

## **CONTENTS**

<b>Background Notes</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2. Policy Objectives</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3. Policy Measures</b>	<b>4</b>
3.1 The Demand for School Sites	4
3.2 Location of Schools Within Catchments	5
3.3 Site Requirements	5
3.4 Site Selection and Planning	6
3.5 Access Issues	7
3.6 Relationship to Nearby Land Uses	7
3.7 Children's Services Facilities	7
3.8 Consultation	8



WESTERN AUSTRALIAN  
PLANNING COMMISSION

## BACKGROUND NOTES

1. This Policy Statement contains the Commission's general requirements for school and TAFE college (technical college) sites in residential areas, and recognises the need to consider any requirements for higher education facilities. It should be used during the preparation of designs for the subdivision of residential land at both the structure planning (district and local structure planning) and subdivision design stages. Guidelines for the Preparation of Local Structure Plans for Urban Release Areas are included elsewhere in this manual.
2. The policy identifies when there is a need to consider the provision of sites for new schools, sets criteria for the selection of such sites, and includes requirements for their design and location within new subdivisions. The policy also incorporates the relevant road safety measures recommended in the *Task Force on Road Safety at Schools Report 1992* for primary and secondary schools. The Commission expects that discussions with the relevant education authority will be held at an early stage of the process upon the detail of particular proposals.
3. The policy has been prepared in close consultation with government and non-government school providers representative of a number of interested State Government departments and instrumentalities as well as the Catholic Education Commission and other non-government school authorities which are the main non-government school providers. The policy largely reflects current practice in the provision of school sites.
4. The policy incorporates guidelines for the establishment and location of children's services facilities associated with school sites and the co-location and joint planning of facilities for multiple purpose community use.
5. The Commission has released the *Liveable Neighbourhoods: Community Design Code* which is a new design code to help make the State's suburban areas more sustainable and offer a wider range of housing and employment to support changing community needs and preferences. The code has been released for an initial period of 12 months to test and refine aspects in practice. This policy, and the related Guidelines for the Preparation of Local Structure Plans for Urban Release Areas will be modified where appropriate following the review and refinement of *Liveable Neighbourhoods*.
6. Other Policy Statements and Guidelines of the Commission which deal with requirements for the subdivision of residential land and should be considered along with this policy are:
  - Policy No. DC 2.1 - Residential Planning Codes
  - Policy No. DC 2.2 - Residential Subdivision
  - Policy No. DC 2.3 - Public Open Space
  - Policy No. DC 2.6 - Residential Road Planning
  - Guidelines for the Preparation of Local Structure Plans for Urban Release Areas (currently under review).

# **I. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This Policy Statement sets out general criteria and design standards for the provision of school sites in residential districts. It also contains the requirements for TAFE colleges (technical colleges) and recognises the need to consider any requirements for higher education facilities.
- 1.2 The policy is intended to overcome problems of conflict that may arise in residential areas between schools and their surroundings particularly in respect of traffic and noise generating activities. The Commission believes future problems can largely be eliminated by judicious subdivision design.
- 1.3 The site selection criteria and design standards in this statement are intended to apply to new residential subdivisions. They may not necessarily be applied to situations where changes of use or rezonings are proposed in already developed residential areas.

## **2. POLICY OBJECTIVES**

- To make provision for school sites and other education facilities related to community needs.
- To indicate school site requirements, specify criteria for selecting new sites, and to establish guidelines for their design and location in new subdivisions.

## **3. POLICY MEASURES**

### **3.1 The Demand for School Sites**

- 3.1.1 Experience has shown that there is a correlation between the number of single residential lots created by subdivision and the need for school sites. However, although that correlation is useful in determining a broad need for new school sites, it is necessary in each particular case to assess that need against existing school sites, established schools, rate and type of development (including the consideration of demographic profiles and block pricing policies), the opportunities for co-location of other human services, etc. In this regard, it is important that the subdivision design of broadacre land into urban lots be done in consultation with both government and non-government education providers.

- 3.1.2 The Department of Education and the main non-government education providers require the following provision of school sites.

