

In the spirit of excellence and contribution to WA

- Families at Perth Modern are extremely grateful for the opportunities and successful program currently running. They just want the same things offered to all students in WA: an education appropriate to their needs and abilities, and outdoor green space and grounds for their physical and mental health.
- Labor has been a strong supporter of Perth Modern School and academically select education. Geoff Gallop re-established an academically select program in WA.
- Mr M. McGowan M.P. in his own words:

“Naturally, when my predecessor created a select school, Perth Modern School was an obvious one because it was removed from select status in the early 1960s. It was an obvious one to go back to that if we wanted to create a public school of absolute excellence in Western Australia. It was the natural one to do that. I think it was a good decision. In fact, I would like to create another one in due course, perhaps in the southern suburbs of Perth.” -- www.parliament.wa.gov.au
- Taxpayers contribute to programs to develop excellence in sport. The need to develop our academic talent is no different. An experimental, non-evidence based path such as this would never be trialed on athletes at the AIS, offering them sporting facilities linked to known health risks, and detrimental performance outcomes.
- Perth Modern School serves all of WA, not just parents who can afford to live close to the school.

Points of concern

Health concerns

- Academically select students are still children aged 11 – 18, they have the same requirements for physical fitness, mental health, natural space and recreation as any other student the same age.

Eye development:

- Less outdoor activity leads to an increase [in myopia and the need for glasses](#). UV B exposure in [teens and young adults](#) is associated with better vision. Medical research suggests that too much time indoors [leads to myopia](#) which is a form of permanent eye damage. There may be life long effects; children with moderate to severe myopia have a higher risk of [glucoma, retinal detachment and cataracts in later years](#).

“Too much time spent indoors may cause “aberrant over-growth of the eye, leading to myopia” according to Associate Prof. Greg Schwartz, Northwestern University. “

Mental Health:

- Natural full spectrum outdoor light is associated with better vision, better mental health and better sleep. In office workers, natural elements (greenery) and [sunlight increase job satisfaction, commitment, improved mood and lower anxiety](#). If this is important for office workers, surely it is even more so for children?

Physical wellbeing:

- *“Physical inactivity is now identified as the fourth leading risk factor for global mortality.” – [World Health Organisation](#)*
- *Sitting and physical inactivity have become “the new smoking” in Australia, causing nearly 14,000 associated deaths each year. -- The Heart Foundation, SMH Sept, 2015*
- *“Sedentary time increases most during the transition from primary school to high school...” – [National Heart Foundation](#).*
-“Research shows that kids who move more aren’t just healthier, they also tend to do better academically, behave better in class and miss fewer days of school. – [University of California](#).

Green exercise (exercise in a natural green environment):

- *“...a one-off bout of Green Exercise may have long lasting physiological effects”. [Night time heart rate showed significant improvement after lunchtime walks in a natural environment compared to a built up one.] – [Gladwell et al, 2016](#)]*
- *Being outdoors has been shown repeatedly to boost health, says Dr Valerie Gladwell, senior lecturer in sport and exercise science at the University of Essex, where research in 2010 found that just five minutes a day in nature was enough to improve mood and self-esteem. “We think that walking outside releases endorphins and hormones that promote better mood such as oxytocin, the feel good hormone,” says Dr Gladwell. – [The Telegraph, August 2016](#)*

Is Education Central a good use of taxpayer funding?

- **WA State debt is out of control** – \$33bn now and rising to \$41bn (p19 of [Pre-Election Financial Statements](#)).
- **Using a private developer instead of the state government will cost three times as much** in the long run. The cost of government debt is 3-3.5% (p3, bottom line of table) but a private developer must do more than just pay off debt, they need a 10% return. The cheapest option is for the State to own the real estate – which means repurposing something existing.
- Five star hotels do not have “green space” on every floor or rooftop gardens. It seems incongruent that the Department of Education can afford to do these properly on the same valuable real estate.
- **The leasing costs** will draw an estimated \$13m from Education Funding each year that will not be available for books, equipment or staff.

Perth Mod families just want the same recreation facilities as other students

- The Education Department has a Planning Guide for new secondary schools that includes a senior oval, eight multi-marked hard courts, a sports hall, and a hockey/soccer playing field. These are also potentially shared as a community asset. (See page 9 Department of Sport and Recreation, [Guide to Shared Use Facilities](#)). Will they be incorporated into the planning? Aren’t large open facilities like this in the CBD excessively expensive for taxpayers?

Transport issues

- Perth Modern Students already spend more time traveling than any other public school students in Perth. They have more need for outdoor time during school hours than other students who have more time for after school sporting activities and recreation.
- For about half of the students at Perth Modern a city based location would mean two extra train stops, so longer trips, not shorter ones.

- *While the citylink location may be slightly shorter for students close to the Midland and Armadale lines, it will be more difficult for students who live far from rail access (eg north of Morley), or for students with disabilities or medical conditions who are driven to the school. Students of Perth Modern School also include students in wheelchairs, with Type I diabetes, autism and severe allergies. Some carry large musical instruments and all carry lap tops.

