New High School for Medowie Social Impact Assessment

Prepared for NSW Department of Education

Ethos Urban

Prepared by Ethos Urban

25 February 2025 | 2240446

'Gura Bulga'

Liz Belanjee Cameron

'Gura Bulga' – translates to Warm Green Country. Representing New South Wales.

'Dagura Buumarri'

Liz Belanjee Cameron

'Dagura Buumarri' – translates to Cold Brown Country. Representing Victoria.

'Gadalung Djarri'

Liz Belanjee Cameron

'Gadalung Djarri' – translates to Hot Red Country. Representing Queensland.

Ethos Urban acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters and culture.

We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

In supporting the Uluru Statement from the Heart, we walk with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in a movement of the Australian people for a better future.

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This document has been prepared by:		**This document has been reviewed by:**	
Solomon Charles		Lucy Band.	
Solomon Charles (SC)	20 January 2025	Lucy Band (LB)	20 January 2025

Version No.	**Date of issue**	**Prepared by**	**Approved by**
1.0 (DRAFT)	28/11/2024	SC	LB
2.0 (FINAL)	20/01/2025	SC	LB

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1.0 Introduction

This Social Impact Assessment has been prepared to support a Review of Environmental Factors (REF) for the NSW Department of Education (DoE) for the construction and operation of a new high school for Medowie (the activity).

The purpose of the REF is to assess the potential environmental impacts of the activity prescribed by *State Environmental Planning Policy (Transport and Infrastructure) 2021* (T&I SEPP) as "development permitted without consent" on land carried out by or on behalf of a public authority under Part 5 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act). The activity is to be undertaken pursuant to Chapter 3, Part 3.4, Section 3.37A of the T&I SEPP.

This document has been prepared in accordance with the Guidelines for Division 5.1 assessments Consideration of environmental factors for health services facilities and schools - Addendum October 2024 (the Guidelines Addendum) by the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI). The purpose of this report is to analyse the potential social impacts that may arise from the High School during construction and operational phases. It subsequently recommends appropriate social mitigation and benefits optimisation measures.

1.1 Statement of Significance

Based on the assessment of the nature and extent of potential social impacts caused by the proposed site activity, it has been determined the construction and operation of a new High School for Medowie will:

- Improve access to high school education for students and their families
- Provide an option for whole-of-school education due to the co-location of Medowie Public School and the propose High School
- Improve community cohesion in associated with the provision on new social infrastructure
- Increase walkability and use of active transport
- Temporarily disrupt daily routines during construction
- Increase traffic at peak school drop-off and pick-up periods
- Potential impact on parents' wellbeing due to fear for student safety associated with the site's close proximity to a petrol station and position in bushfire and flood zones.

The extent and nature of potential negative impacts are generally low and will not have a significant impact on the locality, community and/or the environment. Potential impacts can be appropriately mitigated or managed to ensure that there is minimal impact on the communities.

The extent and nature of anticipated positive impacts associated with the delivery of a new high school and key social infrastructure are high, as detailed by this assessment.

1.2 Methodology

This report has been guided by the NSW DPHI Social Impact Assessment (SIA) Guideline for State Significant Projects as updated in February 2023 ('the SIA Guideline'). While this project is not considered State Significant, this guideline represents best practice in NSW and has informed the approach to this SIA.

Based on DoE guidance for REF approval pathway this report is a streamlined desktop study only and has not undertaken primary research. Technical reports used to inform the SIA include:

- Architectural & Landscape Design Report (NBRS, 2024)
- Blast Assessment from LPG and Storage at Service Centre on the New High School for Medowie (Arriscar 2024)
- Bushfire Assessment (Eco Logical 2024)
- Community Engagement Report (SINSW, 2024)
- Detailed Site Investigation – Proposed Medowie High School (ADE Consulting Group, 2024)
- Medowie High School Concept Design Report (NBRS, 2024)
- Noise and Vibration Assessment Report (Arup, 2024)
- Oder and Air Quality Assessment (ADE Consulting Group, 2024)
- Flood Impact Rask Assessment (Enstruct, 2024)
- Transport and Accessibility Impact Assessment (WSP, 2024)

- Transport Plan (WSP, 2024)

1.3 Qualifications of Report Authors

The SIA Guideline requires authors are 'suitably qualified persons' who hold appropriate qualifications and have relevant experience in social science or related areas. The lead author's qualifications, experience and demonstrated understanding of social impacts is outlined below.

Name: Lucy Band

Qualifications, expertise, and professional memberships (refer to Table 1)

Date the SIA was completed: 20 January 2025

I confirm the SIA contains all relevant information, and understand my legal and ethical obligations, and that none of the information in the SIA is false or misleading.

Signed:

Name of Lead Author: Solomon Charles

Qualifications, expertise, and professional memberships (refer to Table 1)

Date the SIA was completed: 20 January 2025

I confirm the SIA contains all relevant information, and understand my legal and ethical obligations, and that none of the information in the SIA is false or misleading.

Signed:

Table 1 SIA Authors' Qualifications

Author	Expertise/Qualifications
Lucy Band Director, Social Strategy	*BA Communications, MA Environmental Management, Grad Dip Urban and Regional Planning, PIA, MPIA SIMNA* Lucy is an industry leading social planner with over 10 years' experience working in the built environment sector and has contributed to city shaping projects across Australia and the UK.
Solomon Charles Senior Urbanist, Social Strategy	*BA-Hons (Human Geography)* Solomon has 2 years of experience in social science research focusing on urban social sustainability and has worked on numerous SIAs for SSDA projects.

2.0 Proposed Site Activity

2.1 Site Description and Context

The subject site is located on Abundance Road, approximately 1km west of the main township of Medowie, and south of the Medowie Public School located on Ferodale Road. Medowie is located in the Port Stephens LGA and under the jurisdiction of Port Stephens Council. Port Stephens LGA is the traditional home of the Worimi people.