Primary Schools - one site for between 1,500 and 1,800 housing units for government schools.

Secondary Schools - one site for every four or five primary schools for government schools.

While the basis for providing non-government schools will be different from government schools, their provision at the average ratio of one non-government to three government primary schools and one to two for secondary schools may be an appropriate basis for planning.

- 3.1.3 The development of schools sponsored by groups other than the major non-government systems should also be considered. Such schools are typically, although not always, small in size and draw their pupils from a wide area. Demand for sites from these groups often does not materialise until neighbourhoods are well established. The Commission encourages these groups to make expressions of interest, as early as possible in the subdivision design stage (preferably at the structure planning stage), to enable provision to be made for a suitable site in the subdivision. This will require negotiation between the subdivider and the group concerned as to location, size and method of acquisition.

- 3.1.4 In some circumstances, particularly in country areas, the provision of separate primary and secondary schools cannot always be justified. In such areas, the Education Department and the Office of Non-Government Education should be consulted to determine whether there should be sites set aside for separate primary and secondary schools (Years 1 to 10), or whether provision should be made for a shared facility between education providers.

- 3.1.5 For TAFE colleges (technical colleges), there is a general correlation between population and the need for college sites. The general requirement is one site for every 60,000 to 70,000 population. This may vary in densely populated urban areas, where the viable population for a TAFE college can be as high as 250,000 because of the particular demographic characteristics of the area. It may also vary where the following conditions apply;

- if the planned residential development is in a remote location where access to alternative TAFE facilities is limited:

- if the planned residential development is located close to significant industrial, commercial or rural development;
- if the planned residential development is in an area where a higher than average proportion of the population can be expected to be disadvantaged.

### 3.2 Location of Schools Within Catchments

3.2.1 The Commission will encourage wherever possible the integration of schools within local communities and cooperation with local governments in the provision of a wide range of sporting, recreational and cultural facilities.

3.2.2 A primary school site should be located conveniently to the catchment area it is intended to serve. The trend towards larger schools may require neighbourhoods to share a school, rather than locating one in the centre of one neighbourhood which is less convenient to the others that it serves. Most children either walk or cycle to school, but it must be recognised that there will be a significant number of children who travel in private cars or on public transport. In country areas, the wide use of school buses means that easy road access can be of even greater importance. Two important considerations flow from this. The first is the need for a primary school site to be located close to a local distributor road to ensure ease of access by vehicles, and proximity (where appropriate) to public transport routes. Secondly, it needs to be recognised that a school is not a facility that can be adequately serviced by an access road network given the amount of traffic generated and the loss of residential amenity which it causes.

3.2.3 Secondary schools service larger catchments and rely more on public transport, both scheduled and chartered services, and accessibility is, therefore, of even greater importance. Centrality within those catchments, although desirable, is secondary to access. Because secondary schools are more reliant upon vehicular transport and cater for a large number of students, their impact upon local residential amenity is greater, as is the need for sensitivity of siting. While centrality remains important within those catchments, ease of access is also an important consideration. Given this, secondary school sites should be set aside with accessibility as an important consideration, not only for those students arriving by public transport and private cars but also those travelling to school

by bicycle or on foot. Careful design and siting of secondary school sites and the location of buildings on them can help to minimise their impact upon the amenity of nearby residential properties.

3.2.4 Primary schools should be located on or near a local distributor road (preferably the local bus route), in the centre of the neighbourhood which it is intended to serve. Secondary schools can be located at the edge of a suburb, provided they are close to a point where district distributor roads connect with the primary network. Main Roads Western Australia has undertaken work on devices to slow the passing traffic adjacent to school entrances, and local governments may wish to consult with Main Roads at the road design stage.

