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ACU STRATHFIELD CONCEPT PLAN_ PREFERRED PROJECT REPORT AND RESPONSE TO SUBMISSIONS MP 10_0231

Prepared for Australian Catholic University
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Executive Summary

Purpose of this report

This submission to the Department of Planning and Infrastructure (DPI) comprises a Preferred Project Report and Response to Submissions (PPR) in response to comments received from the DPI, local and state government agencies and the general public during the public exhibition period for the Concept Plan application (MP 10_0231) for the Australian Catholic University (ACU), Strathfield Campus.

Consultation and Public Submissions

The Concept Plan application was publicly exhibited by the DPI from 18 January – 29 February 2012, with a subsequent extension to 14 March 2012.

The proposal received:

- 627 public individual submissions, and
- 6 submissions from local and state government agencies.

Of the 627 public submissions:

- 213 (34%) were individual submissions, and
- 408 (66%) were proforma submissions based on 6 variants.

Submissions from local and state government agencies comprised:

- Office of Environment and Heritage (now the Environment Protection Authority)
- Heritage Council of NSW
- Transport for NSW
- Sydney Water
- Roads and Maritime Services
- Strathfield Municipal Council

From the submissions received, the following key issues were identified and have been addressed in this report. The percentage of submissions that mentioned each key issue is also quoted in brackets.

- Student Numbers (75%)
- Traffic, Parking and Access (94%)
- Built Form and Neighbourhood Character (81%)
- Heritage (14%)
- Hours of Operation (2%)
- Residential Amenity (42%)
- Neighbourhood Policy (64%), and
- Approval Process (59%).

Summary of Key Issues

This report shows that ACU are currently complying with the consents applicable to the campus in terms of **student numbers** on site, at any one time. The proposed future student numbers have also been clarified with the distinction made between a figure for enrolled equivalent full time student load (EFTSL) and students on site at any one time. The evolution of the ways in which higher education is delivered (with increasing numbers of distance, correspondence and part-time students) has meant that the numbers of enrolments have become significantly less relevant in an assessment of environmental impacts. The significant figure in terms of an environmental

assessment is the number of students on site at any one time because it is those students that have the potential to impact the relevant environment.

In response to submissions, the figure of 2,400 at any one time has been reduced to 2,000 at any one time, with a maximum number of 2,800 students per day retained. This arrangement is designed to increase the flexibility of options for students enrolled at a contemporary university campus and reduce the impact of student turnover or 'churn' (that is, students departing the campus and re-entering because of timetabling issues) which is a feature of the current 750 students at any one time.

Further **traffic, parking and access** data and assessment has been provided. It has been shown that the increase in student numbers proposed will not significantly increase traffic movements in the surrounding streets. It has also been shown that with an increase in patronage of the free shuttle bus service and extra free on site parking spaces, the number of students and staff parking in surrounding streets will decrease, even as student numbers grow.

In respect of **built form and neighbourhood character**, it is significant to note that the Heritage Council concurs with the overall changes proposed to the site, with minor amendments that have been adopted. These include changes to the built form of Precincts 1 and 3 to address submissions. The footprint of the library building proposed in Precinct 1 has been set back from Albert Road an average 3m to maintain significant heritage view lines and the setting of Mount Royal, Edmund Rice building, the Barron Chapel, and the original line of Albert Road. An additional set back will also protect the two existing Bunya Pines. The height of this building has been reduced in the north western portion from 4 storeys to 3 to also maintain view lines.

The footprint of the building in Precinct 3 has been set back an additional 5m from the western boundary (from 10m to 15m) to assist in reducing any impacts on adjoining residential properties although its height has been increased by 800mm.

Heritage concerns have been addressed with the above built form amendments to Precinct 1.

Hours of operation have been clarified and activities within those hours detailed. It is concluded the increase in student numbers and hours of operation will not detrimentally impact the amenity of the surrounding neighbourhood.

Residential amenity is assessed in terms of safety, noise, air quality and litter. It is concluded that safety, noise and air quality will not be adversely compromised mainly because the proposed increase in student numbers will not be travelling to site by private car. Increases in public transport usage and more on site car parking will mean the increase in vehicular movements is minimal with less cars be parked in surrounding streets. In terms of litter, ACU will maintain staff to collect rubbish around the campus perimeter and implement a rubbish recycling system on campus with collection points at exit points from the campus to reduce litter in the public domain.

The **Neighbourhood Policy** has been revised to address issues raised in submissions.

The Concept Plan **approval process** has been clarified and consultation between Strathfield Council and ACU regarding site operations and future development over the past 4 years has been detailed. The approval process of the Concept Plan in relation to the *EP&A Act 1979* is also outlined and clarified pointing out that the project was and remains of State significance.

Revisions to the exhibited Concept Plan

Revised Development Description

The Concept Plan seeks approval for the following elements on the Strathfield Campus:

- maximum 4,800 EFTSL by 2016, with 2,800 per day and 2,000 at any one time
- hours of operation of 7:00am – 10:00pm weekdays and 8:00am – 5:00pm Saturdays and Sundays

- four development precincts containing new buildings with controls on maximum GFA, height and footprint as detailed on the precinct plans
- a total of 717 car parking spaces with the majority of spaces housed in three basement areas
- three site entrances off Barker Road and one entrance off Edgar Street
- refined internal circulation
- new and improved site landscaping and public domain, and
- new pedestrian linkages throughout the campus.

Car Parking Location and Numbers

The distribution and number of car parking spaces has changed slightly from that in the exhibited EA.

The EA proposed a total of 674 spaces, with 644 spaces allocated to ACU and 30 spaces to St Patrick's College. The PPR proposes 747 spaces with 717 allocated to ACU and 30 to St Patrick's College, an increase of 73 spaces.

The bulk of the increase (70 spaces) comes from the retention of staff parking at grade on the eastern boundary. The remaining additional spaces come from an increase in spaces proposed in the north western underground car park and corrections in figures for other areas.

The comparison between the now superseded Table 3.1 of the EA and the current distribution is shown below in **Table 9** (from Section 4.2). These figures **exclude** the 30 spaces allocated to St Patrick's College because they have not changed.

Table 9 – Car Parking Distribution

Location	**Exhibited**	**Amended**
Underground Car Park	252	262*
Library/ Learning Commons (Precinct 1)	174	174
Main Gate Accessway	19	15
Arts and Sciences (Precinct 3)	158	158
Clancy Site	41	38
On-grade Eastern Car Park	0	70
TOTAL	**644**	**717***

*excludes the 30 spaces for St Patrick's College

Furthermore, original proposals to work with Council to introduce 2-hour timed parking in the local area have been abandoned, as it has been demonstrated that car parking in local streets is likely to significantly decrease with the additional parking on site and the use of the shuttle bus.

Access

The EA proposed four access points off Barker Road (see Figure 3.7 in the EA). Gate 1 in the south eastern corner proposed a new signalised intersection. This entire gate and intersection is no longer proposed because the existing staff parking is to be retained and the Albert Road extension will continue to be retained, utilising the main gate access point. Three gates are now proposed – the main existing gate (entry), the existing service entrance (main gate exit) and a new gate close to the western boundary to service the new north western underground car park.

Precincts 1 and 3 – Built Form

In response to submissions from the public and local and state government agencies, built form elements of Precincts 1 and 3 were changed. The corresponding sections were also amended to more correctly show ground level changes **(Appendix J)**, the photomontages were improved to

better represent the proposal **(Appendix C)** and the shadow diagrams were updated **(Appendix D)**. **Table 10** (from Section 4.2) shows the changes within the precincts.

Table 10 – Changes to Built Form Elements of Precincts 1 and 3

Area	Exhibited	Amended
PRECINCT 1		
Maximum RL	51.20	47.60
Gross floor area	6,700sqm	5,900sqm
No of levels	4 in the western portion	3 in the western portion
Setback to Albert Road	0	3m
Setback from Bunya Pine	3m	9m
PRECINCT 3		
Maximum RL	42.00	42.80
Gross floor area	3,660sqm	3,200sqm
No of levels	3	No change
Setback to western boundary	10m	15m

Conclusion

Elements of the Concept Plan have been amended to address submissions and present a better design outcome for the site and additional information primarily in regard to student numbers and traffic and transport is submitted. The impacts of the proposed changes to the Concept Plan have been assessed and addressed in Section 4. Therefore the Concept Plan as revised in this Preferred Project Report is for recommended for approval.

1.0 ____Introduction

An Environmental Assessment (EA) report for Concept Plan approval for the Australian Catholic University (ACU) Strathfield Campus at 167 and 179 Albert Road, Strathfield was lodged with the Department of Planning and Infrastructure (DPI) on 22 December 2011. The proposal was publicly exhibited from 18 January – 29 February 2012, with a subsequent extension to 14 March 2012.

The Concept Plan seeks approval for a master plan for the site to accommodate student growth over the next 10 years. In summary, this will involve:

- new buildings in four precincts
- an increase in on site parking (from the current 346 spaces to 717 spaces)
- new and improved pedestrian and vehicular circulation into and within the site, and
- improved site landscaping and public domain.

The proposal received:

- 627 public individual submissions, and
- 6 submissions from local and state government agencies.

Of the 627 public submissions:

- 213 (34%) were individual submissions, and
- 408 (66%) were proforma submissions based on 6 variants.

The DPI also provided the proponent with 'Key Issues' that need to be addressed. These issues were mainly generated from the submissions received. They are covered by the list below and addressed in the relevant sections of this report.

From the submissions received, the following Key Issues have been identified. The percentage of submissions in which each issue was raised is identified in brackets.

- Student Numbers (75%)
- Traffic, Parking and Access (94%)
- Built Form and Neighbourhood Character (81%)
- Heritage (14%)
- Hours of Operation (2%)
- Residential Amenity (42%)
- Neighbourhood Policy (64%), and
- Approval Process (59%).

This Preferred Project Report (PPR) addresses these Key Issues and where relevant, details amendments to the Concept Plan. A revised (and now final) Statement of Commitments is also included.

The PPR should be read in conjunction with the EA dated December 2011 and forms part of the Concept Plan.

2.0 ____Summary of Submissions

The list of Key Issues to be addressed in this report has been generated from an analysis of all the submissions received to the Concept Plan. A summary of each submission can be found at **Appendix A**.

2.1 Breakdown of Submitters

Each submission from either local residents, local businesses or other interested parties has been summarised. As a large number of submissions addressed similar issues, rather than addressing individual submissions, the related issues have been collated and where possible placed under 'Key Issues'. A description of these Key Issues is in Section 2.2.

To ensure interested parties can cross check the issues raised in their own submissions with the proponent's response, **Appendix A** includes a summary of each submission. This is generally by the submission number allocated by DPI, and includes:

- a description of each issue raised in each submission, and
- an allocation of each issue an appropriate Issue Category (where possible).

Where one submission covered more than one issue, each issue has been identified and categorised. Within submissions from the general public:

- 99.7% were from local residents, and
- 0.3% were from others, such as past students or local business owners.

The submissions received from local and NSW state government agencies comprise the following.

- Office of Environment and Heritage (now the Environment Protection Authority)
- Heritage Council of NSW
- Transport for NSW
- Sydney Water
- Roads and Maritime Services
- Strathfield Municipal Council

A summary of the submissions from these agencies is also at **Appendix A**.

2.2 Analysis of Submissions

The Summary of Issues Table at **Appendix A** summarises the comments included in each submission as well as allocating one or more 'Issue Category' to that submission, for example, traffic, built form, noise etc. From the issue category (or categories) allocated, a list of the Key Issues to be addressed was generated. **Table 1** shows the Key Issue, the issue category it contains and general comments that represent the majority of submissions made under that category.