Table 2 site description

Context	Details
Street address:	6 Abundance Road, Medowie
Postcode:	2318
Lot/DP no.:	Lot 3 DP 788451
Local Government Area:	Port Stephens Council
Current land zoning:	RU2 Rural Landscape

Source: SINSW

Figure 1 areal view of the site outlined in red

Source: Nearmap 29 February 2024

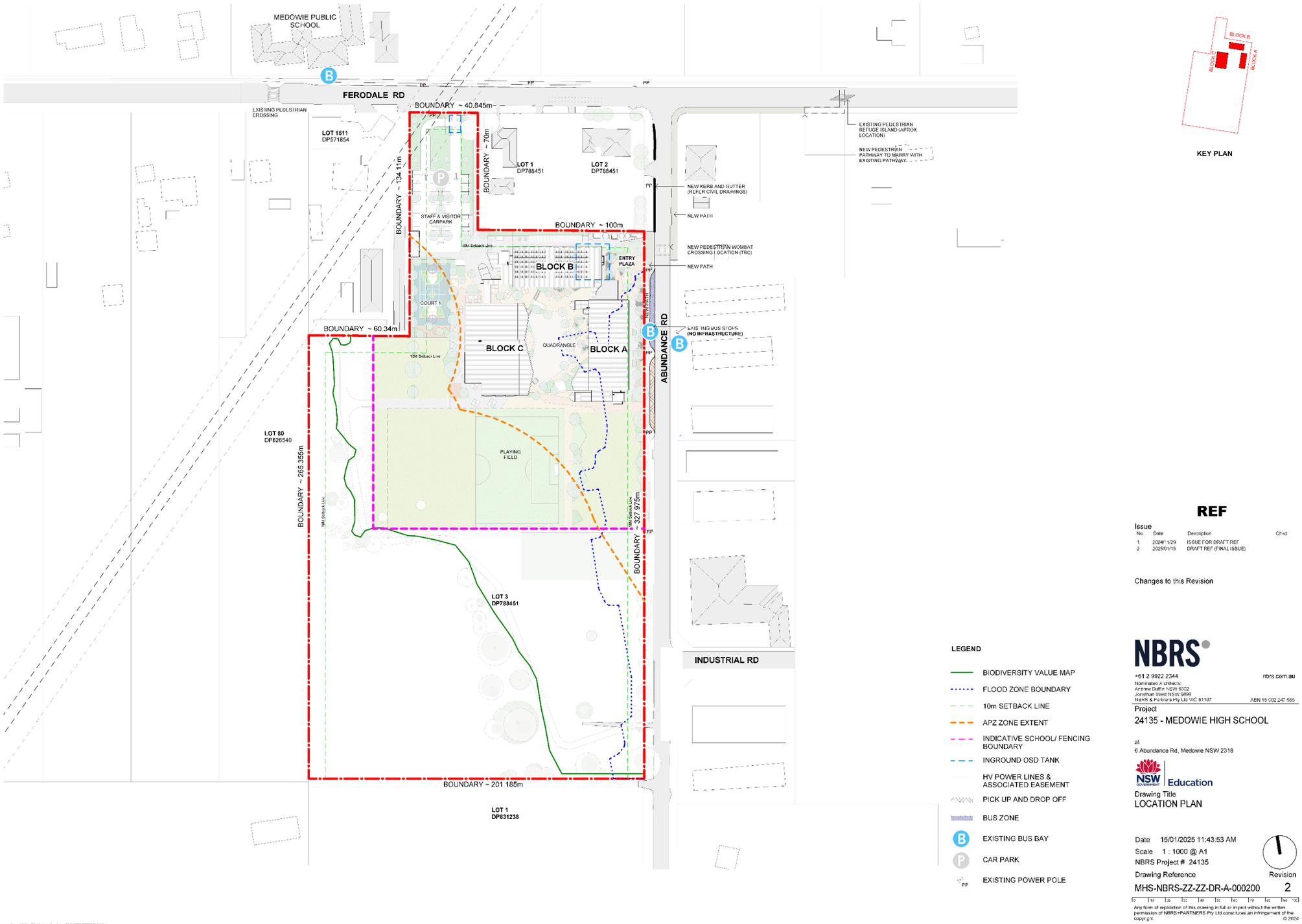
2.2 Description of Proposal

The proposal is for construction of a new high school herein referred to as 'site' and shown in **Figure 2**. The new high school will be developed in the following manner:

Works to allow the establishment of the new school for up to 640 students and 49 staff including:

- The construction of new high school buildings per the SINSW standardised design comprising:
  - Block A – Three storey building for Administration and Staff and Support Learning Unit, Library, General Learning Spaces, specialist Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) and Performing Arts Learning Spaces, amenities and plant areas;
  - Block B – Three storey building for specialist Wood and Metal, Food and Textiles, Visual Arts, science learning spaces, general learning spaces, staff spaces, amenities and plant areas;
  - Block C – Single storey building for gymnasium, canteen, associated storage, amenities and plant areas to requirements for final student capacity; ·
- Earthwork as required across the site.
- Public domain works outside the site boundary mainly on the Abundance Rd side; ·
- Covered Outdoor Learning Areas and Canopies; ·
- Landscape works for outdoor learning, respite and play, including three playing courts and field; and accessible walkways;
- Carpark and bicycle parking areas;
- Waste storage & collection areas;
- Site services and infrastructure to support the school use.

The proposal does not include construction of any public road infrastructure with access to the site via Ferodale Road (north) and Abundance Road (east) as shown in **Figure 2**



KEY PLAN

LEGEND

- BIODIVERSITY VALUE MAP
- FLOOD ZONE BOUNDARY
- 10m SETBACK LINE
- APZ ZONE EXTENT
- INDICATIVE SCHOOL/ FENCING BOUNDARY
- INGROUND OSD TANK
- HV POWER LINES & ASSOCIATED EASEMENT
- PICK UP AND DROP OFF
- BUS ZONE
- EXISTING BUS BAY
- CAR PARK
- EXISTING POWER POLE

REF

Issue

No	Date	Description	Ckd
1	2024/11/29	ISSUE FOR DRAFT REF	
2	2025/01/15	DRAFT REF (FINAL ISSUE)	

Changes to this Revision

NBRS

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Nominated Architects:
Andrew Duffin NSW 6022
Jonathan Wood NSW 5899
NBRS & Partners Pty Ltd VIC 51197 ABN 16 002 247 565

Project
24135 - MEDOWIE HIGH SCHOOL

at
6 Abundance Rd, Medowie NSW 2318

NSW GOVERNMENT Education

Drawing Title
LOCATION PLAN

Date 15/01/2025 11:43:53 AM
Scale 1 : 1000 @ A1
NBRS Project # 24135
Drawing Reference MHS-NBRS-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-000200
Revision 2

Figure 2 Site plan

Source: NBRS

3.0 Strategic Policy Context

The following section identifies the key social drivers for this site, based on a review of the key state and local policies and strategies. The following key documents have been reviewed:

- Design Guide for Schools (Government Architect NSW, 2018)
- Environmental Design in Schools (Government Architect NSW, 2018)
- Local Strategic Planning Statement (Port Stephens Council, 2020)
- NSW Budget: Rebuilding Public Education (Schools Infrastructure NSW, 2024)
- Our Plan for NSW Public Education, Government (NSW Department of Education, 2024)
- Rural and Remote Education Strategy (NSW Department of Education, 2021)
- Stakeholder and Community Participation Plan (NSW Department of Education, 2024)

