

Hurlstone Agricultural High School

Additional frequently asked questions

April 2021

Section 1 – Boarding, changes to staff accommodation and enrolments

Boarding school upgrades

How will the upgrade affect student supervision?

The boarding facilities upgrade focuses on improving overall management, social interaction and supervision of students.

The proposal was developed in consultation with key Department of Education staff. Student and staff wellbeing and safety has been, and will continue to be, a priority consideration.

The proposed boarding upgrade will refurbish Building A for staff housing and shared facilities. The new boarding facilities will include four residential rooms for staff duty and board supervision.

There will be opportunities for additional supervision or future staff housing within Building A and Building E.

What changes are being made to school security?

Currently, Hurlstone Agricultural High School has overnight security patrols. Changes to this existing arrangement are not within the scope of this proposal and will continue to be provided.

We are proposing a new Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) system as part of the project to enhance security and surveillance on site as well as new boundary fencing to secure the site.

How will the school manage student supervision and provide additional support where needed?

Over the coming months, we will support key Department of Education staff, including the school Principal, to carefully work through the details of how the proposed upgrades will change the operational model for the boarding school. Staff will be consulted to develop plans for supervision during construction and when the new boarding facilities are open and in use. This will include considering and planning for supervision, responding to emergency situations and illness, student well-being, and support for students with disabilities.

How will the interface between the school campus, including boarding facilities, and new development be managed?

Hurlstone exists in a unique urban agricultural interface, that differs from an educational experience that might occur in rural or regional NSW. Glenfield is changing. Over time, the area surrounding Hurlstone Agricultural High School is proposed to become a new neighbourhood, with a mix of residential, commercial and open space. This change is guided by the Draft Glenfield Place Strategy. More information can be found at: <https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Plans-for-your-area/Priority-Growth-Areas-and-Precincts/Glenfield>.

This change will bring opportunities for Hurlstone Agricultural High School students to have access to additional sports facilities and fields, as well as improved surveillance for school grounds and students walking to and from the train station. Hurlstone Agricultural High School will be at the heart of Glenfield.

The future developments surrounding Hurlstone Agricultural High School will be required to comply with the relevant planning controls, including privacy, amenity and solar access.

The farm hub has been designed with the future of the surrounding area in mind. By co-locating livestock housing and other farm facilities in a centralised hub, we are reducing the number of interfaces between the school farm and neighbouring properties and minimising potential impacts. The upgraded facilities include livestock housing and a new effluent management system. Both will help improve odour management on the farm. As land around the school is developed there may be construction impacts on the school farm. With approximately 50 hectares retained for the farm only, there is sufficient flexibility within the proposed farm size to move livestock away from temporary impacts of construction, as needed.

How will we manage safety and wellbeing, for day students and boarders, during construction?

The health, safety and well-being of students, staff and neighbours is our highest priority.

School Infrastructure NSW is committed to ensuring that construction work is completed safely and efficiently and with minimal impact to students, staff and the local community. Rigorous safety and security measures will

be in place for the duration of the works. This will include the construction area being fenced and surveillance systems installed. There will be no access to the construction area by staff or students.

The SINSW project team will have regular consultation with the school to discuss construction progress. Any safety concerns will be addressed to ensure the safety and security of students and staff at all times.

Students are encouraged to reach out to the School Counsellor or Year Advisors as required for support on personal or school related matters. The Head Teachers Welfare, Deputy Principals, Principal and student support officer are also able to support as required.

How will we manage staff safety and wellbeing in the lead up to and during construction?

During construction, the health, safety and wellbeing of students, staff and neighbours will continue to be our highest priority.

For some staff, the farm and boarding facilities upgrade will impact on how they deliver their classes, where they can teach, as well as where they may be living or staying when supervising on site. In the lead up to construction, we have time to work carefully through how we will manage these changes, with the staff affected.

We believe developing a plan, together, will provide staff with the clarity and confidence needed to help manage their work and students in the lead up to construction.

As always, any staff member, who needs additional support can reach out at any time to:

- Their Head of Faculty
- School Principal and Deputy Principals
- Employee Assistance Program (contact 1800 060 650).

Conversations will be considered confidential and our focus is always to support staff and their wellbeing.

School Infrastructure NSW is committed to ensuring that construction work is completed safely and efficiently and with minimal impact to students, staff and local community. Rigorous safety and security measures will be in place for the duration of the works. This will include the construction area being fenced and surveillance systems installed. There will be no access to the construction area by staff or students; however, viewing panels will be installed to enable students to see what is going on in the area.

