

Planning Assessment Officer Report

Permit No, Address, Subtitle,
etcPA2604420 – 28 Drage
Road, West Wodonga



Planning Assessment Officer Report
Development Assessment

© The State of Victoria Department of Transport and Planning 2026

Disclaimer

This publication may be of assistance to you but the State of Victoria and its employees do not guarantee that the publication is without flaw of any kind or is wholly appropriate for your particular purposes and therefore disclaims all liability for any error, loss or other consequence which may arise from you relying on any information in this publication.



Department
of Transport
and Planning

OFFICIAL

Executive Summary



Key Information		Details	
Application No:	PA2604420		
Received:	21 May 2026		
Statutory Days:	53		
Applicant:			
Planning Scheme:	Wodonga		
Land Address:	28 Drage Rd, West Wodonga		
Proposal:	Buildings and works associated with an existing school use, erection and display of business identification signage (school logos) and removal of canopy trees.		
Development Value:	\$4,987,000		
Why is the Minister responsible?	In accordance with the schedule to Clause 72.01 of the Planning Scheme, the Minister for Planning is the responsible Authority for this application because: The development is associated with a non governmental school comprising a development with an estimated cost of development is \$3 million or greater.		
Why is a permit required?	Clause	Control	Trigger
Zone:	Clause 32.08	General Residential Zone – Schedule 1	Construct a building or construct or carry out works
Overlays:	Nil		
Particular Provisions:	Clause 52.05	Signs	Display of business identification signs
	Clause 52.37	Canopy Trees	Removal of tree canopies
Cultural Heritage:	Not required – not in an area of aboriginal cultural heritage sensitivity.		
Referral Authorities:	Wodonga City Council (s52(1)(b)) – Consent		
Public Notice:	Not required.		
Delegates List:	Not required.		



Application Process

1. The key milestones in the application process were as follows:

Milestone	Date
Application lodgement	21 May 2026
s50 Amendment to Plans	27 May 2026
Decision Plans	Plans prepared by Rob Pickett Design, titled 'Proposed Wirraway Learning Centre' and dated 26 May 2026
Other Assessment Documents	Planning report prepared by Blueprint Planning and Development, dated 27 May 2026. Arborist Report prepared by Riverina Tree Consulting, dated 6/2/2026. Certificate of Title – produced 20/5/2026. Feature and level survey prepared by Rob Pickett Design, dated 8 July 2025. Drainage Strategy Report prepared by SJE Consulting, Revision A, dated May 2026. ESD Response statement prepared by Rob Pickett Design, dated 27/2/2026.

2. The subject of this report is the decision plans (as described above).

Proposal Summary

3. The proposed development seeks to demolish the existing Wirraway Learning Centre and construct a new, modern learning facility within the existing Victory Lutheran College campus at 28 Drage Road, West Wodonga.
4. It is noted that the application strictly does not seek to increase existing staff and/ or student numbers. Furthermore existing school operations relating to carparking and school pickup/drop off arrangement remain unchanged.
5. Specifically planning permit permission is sought for the construction of a new Wirraway Learning Centre, and display of school business identification (logo) signage, and removal of tree canopies. Details of the proposal are as follows.

Buildings and Works:

6. The proposed new Wirraway Learning Centre is single storey in scale, has an approximate GFA of 1818sqm (52m long x 50m width x 8.9m height), and will consist of the following key design features:
 - A functional internal floor layout consisting of 8 classrooms, lecture theatre, administration facilities, staff facilities, amenities, storage areas.
 - External materials include face brickwork and Colorbond cladding to match and integrate with the existing school campus.
 - Stormwater drainage connection to the school's existing drainage, detention basin and wetland treatment system.