Table 3 Strategic Policy Drivers

Policy theme	Key implications for impact assessment	Source
Delivering more schools to keep up with demand	• The Department of Education is seeking to complete new high school projects as a part of its plan to enable successful education outcomes • The 2024-25 Budget is delivering record education funding to ensure growing communities get access to a world class public education.	• Our Plan Driving for NSW Public Education, Government (NSW Department of Education, 2024) • NSW Budget: Rebuilding Public Education (Schools Infrastructure NSW, 2024) • Rural and Remote Education Strategy (NSW Department of Education, 2021)
School infrastructure's role in sustainable communities	• Schools contribute towards creating and supporting inclusive and vibrant communities. There is an opportunity for schools to play a critical role as community hubs, providing facilities which are social connectors within the broader community, and which foster healthy, culturally rich, and resilient communities. • Improved quality of life can be achieved by co-locating schools, recreation, transport, community and health facilities, social infrastructure and local services in walkable mixed-use places • The application of environmental design principles to schools increases their social, economic and environmental value to become assets for new or established communities • Good environmental design can improve learning outcomes, student and teacher health and wellbeing. • Introducing or improving environmental design principles can help schools embrace their local setting and cultural history and identity, including Aboriginal cultural heritage. • Driving equitable outcomes, opportunities and experiences for all learners and staff is critical to the development of an outstanding education system	• Design Guide for Schools (Government Architect NSW, 2018) • Environmental Design in Schools (Government Architect NSW, 2018) • Our Plan Driving for NSW Public Education, Government (NSW Department of Education, 2024
Active transport	• Port Stephens LSPS identifies the region's centres as the hub of community life where residents and visitors use walking and cycling links to access local shops, schools, parks and sporting facilities.	• Local Strategic Planning Statement (Port Stephens Council, 2020)
Community consultation for School Infrastructure	• The Department of Education's approach to stakeholder and community engagement is guided by the community participation principles of the EP&A Act. • When engaging with neighbours, The Department of Education will consider what impact the development will have, including issues such as privacy, solar access, views and visual impacts, overshadowing, noise generation, hours of operation, traffic and parking impacts	• Stakeholder and Community Participation Plan (NSW Department of Education, 2024)

4.0 Social Locality and Baseline

This section provides an overview of the existing social conditions and trends without the project and provides a benchmark against which potential social impacts can be assessed.

4.1 Defining Social Localities

For the purpose of this assessment, two social localities have been identified in **Table 4** and shown in **Figure 3** and **Figure 4**. Social localities establish the geographical and social boundaries which will be used to understand potential impacts, as well as the surrounding social infrastructure context.

Table 4 Social Locality Definition

Study Area	Relevance to SIA	Definition in this SIA
Primary social locality (PSL)	• Likely to be localised social impacts relating to the immediate surrounds of the site, for example impacts associated with the construction of new buildings (i.e., amenity values, access, noise, air quality). • Longer term impacts such as potential noise, light, traffic and/or increased activity in the area may occur within the close proximity to the proposed site activity.	• The PSL is defined by an area of roughly 350m surrounding the site and considers urban features such as roads and open space. This is the area likely to be most impacted by construction of the proposal, as well as any direct impacts such as traffic, noise, changes to views etc. • The size of the PSL is proportional to the anticipated scope of development and is defined by urban special features (such as roads, railways, waterways)
Secondary social locality (SSL)	• Understand the broader impacts and benefits that the proposed site activity will likely have on the surrounding community.	• The SSL is defined using proposed school catchment zone as defined by SINSW. • Using the future school catchment zone as the SSL allows for analysis of social impacts and benefits on future users of Medowie High School

4.1.1 Impacted Communities

Table 5 provides a summary of the potentially impacted communities within the PSL and SSL and considerations for the social impact assessment.

Table 5 Key affected community groups

Impacted Communities	Consideration for Assessment
• Future students of Medowie HS • Parents of future students of Medowie HS • Residents of the PSL • Residents of the SSL • Port Stephens Council • Businesses in the PSL • Workers in the PSL • Port Stephens Foot Clinic	• Improved access to education • Increased public access to social infrastructure • Improved access to education using active transport • Improved community cohesion due to increased public access to social infrastructure • Construction disruption • Impacts to wellbeing due to concern about the site contamination • Traffic impact associated with school operations