The SINSW project team will have regular consultation with the school to discuss construction progress. Any safety concerns will be addressed to ensure the safety and security of students and staff at all times.

Changes to staff accommodation

How will the proposed changes impact teacher accommodation on site?

For many years, it has been the practice at Hurlstone Agricultural High School to provide teachers, and their families, with on-site accommodation, where accommodation already exists. When it began, this practice reflected the distance between Hurlstone Agricultural High School and practical housing options nearby.

Since that time, the amount of residential housing in South West Sydney has substantially increased, presenting a variety of alternative options in proximity to the school.

This is not a change to the Educational Services (Teachers) Award, since the provision of on-site accommodation is not an entitlement in the Award.

In the past, staff housing has been provided because of the availability of existing on-site accommodation options and surplus space within the student boarding facilities.

The proposed boarding upgrade will refurbish Building A for staff housing and shared facilities and replace Buildings B, C and N. The replacement boarding facilities will include four residential rooms for staff duty and boarder supervision.

There will be opportunities for future staff housing within Building A and Building E into the future. Existing houses currently occupied by the Farm Manager and Deputy Principal will also be retained for ongoing staff use.

How will the changes to staff accommodation be managed?

There will be a transition period for staff, and their families, who are impacted by this change. A construction program is currently being developed, and consultation with the school will be ongoing.

Enrolments

Will places for selective students be increased?

Hurlstone Agricultural High School is unique as the only selective co-educational day and boarding high school in NSW. It will remain a selective high school and as such, enrolment for all potential students is governed by the Department of Education's Selective High School and Opportunity Class Placement Policy. Changes to this policy are not in the scope of this project.

Will the number of boarding students increase?

The new and upgraded boarding facilities will accommodate up to 180 students in new and refurbished rooms. There were 42 boarders at Hurlstone Agricultural High School in 2020.

The overall enrolment capacity of the school is 1,080, with 985 day and boarding students enrolled in 2020. The overall capacity of the school will not be increased as a result of the proposed boarding upgrade.

What were the boarding numbers before 2020?

The average number of accepted Year 7 applications for boarding each year from 2006 to 2019 was 15 students.

Section 2 Farm facilities upgrade

Farm facilities, livestock management and future-focused education

How will student access and classes be managed in and around the farm hub?

A new centralised farm hub is at the core of the proposed farm upgrade. The modern farm hub increases student and animal interaction and viewing opportunities. It will mean students will spend less time travelling between classes and have greater supervision.

This will change how classes are organised, managed and held. We have involved key Hurlstone Agricultural High School staff from the early planning stages to develop the new farm hub proposal. Over the coming months, we will continue to consult with staff and industry experts to carefully work through the details of how Hurlstone will use the new facilities.

How will accessibility around the school farm be improved?

The farm hub and new facilities will have improved accessibility for people with limited mobility. This will include access to viewing platforms, smaller livestock, aquaculture and hydroponics. Co-locating facilities within the farm reduces the distance between various enterprises, further enhancing the overall farm's accessibility.

Why does the upgrade include livestock housing?

Housing livestock in well-design facilities provides them with:

- Improved animal comfort
- Improved heat stress control
- Reduced biosecurity risks
- Reduced predation and vandalism risks.

The shelter and protection from the elements that livestock housing provides is particularly important for smaller livestock like chickens, calves, lambs and sheep. The dairy herd will continue to have access to pasture for grazing and cows will be able to choose to rest within their housing or on pasture.

How will the livestock housing suit the Australian climate?

New livestock housing is based on expert industry advice and has considered environmental factors, including Western Sydney's climate, and current Australian and international scientific literature.

The dairy, cattle, piggery and poultry sheds will be cooled environments. Cooling systems may include fans or evaporative cooling, through wetter/shower systems. The specifications for each facility will be determined during detailed planning and design phases. We will continue to consider industry expert advice and consult with key Department of Education staff.

How will the school and farm be supported to transition over the coming years, until the final layout is achieved?

A plan will be developed as the project progresses to assist the school with operational change management and implementation plans to utilise the proposed new facilities and technology. This includes the recruitment of suitably qualified resources to operate the milk processing element of the upgrade.

The proposed upgrades will also be delivered in a staged manner to reduce impact to students and staff during construction.

The detail of this transition will be determined over several months and will be led by School Operations, with support from School Infrastructure (SINSW).

