



Proposed boundary fence design for Farrer Primary School

BACKGROUND

Over the course of term 4, 2023, the Education Directorate consulted with the local community on the design for a proposed boundary fence at Farrer Primary School.

The proposal to install a fence at the school was made by the Education Directorate in response to staff and parent concerns regarding student safety during school hours and vandalism of school property.

The local community were invited to have their say on the fence line, the location of access gates and the after-hours access arrangements.

The engagement opportunity was open for six weeks, with participants invited to have their say via an online survey, email and in person at two community pop-up stalls.

To inform community about the reasons for installing a fence, the following information was provided for consideration.

A fence at Farrer Primary School would:

- *help reduce the possibility of students absconding from the school grounds. Farrer Primary School is close to three roads.*
- *help limit the risk of external dangers including trespassers, dogs, etc.*
- *help reduce the risk and frequency of physical hazards being left on grounds after-hours.*
- *assist in managing the increase in vandalism being experienced by the school. In 2022, the school's cost for repairs exceeded \$5000. This included replacing broken windows, basketball hoops and cleaning more than 30 incidences of graffiti.*

The Education Directorate understands that schools are important shared community spaces and noted throughout the engagement that the school would ensure it continues to provide access to outdoor spaces and play equipment outside of school hours, on weekends and holidays.

Initial conversations about this project were held with the school and community in 2015. At the time the school facilities were the only community facilities available in the area. Since then, more community facilities have been built locally including a bike track, nature play space and public toilets.

THE CONVERSATION

A short survey on the ACT Government consultation website YourSay Conversations was open for six weeks, from 18 September to 29 October 2023. The YourSay page showed a draft image of the proposed fence line and noted that the fence would be a standard 2.1 metres high and black in colour.



The proposed design included a number of suggested locations for access gates that would allow the community to access sections of the school grounds after hours, including the basketball courts and bike track.

Achieving a balance between the needs of the school and the wider community was a focus of the conversation.

Through the engagement we sought to:

- understand the Farrer community's views about the proposed fence design.
- understand the community's views on the proposed locations of the access gates.
- understand the community's views about which gates should allow out of hours access in the proposed fence design.

The survey specifically asked for feedback about the proposed location of the fence, thoughts on the location of access gates and which gates should be used to provide out-of-hours access.

WHO WE ENGAGED

Through the engagement we spoke to parents and carers of current students at Farrer Primary School and the wider Farrer community.

Communication was sent to Farrer Primary School parents and carers via:

- email from Farrer Primary School
- the Farrer Primary School newsletter
- the Farrer Primary School Facebook page
- a new tab on the Farrer Primary School website
- an in-person pop-up session held at the school on Thursday 12 October 2023.

The Education Directorate engaged with the wider Farrer community via:

- letters to approximately 700 houses within a 500m proximity of Farrer Primary School.
- an in-person pop-up session held at the Farrer shops on Saturday 21 October 2023.

The Farrer Residents Association was also invited to share communications via their own channels.



What we heard from the community

COMMUNITY ACCESS

1. There is support to keep school grounds accessible outside of school hours on evenings and weekends, particularly the bike track and basketball court.
2. A range of feedback commented on what timed access points would look like and how the process would be facilitated. Access arrangements would be finalised in consultation with the school community.
3. Feedback suggested the most practical, timed main access point would be the double gate at the front of the school on Lambrigg Street near the car park. Feedback indicated only one or two gates should have timed access.

FENCE LINE AND ACCESS GATES

1. There is support for the proposed fence line design. Support exists for the trees within the south-west corner to be included within the fence line and for the car park to not be included within the fence line.
2. There is support for the proposed locations of the gates. Feedback given agreed that the gates had been placed in locations where students currently enter and exit the school.
3. Feedback indicated that an additional gate may be needed to accommodate the current flow of bike riders and walkers entering the school particularly at the zebra crossings.

COST

1. There was some concern over cost and funding. It is important to note that the project would be funded by the Education Directorate which has an allocated budget for infrastructure upgrades and security improvements. It is important to note that the installation of school fences is paid for by the Education Directorate, not the school.

SAFETY

1. There is strong support from the school community for a fence to improve the safety of students and support the wellbeing of school staff.
2. There were questions raised about how the fence would deter vandalism.

SENSE OF COMMUNITY AND CONSULTATION

1. There were some concerns raised that a fence would lose the 'openness' of the Farrer community and take away the social aspect of drop-off and pick-up times and social play on weekends.
2. Some feedback raised concerns about the engagement process, including that the consultation did not specifically ask whether a fence should be installed.
3. There was some feedback that the community did not feel the Education Directorate had clearly communicated its decision as to why a boundary fence was needed.



Next steps

1. The 'What We Heard' report will be discussed with the school leadership team, Board and P&C.
2. The Education Directorate will communicate the outcome to the community, including the final fence design.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR FEEDBACK

77 We heard from 77 people via YourSay	16 We spoke to 16 people at the pop up events	42 We received 42 emails with written feedback	700 We letterbox-dropped 700 houses in Farrer
332 There are 332 students at Farrer Primary School	3787 There are 3787 residents in Farrer*		

*ABS 2021 Census Data, Australian Bureau Statistics

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