Table 1 – Relationship between Key Issue and Issue Category

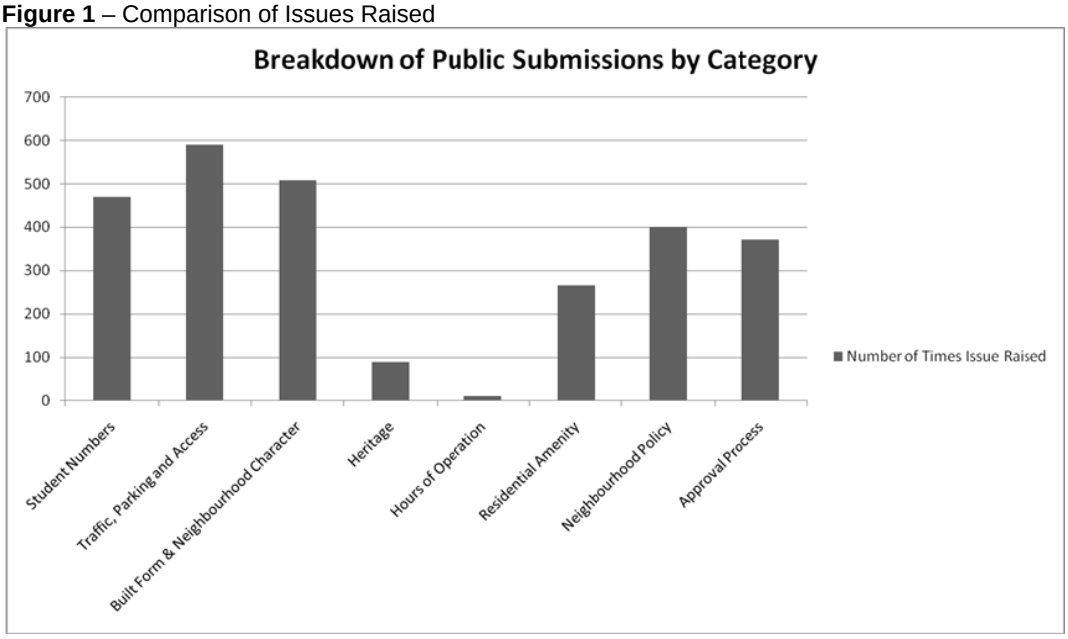
Key Issue	Section in PPR	Issue Category with Explanation
Student Numbers	Section 3.1	• Existing consents • Existing student numbers • Proposed increase • Intensity of use
Traffic, Parking and Access	Section 3.2	*Traffic* • Capacity of local road network • Traffic changes (parking, bus stops, road widths)

Key Issue	Section in PPR	Issue Category with Explanation
		on Barker Road, South Street, Wilson Street, Marion Street and Newton Road
		Access • Safety and traffic impacts from increase in number of site access points • Signalised intersection at South Street
		Parking • On site o number of spaces • On street o extent and impact o cumulative impact of other institutions o proposed 2-hour restriction on street o resident driveways
		Sustainable Transport • Public transport • Current and future use of shuttle bus • Encouragement of other forms of transport (walking, cycling)
Built Form and Neighbourhood Character	Section 3.3	*Built Form* • Building height • Setbacks • Overshadowing • Privacy • Views from public domain
		Neighbourhood Character • 'Commercial/business uses' in residential area • Integration with surrounding streetscape
Heritage	Section 3.4	• Impact of new built forms on heritage buildings • Loss of trees/gardens
Hours of Operation	Section 3.5	• Proposed changes
Residential Amenity	Section 3.6	• Safety • Noise • Air quality impacts from increased traffic/basement car park • Litter in surrounding streets
Neighbourhood Policy	Section 3.7	• Policy needs to address current situation and proposed expansion
Approval Process	Section 3.8	• Part 3A • Consultation process • Adequacy of Information

The importance placed on each Key Issue has been determined by calculating the number of submissions (shown as a percentage) that mentioned each Key Issue, also shown in the bar chart below.

- 75% mentioned Student Numbers
- 94% mentioned Traffic, Parking and Access
- 81% mentioned Built Form and Neighbourhood Character
- 14% mentioned Heritage
- 2% mentioned Hours of Operation
- 42% mentioned Residential Amenity
- 64% mentioned the Neighbourhood Policy, and
- 59% mentioned the Approval Process.

Figure 1 – Comparison of Issues Raised



A small number of issues are not discussed in this report because they are not planning considerations. These issues include:

- the role of religion in education
- that ACU should relocate to a new site
- property values, and
- the relationship between ACU and St Patrick's College.

In addition to these, there were submissions that referred to the concern that the surrounding infrastructure (roads, public transport etc) could not handle the increase in use as a result of the proposal. Although ACU cannot directly alter road capacity or government public transport services, the analysis demonstrates that the impacts are minor. In any case as local and state government agencies were consulted in the preparation of this proposal, they were able to consider any impacts and are able to take the proposal (if approved) into their long term planning for upgrades/ increases in services. Furthermore, the measures outlined in Section 3.2 (Traffic, Parking and Access) will ameliorate the impact on the surrounding infrastructure arising out of the increased use of the campus.

3.0 ____Proponent's Response to Key Issues

This section provides a detailed response to the key issues raised in submissions from the public and local and state government agencies.

3.1 Student Numbers

3.1.1 Key Issues Raised

Student numbers were raised in 75% of public submissions. This refers to existing and proposed numbers as well as the impacts of the future total number of students on site.

It was raised in public submissions and by the DPI and Strathfield Council that there appeared to be a discrepancy between the approved student numbers for the site and the current student numbers attending the campus as detailed in the EA. Given the various ways that the numbers are presented, there is confusion around how student numbers on site are measured. In relation to this, the DPI also requested information relating to discussions between Strathfield Council and ACU from the time of the Albert Road site consent in 1994 to the current Concept Plan application.

The public submissions and Strathfield Council raised the issue that the total future number of students proposed on site is unsustainable.

The DPI also required information regarding the progression of student numbers to the maximum as proposed in the EA, in particular whether the numbers are to be staged in accordance with the proposed staged building works.

3.1.2 Response

This section outlines:

- the existing consents that apply to ACU's Strathfield Campus
- the extent to which Council has been monitoring student numbers on the site
- the way in which the context of higher education has changed over the last 20 years, particularly in regard to how the students achieve qualifications, and
- current and future proposed student numbers.

Existing Consents

ACU and its predecessor Colleges have occupied the site at 179 Albert Road, Strathfield since 1908. The campus has both frontage to and the main entrance on Barker Road. In 2002 the University acquired a second site at 167 Albert Road, Strathfield, known as the Clancy site. Conditions of use for the two sites were established separately, in 1994 for the original Albert Road site (DA 93/164) and in 2002 for the Clancy site (DA 0102/252). These two sites make up the ACU Strathfield Campus ('the campus') and students move between them for classes, services etc.

Albert Road Site

On 16 December 1994 the Land and Environment Court granted consent to development application (DA) 93/164. Condition 30 in relation to hours of operation states:

> *30. Classes should be conducted only between the hours of 8.00 am to 9.00 pm Monday to Friday. The library shall be open only between the above hours and from 8.00 am to 5.00 pm on Saturday.*

Condition 32 in relation to student numbers states:

> *32. The number of students enrolled at the University at any one time shall not exceed 1,100 by day and 700 by night and the number of teachers employed shall not exceed 190, without the prior approval of council. The number of students in*

attendance on the site at any one time shall not exceed 510 between the hours of 8.00 am and 5.00 pm Monday to Friday and 247 between 5.00 pm and 9.00 pm Monday to Friday.

Importantly in granting consent, the Court observed that the key issues were *'limited to the extent of traffic impact and demand for parking*, and that it was *not reasonable from a planning point of view… to meet the contingency of a peak demand*'. The Court also observed that '*Barker Road is a busy thoroughfare, heavily impacted by traffic irrespective of the contribution by ACU*' and that '*there is an adequate bus service between ACU and Strathfield Station*' considered to be '*important to encourage the use of this facility during the daytime*'. The approval required a total of 305 car parking spaces, with 65 to be allocated to staff, and changes to access that resulted in the enlarged Barker Road entry and led to the eventual closure of the Albert Road entry (although the latter was not stipulated by the Court).

Clancy Site

Development on the Clancy site (DA 102/252) was approved by Strathfield Council on 15 October 2002. Condition 24 includes as follow:

d) The student numbers are not to exceed a maximum of 240 students at any given time.

The Clancy consent included a condition that 38 car spaces were to be provided, mainly for staff. In summary the following conditions currently apply to the campus.

- The Albert Road site is limited 'at any one time' to having 1,100 day and 700 night *enrolled* students *without the prior approval of council*. The Clancy site has no such limit.
- The Albert Road site is limited 'at any one time' to having 510 students between 8.00 am and 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday and 247 students between 5.00 pm and 9.00 pm Monday to Friday
- The Clancy site is limited 'at any given time' to having 240 students.
- A minimum of 343 car spaces are required across the two sites.

Therefore across both sites ('the campus'), student numbers are limited 'at any one time' to 750 (510 + 240) between 8.00 am and 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday and 487 (247 + 240) between 5.00 pm and 9.00 pm Monday to Friday.

Summary

Notwithstanding the number of enrolled students, it is the number of students present on site at any one time that is the significant figure on which to base an environmental assessment. This is because, irrespective of the total number of students enrolled, it is the students on site who generate the requirements for car parking and public transport access.

Importantly, the concept of '*enrolled students*' has undergone a radical shift since 1994, reflecting the ways in which higher education delivery models have evolved. Whereas, in 1994, the vast majority of students of an institution attended the institution, often on a daily basis with a minimum class time of 18-20 hours per week, in 2012, the availability of alternative delivery mechanisms such as online learning, distance education, the prevalence of part-time study, and the general decrease in the amount of face-to-face teaching time (around 8-10 hours per week) that is required in order to study has meant that the traditional concept of an '*enrolled student*' bears little or no relation to the concept today.

Accordingly, this Concept Plan seeks to reflect the contemporary models of education delivery and to address elements of the existing consents that have become misleading and outmoded.

A more detailed explanation of the way in which the concept of '*enrolled students'* has been interpreted for the purposes of this Concept Plan, and its relationship with students on campus 'at any one time' is contained in the section entitled Current Student Numbers.

Compliance with Consents

Strathfield Council's submission to DPI includes references to correspondence with ACU *'on or about April 2006… requesting information regarding the number of students on campus'*, the response to which is seemingly unacceptable. Council then refers to *'a long history of problems associated with expansion'*. ACU has responded to Council's concerns over the last few years.

The key features of ACU's consultation with Council and other relevant stakeholders are as follows and summarised in **Table 2**:

- For some time, ACU has proposed the expansion of its Strathfield Campus to meet its anticipated needs, to reflect the diverse nature of the delivery of university education in Australia at present, and to deal with unnecessarily restrictive limits in various consents applying to ACU.
- ACU has consulted with Council on the proposed master planning process, expansion of ACU over a long period and an appropriate audit method for students moving between the various sites of the campus precinct.
- ACU and Council agreed that ACU should conduct a trial whereby additional students were permitted to be on campus at any one time (that is, over and above what might be the limits in the relevant consents) with a view to informing what appropriate levels of student numbers on site might be, particularly in the context of the master planning process.
- Recognising the difficulty of ascertaining student numbers on site, ACU implemented an audit process whereby it measures the numbers of students in class at any particular time in order to monitor compliance with its consents. The audit of students in class is considered by ACU to be the only reliable way of ensuring that students (as opposed to the myriad other persons that will be present on a university campus) are properly counted.
- There have been only two instances where the number of students in class has exceeded the 750 limit contained in the consents. Both of these occasions occurred during the Strathfield Council approved trial, whose very purpose was to inform the master planning process which has ultimately progressed to the Concept Plan application.
- However, the existing limits have imposed significant operational difficulties on ACU, such as requiring inconvenient timetables to be established necessitating significant 'churn'. They have also failed to have regard to the diverse range of delivery modes of higher education such as distance and online learning.

The purpose of this Concept Plan application is, in the context of student numbers, to develop a planning regime which appropriately reflects both the way in which contemporary higher education is delivered and imposes reasonable limits on the number of students on site, having regard to the associated environmental impacts.

Table 2 – Significant Consultation and Lodgement Dates

Date	Event
8 April 2009	Council request information regarding compliance with Conditions 30 & 32 of 1994 (Albert Road) consent
3 August 2009	ACU provide response to Council
10 August 2009	ACU receive penalty notice from Council
25 August 2009	ACU provide additional advice to Council
15 September 2009	Council, through solicitors, advises penalty notice withdrawn

Date	Event
18 September 2009	ACU provide Council with additional information and advise of intention to seek amendments to consent and undertake a master planning process
11 November 2009	Correspondence commenced with Council regarding a trial of increased student numbers to 900 per hour weekdays, small postgraduate classes on weekends, weekend library opening hours and shuttle bus service in 2010
24 February 2010	Meeting with the Manager of Development Assessment at Council offices, where Council gives verbal approval to trial
25 February 2010	ACU confirm details to Council in writing
22 April 2010	Council provided with update on master planning process
21 May 2010	Council provided with an audit of student numbers on site for one week in April
16 July 2010	Council agree not to take action regarding increase in student enrolments and operating details subject to ACU providing Council with ongoing information regarding the master planning process
22 July 2010	ACU provide Council with a letter confirming results of attendance in class audit for Semester 1 2010
25 October 2010	Meeting with Council to discuss master plan, likely a Part 3A application
27 October 2010	Meeting with DPI confirming ACU should seek declaration for master plan as a Part 3A application
November 2010	Meeting with St Patrick's College regarding master plan and location of car park in oval area
	MASTER PLAN DECLARED PART 3A CONCEPT PLAN
4 February 2011	Master plan declared Part 3A project by the DPI and DGRs issued
17 February 2011	Amended DGRs issued
13 July 2011	Meeting with Council to discuss Part 3A process, traffic implications and student numbers
11 & 12 August 2011	Two community information sessions held regarding master plan
8 September 2011	Meeting with Council to discuss changes to Concept Plan, specifically car park location
10 October 2011	DA for 167 Albert Road, lodged with Council (DA2011/165) DA for 179 Albert Road, lodged with Council (DA2011/164)
November 2011	Meeting with St Patrick's College regarding master plan and location of car park in oval area

Date	Event
13 December 2011	Council approves DA2011/165 Council approves DA2011/164
	CONCEPT PLAN LODGED
22 December 2011	Concept Plan submitted to DPI
18 January 2012	Concept Plan exhibition period begins
31 January 2012	Meeting with Council to discuss Concept Plan and early lodgement of car park DA, to which Council agrees
23 February 2012	Resident meeting with ACU, planning & traffic consultants
14 March 2012	Concept Plan exhibition period concludes
3 April 2012	Section 96 for DA2011/165 lodged with Council
10 April 2012	Car park DA lodged with Council (DA2012/039)

Current Student Numbers

The following explains the distinction between the number of students on site 'at any one time' and the number of enrolled students, referred to as Equivalent Full Time Student Load (EFTSL). This term which is explained below, is utilised across all tertiary institutions.