How will the school support on-site pasteurisation and additional dairy processing operations?

The proposed dairy upgrade can allow for the support and expansion of the existing dairy revenue stream and possible entry into on-site yoghurt and cheese production.

There is potential to capitalise on the Hurlstone Agricultural High School brand and to integrate this with the production, marketing and sale of products, providing additional educational opportunities to students.

The upgrade to the dairy will require the recruitment of suitably qualified resources to operate the milk processing equipment. Entry into on-site pasteurisation will require detailed planning to ensure the adequate capacity and capabilities exist, and that it can be a sustainable operation.

Will the upgraded farm facilities accommodate goats?

While Hurlstone has had a small goat herd in the past, currently there are no goats on site.

The need to accommodate goat herds in the future was not raised in our consultation with school staff. However, there is sufficient flexibility in the proposed farm facilities to accommodate a small number of meat goats. Milking goats would be more difficult to accommodate, due to their requirement for specialised milking systems.

Will the upgraded farm facilities accommodate participation in agricultural shows?

Hurlstone Agricultural High School has a strong tradition of participating in agricultural shows, including the Royal Easter Show.

The farm hub and facilities upgrade have been planned to provide the school with flexibility in teaching and learning opportunities and operational management. Continuing to participate in agricultural shows can be accommodated in the upgraded facilities.

Over the coming months, key school staff will continue to be involved as we progress the detailed planning and design phase.

How will the impacts of the proposed Cambridge Avenue extension on livestock be managed?

Across Australia, there are many roads and highways that are in close proximity to grazing livestock, poultry and piggery sheds.

When the proposed road is in use, the impact of passing traffic will be negligible on grazing livestock. A cattle underpass and access for machinery is proposed to be created below the new road to enable access to the northern farmland.

During construction, noise, dust and vibration impacts around the proposed road route will be appropriately managed. The scale of the school farm will allow flexibility to move livestock away from construction. It is anticipated that the school will move livestock to southern pastures to graze during this time, minimising impacts.

How does the farm upgrade relate to the Peters Report recommendations?

The Peters report suggested modernising and delivering future focused agricultural and Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) learning opportunities for students.

The proposed master plan and upgrades for Hurlstone Agricultural High School directly respond to the recommendations from the report.

The upgrade will provide cutting edge technology and better learning outcomes. As Hurlstone Agricultural High School embraces more modern agricultural practices, student learning outcomes will benefit from strengthened data capture across the farm enterprises.

How does the farm upgrade relate to the Pratley Review recommendations?

The proposed masterplan and upgrades directly responds to the Pratley Review's recommendations to:

- Increase food and fibre study opportunities
- Enable state-wide best practice in curriculum delivery and student engagement
- Increase access to agricultural education and training for metropolitan students.

The Peters Report suggested increasing the size of the farm. Why is the school farm size being reduced?

Careful consideration was taken to determine the farming scale, informed by expert industry advice and the Department of Education from an educational needs and syllabus perspective.

The new farm layout and proposed upgrades is at an appropriate scale for a learning facility and optimal for student experiences.

The size of the farming enterprises need to balance the operational management input, ensure sustainable enterprise and provide an enhanced student learning experience, now and into the future.

How will the school farm operate sustainably with less land?

Implementing modern farming facilities and technology will achieve an improved future focused learning experience while maintaining all existing farm enterprises on a smaller parcel of land. The farm and dairy will be retained on approximately 50 hectares alone.

Irrigation of the farm will result in more efficient use of land and resources. The proposed upgrades will provide a sustainable water source for irrigation to drought proof the farm and therefore maximise stock level capacity and yields.

Can students from outside Hurlstone Agricultural High School benefit from the proposed upgrades?

We are investing in the future of Hurlstone Agricultural High School to continue its legacy and support for contemporary agricultural education. The upgrade will provide cutting edge technology and better learning outcomes.

When not being utilised by Hurlstone Agricultural High School students, there will be opportunities for other students and teachers to visit the upgraded dairy and agricultural facilities. This will increase the number of students who would benefit from the new, fit-for-purpose facilities and agricultural curriculum learning opportunities.

Upgraded boarding facilities could also be used during school holiday periods for teacher professional learning opportunities.

Section 3 – Land use and heritage

Land use changes

Are you considering the interface between the farm and residential properties?

Yes, we are considering how the school farm and residential properties may interface, including how to reduce impacts from odour and noise from the operational farm.