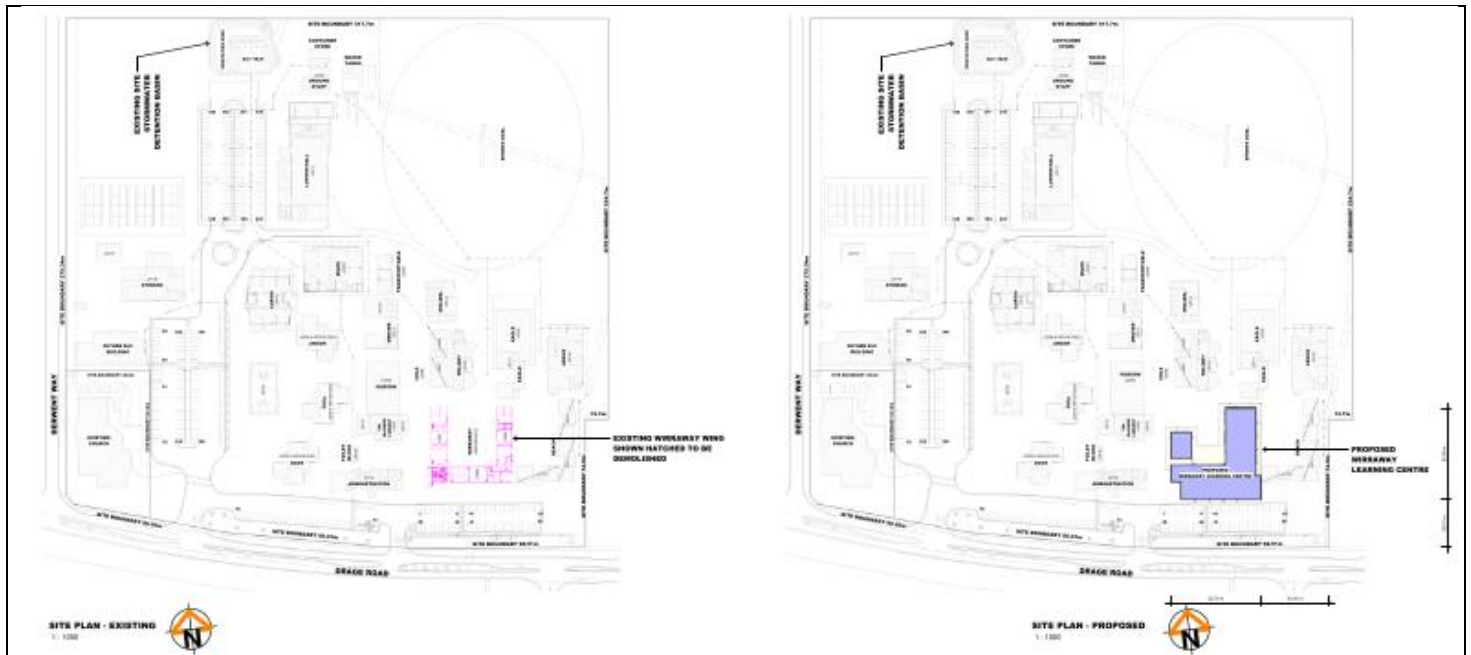


Figure 1: Proposed demolition and development site plan (Source: Decision plans)