Site Attendance Audit

As noted above, in early 2009 Strathfield Council sought confirmation from ACU that they were complying with Conditions 30 and 32 of the Albert Road DA (student numbers and hours of operation).

To address this matter ACU commenced biannual detailed audits of student attendance during the first week after each semester's census date in 2009 to support the master planning process. This is the most accurate time to count student numbers as after this date students are penalised for discontinuing subjects and timetabling issues have been resolved. It should be noted that the audits were completed for the *entire campus*, ie Albert Road and Clancy sites. By auditing students in class, ACU are confident that the individuals identified and counted in the room are in fact students and are in a stable setting for the collection period. Other data collection methods, such as counting unidentified individuals arriving and departing at the campus gates, are statistically unreliable. This method in particular would capture groups excluded from the student cohort and therefore outside the student number restrictions contained in Conditions 30 and 32 of the Albert Road DA and Condition 24(d) of the Clancy DA such as staff, visitors and researchers.

The first audit completed was of Semester 2, 2009. The results of the audit, set out in **Table 3**, were provided to Council.

Importantly, **Table 3** shows that during 2009 the maximum number of students in class at any one time was 641 on a Tuesday between 10.00am and 11.00am. In 2010 the maximum number was 686 on a Tuesday between 12midday and 1.00pm. In 2011 the maximum number was 522 on a Monday between 10.00am and 11.00am.

Equivalent Full Time Student Load

The Equivalent Full Time Student Load (EFTSL) gives the best figure for enrolments and is a common approach at all tertiary institutions to be able to assess resourcing and funding needs. The EFTSL counts in **Table 3** for the year include undergraduate, postgraduate, online and *Away from*

Base/Residential indigenous program students. Students in these programs attend the campus for four weeks a year. The counts also include a number of students enrolled in programs based at ACU's North Sydney campus who may study individual units that are part of programs based at the Albert Road site or Clancy site. Also, some students, who are enrolled at other universities, attend the campus for cross institutional study and some cohorts of students enrolled at the University are taught off site throughout Australia. Currently there are 305 EFTSL enrolled as students of the campus in these categories.

Table 3 shows that while there has been an increase in the number of enrolled students over the past three years, there has generally been a decrease in number of students on site. This reflects the increased use of blended learning strategies with a number of courses including online components.

The number of enrolled students includes students that may never attend campus or attend campus for short defined periods within the year. As mentioned above, the number of students actually on site each day is the best indicator, for example to assess car parking needs or other services.

Table 3 – Comparison of Semester 2 Audits 2009-2011 and Equivalent Full Time Student Load (EFTSL)

Day	**Monday**			**Tuesday**			**Wednesday**			**Thursday**			**Friday**		
Year	2009	2010	2011	2009	2010	2011	2009	2010	2011	2009	2010	2011	2009	2010	2011
EFTSL	2744	3112	3601	2744	3112	3601	2744	3112	3601	2744	3112	3601	2744	3112	3601
8.00-9.00	169	358	464	376	514	246	0	467	266	307	264	170	350	197	317
9.00-10.00	324	399	378	488	553	280	492	546	126	377	368	155	417	294	134
10.00-11.00	374	568	522	641	381	192	621	427	293	475	552	374	410	318	242
11.00-12.00	503	668	191	548	533	81	530	481	223	506	609	256	481	272	157
12.00-13.00	515	520	344	602	686	320	200	550	286	345	503	208	345	448	339
13.00-14.00	395	489	391	499	648	236	402	453	192	585	504	279	293	251	157
14.00-15.00	451	525	386	439	485	259	488	398	407	401	548	282	234	245	278
15.00-16.00	507	461	447	361	464	104	517	346	247	379	291	266	92	154	171
16.00-17.00	277	490	170	138	461	370	108	340	190	173	347	187	54	143	42
17.00-18.00	348	411	144	294	379	131	246	281	185	166	251	101	55	128	23
18.00-19.00	289	250	20	168	126	24	205	163	130	168	205	63	0	51	0
19-00-20.00	165	41	22	44	86	0	134	50	29	57	95	22	0	3	0
20.00-21.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	35	0	53	0	0	0

Figure 5.1 – Transport Increase Diagram of the EA shows the current student numbers at 3,600. This is the maximum EFTSL shown in **Table 3**, and reflects the number of enrolled students in 2011.

Future Student Numbers

The proposed 4,800 students in 2016, shown in Figure 5.1 of the EA, is the anticipated EFTSL for enrolled students. Students on site at any one time is proposed at a maximum of 2,000 at any one time, based on two teaching sessions per day (8.00am – 2.00pm and 2.00pm – 8.00pm) shown in **Table 4** below. This represents a reduction from the 2,400 at any one time in the EA.

Twelve groups of up to 400 students (A1, A2, A3, B1, B2, B3, C1, C2, C3 and D1, D2, D3) would be on campus per session. Each group would have up to 1 full day and 2 half days, so per session there would be up to 2,000 students on site at any one time with a maximum of 2,800 students per day. For example, Group A1 are on site all day Monday and half of Wednesday and Friday. As groups are on site for whole or half days at a time, the majority of students will only come and go from the site up to three days per week.

This approach will reduce the current turnover or 'churn' of students on and off the campus, which is a feature of the need to timetable for 750 students at any one time and which necessitates four or five days on campus for most students. At present students arrive on campus for their first lecture at 8am, and begin to leave from 9am, with many returning later in the day for classes because of the structure of the current timetable. The new approach will provide greater flexibility in timetabling the students to reduce their days on campus, while providing for library, group study and studio time and recreational activities, contributing to full campus experience.

Table 4 – Indicative Timetable Rubric for 4,800 EFTSL Students

Monday		**Tuesday**		**Wednesday**		**Thursday**		**Friday**	
8.00-14.00	14.00-20.00	8.00-14.00	14.00-20.00	8.00-14.00	14.00-20.00	8.00-14.00	14.00-20.00	8.00-14.00	14.00-20.00
A1	A1	B1	B1	C1	C1	D1	D1	C2	C3
A2	A2	B2	B2	C2	C2	D2	D2	D1	D2
A3	A3	B3	B3	C3	C3	D3	D3	D3	A1
B1	B2	C2	C3	D3	A1	B1	B2	A2	
B3	C1	D1	D2	A2	A3	B3	C1	A3	

Growth in student numbers has been planned to continue until 2016 as set out in **Table 5**, when the maximum number of EFTSL will be reached. Facilities being constructed at North Sydney to accommodate some student load currently located at Strathfield will not be complete until the 2014 academic year.

These figures represent the maximum anticipated growth for the Strathfield Campus, that can both be comfortably accommodated on the site and foster a greater sense of collegiality and program choice while minimising impacts on the surrounding area.

The increase in student numbers does not directly depend on the construction of the new facilities in the precincts indicated in the Concept Plan. Rather the building works are required to update, upgrade and expand the extent and facilities currently available to students. Many of the existing buildings on the site have exceeded their useful life or fit-out. For example, the construction of a new Library Learning Commons will both provide a state-of-the-art library for students and the local community and permit the existing library facility to be refurbished and reused for other purposes.

Table 5 – 2011-2016 EFTSL, Students on Site/Day, Shuttle Bus & Car Parking

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
EFTSL	3,600	4,060	4,400	4,500	4,600	4,800
Students on Site per Day	1,800	2,400	2,500	2,600	2,700	2,800
Car Parking	384	346	596	663	717	717
Shuttle Bus	1,000	1,600	1,700	1,800	1,900	2,000

Traffic and parking impacts as a result of the proposed increase in student numbers are addressed in the next section. In summary, the increased use of the shuttle bus combined with the provision of additional parking on site will be able to accommodate the student growth. It has also been demonstrated that an increase in EFTSL does not result in a proportional increase in parking demand because the provision of shuttle bus services has been increased each year since its introduction in 2010 and with the proposed increase in parking on site, the demand for on street parking will decrease.

3.2 Traffic, Parking and Access

3.2.1 Key Issues Raised

By the Public

Issues relating to traffic, parking, access and sustainable transport were mentioned in 94% of public submissions.

One of the two biggest areas of concern was the impact of traffic increases as a result of the proposed increase in student numbers on the local road network. The other major concern was that parking on site cannot cater for the increase in student numbers and therefore the parking off site, in surrounding residential streets would increase. One response to this, a proposed 2-hour street parking restriction around the campus, is not supported by residents.

Public submissions raised concern regarding the increase in vehicular access points along Barker Road from three to four would increase congestion and decrease pedestrian safety. Submissions object to the alterations required to South Street to allow the signalised intersection.

Public submissions also raised concern with public transport and the shuttle bus and that there are not enough public transport services to the site to encourage the proposed increase in student numbers not to drive. Submissions stated not enough information was provided on the current patronage of the shuttle bus nor details regarding how the shuttle bus would meet the needs of the proposed future student numbers.

Department of Planning and Infrastructure

The DPI also raised concern over the possible impact of additional on-street parking and traffic movements on the local road network as a result of increase in student numbers. Therefore, the DPI requested additional car parking and traffic analysis be undertaken, including traffic studies on a wider area than that prepared in the Transport and Accessibility Study (TAS) with further details showing how student numbers could be increased with minimal reliance on private vehicle trips.

The DPI also required further details in relation to sustainable transport and the proposed student to car parking ratio, number of students travelling by shuttle bus and further justification for parking controls to be enforced off the subject site.

Lastly, in reference to the issue of student numbers, DPI required that TAS refer to the confirmed current and proposed student numbers.

Transport for NSW

Transport for NSW (TfNSW) advised the TAS does not address the Director General's Requirement (DGR) No 7 to provide an estimate of the total trips (all modes) generated by the proposed development. They state that this information would advise future public transport needs, including increasing the shuttle bus service, on site parking needs and improvements to bicycle and pedestrian accessibility.

Strathfield Council

Strathfield Council raised a number of issues with the TAS which they believe have not allowed a proper assessment of the impacts to be made. The main issues are:

- baseline assessments of the surrounding road network have not been done
- travel mode splits have not been determined
- discrepancies in current and proposed student numbers, and
- public transport accessibility conditions need further detailing to understand how students can be encouraged to use forms other than the private car to assist in maintaining residential amenity.

3.2.2 Response

A Transport and Accessibility Report (TAR) has been prepared by ARUP to address the above submissions (refer **Appendix B**). The TAR undertook additional traffic flow data, parking data and shuttle bus patronage to further assess the traffic and parking impacts of the proposal. The TAR also refers to existing and proposed student numbers consistent with Section 3.1 of this report.

The results of the TAR are summarised and discussed below.

Traffic, Parking and Shuttle Bus

Existing Traffic Situation

Additional traffic data was collected in May/June 2012 (refer Section 3.1 of the TAR) at:

- two entry points into the campus (the main entry and the western driveway)
- Barker Road near Oxford Street
- Barker Road near Wilson Street, and
- South Street near Barker Road.

For a teaching week results can be summarised as follows (two-way weekday averages):

- Barker Road near Oxford Street carries 7,413 vehicles per day
- Barker Road near Wilson Street carries 5,715 vehicles per day, and
- South Street carries 1,843 vehicles per day.

According to the Roads and Maritime Services Road Design Guide, these movements would classify Barker Road as a collector road (up to 10,000 movements a day) and South Street as a local street (up to 2,000 movements a day).

At the site access driveways a total of 1,687 two-way vehicular movements were counted per day consisting of:

- the main access – 1,437 vehicles, and
- the western access – 250 vehicles.

The main access total includes 190 two-way bus movements per day, resulting in some 1,500 car movements over one day on and off the campus.

The ACU traffic generation of 1,498 vehicles per day on campus with the addition of an average 500 cars parked on street (see information below regarding existing parking) and with a turnover rate of approximately 1.5 times per space, results in total ACU traffic generation of 1,498 + (1.5 x 500) = **2,248 car movements per day and 2,438 total vehicle movements per day.**

The turning count traffic surveys undertaken in 2011 at the campus driveways (as set out in the EA) indicate that 65% travel to and from the east and 35% to and from the west. The proportion of traffic on Barker Road attributed to ACU can therefore be determined as follows.

- Barker Road east – 65% x 2,438 = 1,585, this is 20% of the 7,413 total traffic.
- Barker Road west – 35% x 2,438 = 853, this is 15% of the 5,715 total traffic.

Cars make up about 95% of the vehicle movements in the local area. Even though the speed limit is 50km/h, the traffic data indicates that average speeds for all vehicles slightly exceed this limit by about 8km/h.