Other considerations include ability to monitor livestock, biosecurity and animal welfare.

How will the farm upgrade improve odour management?

Animal waste (effluent) is the primary odour source on site. Co-locating the dairy and piggery will provide an opportunity for an integrated and more efficient approach to effluent management.

The current systems are functional. However, the development of the dairy and housing of cattle will require a new system, presenting an opportunity to build a more efficient and effective effluent management approach.

Designs are currently being worked on for improved waste management to be incorporated into the poultry facilities.

How will the interface between the school campus, including boarding facilities, and new development be managed?

Hurlstone Agricultural High School exists in a unique urban agricultural interface, that differs from an educational experience that might occur in rural or regional NSW.

Over time, the land use changes proposed by the Draft Glenfield Place Strategy will see urban development closer to the school campus. It is common for schools across NSW to be surrounded by residential development. In Sydney, it is increasingly common for schools to be adjacent to medium or high-density development. There are many boarding schools and student accommodation in Sydney that are adjacent to or in the heart of higher density areas.

These future developments will be required to comply with the relevant planning controls, including privacy, amenity and solar access.

More information about the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment's draft Glenfield Place Strategy can be found at: www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/glenfield.

How will student access to Glenfield Train Station change?

Students currently use pedestrian access through the school grounds to directly reach Glenfield Train Station. Maintaining safe student access to the train station will be a priority for the Department of Education and access will be maintained throughout the construction period.

During project construction

SINSW is committed to ensuring that construction work is completed safely and efficiently and with minimal impact to students, staff and local community. Rigorous safety and security measures will be in place for the duration of the works. The SINSW project team will have regular consultation with Hurlstone, as we begin the detailed planning phase and throughout the construction period. Any safety concerns will be addressed to ensure safety and security of students and staff at all times.

In the longer term

We expect that pedestrian access to and around the train station will be redesigned, as the long-term vision for the Glenfield is realised. Accessibility and walkability are part of the guiding principles that have been established in the Draft Glenfield Place Strategy.

The Department of Education will advocate for, and are providing feedback around safe and direct routes that prioritise the pedestrian experience for students and visitors to access Hurlstone Agricultural High School from Glenfield Train Station to the appropriate bodies.

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This includes the proposed new sports fields and other community infrastructure and residential development is planned and built.

How have you considered the development impacts on the Schools for Specific Purposes?

There are three Schools for Specific Purposes, located to the west of Hurlstone Agricultural High School: Campbell House School, Ajuga School and Glenfield Park School. The Department of Education will retain land for these existing schools, and SINSW has recently completed an upgrade at each school.

Over time, the land use changes proposed by the Draft Glenfield Place Strategy will see low rise residential development closer to these schools. These future developments will be required to comply with the relevant planning controls, including privacy and amenity.

More information about the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment's draft Glenfield Place Strategy can be found at: www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/glenfield.

Proposed new primary school

What planning has been undertaken for the proposed new primary school?

As part of this masterplan, an area north of Roy Watts Road will be reserved for a future proposed primary school.

No further planning for this primary school, including likely enrolment capacity, has been undertaken at this stage.

Preserving heritage

What buildings are of heritage significance?

There are a number of buildings and sites, with varying levels of heritage significance at Hurlstone and within the Department of Education land.

The Memorial Forest will be retained and continue to be surrounded by the school farm.

Clarke House is state heritage-listed and is not impacted by this proposal.

Building A was built in 1926 and has local heritage value. Two shower and communal laundry facilities, attached to the southern façade, are not part of the original building. We are proposing to remove these. The building will be sensitively refurbished for boarding administration and shared facilities.

Buildings B, C and N are not heritage listed.

Will this proposal impact the Memorial Forest?

The proposed boarding and farm facilities upgrades for Hurlstone do not impact the Memorial Forest. It will be retained, unchanged, under this proposal. Installing a fence around the Forest is not in the scope of this proposal and an access way through the forest already exists.

What will happen to the former Veterinary Research Station site?

The Glenfield Veterinary Research Station was relocated in 1990 to the NSW Department of Primary Industries' Centre for Animal and Plant Health at Menangle. Since this time, some of these buildings have been used by the Department of Education for administrative purposes. This area is included in the land that the Department of Education has determined will be available for sale.

What heritage assessments have been undertaken?