These social localities are shown over the page in **Figure 3** and **Figure 4**

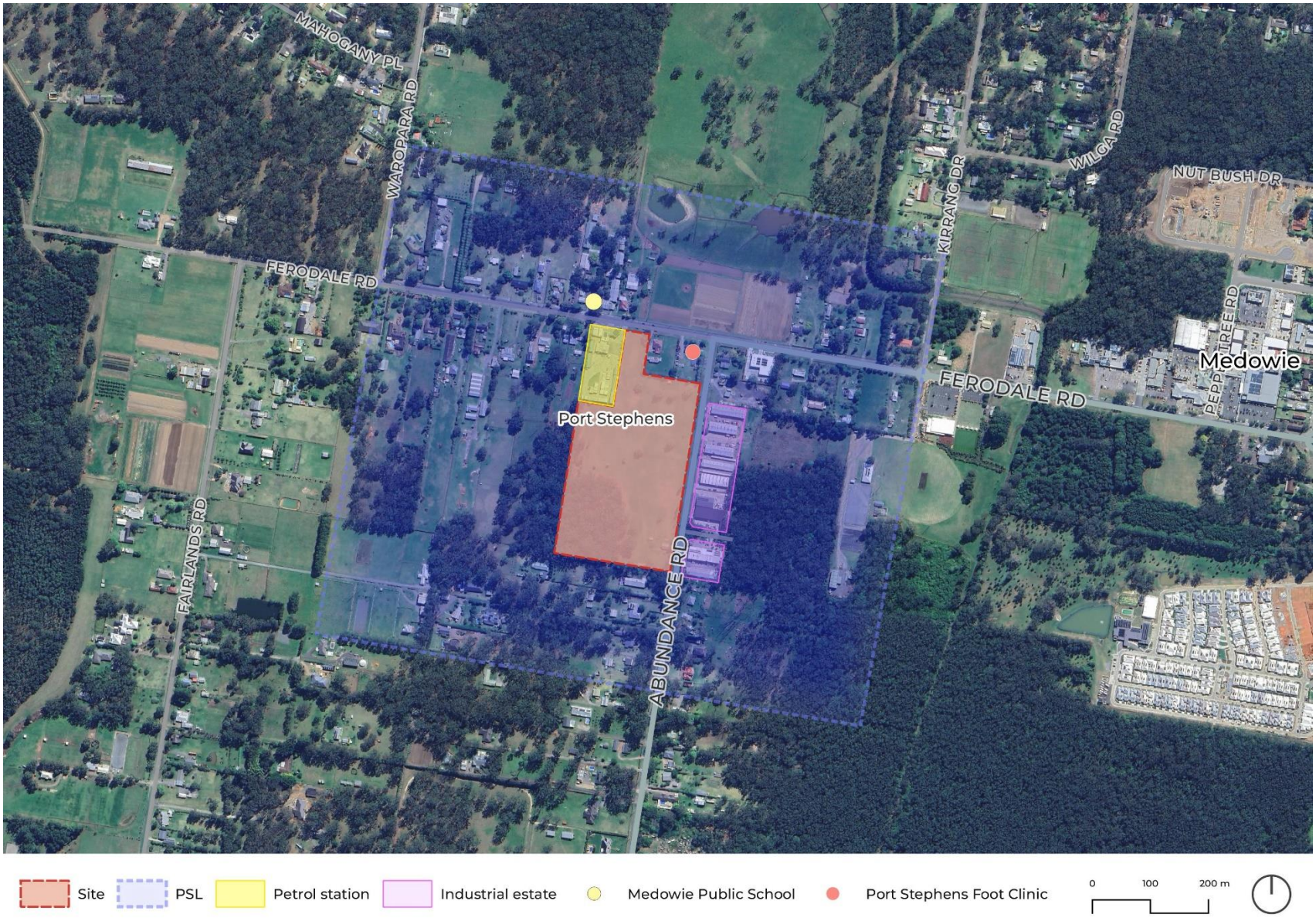

Figure 3 Primary social locality

Source: Ethos Urban

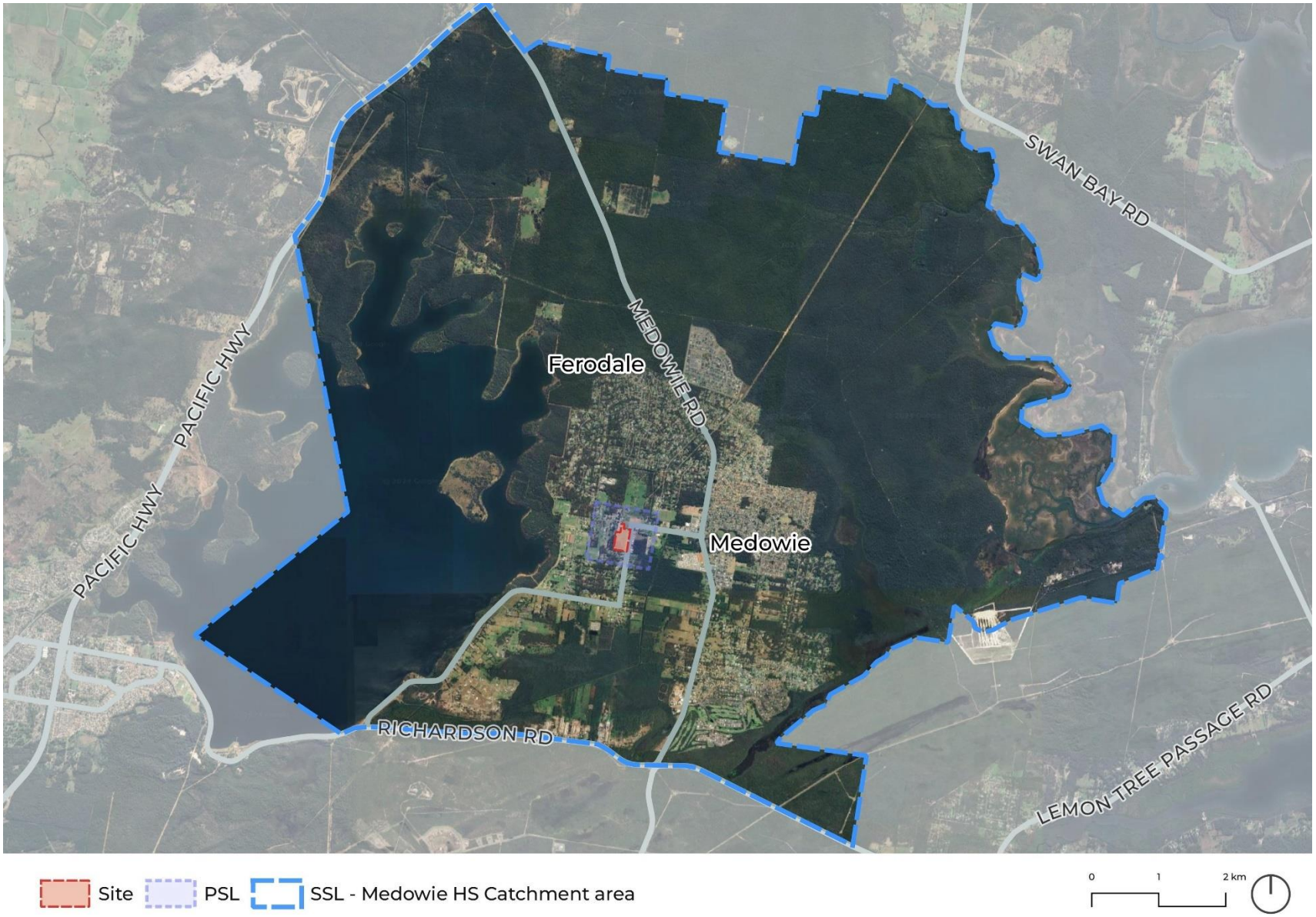

Figure 4 Secondary social locality

Source: Ethos Urban

4.2 Demographic Profile

Based on *2021 ABS Census of Population and Housing* data, an overview of the demographic profile of the school catchment area (SSL) is compared to the Regional NSW baseline. Key findings in relation to relevant social indicators are highlighted below with detailed demographic tables available in **Appendix A**.