Existing Parking Data

The campus currently has 346 car parking spaces. ACU students and staff also utilise surrounding streets for parking, as do a number of other educational facilities in the area. Figure 3 in the TAR indicates the utilisation of on street parking by ACU and adjacent institutions.

On-street parking surveys around the campus on typical teaching days have revealed 329 parked cars in 2009, 407 parked cars in 2011 and 506 parked cars in 2012 (see Section 3.3.2 of the TAR for full details). Part of the increase in on street parking in 2012 is due to the temporary loss of some 40 car parking spaces on site due to building works. These spaces will be reinstated in due course.

Existing and Proposed Car Parking Provision

The proposed car parking allocation set out in Table 3.1 of the EA is superseded by **Table 6** below. The EA proposed a total of 674 spaces, with 644 spaces allocated to ACU and 30 spaces to St Patrick's College.

An increase of 73 spaces is now proposed with a total of 717 spaces allocated to ACU. The bulk of the increase (70 spaces) comes from the retention of staff parking at grade on the eastern boundary. The remaining additional spaces come from an increase in spaces proposed in the north western underground car park and corrections in figures for other areas (this is explained further in Section 4.2 of this report).

Table 6 – Existing and proposed car parking allocation

Location	Existing Spaces	Revised Spaces
On-grade Western Car Park	75	0
On-grade Eastern Car Park	99	70
On-grade South Eastern Car Park	107	0
Clancy Site	38	38
Main Entry	22	10
Visitor	5	5
New Underground Car Park	0	292
Spaces allocated to St Patrick's College	0	-30
Precinct 1 Basement	0	174
Precinct 3 Basement	0	158
TOTAL	**346**	**717**

Shuttle bus

ACU has a free shuttle bus operating between the campus and Strathfield Railway Station. It generally operates every:

- 10 minutes between 7.30am – 10.30am, and
- 30 minutes between 10.30am – 8.30pm.

The service is flexible and adjusted to meet demand (holidays, exam time etc). The service commenced in 2010 when one bus carried approximately 450 passengers per day. In 2011 services were increased with up to 3 buses running at peak times carrying approximately 1,000 passengers per day. In 2012 there are 5 buses running at peak times.

Recent shuttle bus patronage surveys have been undertaken (see Table 7 in the TAR) and they show on the busier early weekdays some 1,650 passengers per day use the shuttle bus between Strathfield Railway Station and the campus. Less use it on the return journey because some students and staff walk to the station on the return trip.

Student Attendance and Travel Characteristics

The peak room attendance on campus is weekday mornings between 10.00am – 1.00pm. On a Monday for example, peak attendance in 2009, 2010 and 2011 varied from 515 to 668 students (refer **Table 3**).

Based on the shuttle bus patronage and car parking data, the trend in travel characteristics for students can be derived. Table 9 reproduced from the TAR is included below.

Figure 2 – Table 9 reproduced from Transport and Accessibility Report

Year	2009	2010	2011	2012
EFTSL	2,744	3,112	3,601	4,060
Peak parking on-site	395	390*	384	350
Peak parking off-site	329	368*	407	506
Total parking (staff + students)	724	758*	791	856
Daily shuttle bus patronage	0	450	1,000	1,600
Number of buses running	0	1	3	5

* Car parking data for 2010 not available therefore extrapolated from 2009 and 2011 data for graphing purposes.

The peak parking (on-site and on-street) has risen slowly from 724 cars in 2009 to 856 cars in 2012, representing a 20% increase over the 4 year period. Over the same period the EFTSL has increased from 2,744 to 4,060 which is a 48% increase. This shows the increase in EFTSL does not mean an equivalent direct increase in parking (refer also to the discussion on student numbers in Section 3.1).

The use of the shuttle bus has climbed at the same rate as EFTSL growth. Prior to 2010, students arriving by public transport needed to use government public transport or walk from Strathfield Railway Station. The shuttle bus commenced in 2010 providing a free service. In 2012, there are approximately 1,600 students arriving by shuttle bus per day which is 67% of students arriving by shuttle bus per day if up to 2,400 students attend in one day (refer to Figure 3).

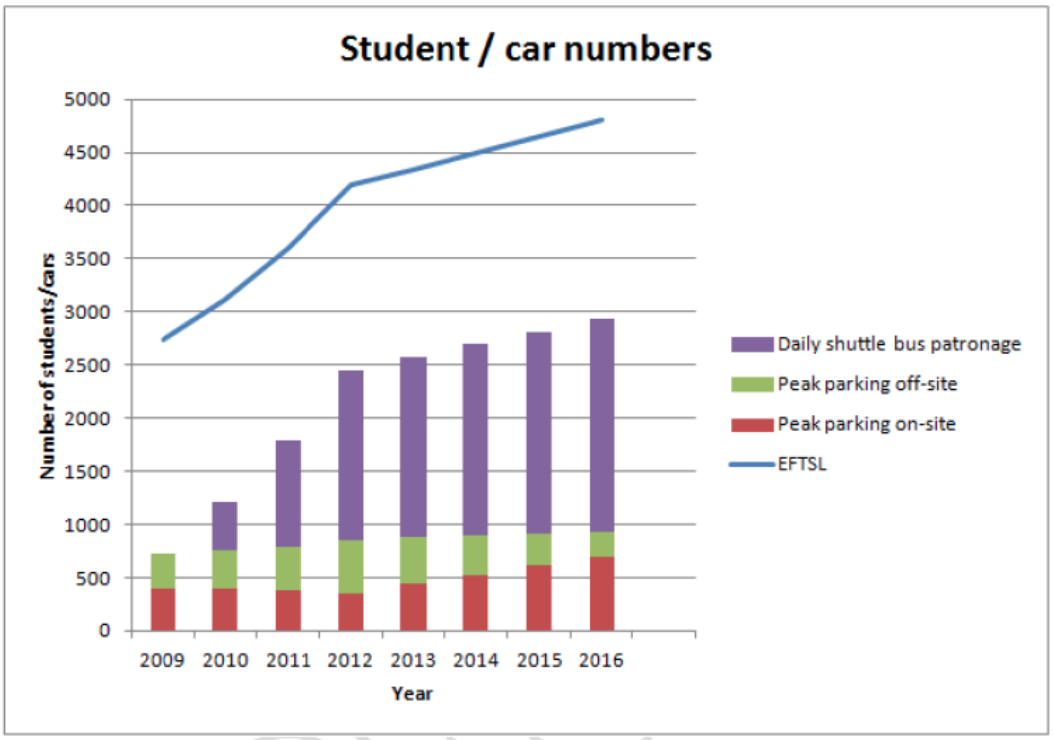
Future Trends and Impacts

By 2016 a proposed 4,800 EFTSL will result in 2,800 students on campus per day or 2,000 at any one time. With a minor increase in shuttle bus services to match the student growth, the shuttle bus could be expected to carry up to 2,000 students per day which represents a public transport mode of 70%.

With this very high public transport utilisation, the current level of student and staff parking of 856 cars (refer Table 9 from the TAR above) could be expected to increase only marginally to about 950 cars. The future provision of car parking on the campus is proposed at 717 spaces. This reduces on street car parking from 500 now to approximately 230 cars which is a 120% decrease from existing levels (refer to Figure 11 reproduced from TAR below). This reduction in on street parking means that parking restrictions as previously proposed are no longer required.

Future growth in traffic movements as a result in the 4,800 EFTSL in 2016 can be derived from the additional 100 parked cars. Based on the assumption that these cars would turn over 1.5 times per day means there will be approximately additional 300 two-way movements per day. Applying 65% travelling to the east, represents 200 additional vehicles per day, a 3% increase on the total daily traffic of 7,413 vehicles in the eastern section of Barker Road and a 2% increase in the western section of Barker Road.

Figure 3 – Figure 11 reproduced from Transport and Accessibility Report



Access

The EA proposed four access points off Barker Road (refer Figure 3.7 in the EA). Gate 1 in the south eastern corner proposed a new signalised intersection. This entire gate and intersection is no longer proposed because the existing staff parking is to be retained and the Albert Road alignment will be retained, utilising the main gate access point. Three gates are now proposed – the main existing gate (entry), the existing service entrance (main gate exit) and a new gate close to the western boundary to service the new north western underground car park.

The main gate entry will continue to provide access to student and staff car parks as well as the shuttle bus and private vehicle drop-off/ pick-up. The width of the main gate exit driveway will be adjusted to suit two-way movement and the configuration of the internal road arrangements.

Sustainable transport initiatives

Sustainable transport initiatives are detailed in Section 6 of the TAR. Initiatives are suggested relating to:

- pedestrian facilities
- bicycle facilities
- public transport facilities
- car pooling
- small car and hybrid/ electric car parking, and
- advisory travel information for students and staff via the ACU website.

Summary

- Current vehicle movements generated by ACU on a typical teaching day are some 2,450. At Barker Road east this is 20% of the local traffic and at Barker Road west this is 15% of local traffic.

- Shuttle bus patronage in 2012 between Strathfield Railway Station and the campus is some 1,600 students per day. This represents some 67% of students coming to site by bus.
- In 2012 on and off street peak parking occupies 856 spaces (350 on site, 506 off site).
- Between 2009 and 2012 on and off street car parking has increased by 20% while the EFTSL has increased by 48%, demonstrating that an increased student load does not equate to a proportional increase in parking.
- Parking on site is to be increased from the current 346 spaces to 717, an increase of 107%.
- The Concept Plan proposes increases in public transport usage (the shuttle bus) of up to 70% on any given day and increased on site parking, both of which will reduce parking in the surrounding streets by some 120% (from 506 to 230 spaces).
- Growth in traffic movements as a result of the Concept Plan is predicted at 3% on the total daily vehicular movements for Barker Road east and 2% for Barker Road west.
- Three access points are to be maintained with and the deletion of the proposed signalised intersection.
- Sustainable transport initiatives are detailed.

3.3 Built Form and Neighbourhood Character

3.3.1 Key Issues Raised

By the Public

Built form/ neighbour character was mentioned in 81% of public submissions. As a general statement, the submissions claim the use and the scale of development is not appropriate for the site and surrounds.

Submissions object to the height of the proposed buildings at 3 and 4 storeys, stating such heights are not appropriate because of:

- the scale and height of existing buildings on site
- the heritage significance of buildings on site
- the low scale residential nature of adjoining and surrounding development
- privacy and overshadowing impacts on nearby properties
- too much bulk and height will be visually dominant at the front of the site, along Barker Road, and
- the loss of views into the site from the public domain.

Submissions also stated the proposal would impact neighbourhood character which is one of a low density residential nature, and that a commercial activity such as a university does not belong in such a setting.

Related to this the submissions stated that images in the EA do not accurately represent the proposal.

Strathfield Council

Strathfield Council believe the proposal will bring about a fundamental and undesirable change to the relevant locality and character of the Strathfield local government area. They submit the bulk and scale is inconsistent with the existing neighbourhood character.

Their submission states that currently, the built form on site is distanced from nearby houses, is low density and in a landscaped setting. The proposal is considered excessive because it is markedly different to the bulk and scale on site and to the adjoining low density residential area. New buildings proposed at the edge of the campus will be readily visible and in doing so change the perceived scale of the surrounding area.

Specific comments include the following.

- The 4 storey library building within Precinct 1 is not appropriate for the site/ surrounds as it will impact on existing view lines and the setting of Mount Royal, Edmund Rice Building and Barron Chapel, the original line of Albert Road and require the removal of existing Bunya Pines.
- The buffer between the driveway and building within Precinct 3 to the adjoining residential dwellings is not sufficient. Privacy and character issues are raised as is tree removal.
- Inconsistencies with Clause 41(C) of Strathfield Planning Scheme Ordinance 1969 (SPSO) and the objectives of Part M of Development Control Plan (DCP) 2005.
- Errors in architectural figures and photomontages that misrepresent the proposed buildings.

Department of Planning and Infrastructure

The DPI requires further analysis and detail to address the concerns of the public and Strathfield Council in the following terms.

- Further analysis is to be provided on the appropriateness of the heights/ built form of the buildings fronting Barker Road.

- Consideration of increased building separation between the western boundary and the proposed building envelope at Precinct 3.

3.3.2 Response

The response to this section comprises details of:

- summary of amendments
- a discussion about built form and neighbourhood character
- clarification of tree removal, and
- relevant planning controls.

Amendments

A number of amendments have been made to the built form of the concept plan as suggested by submissions. They are detailed below as are other amendments to the architectural plans and supporting documentation. The revised architectural drawings (plans, sections and volumes) can be found at **Appendix J**. The illustrative concept plan, tree removal plan and photomontages are at **Appendix C** and the revised solar access study is at **Appendix D**. These amendments also correct some figures that were raised in submissions as not being the most representative of the proposal.