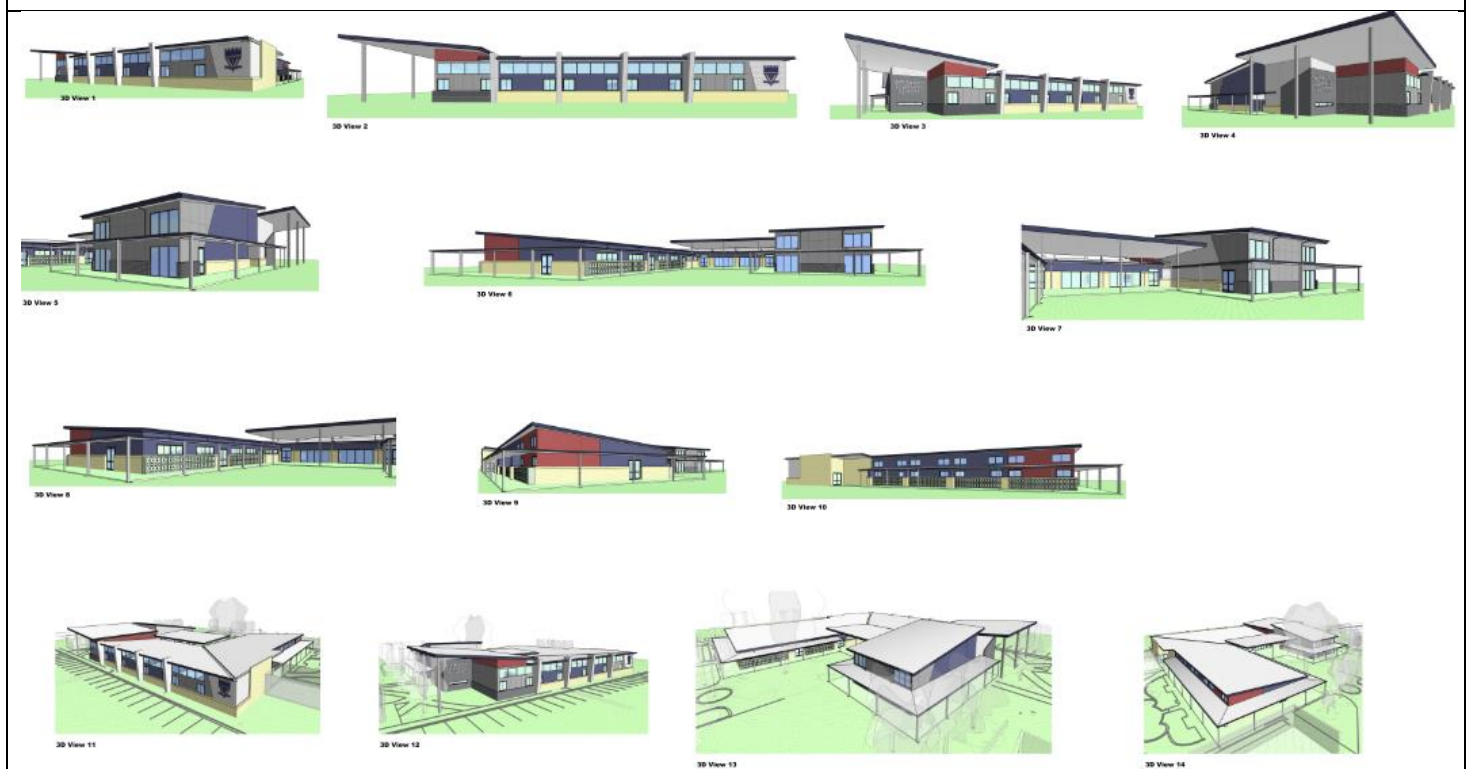


Figure 2: Proposed learning centre building renders (Source: Decision plans)

Proposed Signage

7. The proposed new learning centre will include business identification signage (school logos), with details as follows:

- Main building sign (Non illuminated): 2m x 4.7m (7.9sqm)
- School emblem sign (Non illuminated): 2.2m x 2.9m (4.6sqm)

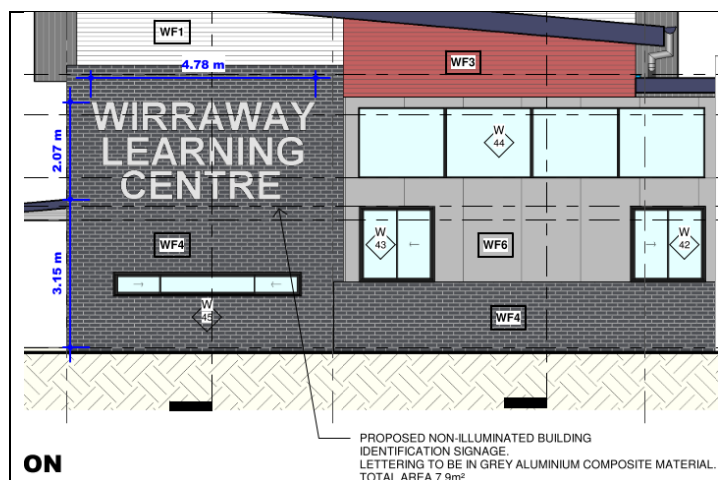


Figure 3: Proposed school main building sign (Source decision plans south elevation drawing)

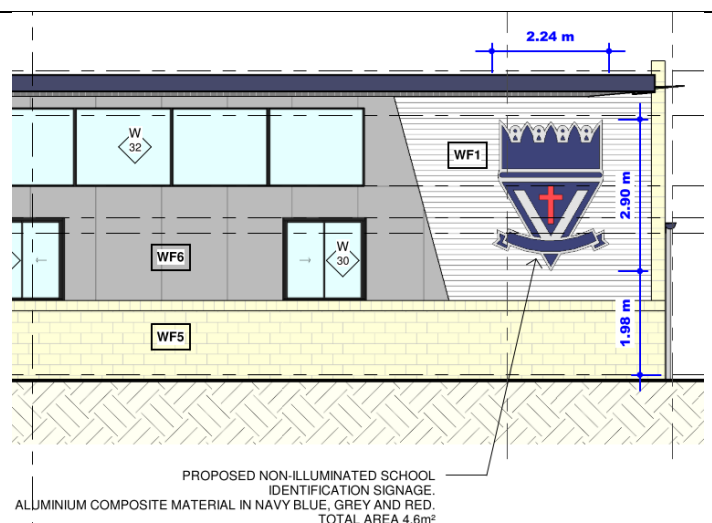


Figure 4: Proposed school main building sign (Source decision plans south elevation drawing)