Table 6 Overview of Demographics

Characteristics	Summary
Age structure	**A younger population** The median age in the SSL is 37.8 years, younger than the Regional NSW baseline median of 42.4 years. The high school age cohort comprises a slightly larger proportion of SSL population (8.8%) compared to the baseline (7.4%). The SSL also comprises a slightly larger proportion of the primary school aged cohort (8.5%) compared to the baseline (6.2%)
Population change	**Steady population growth** The SSL experienced sustained growth in the population between 2016-2024. The SSL average annual growth rate within this timeframe was 2.1%, which saw the population grow from 9,960 to 11,760 people. In contrast, the Rest of NSW average annual growth rate was 0.9% during the same eight-year period. The SSL annual population growth between 2024-2036 is projected to be 2%, greater than double that of the Rest of NSW baseline (0.7%).
Median Income	**Higher median incomes** The SSL has a median household income of $106,540, significantly higher than the Regional NSW baseline (+41.5.9%). The median individual income is also higher than the Regional NSW baseline (+16.3%). Over half of the SSL population are identified as comprising high income households (51.3%) which is significantly greater than the baseline of Regional NSW (36.5%). Only approximately 10% of the population of the SSL is identified as low or no income households, approximately half of that of the baseline of Regional NSW (approximately 20%).
Cultural diversity	**Population predominantly born in Australia** The majority of residents were born in Australia (92.2%), marginally greater than the baseline of Regional NSW (88.5%). The top three countries of birth outside of Australia are England (3.3%), New Zealand (1%) and South Africa (0.5%). A very small percentage of the population of the SSL speak languages other than English at home (approximately 2.9%). The proportion of people who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander across the SSL is 7%, which is the same as the baseline of Regional NSW (7%).
Household composition	**A high proportion of couple families with children** There is a significantly higher proportion of couple families with children within the SSL (41.5%) in comparison to the baseline of Regional NSW (26.6%). By extension, there is also a significantly higher proportion of family households within the SSL (83.6%) in comparison to the baseline of Regional NSW (68.8%). The SSL also hosts a significantly lower portion of lone person households (14.7%) in comparison to the baseline of Regional NSW (28%).
Tenure Type	**Most homes are owned with a mortgage** Dwellings that are owned with a mortgage are the most common tenure type in the SSL (47.2%), followed by dwellings that are owned outright (30.3%). The percentage of dwellings owned with a mortgage is significantly greater than the baseline of Regional NSW (32%). Renting is the least common tenure type within the SSL, comprising 21.9% of the population, which is lower than the baseline of Regional NSW (26.9%). The dwelling occupancy rate is higher across the SSL (95.1%) in comparison to the baseline (88.8%).
High school level	**Low rates of high school completion** 50.8% of the SSL population did not complete high school level education, comparable to the baseline of Regional NSW (51.6%).

Disclaimer regarding COVID-19 Pandemic

It is our view that interpretation of small area data from the 2021 ABS Census – that is any geography smaller than a State - should have due consideration for potential outcomes arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, at a small area level trend analysis relative to 2011 and 2016 Censuses should be treated with some degree of caution, as potential changes in demographics/behaviour may reflect temporary rather than structural changes as a result of COVID-19

5.0 Community and Stakeholder Perspectives

The following section provides an overview of the community and stakeholder consultation undertaken to inform the SIA. The purpose of this section is to highlight user values and aspirations relevant to the proposed site activity.

5.1 Community Information Session

More than **80** attendees visited the community information session. Most attendees were residents/neighbours who live around the proposed high school site. There were also future parents, local businesses including those located opposite the school site, the Local Member of Parliament Kate Washington and a Councillor from Port Stephens Council. The session was held on November 27 at Medowie Public School.

Table 7 Community Information Session Summary

Community concerns	Summary
Traffic/road/access related enquires and concerns	• Concerns around traffic congestion/speed management/footpath and road safety concerns along Abundance and Ferrodale Roads • Disability concerns: accessibility (drop off bays, visual impairment) and support unit classrooms
Parking related questions/concerns	• More parking and drop off bays for parents and high school students • Concerns about people parking in local business' allocated parking (e.g. neighbouring GP surgery)
Infrastructure related enquiries	• Undercover and shaded areas for children • Upgrading the current sewerage systems and septic system • Appropriate fencing • Inquiry into whether the project supporting local businesses during construction

5.2 School Infrastructure NSW Engagement Overview

A community engagement survey was conducted by SINSW. A total of **30** participants provided feedback between 27 November to 4 December 2024. The most significant concern categories which were identified as 'very important' by most survey respondents was an accessible and inclusive environment.

The survey was shared at an information session on 27 November 2024 at Medowie Public School, School Hall displayed on an info board and included in an information pack. The project webpage also contained a link to the survey.

Key themes identified through open comments include

- Concerns about the number of kiss and ride spaces (4)
- Footpath upgrades and road safety
- Adequate shade for students

Table 8 Community Survey Feedback

Community concerns	Summary
Accessible and inclusive environment	28 out of 30 respondents identified accessibility and inclusivity as very important.
Landscaping and shading	29 out of 30 respondents identified landscaping and shading as either important or very important
Public transport	Public transport was identified as important or very important by 28 out of 30 respondents
Effective use of space	24 out of 30 respondents identified effective use of space as either important or very important

Source: SINSW

6.0 Social Impact Assessment

The following section sets out the SIA methodology and provides an assessment of the identified impacts.

6.1.1 Social Factors

Social impacts refer to the consequences that people experience when a project brings change. The SIA Guideline classifies social impacts using a suite of social factors, these include:

Table 9 Social impact categories

Way of life How people live, get around, work, play and interact with one another each day	**Community** Its composition, cohesion, character, how it functions, resilience, and people's sense of place	**Accessibility** How people access and use infrastructure, services and facilities (private, public, or not-for-profit)	**Livelihoods** Including people's capacity to sustain themselves through employment or business
Health and wellbeing People's physical, mental, social and spiritual wellbeing – especially for people vulnerable to social exclusion or substantial change, psychological stress (from financial or other pressures), access to open space and effects on public health	**Surroundings** Access to and use of natural and built environment, including ecosystem services (shade, pollution control, erosion control), public safety and security, as well as aesthetic value and amenity	**Culture** Both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal - people's shared beliefs, customs, practices, obligations, values and stories, and connections to Country, land, waterways, places and buildings	**Decision-making systems** The extent to which people can have a say in decisions that affect their lives, and have access to complaint, remedy and grievance mechanisms.

6.1.2 Environmental factors for hospital and school activities:

In accordance with the Addendum Guidelines this report has taken into consideration the following environmental factors for hospital and school activities that relate to social impact assessment:

- the environmental impact on the community
- the transformation of the locality
- reduction of the aesthetic, recreational, scientific or other environmental quality or value of the locality
- the effects on any locality, place or building that has:
  - aesthetic, anthropological, archaeological, architectural, cultural, historical, scientific or social significance,
  - or other special value for present or future generations
- long-term effects on the environment
- risk to the safety of the environment
- cumulative impacts from the development and other surrounding approved developments

6.1.3 Social Significance Rating

The significance rating of each identified impact is determined by assessing the **likelihood** and **magnitude** of the impacts. Magnitude considers varying dimensions of impacts including the extent, duration, intensity/scale, sensitivity of the people affected, and their level of concern or interest. The assessment also considers the residual impact after the application of enhancement or mitigation measures.