- Precinct 1
    - Maximum RL now 47.60 (was 51.20)
    - Maximum gross floor area (GFA) now 5,900sqm (was 6,700sqm)
    - Maximum three levels at the western end (was four)
    - Building setback 3m from Albert Road (was zero)
    - Building setback from nearest Bunya Pine increased to 9m in both directions
    - Sections corrected to show changes in ground levels
    - Deletion of signalised intersection and access gate in the south eastern corner; therefore no requirement to use part of Council's land
- Precinct 3
    - Maximum RL now 42.80 (was 42.00)
    - Maximum GFA now 3,200sqm (was 3,660sqm)
    - Setback to western boundary increased 15m (was 10m)
    - Sections corrected to show changes in ground levels
- Photomontages reviewed
- Tree removal plan revised
- Shadow diagrams revised

Discussion of Built Form and Neighbourhood Character

Architectural Statement

The campus contains a number buildings and landscape elements that contribute to its heritage significance, namely the Edmund Rice Building, the Barron Chapel and the Mullens Building together with more recent structures. All these elements along with substantial, established landscaping contribute to its character.

The character of the surrounding area is one of wide streets, established landscaping and generous lots. Surrounding development is mainly low scale residential interspersed with a number of educational establishments such as ACU and its predecessor colleges, which have occupied the site since 1908.

The campus is distinct from surrounding development, with buildings designed around courtyards and the presence of substantial landscaping. Views from the public domain are of open spaces, established vegetation and medium scale buildings.

In preparing the master plan and built forms for the site to meet the needs of ACU up to 2016 while making best use of the land, consideration was given to the site, its internal conditions (layout,

heritage buildings, building heights, landscaping) and its external conditions (surrounding low scale residential development and views from the public domain).

The Concept Plan identifies four distinct precincts that respond to the pattern of buildings on campus, their scale as well as retaining their landscape setting and amenity.

The key feature on the site is the existing main quadrangle formed by buildings that are either two large storeys with significant pitched roofs or three storeys with more shallow pitched roofs. Architectural features such as the clock tower and steeple increase the apparent height of these buildings. The buildings around the quadrangle have developed over time from west to east, starting with the Edmund Rice Building, followed by the Barron Chapel and more recently the St Edmunds Building.

Precinct 1 – South eastern is to house the new Library Learning Commons to the south east of the quadrangle, the proposed next stage in the chronological sequence of the quadrangle buildings. It will continue the scale, materials and colonnade of the Barron Chapel and the St Edmunds Building. It will include an external north-facing courtyard in concert with the character of the existing courtyard focused buildings on site.

The building will be set back from Barker Road by 12m and the Mount Royal Reserve by 10m to ensure the retention of the existing significant mature trees on these edges, which will screen this building from the surrounding area.

The northern edge will be setback an additional 3m from the Albert Road alignment to ensure that the view lines and setting of Mount Royal and Edmund Rice Building are maintained. This original line of Albert Road together with the setback will also minimise the impact of the significant Bunya Pines. The building height will be 3-4 storeys with a maximum RL of 47.60, lowered from RL 51.20.

Precinct 2 – Eastern is to accommodate a building for educational purposes. The building will be 4 storeys with a maximum RL of 46.00. It will be setback 10m from the eastern side boundary. It will be integrated with the adjoining Mullens Building to the west and St Edmunds Building to the south. The southern edge of the precinct will provide an active frontage, with activity opening onto a new pedestrian spine. The northern extent of the building will address the existing oval with a new promenade along the playing field edge.

Precinct 3 – Western is earmarked for a new 3 storey Arts and Sciences Building with a maximum RL of 42.80. Adjoining educational buildings have RLs between 37.92 and 48.62. The building will be setback from Barker Road by 12m and from the western boundary by 15m, an increase of 5m. Again, the presence of significant vegetation on both the western and southern boundaries is intended to assist in screening the proposed building.

Precinct 4 – Central contains the existing handball courts building, presently used as storage space. The surrounding area also comprises a number of existing portable structures utilised as classrooms. These existing buildings will be removed to allow construction of new permanent buildings with associated a landscaped courtyard space. One building will be used for storage and the other for educational purposes. The buildings will both be 2 storeys with a maximum RL of 41.00. Adjoining buildings have RLs between 40.43 and 48.64.

Precincts 1 and 3

The built form concerns in submissions related to the buildings proposed in Precincts 1 and 3.

As detailed above, the height and footprint of the proposed library building in Precinct has been reduced to maintain the heritage significance of views along Albert Road and to ensure retention of significant trees. The setback to the western boundary of building in Precinct 3 has been increased from 10m to 15m to minimise the impact on the adjoining residential building, although the height has been increased by 800mm to allow for educational purposes.

The buildings in both Precinct 1 and 3 are intended to be significant buildings, but especially the library building, which is to serve as a public gateway building to the site. It is acknowledged the buildings will be different to the bulk and scale of the immediate surrounding residential buildings but they will not be out of place in relation to the buildings within the site and in the greater area which contains other larger educational buildings. The large number of mature trees on the campus boundaries will be used to assist in screening the buildings and integrating their bulk. As demonstrated in the reviewed photomontages, the buildings along the Barker Road boundary will not generally be visible due to the presence of the existing trees, most of which will be retained. Furthermore, additional trees will be planted as indicated in the illustrative concept plan to ensure this buffer is maintained.

Substantial setbacks from Mount Royal Reserve (10m), Barker Road (12m), and the western boundary (15m) will ameliorate the bulk of the buildings. Views to the public domain from Barker Road will be maintained with the buildings within Precincts 1 and 3 at south eastern and south western ends of the campus, leaving existing views across the middle of the site intact.

Solar access to adjoining and nearby residential properties is maintained as demonstrated in the Solar Access Study at **Appendix D.** Only the building within Precinct 3 will overshadow part of the adjoining property at 9am on 21 June.

Separate development applications will be lodged for the detailed design of each building. Design articulation and materials will be determined at this stage as will the location of windows and their treatment to mitigate overlooking of surrounding residential properties.

Tree Removal

The Arborist Report at **Appendix E** assesses tree removal and retention for Precinct 1 and summarises tree removal and retention already assessed for the western boundary as part of the works for the construction of the underground car park. A DA has been lodged with Strathfield Council for the car park. A separate arborist report was submitted with that DA.

A revised tree removal plan is at **Appendix C**. This plan summarises the anticipated tree removal and transplanting that will be required to accommodate development on the four precincts. Despite the extent of works, a relatively small number of trees will be removed. In any case, the illustrative concept plan indicates that additional tree planting is proposed along all perimeters of the property. Given the generous setbacks substantial trees are able to be accommodated in these areas.

Precinct 1

The Arborist Reports shows 9 Canary Island Date Palms, 1 Turpentine and 7 other trees require removal for construction of the library building. All of the palms are nominated for transplanting and retention on site because of their landscape value and condition.

Nineteen trees have been identified as potentially having their tree protection zone (TPZ) impacted as a result of the building. The full list is in the conclusion of the Arborist Report. Five of these trees are at a more significant risk of damage to their TPZ affecting their long term health and safe use and life expectancy (SULE) and the remaining trees are unlikely to be affected.

The 2 significant Bunya Pines are included in the list and one of them has been given a less than 10% chance of having its TPZ affected, therefore no impact of substance is predicted but the other has been given a 25-35% of having its TPZ affected. This is a high level of encroachment which would likely affect the tree's long term health and reduce its SULE. Consequently the proposed setback of the northern corner of the library building in Precinct 1 has been increased to 9m in both directions (refer revised plan at **Appendix J**).

Precinct 3

The Arborist Reports shows three trees (numbered T4, T6 & T7) in the south west corner of the site will require removal for construction of the driveway for the underground car park in the north west of the site. The driveway is located between the western boundary and the Precinct 3 building. The

reports also indicate the loss of 8 trees (numbered T19 – T 26) in the north west corner. Final construction details will confirm the extent to which these trees will require removal.

All of the other trees along the western boundary are proposed to be retained. Some of them have been identified as Camphor Laurels, which are considered to be a weed. The report recommends some pruning of these trees. Tree T11 although identified as being of high significance, is in poor health, so may ultimately be lost. The impacts to these trees are considered acceptable and if in the future, trees with high screening value were lost, they would be replaced with mature specimens.

Discussion of Planning Controls

Strathfield Council's urban design consultant states that the application fails to address clause 41(C) of Strathfield Planning Scheme Ordinance and Strathfield Development Control Plan (DCP) 2005. Compliance with the DCP was addressed in the EA as noted below. Clause 41(C) is addressed below.

Strathfield Planning Scheme Ordinance

Clause 41(C) of the SPSO details controls on development adjoining residential zones. The relevant subclauses are identified below with a response.

- *Wherever the Council considers it to be appropriate, proposed buildings are compatible with the height, scale, siting and character of existing buildings within the residential zone.*

Built form is discussed above. It is considered that given the proposed large setbacks and consistent heights across the campus, the built form will be compatible in the existing area.

- *The elevation of any proposed building facing land a residential zone has been designed to be compatible with existing buildings within the residential zone or is suitably screened.*

Precincts 1 and 3 face residential zones. As stated in the built form comments above, the proposal is considered both compatible with the surrounds and will be screened by existing and proposed mature trees. It should be noted that the detailed design of these buildings, including their materiality would be addressed in subsequent applications.

- *The development will not inhibit reasonable solar access to existing buildings within the residential zone between 9.00am and 3.00pm during the winter solstice.*

As demonstrated in the revised Solar Access Study at **Appendix D**, only the adjoining dwelling to the west of Precinct 3 will be affected for a short time from 9am. No other adjoining or adjacent buildings will be affected by any of the proposed built forms, further confirming their compatibility in the surrounding area.

- *Noise generating from fixed sources or motor vehicles associated with the development has been effectively insulated or otherwise minimised.*

The main car park proposed on site will be underground in the north west under existing playing fields. Locating the majority of cars in this car park and the fact that it is underground will minimise noise impacts on adjoining residences compared to an on-grade car park. Further the revised acoustic report at **Appendix G**, based on revised traffic data, indicates that noise from any traffic increase will be *'inaudible and imperceptible'*, while noise from any fixed sources will comply with established criteria.

- *The development will not cause nuisance to residents by way of hours of operation, traffic movement, parking, headlight glare, security lighting or the like.*

See Section 3.5 for a discussion relating to hours of operation. See above dot point in relation to traffic and parking. Traffic headlight glare will be minimised due to fencing, landscaping and the fact that the largest parking area will be underground. Security lighting will not involve any spotlights but

as with existing buildings, pathways, common areas etc will be lit for safety and access and glare will not impact surrounding residences.

- *Windows facing residential areas have been treated to avoid overlooking of private yard space or windows in residences.*

The detailed design of buildings in Precincts 1 and 3, which will face residential zones, will ensure that there is no overlooking of private yards or windows in residences. Details will be provided in separate development applications for these buildings. Possible design solutions may include, high level sills, opaque glazing and/or landscaping.

Development Control Plan 2005

The design principles of Part M – Educational Establishments are addressed in Section 4.3 of the EA. This assessment remains applicable except where the design has been amended and discussed above under 'Amendments' and 'Discussion of Built Form'.

The objectives of Part M that relate to the key issues discussed in this report are paraphrased below.

- Educational establishments are compatible with neighbouring land uses.
- Integration into local area/ streetscape in terms of size, bulk, height, site coverage, form, character, noise generation, privacy impact, solar access and landscaping.
- Maintain pedestrian and traffic safety on and off site.
- Operate with an acceptable traffic impact on the local road network.
- Educational establishment to manage on-going traffic impact, safety, movements etc.
- Encourage sustainable modes of transport.
- Provide on site parking to avoid adverse impacts on local road network and neighbourhood.

It is considered the above objectives have been addressed either in further discussion (and resulting architectural amendments) in this report or in the EA.

3.4 Heritage

3.4.1 Key Issues Raised

By the Public

Heritage concerns were raised in 14% of public submissions. Submissions stated the proposal would impact the heritage buildings on site as well the heritage significance of the surrounding area.

Strathfield Council

The submission from Strathfield Council prepared on their behalf by HWL Ebsworth Lawyers states the proposal would have unacceptable impacts on the heritage values of the existing buildings and surrounds.

However, an assessment completed by Godden Mackay Logan (GML), Heritage Consultants to support Strathfield Council's submission states that *'...the Concept Plan generally respects the established significance of the ACU site and its components. With the exception of one particular portion of Precinct 1, it generally represents a well-considered response to key heritage constraints'*.

GML's comments regarding Precinct 1 and suggested modifications are detailed below.

- Comments:
    - The proposed envelope would have potential adverse impacts upon the existing significant view corridor and the visual setting of Mount Royal, the Edmund Rice Building and the Barron Chapel as a result of the small setback from the existing tree-lined avenue and the 4 storey height.
    - The 4 storey height at the western end will create a dominant new scale of development within this sensitive area.
    - The proposed footprint of the library building is quite close to two Bunya Pines which are highly significant.
- Recommend the building footprint should be set back further, by at least 3 metres, from the former alignment of Albert Road to minimise the visual impact on the view corridor and to respect the original alignment of Albert Road and the existing setbacks of residences along the southern side of the road.
- Recommend reducing the height of the building to 3 storeys in the north-western corner to improve the relationship with the heritage buildings.
- Recommend modifying the building footprint to increase the distance between the proposed building and the canopies of the Bunya Pines and nearby gateway.