Tree Canopy Removal

8. The following trees are proposed for removal in order to deliver the proposed development:
 - VLC20 – Acer Platanoides
 - VLC21 – Ulmus glabra 'Lutescens' (Golden Elm)
 - **VLC22 – Corymbia citriodora (Lemon-scented Gum) (Canopy Tree)**
 - VLC23 – Ulmus glabra 'Lutescens' (Golden Elm)
 - VLC24 – Pyrus calleryana 'Bradford' (Bradford Callery Pear)
 - **VLC25 – Pyrus calleryana 'Bradford' (Bradford Callery Pear) (Canopy Tree)**
 - **VLC27 – Pyrus calleryana 'Bradford' (Bradford Callery Pear) (Canopy Tree)**
 - **VLC31 – Pyrus calleryana 'Capital' (Capital Callery Pear) (Canopy Tree)**
 - VLC33 – Pyrus calleryana 'Capital' (Capital Callery Pear)
9. All trees nominated for removal do not classify as 'native vegetation' and/or are exempt from the requirements of clause 52.17. Refer to assessment section below for details.
10. Trees shown on plan as VLC22, VLC25, VLC27 and VLC31 are noted to meet the definition of a 'canopy tree' under clause 52.37. On such basis these specific trees required planning permit permission for removal, whilst all other identified above do not require permit approval.
11. It is noted that tree 'VLC43 – Quercus palustris' is proposed to be retained.

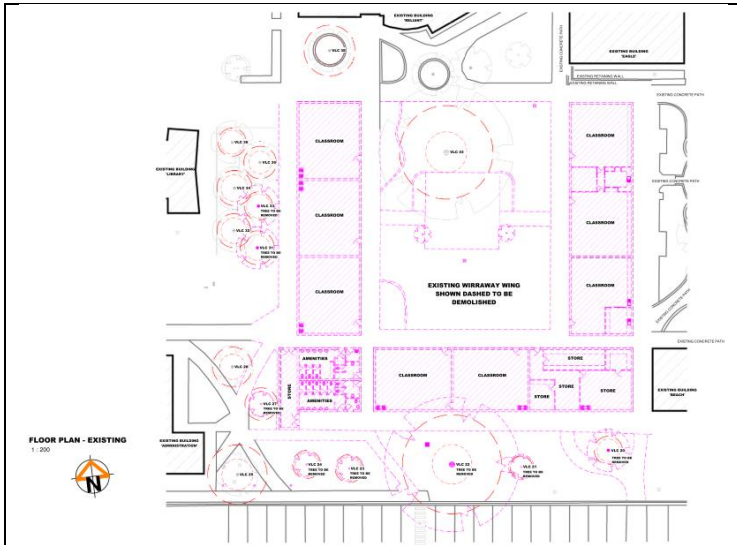
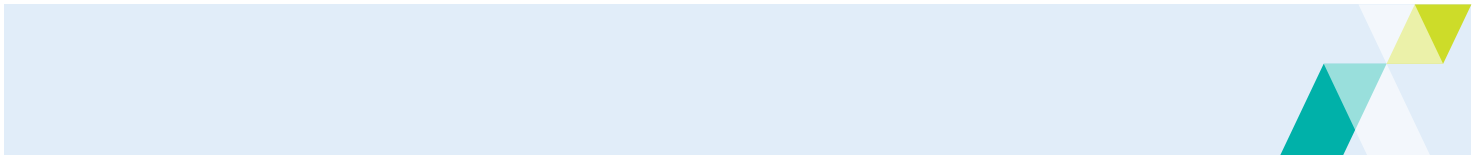


Figure 5: Proposed demolition Plan identified trees for removal
(Source: Decision Plans)