Table 10 Social Impact Significance Matrix

Likelihood	Magnitude				
	Minimal	Minor	Moderate	Major	Transformational
Very unlikely	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Medium
Unlikely	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	High
Possible	Low	Medium	Medium	High	High
Likely	Low	Medium	High	High	Very high
Almost certain	Low	Medium	High	Very high	Very high

Source: DPHI 2023

6.2 Impact Assessment

Table 11 sets out the assessment of material social impacts arising from the proposed site activity and recommended responses to enhance social benefits and mitigate potentially negative impacts.

Table 11 Assessment of Social Impacts

Impact	Key supporting evidence	Impacted communities	Impact Dimensions			Potential Impact (without standard mitigation techniques)		Project responses - avoidance, minimisation or enhancement	Residual impact after project response
			Period	Duration	Extent	Rating	Experience		
Improved access to secondary education for future students and their families. High school education is an essential service which should be accessible to all eligible adolescents. High school students in Medowie currently have to commute to neighbouring townships to access education. The provision of a new public high school in a growing regional area will substantially reduce commute times for students and their families, improving accessibility outcomes. Increasing access to public education in Medowie will help to prevent capacity issues at surrounding high schools, notably Irrawang HS in Raymond Terrace. Establishing Medowie Public School and the Medowie HS feeder school will provide a whole-of-school education in one location Increased education access has the potential to improve rates of year 12 completion, which is lower across Regional NSW compared to Metropolitan Sydney. *Social factor(s): Accessibility*	• The SSL had a relatively high population growth rate of 2.1% per annum between 2016-2024 compared to the Regional NSW baseline (see **Section 4.2**) • Medowie HS will support up to 520 students. • Medowie Public School is located directly opposite the proposed High School site, providing a whole of school education (see **Figure 3**) • Commute distance from Medowie to Irrawong HS is 14km, approx. 20-minute drive or 30-40 minutes journey by public transport.	• Parents and students within the SSL	Operations	Ongoing	SSL	**Almost Certain, Major** **Very High**	**Positive**	• The use of the Expandable School Model plans for the growth of a school based on projected figures and enrolments. This allows for the provision of additional facilities when required.	Medowie HS will be able to meet growing demand using the Expandable School Model. This will allow the school to sustainably provide access to education facilities, avoiding overcrowding. *Residual impact rating:* Almost Certain / Major = **Very High**
Provision of new community infrastructure which can be used by the surrounding community. This has the potential to improve community cohesion through community use of school facilities. This may include the use of sports facilities by local sport clubs, hall spaces, and afterhours extra-curricular programs, such as Saturday language school programs. As communities grow and new families establish themselves, supporting community cohesion and connection is important. *Social factor(s): Community, health and wellbeing*	• Better access to sport and recreation facilities can support improved health and wellbeing and make it easier to interact and feel a sense of belonging. • The SSL is expected to grow at a greater rate (2.0%) compared to Rest of NSW baseline (0.7%).	• Residents of the SSL • Port Stephens Council	Operations	Ongoing	SSL	**Almost Certain, Moderate** **High**	**Positive**	• Promote the availability of shared-use and the SINSW Share my school program • Support the development of community programming such as a monthly school market to foster community use of the proposed school grounds to foster community cohesion.	Medowie HS will support community cohesion outcomes though diverse social uses, including public use of sports facilities, grounds, and teaching and learning spaces. *Residual impact rating:* Almost Certain / Major = **Very High**

Development of education infrastructure which priorities active and public transport use will increase walkability and reduce private vehicle use for school drop-offs and pickups. Creating a more walkable and public transport-oriented neighbourhood by providing key education infrastructure near to where people live will benefit surrounding residents. Increasing walkability has health and wellbeing benefits associated with increased exercise throughout everyday life *Social factor(s): Access, health and wellbeing*	• Public transport connections to the new school have been planned. Key public transport connections include a school bus stop and public bus stop. This will provide access to the surrounding locality. • Aligns with the Port Stephens LSPS goals to provide residents with walking and cycling links that cater for active neighbourhoods. • The proposed High School is well served by bus stops. Bus stops are located at the site boundaries on Abundance Rd and Ferodale Rd (NBRS, 2024)	• Future students of Medowie HS • Future parents of students of Medowie HS	Operations	Ongoing	SSL	**Almost Certain, Moderate** **High**	**Positive**	• Implement school programs to encourage the use of public and active transport • Implement the School Travel Plan • Consider providing shading at school bus stop shelters to reduce risk of urban heat impacts on students.	Moderate use of private vehicles for school drop-off and pick-ups. This will reduce additional traffic generation associated with the operation of a high school facility and improve health and wellbeing outcome amongst students using active transport. *Residual impact rating:* Almost Certain / Moderate = **High**
Economic opportunities during construction and operation Construction and operation of the proposal will provide economic benefits for workers as well as local businesses. *Social factor(s): Livelihoods*	• The proposal will support jobs during construction and 49 FTE jobs during operation. • The site is located near to Medowie town centre, including food and beverage outlets as well as other services which are likely to be used by workers during construction and operation	• Construction, teaching and other support function workers in the SSL • Businesses with the SSL	Construction and Operations	Temporary and Ongoing	SSL	Almost Certain/ Moderate **High**	**Positive**	• NA	The proposal will support employment during construction and operations. Livelihood benefits will be concentrated within the Port Stephens Region, to support the local community. Almost Certain / Moderate **High**
Disruption associated with the construction of the new high school facilities will likely impact the daily routines and wellbeing of neighbouring residents, businesses and visitors to Port Stephens Foot Clinic. Construction impacts may include noise, vibration, traffic, construction vehicle routes, access and parking, pollution/dust, water and stormwater flow, sediment and run-off, waste removal, servicing arrangements, bushfire, flooding and contamination. *Social factor(s): Way of life, access, heath and wellbeing, surroundings*	• Risk of construction noise impacts exceeding target noise levels have been identified by the Noise and Vibration Assessment Report (NVAR) (Arup, 2024).	• Residents of the PSL	Construction	Temporary	PSL	**Likely, Minor** **Medium**	**Negative**	• Future preparation of a Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) should contain measures to effectively communicate and engage with the surrounding community to minimise disruption, including notification requirements for periods of high impact, key contacts for enquiries and a complaints management process. • The NVAR details preliminary construction noise mitigation measures, including: Mufflers and screening, residential-grade silencers and the use of resilient padding (dolly). The NVAR also identified the need for the preparation of a detail Construction Noise and Vibration Management Plan by the construction contractor (Arup 2024)	Minimal construction related disruption to the daily routine of residents surrounding the site. Construction will not prevent residents from accessing the road network and have minimal effect on wellbeing and enjoyment of the surroundings. *Residual impact rating:* Possible / Minimal = **Low**