Heritage Council of NSW

The Heritage Council generally thought the Heritage Impact Statement (HIS) prepared by Weir Phillips was a sound assessment of the heritage issues and impacts of the proposed development but with some exceptions:

- the limited assessment of the significance of the site's layout and grounds
- lack of an existing site plan to indicate historic alignments and paths of significance to compare with the proposal, and
- lack of an archaeological assessment as recommended in the HIS for areas of proposed excavation.

Notably the Heritage Council generally concurs with the GML recommendations above. The Heritage Council also recommends a number of conditions to satisfy DGR No 11. The key conditions are listed here, the full list can be found in the letter from the Heritage Council at **Appendix A.**

- The proponent is recommended to complete a nomination for listing the site on the State Heritage Register.
- The western end of the Precinct 1 library building should be reduced to 3 storeys to minimise the visual dominance of new development in the vicinity of principal historic buildings, namely view lines and the setting of Mount Royal, Edmund Rice building and Barron Chapel, and the original line of Albert Road.
- Further setbacks on the north and north-eastern extent of the library building are recommended to maintain vistas, the retention of the Bunya Pines and the significant avenue of trees leading from Albert Road to Mount Royal.

Department of Planning and Infrastructure

The DPI requests further consideration to be provided on the impact of the proposed building precincts upon the heritage significance of the existing buildings and landscape.

3.4.2 Response

A Heritage Impact Statement Addendum prepared by Weir Phillips is at **Appendix F.** It addresses comments received from the NSW Heritage Council and Strathfield Council.

In summary, the Concept Plan has been amended to address the concerns of the Heritage Council and Strathfield Council by:

- increasing the setback along the Albert Road alignment to maintain significant view lines and the health of the Bunya Pines, and
- reducing the height of the north western portion of the building to 3 storeys.

See further discussion on built form in Section 3.3 above.

The proponent also accepts and welcomes the Heritage Council recommendation to complete a nomination for listing the site on the State Heritage Register. This recommendation confirms the significance of the site and gives reassurance the proposed new works are not considered to adversely impact the status of the site.

Conditions as proposed by the Heritage Council (and incorporated into the Statement of Commitments) require the proponent to prepare a Conservation Management Plan (CMP) and undertake archaeological assessments in areas of excavation. A CMP is currently being prepared. Archaeological assessments will be undertaken as specific stages are realised.

3.5 Hours of Operation

3.5.1 Key Issues Raised

Concerns regarding the hours of operation of ACU were raised in 2% of public submissions. These included references to excessive noise during the evening and on weekends, or stating the increase in operating hours is out of character with the surrounds.

3.5.2 Response

Existing Consents

The hours of operation for the University were set out in the 1994 consent (DA 93/164) and have been maintained in subsequent consents.

Table 7 – Existing Consents Applying to ACU Strathfield

DA Details	Condition to be superseded
DA 93/164 was granted consent 16 December 1994 for the erection of a three storey building to be used for lecture rooms and teacher office accommodation at No. 179 Albert Road, Strathfield. This is the Albert Road site.	**Condition 30** **Classes should be conducted only between the hours of 8.00am to 9.00pm Monday to Friday The library shall be open only between the above hours and from 8.00am to 5.00pm Saturday.**
DA 0102/262 was granted consent 15 October 2002 at 163-167 Albert Road, Strathfield to use and carry out alterations and additions to the existing building for the purpose of an 'educational establishment'. This is the Clancy Site.	**Condition 24** A 'Staff Parking Only' plan of management is required to be prepared, submitted and approved by Council prior to occupation and use of the premises. (a) The approved plan of management relating to staff only parking and traffic movements shall be implemented and maintained at all times in conjunction with the use of this premise. **(b) The hours of operation shall be restricted to 8.00am – 9.00pm Monday – Friday.** (c)The student numbers are not to exceed a maximum of 240 students at any given time.
DA 2011/165 was granted consent 21 December 2011 at 167-169 Albert Road, Strathfield for alterations and additions to existing educational establishment. This is the Clancy Site.	**Condition 9** The proposed expanded Exercise Performance and Resistance Training Gymnasium and new Movement Rehabilitation Clinic on the site shall comply with the hours of operation, maximum capacity and car parking plan of management established under Condition 24 of DA0102/252 which reads as follows: a) A 'Staff Parking Only' plan of management is required to be prepared, submitted and approved by Council prior to occupation and use of the premises. b) The approved plan of management relating to staff only parking and traffic movements shall be implemented and maintained at all times in conjunction with the use of the this premise. **c) The hours of operation shall be restricted to 8.00am – 9.00pm** d) The student numbers are not to exceed a maximum of 240 students at any given time.

Existing and Proposed Opening Hours

The existing and proposed hours of operation are compared in **Table 8**.

Table 8 – Existing and Proposed Hours of Operation

	Existing Albert Road Site	Existing Clancy Site	Proposed
Monday	8.00am-9.00pm	8.00am – 9.00pm	7.00am – 10.00pm
Tuesday	8.00am-9.00pm	8.00am – 9.00pm	7.00am – 10.00pm
Wednesday	8.00am-9.00pm	8.00am – 9.00pm	7.00am – 10.00pm
Thursday	8.00am-9.00pm	8.00am – 9.00pm	7.00am – 10.00pm
Friday	8.00am-9.00pm	8.00am – 9.00pm	7.00am – 10.00pm
Saturday	8.00am-5.00pm		8.00am – 5.00pm
Sunday			8.00am – 5.00pm

The concept plan proposes hours of operation across the campus as a whole. **Table 8** shows that the existing and proposed hours are very similar.

The campus is proposed to operate within the normal hours of 7.00am to 10.00pm during weekdays. This operational period includes all activities across the campus, however, not all buildings would be in use or occupied during this period.

Teaching staff, service and support staff generally arrive on campus from 7.30am on weekdays, however, teaching activities are and will continue to be scheduled only between 8.00am and 8.00pm. The 8:00am class time is intended to minimise any conflict with later school start times in the area. Similarly the 2:00pm 'changeover' time occurs before school finishing times later in the afternoon. The new library building is intended to operate until 9.30pm on weekdays.

The 7:00am start time allows time for security to open the premises in the morning, while the 10:00pm closing similarly will allow for security to lock up the campus at night.

On weekends the campus would operate from 8.00am to 5.00pm. Most student activity would involve use of the Library Learning Commons with the campus being open for study purposes for other students and the community. There would also be a small number of postgraduate classes carried out on Saturdays and Sundays.

These hours are generally consistent with Part M of Strathfield Development Control Plan which nominates *standard hours of operation for educational establishments in residential areas be limited to 7:00am to 9:30pm, Monday to Sunday*.

The marginal variation for hours of operation Monday to Friday until 10:00pm will allow for the security staff to lock-up the campus at night. Neither classes nor the library would operate at this time. Rather this will ensure the safety and security of not only the staff and students of ACU Strathfield but also the surrounding residents.

3.6 Residential Amenity

3.6.1 Key Issues Raised

Residential amenity issues were raised in 42% of public submissions. Both the public submissions and the submission from Strathfield Council believe the proposal will have a detrimental impact on residential amenity because of the following.

- Safety – increased traffic movements and parking (including illegal parking over residential driveways) in the surrounding area will impact residents' safety, both pedestrian and vehicular.
- Noise – increased noise levels from an increase in traffic movements, an increase in student numbers and extended operating hours.
- Air quality – increase in fumes from additional parking on site (including basement car parking) and from an increase in traffic movements off site.
- Litter in surrounding streets left by students.

3.6.2 Response

Safety and Noise

See Section 3.2 for a full discussion on traffic and parking impacts as a result of the increase in student numbers.

The increase in traffic movements on Barker Road east by 2016 is expected to be 3% on current vehicle movements, while Barker Road west is expected to have a 2% increase. The number of staff and students parking in surrounding streets will also decrease on current levels by 2016 due to increased patronage of public transport (the shuttle bus) and an increase in on site car parking. For these reasons, the increase in student numbers (EFTSL) is not likely to result in a proportional increase in cars being parked on the street. As a consequence safety and parking in the surrounding streets should improve.

As discussed in Sections 3.3 noise impacts from increases in traffic and students will be *'inaudible and imperceptible'*.

See comments above in Section 3.5 relating to operating hours and noise impacts.

Air Quality

As stated above, expected increases in private car movements to the site will be minor (2% and 3%) so air quality will not be adversely impacted.

Litter

ACU has recently reinstated a cleaner to pick up litter around the perimeter of the campus and along Albert Road. ACU also runs a student awareness program to educate students about resident amenity and the importance of not littering in surrounding streets. ACU will also implement a rubbish recycling collection system on campus with collection points at exit points from the campus to reduce litter in the public domain.

3.7 Neighbourhood Policy

3.7.1 Key Issues Raised

Concern over the neighbourhood policy was raised by 64% of public submissions on the basis it does not address the key issues impacting the surrounding residents.

Submissions by residents state the Neighbourhood Policy does not sufficiently address parking, traffic and other amenity impacts on the neighbourhood, and that the vision of the neighbourhood policy is not being presently fulfilled.

3.7.2 Response

Under DGR No 5 - Local Localised Impact and Integration, a Neighbourhood Policy is required:

> *'Prepare a 'ACU Neighbourhood Policy' that outlines the initiative that ACU will action to improve the integration of the proposed intensified university campus with the surrounding residential area and the wider Strathfield area. This includes opportunities to maximise the mutual social, physical and economic mutual benefits and to minimise any negative impacts of the campus intensification'*.

ACU has been a member of the Strathfield Community for almost 20 years. At present, residents and members of the community have access to a number of activities and facilities on the campus. These include:

- the library
- public lectures and concerts
- the regional gallery
- use of the facilities on Sunday by the Korean Church
- use of the car park for community events at weekends
- use of the ovals (specifically St Patrick's College)
- attendance at Easter and Christmas Liturgies
- attendance at Advent recitals
- the Co-op bookshop, coffee cart and canteen, and
- use of chapel for weddings, baptisms and funerals.

ACU students:

- participate in homework programs with local schools
- participate in reading programs with local schools, and
- have contributed to projects at Homebush Public School and Chalmers Road Public School.

Future Community Use of Facilities

In future, in addition to the existing access to the campus, residents and the community will also have access to:

- strengthening and counselling clinics
- organ recitals, and
- weekly Sunday mass for the Maronite community.

There is a common theme in the submissions that residents believe what is in the neighbourhood policy is not currently being enforced.

The purpose of the neighbourhood policy is to demonstrate how the proposed Concept Plan will integrate with the surrounding residential community and wider Strathfield area. It aims to continue and build upon the existing access to residents and the community.

Included in **Appendix H** is a revised version of the neighbourhood policy addressing the community concerns expressed in the public submissions. The policy aims to create strong networks between the local community and the University.

New and existing students are reminded (at induction presentations and in newsletters) of the importance of respecting the local residents' amenity, particularly not parking across driveways and ensuring the appropriate disposal of rubbish.

3.8 Approval Process

3.8.1 Key Issues Raised

Public Submissions

The approval process, which includes consultation, was mentioned in 59% of public submissions. Submissions state that consultation was not adequate and the Concept Plan contained inaccurate information. Submissions also state that residents were not consulted early enough in the process, not enough residents were notified and a newsletter and two viewing periods was not enough when the Concept Plan was on exhibition.

One submission stated that DGR No 20 has not been satisfied. DGR No 20 reads:

> *'Consultation: Undertake an appropriate and justified level of consultation in accordance with the DPI's Major Project Community Consultation Guidelines October 2007, in particular surrounding residences and Strathfield Municipal Council.'*

Submissions show a misunderstanding of the Part 3A application process with the apparent bypassing of Strathfield Council seen to be a lack of due process.

3.8.2 Response

Consultation Generally

For clarification and transparency, the consultation process commencing with Strathfield Council regarding student numbers and site operation in 2009, through the master planning process and up to lodgement of the Concept Plan with the DPI is summarised above in **Table 2** (Section 3.1.2).

It is considered that all the consultation undertaken as part of the development of the Concept Plan and post lodgement has complied with DPI's *Major Project Community Consultation Guidelines October 2007*.

It is acknowledged the EA contained some figures that led to confusion and some of the figures did not most clearly represent the proposal. Section 3.3 – Built Form and Neighbourhood Character of this report details amendments to the figures and refinements to diagrams to show the proposal more clearly. The amendments are also summarised in Section 4.2.

As set out in **Table 2** in Section 3.1.2 above, the records show that ACU has been in consultation with Strathfield Council since 2009 regarding student numbers and corresponding traffic and parking issues.

Since July 2010, ACU or consultants representing ACU have met with Council officers on numerous occasions to discuss the following issues:

- the master planning process, including Council's support for the application for concept plan approval under (the now repealed) Part 3A of the *EP&A Act 1979*
- development applications for the atrium and canteen extension, and strengthening clinic (approved December 2011); and
- a development application for a new underground car park as part of the Concept Plan.