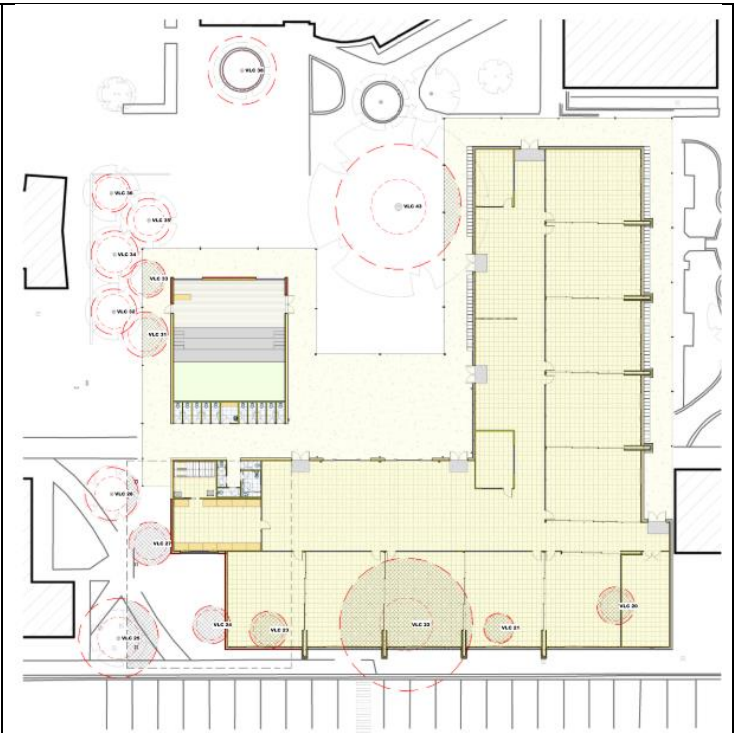
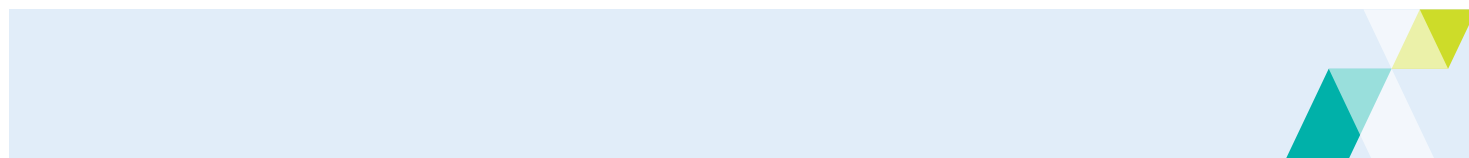


Figure 6: Proposed development site plan extract depicting proposed development encroachment upon TPZ of existing trees
(Source: Decision plans & Arborist Report)



Figure 7: Arborist report plan depicting trees assessed in red dot (Source: Arborist report)



VL C 22	Corymbia citriodora	Lemon- scented Gum	Aus Nativ e		VL C 25	Pyrus calleryana 'Bradford'	Bradford Callery Pear	Exotic	
VL C 27	Pyrus calleryana 'Bradford'	Bradford Callery Pear	Exotic		VL C 31	Pyrus calleryana 'Capital'	Capital Callery Pear	Exotic	



Site Description

12. The site is located **28 Drage Road, West Wodonga**
13. The existing site comprises Victory Lutheran College (Year 7-12)
14. The site measures approximately 9.125 hectares (91,250m²) and has frontages to Drage Road and Derwent Way, with a total size of 9.125 hectares
15. The site is formally described as comprising the following land parcels:
 - Lot 2 PS830642D
16. The title is clear of any registered s173 agreements or covenants.
17. There are several easements, restrictions or reserves on the site, as follows:

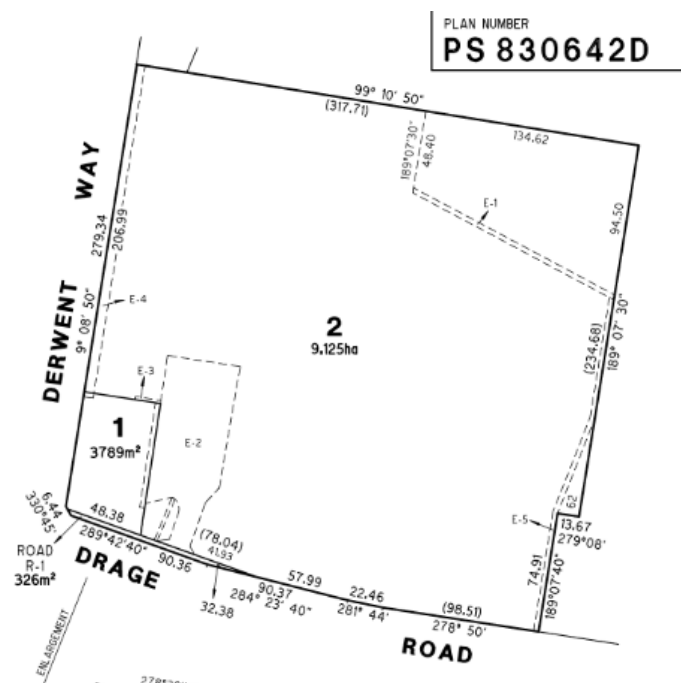


Figure 8: Subject site title plan extract

Site Surrounds

18. The surrounding development consists mainly of residential development comprising detached dwellings and associated outbuildings, together with educational uses associated with the Victory Lutheran College campus and the adjoining La Trobe University precinct.
19. Development surrounding the site can be described as follows:
 - To the **north** of the site: Land within the La Trobe University campus zoned Public Use Zone, comprising sporting fields, open space and university-related facilities
 - To the **south** of the site: Drage Road, beyond which are established residential properties characterised by single-storey detached dwellings

- To the **east** of the site: Established residential development, including detached dwellings within Ambrose Crescent and the surrounding residential neighbourhood
- To the **west** of the site: Derwent Way and additional areas of the Victory Lutheran College campus, including school buildings, car parking and associated educational facilities



Figure 9: Subject site existing conditions (Source: Planning Report)



Municipal Planning Strategy

20. The following objectives and strategies of the Municipal Strategic Statement of the scheme are relevant to the proposal:

Clause	Description
02.01	Context
02.02	Vision
02.03-1	Settlement
02.03-4	Natural resource management
02.03-5	Built environment and heritage

Planning Policy Framework

21. The following objectives and strategies of the Planning Policy Framework of the scheme are relevant to the proposal:

Clause 11	Settlement
11.01-1S	Settlement
Clause 13	Environmental and Landscape Values
12.06-1S	Urban Forests
Clause 15	Built Environment and Heritage
15.01-1S	Urban Design
15.01-1L-01	Urban Design along Main Roads
15.01-2S	Building Design
15.01-5S	Neighbourhood Character
Clause 19	Infrastructure
19.02	Community Infrastructure
19.02-2S	Education Facilities

22. The assessment section of this report provides a detailed assessment of the relevant planning policies

Zoning and Overlays

General Residential Zone – Schedule 1

23. A permit is required to construct a building or construct or carry out works for a use in Section 2 of Clause 32.08-2.
24. The following sections include a discussion of how the proposal responds to the purpose and decision guidelines of the control, as relevant, in the assessment section of this report.

Overlays

25. There are no overlays affecting the subject site.



Particular and General Provisions

Clause 52.05 - Signs

26. Clause 32.08-15 (GRZ1) outlines that 'Sign requirements are at Clause 52.05. This zone is in Category 3'.
27. Clause 52.05-13 (signs – category 3 – high amenity areas) outlines that business identification signage is a section 2 (Permit required) class of signage.
28. A permit is required to construct or put up for display a sign in Section 2.

Clause 52.37 – Tree Canopies

29. Clause 52.37-2 requires a permit for the removal of 'tree canopies' as defined under clause 52.37. Specifically a tree canopy is defined as a tree that has:
- height of more than 5 metres above ground level; and
 - a trunk circumference of more than 0.5 metres, measured at 1.4 metres above ground level; and
 - a canopy diameter of at least 4 metres;

Clause 53.18 – Stormwater Management In Urban Development

30. Clause 53.18 applies to the buildings and works of this application. The clause includes standards and objectives relating to stormwater.

Clause 53.19 – Non Governmental Schools

31. Clause 53.19-1 *'applies to an application under any provision of this scheme, other than a VicSmart application, to use or develop land for a primary school, secondary school, or education centre that is ancillary to, carried out in conjunction with, and on the same land or contiguous land in the same ownership as, a primary school or secondary school'*.

Clause 53.19-2 states that *'An application to which Clause 53.19 applies is exempt from the decision requirements of section 64(1), (2), and (3), and the review rights of section 82(1) of the Act'*.



