff met with interested stakeholders, including:

- Indooroopilly State High School Principal
- Ironside State School Principal
- Indooroopilly State School Principal
- Indooroopilly State High School Parents and Citizens group
- State Member for Maiwar, Michael Berkman MP
- Councillor James Mackay, Brisbane City Council (Walter Taylor Ward)

The Department shared information about the need for the new school, the \$65 million investment for delivery of a new school to open in 2023, site selection criteria, an overview of early planning for the Indooroopilly State High school site and catchment management.

Key feedback on the new school from these stakeholders included:

- support for the need for a new school to service the inner west;
- acknowledgement of the challenge of finding a suitable site in the inner west;
- traffic and safety concerns regarding locating a fifth school in the area surrounding the Indooroopilly State High School site;
- concerns relating to the timing of the consultation and requests to extend the consultation period;
- concerns regarding the impact on green space;
- concerns regarding the impact on ISHS; and
- requests for the department to provide more detailed information and data associated with the planning for a new school, and the alternative sites considered by the department to date.

