



Steiner Education Australia

Submission to the NSW Department of Planning and Environment

Draft Education and Child Care SEPP

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1. Introduction

Steiner Education Australia (SEA) is the peak national body representing 46 Member Schools and 11 Associate Members across Australia with 18 non-government Steiner schools in NSW.

Our NSW schools are diverse, ranging from K-12 in larger city schools to small schools in regional areas, many in high growth areas where enrolment demands are increasing.

Steiner Education Australia welcomes this opportunity to provide comment to the Draft Education and Child Care SEPP.

2. Submission

Steiner Education Australia welcomes the proposed Draft Education and Child Care SEPP which aims to simplify planning approval pathways for non-government schools to provide greater clarity, consistency and transparency around planning for educational facilities.

There are many positive changes included in the draft which will give non-government schools greater ability to respond to the needs of their changing communities. This will mean that non-government schools will have the ability to streamline development pathways and there will be more equity between government and non-government schools, both of which must meet the growing enrolments needs which are anticipated in the very near future.

To recognise independent schools as 'public authorities' and 'determining authorities' under Part 5 of the EP & A Act, allowing 'development without consent' will enable them to carry out necessary school development in a responsive way to meet growing educational and population needs in a timely manner.

It will mean non-government schools will have increased scope to plan for and undertake capital projects under 'exempt development' and 'complying development provisions' and will free up the interminable red tape of local councils, which often stall projects or impose unrealistic or costly development conditions on schools.

To have exempt development provisions to enable minor works within school grounds without planning approval will certainly mean that schools can be flexible and able to meet budgetary considerations without extra provisions being imposed. To be able to add a portable classroom, remove a tree, landscape or add play equipment, shade structures or demolish certain buildings without having to apply for development approval is a welcome step.

The 'complying development' fast track assessment process is also welcome, although more information is required about accredited certifiers.

The 'without development consent' is an excellent example of schools having the ability to be responsive to immediate needs.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the draft which is a positive step for non-government schools.