Both of the planning reports to the Council meeting of 13 December 2011 note the existence of the Part 3A concept plan application, which was still being prepared at that time. Significantly both reports also acknowledge the existence of the shuttle bus with the latter report identifying that the campus is close to public transport: *'15-20 minutes walk to Strathfield and Homebush Stations'*.

Prior to commencing the master plan process ACU had received feedback from Council about resident concerns, as well as concerns directly from the residents. Increased parking on campus to remove cars parked in surrounding streets was a priority, as well as improved provision of public transport and litter removal.

Consultation Prior to Lodgement of Concept Plan

Information sessions were held on 11 and 12 August 2011. Residents in the area around the campus who were identified as being impacted by on street parking were informed of the two sessions via a letterbox drop.

The sessions were attended by ACU representatives and ACU's planning consultants who provided members of the community with the opportunity to gain information about the master plan and give feedback to the project team. Information was provided on the proposed increase in student numbers, parking on site and the building stages over the implementation of the master plan.

Of the approximately 220 notified residents, 7 attended the session on 11 August and 13 attended on 12 August

Consultation with the DPI, Strathfield Council, St Patrick's College and the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council was also carried out and is detailed in Section 4.22 of the EA.

Consultation Since Lodgement

The Concept Plan application was publicly exhibited by the DPI from 18 January – 29 February, subsequently extended to14 March 2012. Copies of the EA and accompanying documents were available at:

- DPI offices, 23-33 Bridge Street, Sydney, and
- Strathfield Council, 65 Homebush Road, Strathfield.

All relevant exhibition documents were also made available on the DPI's website.

As part of the statutory consultation process, the DPI consulted with local residents, Strathfield Council and relevant government agencies.

As described in Section 2.0 of this report, a total of 627 submissions were received from the general public and 6 submissions were received from local and state government agencies.

ACU held one community information session on 23 February 2012. Over 500 flyers were distributed to residents. Details of the session were also distributed to attendees of a meeting of residents at Strathfield Town Hall on 18 February 2012.

ACU also made available display boards in the foyer of the Edmund Rice Building during the two weeks after the August consultation sessions. The display boards provided the local community and ACU staff and students with information about the proposal, including:

- local context
- design principles
- master plan
- traffic and access
- building height, and
- a solar study.

ACU intend to provide ongoing updates to the local community regarding the Concept Plan and any future construction via the distribution of information letters and making information available on their website, as set out in the Neighbourhood Policy.

Part 3A Approval Process

As mentioned above, the master plan application process was initially foreshadowed with Council in September 2009 and discussed with Council in October 2010 where it was pointed out (by Council) that it may be a project to which Part 3A of the *EP&A Act* may apply. A meeting with DPI, also in October 2010, confirmed this with ACU being advised to seek a declaration from DPI.

A request for declaration was sought from DPI in December 2010. The DG subsequently declared the Concept Plan to be a project to which Part 3A of the *EP&A Act 1979* applied and the DGRs were issued on 17 February 2011 (see Section 1.4 of the EA).

Under the now repealed Clause 6 of State Environment Planning Policy (Major Development) (Major Development SEPP), those projects to which Part 3A of the Act applied were detailed. The also repealed Schedule 1, Group 7 Clause 20 of the Major Development SEPP referred to educational facilities, and stated the following:

> *Development for the purpose of teaching or research (including universities, TAFE or schools) that has a capital investment value of more than $30 million.*

As a result, the proposal was considered to represent a kind described in the repealed Schedule 1, Group 7, Clause 20 of the Major Development SEPP. Recent changes to the *EP&A Act 1979* mean the proposal has status as a Transitional Part 3A project.

As the DGRs for this application were issued prior to 8 April 2011, the project continues to be determined under the repealed Part 3A of the *EP&A Act 1979.* Accordingly, the Concept Plan application is controlled by Part 3A.

Under the transitional arrangements any approved Part 3A application can be modified under section 75W of the *EP&A Act 1979.*

Strathfield Council's submission to DPI suggests that ACU employed the Part 3A process in order to bypass the decision-making processes of the Council. This is incorrect for a number of reasons:

- First, ACU has maintained ongoing dialogue with the Council about its expansion plans. Council has also been actively engaged with ACU regarding various aspects of the project.
- Second, ACU is not at liberty to choose the planning regime that applies. It can seek a declaration that Part 3A applies, but the power to grant or withhold that declaration rests with the Minister. Otherwise, the Major Development SEPP would apply on its terms. Both of these alternatives result in the project being controlled by Part 3A.
- Third, as a matter of merit, the significance of the project warrants inclusion in a planning regime specifically designed for major projects.

In view of the above, the Council was not the approval body for the project. Further, the repeal of Part 3A would not have altered this position.

4.0 ____Preferred Project

In response to the concerns raised by the public, the DPI, Strathfield Council and other state government agencies, ACU has modified the proposal and provided further information to inform and support the proposal.

The following new and revised documents have been provided:

- Transport and Accessibility Report prepared by ARUP (Appendix B)
- Illustrative Concept Plan, Tree Removal Plan and Photomontages prepared by HASSELL (Appendix C)
- Solar Access Study prepared by HASSELL (Appendix D)
- Arborist Report prepared by Landscape Matrix (Appendix E)
- Heritage Report Addendum prepared by Weir Phillips (Appendix F)
- Revised Acoustic Report prepared by Acoustic Studio (Appendix G)
- Revised Neighbourhood Policy prepared by ACU (Appendix H), and
- Architectural plans, sections and volumes (Appendix J).

4.1 Description of Final Development Proposal

The main elements of the proposal as set out in the EA have not changed. Some of the design elements within precincts have changed and are detailed in Section 4.2 of this report. The concept has been amended in response to issues raised in the submissions. The matters set out below therefore summarise the manner in which ACU proposes to minimise the environmental impact of the project.

4.1.1 Revised Development Description

The Concept Plan seeks approval for the following elements on the Strathfield Campus:

- maximum 4,800 EFTSL by 2016, with 2,800 per day and 2,000 at any one time at the campus
- hours of operation of 7:00am – 10:00pm weekdays and 8:00am – 5:00pm Saturdays and Sundays
- four development precincts containing new buildings with controls on maximum GFA, height and footprint as detailed on the precinct plans
- a total of 717 car parking spaces with the majority of spaces housed in three basement areas
- three site entrances off Barker Road and one entrance off Edgar Street
- refined internal circulation
- new and improved site landscaping and public domain, and
- new pedestrian linkages throughout the campus.

4.1.2 Staging

The staging of the precincts is set out in Section 4.8 of the EA. It is reproduced below with one change. Stage 1 no longer includes the signalised intersection at South Street as this has been deleted from the Concept Plan.

Staging of the works is not directly related to the proposed increase in student numbers as the works will largely replace existing outdated facilities. Nevertheless student numbers on site will be monitored in biannual travel surveys to demonstrate the ongoing use of the shuttle bus service.

Stage 1 – Precinct 1 South eastern + Underground Car Park

- North western underground car park
- Main gate (exit) widened
- Library Learning Commons Building with basement car parking

Stage 2 – Precinct 4 Central

- Demolition of existing handball courts
- Refurbishment and reuse of existing library
- New services/storage and/or education buildings

Stage 3 – Precinct 2 Eastern

- New building for educational uses, lecture theatres and research space

Stage 4 – Precinct 3 Western

- New arts and sciences building with basement car parking

4.2 Key Changes to Exhibited Concept Plan

Key changes to the Concept Plan, in response to the submissions, including car parking distribution and built form are identified below. While not strictly key changes to the 'exhibited' Concept Plan, the further explanation around student numbers and traffic and parking impacts in Sections 3.1 and 3.2 are considered additional information to assist in the assessment of the Concept Plan application and its potential impacts.

Car Parking Location and Numbers

The location and number of car parking spaces is set out in **Table 6** in Section 3.2 of this report. The proposed car parking allocation as set out in Table 3.1 of the EA is superseded by this table.

The EA proposed a total of 674 spaces, with 644 spaces allocated to ACU and 30 spaces to St Patrick's College. The PPR proposes 747 spaces with 717 allocated to ACU and 30 to St Patrick's College, an increase of 73 spaces.

The bulk of the increase (70 spaces) comes from the retention of staff parking at grade on the eastern boundary (see revised Illustrative Concept Plan in **Appendix C**). The remaining additional spaces come from an increase in spaces proposed in the north western underground car park and corrections in figures for other areas.

The comparison between Table 3.1 of the EA and the current distribution is shown below in **Table 9**. These figures **exclude** the 30 spaces allocated to St Patrick's College because they have not changed.

Table 9 – Car Parking Distribution

Location	Exhibited	Amended
Underground Car Park	252	262*
Library Learning Commons (Precinct 1)	174	174
Main Gate Accessway	19	15
Arts and Sciences (Precinct 3)	158	158
Clancy Site	41	38
On-grade Eastern Car Park	0	70
TOTAL	**644**	**717***

* excludes the 30 spaces for St Patrick's College

Furthermore, original proposals to work with Council to introduce 2-hour timed parking in the local area have been abandoned, as it has been demonstrated that car parking in local streets is likely to significantly decrease with the additional parking on site and the use of the shuttle bus.

Access

The EA proposed four access points off Barker Road (see Figure 3.7 in the EA). Gate 1 in the south eastern corner proposed a new signalised intersection. This entire gate and intersection is no longer proposed because the existing staff parking is to be retained and the Albert Road extension will continue to be retained, utilising the main gate access point. Three gates are now proposed – the main existing gate (entry), the existing service entrance (main gate exit) and a new gate close to the western boundary to service the new north western underground car park.

Precincts 1 and 3 Built Form

In response to submissions from the public and local and state government agencies, built form elements of Precincts 1 and 3 were changed. The corresponding sections were also amended to more correctly show ground level changes **(Appendix J)**, the photomontages were reviewed to better represent the proposal **(Appendix C)** and the shadow diagrams were updated **(Appendix D)**. **Table 10** shows the changes within the precincts.

Table 10 – Changes to Built Form Elements of Precincts 1 and 3

Area	Exhibited	Amended
PRECINCT 1		
Maximum RL	51.20	47.60
Gross floor area	6,700sqm	5,900sqm
No of levels	4 in the western portion	3 in the western portion
Setback to Albert Road	0	3m
Setback from Bunya Pine	3m	9m
PRECINCT 3		
Maximum RL	42.00	42.80
Gross floor area	3,660sqm	3,200sqm
No of levels	3	No change
Setback to the western boundary	10m	15m

4.3 Merits of Key Changes

Car Parking

The changes to the car parking numbers and location was not directly in response to submissions though the increase will decrease the parking load in surrounding streets.

During the detailed design of the north west underground car park, a further 10 spaces was achieved compared to initial designs for the car park.

The 70 on-grade staff car parking spaces already exist in the north east of the site and are to be retained to assist in providing as much parking on site as possible. This will mean the loss of some proposed open space but the Concept Plan provides substantial open space to meet student needs and retain the amenity and setting of buildings on site.

Access

Further analysis of the site and access arrangements revealed the signalised intersection and new gate access was not required to meet the needs of vehicular movements into and out of the site. The intersection and access is therefore no longer proposed and one of the benefits of this is the use of part of Council owned land in the south eastern corner is no longer required.

Built Form

As discussed in Section 3.3 the amendments to built form were in response to submissions, including Heritage Council and Council's heritage consultant. The setback to Albert Road of the footprint of the library building in Precinct 1 will maintain view lines to significant heritage buildings and protect the two historically significant Bunya Pines. The decrease in height to the western portion of this building also minimises any potential heritage impact. The increase in setback to the western boundary of the building footprint in Precinct 3 will increase residential amenity to adjoining properties.

5.0 ____Final Statement of Commitments

In accordance with the former Part 3A of the *EP&A Act 1979*, the following are the commitments made by the ACU to manage and minimise potential impacts arising from the proposal. These commitments replace those in the EA.

Key changes from the draft Statement of Commitments are provided in **bold and underline** and ~~strikethrough~~ below.

Commitment		Timing
General		
1.1	The Concept Plan will be implemented generally in accordance with the Environmental Assessment prepared by HASSELL dated December 2011 **and the amendments as outlined in the Preferred Project Report dated June 2012.**	All subsequent detailed design stage and future development applications submitted.
1.2	**The proponent will undertake biannual audits of class attendance to confirm the daily campus population.**	**Biannual upon commencement of the consent.**
1.3	All future development within the development precincts will be consistent with the 'Character Statement' for each precinct included at Section 3 of the Environmental Assessment.	All subsequent detailed design stage and future development applications submitted.
Ecologically Sustainable Development		
2.1	The proponent's Ecologically Sustainable Development Officer will identify an appropriate future green star design target for future development.	All subsequent detailed design stage and future development applications submitted.
Transport and Accessibility		
3.1	The proponent will continue to provide a shuttle bus service between the campus and Strathfield Railway Station to improve connection of the campus to high frequency and high capacity public transport services. **The proponent will undertake annual travel surveys to demonstrate the ongoing use of the shuttle bus service.**	Subsequent detailed design stage and future development applications. **Annual travel surveys to accompany future development applications.**
3.2	A committee will be appointed to implement programs and initiatives within the campus to promote increased use of public transport services and car pooling opportunities.	To be implemented by the proponent following approval of the Concept Plan and as part of each subsequent detailed development applications.
3.3	The proponent, in partnership with the State Transit Authority, will continue to investigate opportunities to increase the frequency and provision of bus services to the ACU Strathfield campus.	To be undertaken by the proponent during detailed design and future operation of the campus.