Increased demand on the road network across the surrounding locality during school drop-off and pick-ups at future kiss and ride. This will likely increase congestion, particularly on Abundance Rd which is anticipated to host the school kiss and ride bus stop. Abundance Rd hosts a light industrial area on the east side of the roadway, opposite the propose High School site. Businesses workers may be affected by increased traffic. There is also a risk of cumulative traffic impacts at peak drop-off and pick-up periods due to the co-location of Medowie Public School and the proposed High School. *Social factor(s): Way of life, accessibility*	• Additional traffic and road congestion was a key community concern identified thought the consultation process (see **Section 5.1**).	• Residents of the PSL • Future parents of students of Medowie HS • Businesses and workers on Abundance Rd	Operations	Ongoing	PSL / SSL	**Likely, Moderate** **<u>High</u>**	**Negative**	• Implementation of a School Travel Plan to encourage walking, cycling and the use of public transport • Staggering of school start and finish times between Medowie Public School and the proposed High School	Minimal impact on surrounding road network during school drop-off and pick-up periods. Traffic generated by the future school with be supported by the surrounding road network. *Residual impact rating:* Likely / Minor = **Medium**
Location of school infrastructure in close proximity to petrol station and is in a bushfire zone and flood zone Parents of school children may be concerned about the health and wellbeing of their children due to a perception of increased risk to student safety caused by exposure to petrochemicals and risk of bushfire and flooding. This may cause increased fear or stress, impacting parent wellbeing.	• The High School site borders the Peral Energy Petrol Station Medowie (see **Figure 3**). • The Odour Assessment identified no offensive odours relating to the service station and it is considered unlikely to present a long-term adverse odour issue to sensitive receptors or facilities on the school grounds (ADE Consulting Group, 2024). • The Blast Assessment shows that a potential gas cylinder fire or petrol tank explosion would be localised to the petrol station and would not impact on the High School premises (Arriscar, 2024) • Comprehensive soil analysis was conducted to assess site contamination. It was found that the soils present a low risk of contamination, and the site is considered chemically suitable for the proposed land-use as a school (ADE Consulting Group, 2024). • Consultation outcomes showed concern about increased flood risk and the potential impacts on the local sewage system during heavy rain/flood events. • The Bushfire Assessment demonstrate the site has sufficient space to accommodate the proposed buildings from a bushfire risk perspective (Eco Logical 2024)	• Future parents of students of Medowie HS • Future students of Medowie HS	Operations	Ongoing	PSL	**Possible, Minor** **<u>Medium</u>**	**Negative**	• The High School site layout responds to its proximity to the petrol station by situating the staff carpark at the northwest site boundary, creating a buffer between the petrol station and school facilities. Palisade fencing will be used to prevent student access to the parking area • The project has been designed to prevent additional strain on the existing issues with the sewer system. The project has consulted with Hunter Water and will release the sewerage at a rate that is low and appropriate for the system to handle. • As per the Planning for Bushfire Protection and Rural Fire Service 2019 requirements, a Bushfire Emergency Management and Evacuation Plan will be prepared prior to the occupation of the new school (Eco Logical 2024)	Minimal concern about the health and wellbeing of future students amongst parents due to school design interventions demonstration of negligible bushfire and flood risks or health risks associated with the future High School's proximity to a petrol station . The school will also not contribute to sewer issues currently impacting residents across the surrounding locality heavy rain or flood events *Residual impact rating:* Unlikely / Minimal = **Low**

7.0 Conclusion

An assessment of social impacts has been undertaken with consideration to the issues identified through the social baseline analysis. Each impact has been appraised in terms of the significance of the impact, based on the likelihood and magnitude of the change experienced by the community.

7.1 Assessment Summary

Based on the identification of potential impacts and an assessment of the nature and extent of the impacts of the proposed High School, it is determined that:

- The new Medowie HS will improve access to education for future students across the school catchment and reducing commute times for students across Medowie and Ferodale as well as alleviate student population growth pressure on surroundings high schools across the Port Stephens region.
- The co-location of the proposed High School and Medowie Public School will provide a whole-of-school experience for future students, improving community and education outcomes.
- The surrounding community will experience positive social impacts associated with the provision of publicly accessible social infrastructure, improving community cohesion outcomes.
- The surrounding Port Stephens region will benefit from increase employment opportunities supported by the construction and operation of the new High School
- The development of a new high school in a growing regional community will improve active transport outcomes by creating a more walkable and transit orients environment.
- Local residents surrounding the site may experience disruption to their daily routines during the construction. However, the implementation of mitigation measures will minimise construction impacts and the project on the surrounding community.
- The wellbeing of parents may be impacted by potential fears for student safety associated with the site's close proximity to a petrol station and position in bushfire and flood zones. However, it is noted that student safety concerns related to the site's location are not supported by relevant technical studies.
- Traffic generated during peak drop-off and pick-up periods has the potential to impact residents and business across the surrounding locality. The co-location of Medowie Public School risk causing cumulative traffic impacts during peak periods. However, the use of mitigation measures to incentives the use of active and public transport as well as stagging of High School and primary school start and finish times will reduce to the over risk traffic impacts affecting local residents.

7.2 Summary of Mitigation Measures

This section summaries the recommended mitigation measures to address negative social impacts identified in **Section 6.2**.

Table 12 Summary of mitigation measures

Project Stage ***Design (D)*** ***Construction (C)*** ***Operation (O)***	**Mitigation Measures**	**Relevant Section of Report**
D	• The use of the Expandable School Model plans for the growth of a school based on projected figures and enrolments. This allows for the provision of additional facilities when required.	**6.2**
D/O	• Promote the availability of shared-use and the SINSW Share my school program • Support the development of community programming such as a monthly school market to foster community use of the proposed school grounds to foster community cohesion.	**6.2**
O	• Implement school programs and to encourage the use of public and active transport	**6.2**

	• Implement the School Travel Plan • Consider providing shading at school bus stop shelters to reduce risk of urban heat impacts on students.	
C	• Future preparation of a Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) should contain measures to effectively communicate and engage with the surrounding community to minimise disruption, including notification requirements for periods of high impact, key contacts for enquiries and a complaints management process.	**6.2**
O	• Staggering of school start and finish times between Medowie Public School and the proposed High School	**6.2**