### 3.3 SITE REQUIREMENTS

3.3.1 The following sizes of school sites have been adopted by education authorities as a general guide to the desirable size for each type:

	Education Department	Other non-government schools
Primary School	4ha	4ha
Secondary School	10ha	8ha - 10ha
District High School	6ha	6ha
Combined Primary and Secondary	-	10-12ha

3.3.2 These sizes are based upon the provision by the authorities of fairly standard facilities for a given number of children and assumes the land is all useable. The site requirements for schools may vary depending upon a number of factors including:

- demand for individual schools and associated facilities such as children's services facilities which normally require an additional site area of 3,000m<sup>2</sup> (refer to section 3.7);
- the need for adequate pick-up and set-down areas where this cannot be provided off-site (refer to section 3.5);
- co-location with public open space, community facility sites and other schools subject to agreements being reached between the various parties on the sharing of facilities.

In addition, the Catholic Education Commission will normally require a primary school site of 5ha where a church and associated community facilities are included on the site.

- 3.3.3 The Commission recognises that there are significant benefits in terms of efficient use of land and physical resources in the joint use of school facilities with those of the general public. The potential for this should be considered at the design stage of new subdivisions which will require liaison between human service providers including agencies such as local governments and the education providers.
- 3.3.4 Where a school site is co-located with public open space, that open space is fully utilised by the school and arrangements are in place to the satisfaction of the local government to provide long-term contributions from the education provider for the management of the open space, the land requirement for the school may be reduced. In these circumstances a primary school site of 3.5ha in size may be acceptable.
- 3.3.5 For TAFE colleges, depending on the range of programs to be offered and the style of delivery most suited to the needs of the target population, the facilities can range in size. It is not considered feasible to plan a facility on a site less than 11ha, and the optimal size to provide for future growth is 25ha.
- 3.3.6 TAFE colleges should, where possible, be located adjacent to other post-secondary education and secondary education facilities in the area. Where flexible learning centres are incorporated into a TAFE college, co-location with the more traditional community resource centres is desirable. Sites should have good access via the primary and district distributor road network and be located on public transport routes.
- 3.3.7 In broadacre subdivision where the particular subdivision generates the need for a primary school the subdivider should provide for the ceding of the government primary school site free of cost. Where land is in multiple ownership the subdividing landowners should provide a pro-rata contribution for the acquisition of the primary school site. Where a school site is identified within a subdividing landowner's land the Commission will require as a condition of subdivision that arrangements be made to ensure that the land is transferred to the Education Department within a defined time period, generally within

18 months of approval. In the event of a site for a proposed primary school being surplus to the requirements of the community, the land should be offered for disposal of to the contributing landowners in accordance with the policy of the Department of Land Administration.

### **3.4 SITE SELECTION AND PLANNING**

- 3.4.1 The physical condition of the selected land is particularly important. There is a need to ensure that the area to be occupied by buildings is level, in order to produce a satisfactory relationship between buildings and any adjoining hard-surfaced play areas. Second, there is a need to provide level, grassed, recreation areas for organised sports and games.
- 3.4.2 For these and general economic reasons, land for school sites should generally be level, although gently sloping sites may be acceptable. Sites with extreme topographical features involving extensive on-site earthworks and/or importation of fill, or sites containing rock outcrops or land liable to inundation are not acceptable unless such area is additional to the minimum area required.
- 3.4.3 Public utilities such as drainage sumps, compensating basins, high tension transmission lines and transformer pads for underground power are not acceptable within the land area requirement for school sites. Other easements and reserves for public utilities such as sewerage and drainage mains and underground pumping stations should be included in the land area requirement of school sites only where these can be demonstrated to be safe and useable.
- 3.4.4 Consistent with other considerations such as topography and accessibility, all school sites should be regular in shape and preferably rectangular. In no instance should the length of the site exceed twice the width. Acute boundary angles with the consequent unusable spaces are not acceptable.
- 3.4.5 All appropriate services should be made available to the school site, especially to that part selected for the construction of buildings.