The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment has undertaken a heritage assessment of the area subject to the Draft Glenfield Place Strategy, including Hurlstone Agricultural High School and the land owned by the Department of Education. This study and others are available at: www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/glenfield.

SINSW will undertake detailed heritage assessments as the project progresses through the design phase.

Section 4 – Consultation process

Consultation to date

Who has been involved in preparing the master plan for the proposed upgrades?

Following consultation in early 2020, we reviewed feedback and continued to consult with key Department of Education staff to ensure the master plan accommodated key operational and educational requirements for boarding and farm facilities.

What was the purpose of the most recent community consultation?

We are completing the master planning phase for this project. The development of the master plan proposal has been informed by the consultation undertaken in early 2020 and ongoing consultation with key Department of Education staff.

We consulted with the school and local community in December 2020 to:

- Share the master plan proposal and show how feedback from early 2020 had been incorporated, particularly to retention of all five enterprises in the school farm

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- Gather feedback about the boarding and farm upgrades to help refine the project during future project phases.

We presented our current plans at the same time as the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment's Glenfield Place Strategy and Transport for NSW's proposed Cambridge Avenue upgrade.

This provided the school community and stakeholders with a greater understanding of the potential future context and interfaces for the school.

Our consultation was not a statutory process or requirement for SINSW.

How can I give feedback?

While the virtual information session closed on Wednesday 23 December 2020, all information and content available in the virtual session is on our website.

Our information hotline and email address will continue to operate as normal. Interested community members and stakeholders are welcome to continue to ask questions and provide feedback at any time.

How have you consulted with Aboriginal communities and considered Aboriginal heritage?

We acknowledge that Hurlstone Agricultural High School stands on D'harawal land and pay respects to the traditional custodians of the land, and elders past, present and emerging.

We are aware of anecdotal evidence that suggests some trees on site may have Aboriginal heritage significance.

We will undertake Aboriginal heritage investigations, including consultation, as the project progresses to detailed planning.

The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment has undertaken an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment of the area subject to the Draft Glenfield Place Strategy, which includes Hurlstone Agricultural High School and land owned by the Department of Education. Consultation to inform the Assessment process, with two Registered Aboriginal Parties, commenced in 2018. The registered parties involved were the Tharawal Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC) and Cubbitch Barta Native Title Claimants Aboriginal Corporation (CBNTC). The full report and other studies are available on DPIE's website: www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/glenfield

Future consultation about the project

Who will be involved in during the detailed planning phases?

As we commence detailed planning and design in 2021, we will establish a Project Reference Group (PRG) to consider operational, educational and service delivery factors and provide input into the design as it progresses.

The PRG typically includes the Project Director and other members of the SINSW project team. The PRG also has representatives from the school including the Director Educational Leadership, Principal and relevant school staff.

What future consultation is planned for the school community to have input into the proposed upgrades?

Consulting with staff and students will be at the discretion of the Hurlstone Agricultural High School Principal. It may involve surveys, focus groups of staff and students or similar, to gather feedback on specific elements of the boarding and farm upgrades.

What future consultation is planned for the local community about the proposed upgrades?

SINSW will be required to lodge a State Significant Development Application (SSDA) for this project. During this process, our SSDA, with an Environmental Impact Statement, will be placed on public exhibition and the community will have the opportunity to comment on the project proposal.

What is a State Significant Development and its statutory planning approval process?

SINSW requires development approval from the NSW Government to proceed with the project. The formal process of gaining this approval is called the statutory planning approval process. The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) is responsible for managing the statutory planning approval for this project. This is because it is a State Significant Development (SSD).

A SSD is a development of particular significance to the people and the State of NSW. The approval process for a SSD is different to that of other types of development. It involves requesting the Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) and then preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in response to these requirements.

What are SEARs?

The Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) are the set of terms by which DPIE will assess SINSW's application for planning approval.

The SEARs are prepared by DPIE to ensure the impacts of the project are properly described and understood.

DPIE consults with other relevant government departments and agencies to prepare the SEARs.

To satisfy the SEARs, SINSW must prepare a document called an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

What is an EIS?

An EIS provides a comprehensive description of the project's environmental, social and economic impacts. It includes detailed information on the project scope and design plans.

Once the EIS is submitted to DPIE, it will be placed on public exhibition and the community will have the opportunity to comment on the project proposal.

Community feedback will be used by DPIE to decide whether the project should be approved or rejected.

When will the EIS be complete?

At present, SINSW is planning to submit the EIS to DPIE in 2021.