Appendix A Demographic Profile

Table 13 Population projections

Population (no.)	2016	2024	2026	2036	2041	2016 - 2024	2024 - 2041
SSL	9,960	11,760	12,230	12,730	13,990	+1,800	+2,230
Average Annual Growth (no.)	**2011 - 2016**	**2016 - 2024**	**2024 - 2026**	**2026 - 2036**	**2036 - 2041**	**2016 - 2024**	**2024 - 2041**
SSL	+130	+230	+240	+50	+250	+230	+130
Average Annual Growth Rate (%)	**2011 - 2016**	**2016 - 2024**	**2024 - 2026**	**2026 - 2036**	**2036 - 2041**	**2016 - 2024**	**2024 - 2041**
SSL	1.4%	2.1%	2.0%	0.4%	1.9%	2.1%	1.0%
Benchmark	**2016**	**2024**	**2026**	**2036**	**2041**	**2016 - 2024**	**2024 - 2041**
Rest of NSW	2,707,940	2,899,700	2,941,190	3,172,490	3,297,470	+191,760	+397,770
Average Annual Growth	+19,672	+23,970	+20,745	+23,130	+24,996	+23,970	+23,400
Growth Rate	0.7%	0.9%	0.7%	0.8%	0.8%	0.9%	0.8%

Table 14 General population characteristics

Category	PSA	Regional NSW
Income		
Median individual income (annual)	$43,680	$37,560
Variation from Regional NSW median	*+16.3%*	*n.a.*
Median household income (annual)	$106,540	$75,280
Variation from Regional NSW median	*+41.5%*	*n.a.*
Individual income		
No income	8.4%	7.5%
Low	32.6%	38.5%
Medium	47.4%	44.1%
High	11.6%	9.9%
Household income		
No income	1.1%	1.6%
Low	8.5%	18.0%
Medium	39.0%	43.9%
High	51.3%	36.5%
Age Structure		
0 years	1.5%	1.0%
1-2 years	2.6%	2.2%
3-4 years	2.8%	2.2%
5-6 years	3.2%	2.4%
7-11 years	8.5%	6.2%
12-17 years	8.8%	7.4%
18-24 years	7.6%	7.5%
25-34 years	10.9%	11.5%
35-49 years	20.4%	17.5%
50-59 years	13.0%	12.9%
60-69 years	10.8%	13.4%
70-84 years	9.3%	12.9%
85 years and over	0.6%	2.7%
Males	49.9%	49.2%
Females	50.1%	50.8%
Median Age (years)	37.8	42.4
Country of Birth		

Australia	92.2%	88.5%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders	*7.0%*	*7.0%*
Other Major English Speaking Countries	5.5%	5.4%
Other Overseas Born	2.3%	6.1%
% speak English only at home	*97.1%*	*93.5%*
Household Composition		
Couple family with no children	30.0%	29.7%
Couple family with children	41.5%	26.6%
Couple family - Total	71.5%	56.3%
One parent family	11.8%	11.7%
Other families	0.2%	0.8%
Family Households - Total	83.6%	68.8%
Lone person household	14.7%	28.0%
Group Household	1.7%	3.2%
Dwelling Structure (Occupied Private Dwellings)		
Separate house	97.6%	82.9%
Semi-detached, row or terrace house, townhouse etc.	2.0%	9.9%
Flat, unit or apartment	0.3%	6.2%
Other dwelling	0.1%	1.0%
Occupancy rate	*95.1%*	*88.8%*
Average household size	2.9	2.4
Tenure Type (Occupied Private Dwellings)		
Owned outright	30.3%	38.9%
Owned with a mortgage	47.2%	32.0%
Rented	21.9%	26.9%
State or territory housing authority	0.3%	2.9%
Housing co-operative/community/church group	0.0%	1.0%
Other	21.6%	22.9%
Other tenure type	0.6%	2.2%
Attending Education (% of those attending)		
Pre-school	9.3%	9.4%
Infants/Primary Total	38.2%	35.8%
Government	79.9%	69.4%
Catholic	5.2%	20.8%
Other	14.9%	9.9%
Secondary Total	28.6%	27.6%
Government	60.8%	62.4%
Catholic	22.4%	23.1%
Other	16.8%	14.6%
Technical or Further Educational Institution	10.8%	11.2%
University or other Tertiary Institution	11.1%	13.8%
Other type of educational institution	2.0%	2.2%
Highest Level of Education Completed (% of population aged 15 years and over)		
Year 12 or equivalent	49.1%	48.4%
Year 9-11 or equivalent	48.3%	46.5%
Year 8 or below	2.5%	4.7%
Did not go to school	0.0%	0.4%
Non-school Qualifications (Employed persons aged 15 years and over)		
Postgraduate degree	4.4%	7.1%
Graduate diploma or certificate	2.9%	3.7%
Bachelor degree	17.6%	24.1%
Advanced diploma or diploma	19.8%	17.2%
Certificate	55.3%	47.9%
Employment Status		

Unemployed/ looking for work	4.1%	4.5%
Labour force participation rate	66.0%	56.3%
Need for Assistance		
With Need for Assistance	5.9%	7.3%
No Need for Assistance	94.1%	92.7%
Top 10 Countries of Birth	**PSA**	**Regional NSW**
1	Australia (92.2%)	Australia (88.5%)
2	England (3.3%)	England (3.0%)
3	New Zealand (1.0%)	New Zealand (1.2%)
4	South Africa (0.5%)	India (0.8%)
5	Philippines (0.3%)	Philippines (0.5%)
6	Scotland (0.3%)	Germany (0.3%)
7	United States of America (0.2%)	South Africa (0.3%)
8	Netherlands (0.2%)	Scotland (0.3%)
9	Thailand (0.2%)	China (0.3%)
10	India (0.2%)	United States of America (0.3%)
Top 10 Languages Spoken at home (other than English)	**PSA**	**Regional NSW**
1	Afrikaans (0.4%)	Mandarin (0.4%)
2	Mandarin (0.3%)	Italian (0.4%)
3	Italian (0.1%)	Punjabi (0.3%)
4	Tagalog (0.1%)	Macedonian (0.3%)
5	Hindi (0.1%)	Spanish (0.3%)
6	Thai (0.1%)	Arabic (0.3%)
7	Spanish (0.1%)	Nepali (0.2%)
8	Persian (0.1%)	German (0.2%)
9	Vietnamese (0.1%)	Malayalam (0.2%)
10	Arabic (0.1%)	Tagalog (0.2%)
Religion		
Buddhism	0.4%	0.8%
Christianity	53.8%	55.7%
Hinduism	0.2%	0.8%
Islam	0.2%	0.7%
Judaism	0.1%	0.1%
Other Religions	0.1%	0.7%
No religious association	45.2%	41.2%
Long-term Health Conditions		
Asthma	18.2%	8.5%
Cancer	18.7%	2.9%
Dementia	4.4%	0.6%
Diabetes	0.3%	4.4%
Heart disease	8.6%	4.2%
Kidney disease	6.6%	0.7%
Lung condition	1.2%	2.0%
Mental health condition	2.4%	9.4%
Stroke	21.4%	0.7%
Other	0.7%	7.4%
None	17.5%	48.8%
Provided Unpaid Childcare		
Females	40%	31%
Males	30%	24%