### 3.5 ACCESS ISSUES

- 3.5.1 School and TAFE college sites should be provided with frontage access to through roads constructed on at least two sides. These roads must be designed (with an appropriate carriageway width and traffic management devices as set out in Policy DC 2.6 - Residential Road Planning) to allow for the safe pick-up and set-down of students from both private cars and public transport systems within the road reserve. Culs-de-sac or underwidth roads are not acceptable for this purpose.
- 3.5.2 While facilities to pick up and set down should be within the road reserve, any additional associated land requirement should be provided from the land allocated for the school site and provided by the school authority. On site parking may need to be provided within the school site or on an adjacent reserve.
- 3.5.3 Road carriageways and traffic management devices (including on-street embayments and raised pedestrian crossings) should be provided by the subdivider at the time of subdivision to the satisfaction of the local government, and also the Education Department in the case of government schools. The cost of on-street embayments and raised pedestrian crossings should be shared on a 50/50 basis by the subdivider and the school authority. The sharing of costs by subdividers may be spread across the catchment area of the school. Where subdivisions occur well ahead of the establishment of the school (i.e. high school sites) the subdivider will normally be required to deposit a cash equivalent for the construction with the local government.
- 3.5.4 Apart from accessibility by road, school sites should also provide a strong local focus for pedestrian and cycleway systems in the neighbourhood. Preferably these systems should lead as directly, conveniently and safely as possible to the school. Where there is a need to cross significant distributor roads, careful consideration should be given to the nature of the crossing, whether it be by grade separation, controlled lights, intersection separation, manned crossing or other acceptable alternatives.
- 3.5.5 The vehicle/pedestrian/cycle access and road safety needs of schools should be considered at the local structure planning stage. The Guidelines for the Preparation of Local

Structure Plans for Urban Release Areas, included elsewhere in this manual, incorporate the principles that should be applied.

### 3.6 RELATIONSHIP TO NEARBY LAND USES

- 3.6.1 Common boundaries of school sites with residential uses should be avoided whenever possible. There are a number of activities conducted on school sites which can adversely affect the amenity of residential properties, particularly where they are located very close to a school site. This is a growing problem with the trend towards increased community use of school facilities after hours. To avoid potential conflict with residential properties it is therefore preferable that school sites be surrounded by a combination of roads and amenities generally, including public open space and other compatible community, cultural recreation and sporting facilities.
- 3.6.2 There are other land uses such as certain types of shop or licensed premises which can affect school sites and careful consideration needs to be given during the design stage to ensure that school sites are compatible with their neighbours.

### 3.7 CHILDREN'S SERVICES FACILITIES

- 3.7.1 Children's services facilities include both child care centres and other multi-functional facilities. These facilities could provide child-related services such as long day care, occasional care, playgroups and out-of-school hours care. Because of the considerable advantages of developing multi-purpose community buildings (e.g. better co-ordination of services, easier access and the need to develop fewer sites), these facilities may also provide a venue for other community uses associated with young children, adults and seniors.
- 3.7.2 The co-location of children's services facilities with primary schools has advantages for both. Convenience is offered to parents of children attending both facilities while interaction between the two services provides a smooth transition for children entering the primary school system. Co-located children's services facilities also provide a venue for other associated school activities.

- 3.7.3 Children's services facilities should generally be provided within primary school sites at a ratio of one for every two primary school developments in new subdivisions. Where such facilities cannot be accommodated within the site allocated for the school, provision for the acquisition of additional land should be made by the service provider.

## **3.8 CONSULTATION**

- 3.8.1 It is important that those involved in subdivisional design confer regularly with the Education Department, non-government education providers (where appropriate) and the Commission during the design process.
- 3.8.2 Prior to commencement of design, contact with the Education Department and the major non-government education providers will identify the extent to which provision should be made for new school sites and whether parts of the land area to be subdivided are capable of being serviced by existing schools. Where appropriate other non-government education providers should be made aware of the subdivision and be invited to submit expressions of interest. Early contact should also be made with the authority responsible for administering the TAFE system and the WA Office of Higher Education to establish any site requirements.
- 3.8.3 As the design work continues and school sites are selected, further contact should be made with officers of the Education Department, non-government education providers and the Commission to determine the general acceptability of proposed sites. Consultation with the Department of Family and Children's Services will also determine the need for, and correct location of, any sites for children's services facilities.