Commitment		Timing
3.4	The proponent will investigate providing interest free loans to employees to purchase annual travel passes.	To be investigated by the proponent.
Amenity		
4.1	The proponent will ensure potential impacts on residential amenity caused by operations of the University are identified and minimised.	To be continued by the proponent.
Community		
5.1	The proponent will implement an ACU Neighbourhood Policy provide opportunities for external hire of halls, rooms and outdoor spaces for conferences and the like.	The **revised** Neighbourhood Policy will be implemented by the proponent following approval of the Concept Plan Application.
5.2	Opportunities for community education activities and shared use of learning spaces and library facilities with the surrounding community will be investigated.	To be implemented by the proponent as necessary following completion of each Stage.
Staging		
6.1	The new development precincts will generally be developed in accordance with the Staging plan at Section 3.5 of the Environmental Assessment prepared by HASSELL dated December 2011 **as amended by the Preferred Project Report dated June 2012.**	All future development applications to demonstrate compliance.
Contamination		
7.1	A detailed site contamination assessment will be undertaken for future detailed development applications to assess the contamination status of the Underground Storage Tanks and Areas of Environmental Concern.	To be prepared and submitted with the development application for Stage 1 works.
7.2	During future demolition works, care will be taken and should suspected Asbestos Containing Material be identified works will immediately cease and an asbestos specialist will be consulted for identification, removal and disposal of material prior to works recommencing.	During demolition and excavation works for all future development.
7.3	Prior to future detailed development applications, soil sampling of the stockpile at the western end of the site will be undertaken and samples analysed for identified PCOCs and waste classification to determine chemical composition and the potential risk posed to human health by the material. Once composition is determined the waste classification of the stockpile will be determined and the material removed to an appropriately licensed disposal facility.	As part of a Development Application for Stage 1.

Commitment		Timing
7.4	During construction works, should contamination be detected that presents an unacceptable risk to human health or the environment, then management and/or remediation will be instigated.	During construction works for all future development.
Heritage		
8.1	~~The Conservation Management Plan (CMP) prepared for the campus will be implemented for ongoing future operation and development.~~ **A Conservation Management Plan (CMP) shall be lodged with the Heritage Council for review prior to the determination of applications after Concept Plan approval.** **The CMP shall include a schedule of prioritised conservation works on the site with set timeframes for completion of these works to the satisfaction of the Heritage Council.** **An Interpretation Plan for works to interpret the heritage significance of the site shall be submitted to the satisfaction of the Heritage Council prior to the determination of applications after Concept Plan approval.**	~~To be implemented by the proponent~~. **A CMP is nearing completion in draft form which will address all these requirements.**
8.2	**An archival photographic recording of the site shall be prepared prior to the commencement of works to the satisfaction of the Heritage Council. The recording shall be prepared in accordance with the Heritage Council guidelines 'Photographic Recording of Heritage Items using Film or Digital Capture'. The original copy of the archival record shall be lodged with the Heritage Council. An additional copy shall be provided to Strathfield Council.**	**An archival recording will be commissioned. A scope of recording will be submitted to the Heritage Council prior to commencement but will include the handball courts.**
~~8.2~~	~~Prior to any demolition of the existing handball courts, an interpretation strategy will be developed to communicate the heritage significance of the existing courts.~~	~~An interpretation strategy is to be submitted for approval with any Development Application seeking demolition of the handball courts~~
Aboriginal Heritage		
9.1	During future detailed development applications, the proponent is to consult with the relevant Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council at a minimum to identify if Aboriginal cultural values are present within the study area, and to assess what impact the	During construction, demolition and excavation works for all future development.

Commitment		Timing
	proposed development would have on such values	
9.2	If Aboriginal objects are identified during development of the subject land, works will stop and a suitably qualified archaeologist notified immediately to assess the finds. The finds will be reported to the Office of Environment and Heritage and further approvals may be necessary prior to the recommencement of works.	During construction, demolition and excavation works for all future development.
Drainage and Infrastructure		
10.1	Staging of infrastructure will be undertaken in accordance with the infrastructure staging plan within the *Australian Catholic University – Infrastructure Assessment* prepared by Mott MacDonald Hughes Trueman dated December 2011.	All future development applications for Stages 1 to 4 to demonstrate compliance with infrastructure staging plan.
10.2	The proponent will comply with the requirements of the relevant public authorities with regard to connection, relocation or adjustment of services affected by the construction of the proposed development.	During construction works for all future development.
Flora and Fauna		
11.1	The proponent will retain mature planted trees where possible and in accordance with the tree removal plan shown at Section 3.4 of this Environmental Assessment, **as amended by the Preferred Project Report dated June 2012.**	All future development applications involving tree removal is to demonstrate compliance with the tree removal plan, **as amended.**
11.2	The proponent will transplant those existing trees where indicated on the tree removal plan shown at Section 3.4 of this Environmental Assessment, **as amended by the Preferred Project Report dated June 2012.**	All future development applications involving tree relocation is to demonstrate compliance with the tree removal plan, **as amended.**
11.3	The proponent will ensure that all mature trees that are to be removed as part of the proposal be replaced. Where possible native trees which naturally occur within the locality will be used as a replacement planting.	All future development applications involving tree removal.
11.4	During construction works, mature planted trees will have adequate tree protection measures implemented to ensure retained trees are not impacted.	All future development applications.
11.5	Naturally occurring, remnant trees including the Fine Leaved Ironbark and Turpentines will be retained where possible and adequate tree	All future development applications. Trees to be maintained during construction, demolition and excavation works for all future

Commitment		Timing
	protection measures will be implemented to ensure retained trees are not impacted by the proposal during the construction phase	development.
11.6	The identified noxious weed Broad Leafed Privet (Ligustrum lucidum) will be managed by the proponent in accordance with the legal requirements for the control of a Class 4 weed. The growth and spread of the plant will be controlled according to the measures specified in a management plan published by the local control authority.	To be managed by the proponent during future operation of the campus.
Waste		
12.1	As part of future detailed design and subsequent development applications for each new building, a fully detailed Construction Waste Management Plan will be submitted for approval. These plans will document waste management practices that comply with all relevant legislation relating to waste and resource recovery, environmental protection, and occupational health and safety,	To be submitted for approval with all future development applications.
12.2	General waste collection will continue to be collected on a daily basis from the dedicated waste storage area.	To be implemented by the proponent during future operation of the campus in consultation with the relevant waste contractor.
12.3	Recycled waste collection will occur on a twice weekly cycle from the dedicated waste storage area. Collection days will be agreed with the nominated waste contractor.	To be implemented by the proponent during future operation of the campus in consultation with the relevant waste contractor.
12.4	Prior to the commencement of works at the site all asbestos based and other hazardous materials that will be disturbed during refurbishment works will be removed. Removal of asbestos based materials will be undertaken in accordance with the regulations and requirements of the NSW Government and the Worksafe	Prior to any construction works commencing.
Construction Management Plan		
13.1	Prior to commencing construction, a Construction Environmental Management Plan will be prepared. This plan will include: 1. Hours of work, 2. Contact details of the site manager 3. Air quality/dust control procedures, 4. Noise management procedures, 5. Waste management procedures, 6. Flora and Fauna Protection,	To be prepared and submitted to prior to construction.

Commitment		Timing
	7. Community Safety, 8. Site specific soil erosion and sediment control plan 9. Arrangements for temporary pedestrian and vehicular access 10. Storage and Handling of Materials Procedures, 11. Environmental Training and Awareness, 12. Contact and complaints handling procedures, 13. Emergency Preparedness and Response.	
13.2	Measures to control soil erosion during construction will be introduced in accordance with currently accepted principles, as described in Managing Urban Stormwater (EPA NSW) and Soil Erosion and Sediment Control (The Institution of Engineers, Australia).	To be prepared and submitted to prior to construction.
Arborist Report		
14.1	A detailed arborist report will be prepared in relation to all trees to be removed or relocated. This report will detail all measures to be taken to ensure that proposed works do not threaten the ongoing viability of these trees.	Reports to be submitted for assessment as part of any future development applications involving tree removal or relocation.
Demolition		
15.1	Demolition will be undertaken in accordance with the requirements of Australian Standard AS2601– 2001: The Demolition of Structures which is incorporated into the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000 administered by WorkCover NSW.	During any future demolition works.
15.2	A licensed asbestos contractor will be engaged to monitor demolition of buildings containing asbestos or other contaminants. Following removal of all asbestos from the site final clearance certificates will be obtained. Further analysis will be undertaken where significant amounts of soil are to become exposed or disturbed as part of the redevelopment works. Further investigations of groundwater conditions and quality will be undertaken if soil contamination is encountered.	A licensed asbestos contractor is to be engaged by the proponent prior to any future demolition works commencing.
Archaeological Relics		
16.1	**Before excavation commences on site, the proponent must engage a suitably qualified historical archaeologist to undertaken an archaeological assessment to determine**	**To be submitted for approval with all future development applications**

Commitment		Timing
	the likelihood and significance of any archaeological relics in areas proposed for excavation. This assessment must contain an appropriate methodology for any archaeological work required and an appropriate research design to guide the archaeological works. This archaeological assessment must be submitted to the Heritage Branch, Office of Environment and Heritage, for comment prior to any archaeological works commencing on the site.	

6.0 ____Conclusion

Following exhibition of the Concept Plan for the ACU Strathfield Campus a number of elements have been modified and further information provided to clarify key issues of concern.

In Section 3.1, it has been shown that ACU are currently complying with the consents applicable to the campus in terms of student numbers on site at any one time. The future student numbers have also been clarified with the distinction made between a figure for enrolled equivalent full time student load (EFTSL) and students on site at any one time. The significant figure in terms of an environmental assessment is the number of students on site at any one time.

In response to submissions, the figure of 2,400 at any one time has been reduced to 2,000 at any one time, with a maximum number of 2,800 students per day retained. This arrangement is designed to increase the flexibility of options for students enrolled at a contemporary university campus and reduce the impact of student turnover or 'churn' (that is, students departing the campus and re-entering because of timetabling issues) which is a feature of the current 750 students at any one time.

Further traffic, parking and access data and assessment has been provided and discussed in Section 3.2. It has been shown that the increase in student numbers proposed will not significantly increase traffic movements in the surrounding streets. It has also been shown that with an increase in patronage of the free shuttle bus services and extra free on site parking spaces, the number of students and staff parking in surrounding streets will decrease, even as student numbers grow.

Built form and neighbourhood character is discussed in Section 3.3. Significantly the Heritage Council concurs with the overall changes proposed to the site, with minor amendments that have been adopted. These include changes to the built form of Precincts 1 and 3 to address submissions. The footprint of the library building proposed in Precinct 1 has been set back from Albert Road an average 3m to maintain significant heritage view lines and the setting of Mount Royal, Edmund Rice building, the Barron Chapel, and the original line of Albert Road. The set back has been increased further to protect the two existing Bunya Pines. The height of this building has been reduced in the north western portion from 4 storeys to 3 to also maintain view lines referred to above.

The footprint of the building in Precinct 3 has been set back an additional 5m from the western boundary (from 10m to 15m) to assist in reducing any impacts on adjoining residential properties although its height has been increased by 800mm.

Heritage concerns (Section 3.4) have been addressed with the above built form amendments to Precinct 1.

Hours of operation (Section 3.5) have been clarified and activities within those hours detailed. It is concluded the increase in student numbers and the marginal increase in hours of operation will not detrimentally impact the amenity of the surrounding neighbourhood.

Residential amenity is discussed in Section 3.6 in terms of safety, noise, air quality and litter. It is concluded that safety, noise and air quality will not be adversely compromised mainly because the proposed increase in student numbers will not be travelling to site by private car. As mentioned above, increases in public transport usage and more on site car parking will mean the increase in vehicular movements is minimal and less cars will be parked in surrounding streets. In terms of litter, ACU will maintain staff to collect rubbish around the campus perimeter and implement a rubbish recycling system on campus with collection points at campus gates to reduce litter in the public domain.

The Neighbourhood Policy has been revised and discussed in Section 3.7 with the revised policy addressing matters raised in submissions.

The Concept Plan approval process has been discussed in Section 3.8. Consultation between Strathfield Council and ACU regarding site operations and future development over the past 4

years has been detailed. The approval process of the Concept Plan in relation to the EP&A Act is also outlined and clarified, pointing out that the project was and remains of State significance.

Recommendation

Elements of the Concept Plan have been amended to address submissions, present a better design outcome for the site (including the manner in which ACU will reduce the environmental impact of the project) and provide additional information primarily in regard to student numbers and traffic and transport. Therefore the Concept Plan as amended in this Preferred Project Report is recommended for approval.

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