Parental involvement will suffer

- A city location will make parental involvement more difficult – meetings with teachers, staff, and the P&C, and attendance at concerts, performances, picnics and plays will decrease. Picking up a student for a medical appointment or family event will be more onerous. Will parents keep students home on these days instead?

The tight timeframe for an untested large project

- **Is a two year, eight month timeframe feasible?** Education Central is an untested model combining other organisations and businesses in a new, high-rise, leased arrangement which has never been done before in Australia.
- *Other “vertical schools” in Australia have ground level access, and are private schools (meaning parents have some choice about their suitability for their children, and the schools have extra funding to compensate for the disadvantages of a CBD location). Other vertical schools have ground space designed in from the beginning and are not placed over very congested sites in the CBD, nor are they rented.

Children don't need to be in the city

- Access to the museum and other institutions is a minor benefit. Children need access to ovals, green space and outdoors areas every day for normal childhood development and health. Currently students travel by bus a few times a year to visit institutions but walk to an oval. This is reversed in the city where students can walk to a museum, but need a bus to visit an oval.
- Adding 1,500 students to an already congested location will increase the peak hour load.
- Real estate in the city is the most expensive in Perth, children do not need easy access to shopping, banks, stock brokers or lawyers. Is it wise to use Department of Education funds to lease in an expensive area?

Disruption of heritage, culture and community

- Sponsorship programs will be extinguished. Currently the Sphinx Foundation generously helps over 50 low income students.
- Donations Former Alumni (largely through [The Perth Modernian Society](#)) have donated over \$2m for school facilities. The government is effectively expropriating these.
- Fundraising – Before the announcement the school was actively fundraising for a new building. What happens to those funds? Who will donate to the school from 2017-2020?
- *Pegasus society – part of the school culture is a dedication to community work. The class of 2015 achieved nearly 12,000 hours of community work.

The current Perth Modern School program is an asset to WA

- Families move back to Perth from all over the world to take part in Perth Modern School. The school helps to stop the brain drain and the state gains the talents of their parents and siblings too.

- Students will grow up to be the medical researchers, top taxpayers, hi-tech innovators, and are likely to generate new jobs and industries for WA. Gambling with these students health and education may risk losing the next Fiona Woods.
- Other states have several academically select schools -- NSW has 5; Victoria, 4 and Queensland 3. WA doesn't want to lose its natural talent base to the eastern states or international programs.

A disruptive and unnecessary expense to families

- The name change breaks the culture, and connection and legal ties to clubs, societies, teacher contracts, heritage foundations, and scholarships. The government is not moving Perth Modern School, it is extinguishing the current school community and starting an entirely new one.
- The name change would require all new uniforms, bags, badges, logos, equipment and renders 1300 sets of second hand uniforms valueless. It is an unnecessary burden on families of hundreds of dollars. It is environmentally wasteful.

The current Perth Modern School location doesn't solve the local intake problem:

- According to Education Department numbers, Churchlands SHS is growing at ten times the rate that Mt Lawley Senior High School is. This suggests the real need for a new local intake school is closer to Churchlands, not Mt Lawley or the city.
- ***Student numbers as of 2016:** [Churchlands](#) (2,437), [Shenton College](#) (1,940), [Mt Lawley](#) (1,556), [Perth Mod](#) (1,336). Looking at trends, Mt Lawley is barely growing, unlike the big two.
- **Growth rates from 2015-2016:** [Churchlands](#) (6.2%), [Shenton College](#) (4.8%), [Mt Lawley](#) (0.6%), [Perth Mod](#) (2.2%).
- There are only 200 students who live in the Perth CBD. Building an inner city public school is not justified for local intake numbers and offers more disadvantages than benefits for academically select students.

The Citylink project is inconsistent with Labor Policy

- Here are some very quick phrases taken from the WA Labor Platform policy document (<https://www.walabor.org.au/platform>)
- **In Education and Training:** WA Labor will respect the voices of representatives of parents; professional bodies and parents should be consulted on educational policy and strategies; middle years education should be resource to meet the personal, social and intellectual requirements of young adolescents; public schools should be for education and learning and not profit maximisation; NO privatisation of OUR Public Schools; where possible negotiate the early termination of public private partnership arrangements; etc
- **In terms of Sport & Recreation:** The policy highlights the importance of sport and recreation for physical, mental and social well being; recognises that the quality of open space affects the nature and amount of physical activity; highlights a commitment to initiating and developing opportunities for maximum participation of all members of the community in recreational and sporting activities; committed to creating an environment for the pursuit of preventative health through education, recreation and sport opportunities for all members of the community; developing initiatives to highlight and enhance the importance of developing sporting and recreational skills and enjoyment for all primary and secondary students; etc etc
- **In Health:** WA Labor will adopt policies reinforcing recreation, physical activity and sport as the **universal language of preventative physical and social health** for people of all ages and abilities.