Referrals

32. There is no statutory referrals triggered by the proposed subject development.

Municipal Council Comments

33. The City of Wodonga provided the following raised no objection and no recommended conditions in response to notification of the application under s52(1)(b) of the 'Planning and Environment Act 1987'

34. The council determined:

I apologise for the delay as this referral slipped through the cracks on my end.

As the application is not altering any Council infrastructure, and the stormwater is draining to their existing onsite detention basin, we do not object to the issue of the planning permit or provide any additional conditions relating to this permit.

Notice

35. The application is not exempt from the notice requirements of section 52(1)(a), (b) and (d), the decision requirements of section 64(1), (2) and (3) and the review rights of section 82(1) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* pursuant to the following provisions:

- Clause 32.08 – General Residential Zone
- Clause 52.05 - Signs

36. The application is exempt from the notice requirements of section 52(1)(a), (b) and (d), the decision requirements of section 64(1), (2) and (3) and the review rights of section 82(1) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* pursuant to the following provisions:

- Clause 52.37 – Canopy Trees

37. The application was not advertised other than to the municipal authority under section 52(1)(b) as it was considered not to cause material detriment to any person because:

- The proposed new building is located a sufficient distance to the adjoining properties to ensure no material detriment to any person. The building is located in the exact location of existing built form that it is replacing and is located internally within the school site.
- The proposed trees for removal, of which require planning permit approval pursuant to clause 52.37 are exempt from public notice requirements pursuant to clause 52.35-5.
- The proposed signage is commensurate in scale with the of the school, abuts the school carpark with no direct residential interfaces. It is not considered that approval of the school's business identification signage would cause material detriment to any parties.



Key Considerations

39. The following are deemed the key considerations in assessing the acceptability of the proposal:
- The overall appropriateness and functionality of the school building within the existing campus.
 - The extent of signage proposed
 - The need for tree canopy removal

Planning Permit Triggers

Planning scheme clause	Matter for which a permit is required
32.08-10	A permit is required to construct a building or construct or carry out works for a use in Section 2 of Clause 32.08-2.
52.05-2	A permit is required to construct or put up for display a sign in Section 2.
52.37-2	A permit is required to remove, destroy or lop a canopy tree in the General Residential Zone.

Strategic Direction and Land Use

40. The *Planning Policy Framework* encourage appropriate land use and development which enhances the built environment, supports economic growth, meets the community expectations on retail and commercial provision, delivers diversity in housing supply to meet existing and future needs, and integrates transport and infrastructure planning.
41. The relevant MPS and PPF policies have been considered in assessing the application.
42. The proposed land use is consistent with the strategic direction of the following policies within the Wodonga planning scheme on the basis of the following:
- Supports the continued operation and upgrade of an existing educational facility serving the local and regional community.
 - Delivers improved educational infrastructure through replacement of an ageing learning centre with contemporary teaching and learning spaces.
 - Provides a high-quality building outcome that integrates with the existing school campus and surrounding area.
 - Maintains compatibility with the surrounding residential context through appropriate building scale, setbacks and landscaping.
 - Facilitates the ongoing development of an existing non-government school in an established education precinct.
 - Does not result in an increase in student enrolments, staff numbers, traffic generation or parking demand.
 - Incorporates stormwater management measures that utilise existing drainage infrastructure and treatment systems.
 - Continues to provide community infrastructure in a location well serviced by existing transport and utility networks.

Buildings and Works

43. The zoning and overlay provisions have been considered in the application.
44. The purpose and decision guidelines of zoning control triggering the requirement for planning permit has been considered as part of this application. The proposal is considered to appropriately respond to these considerations on the basis of the following:

- The proposal facilitates the continued operation and improvement of an existing educational facility that serves community needs in an established location.
- The proposed building is located within the existing school campus and replaces an existing learning centre rather than expanding the overall school use.
- The development maintains an appropriate relationship with surrounding residential land through its siting, scale and setbacks.
- The proposed building is limited to a single storey and is considered compatible with the existing built form within the school campus and surrounding area.
- The design incorporates architectural articulation, landscaping and high-quality external materials that integrate with the existing school environment.
- The proposal does not increase student numbers, staff numbers, traffic generation, car parking demand or loading requirements associated with the school.
- Existing access arrangements, parking facilities and transport infrastructure will continue to accommodate the operation of the school.
- Landscaping is proposed to complement the existing campus and contribute positively to site presentation and amenity.
- The proposal represents an upgrade to existing community infrastructure and supports the ongoing provision of education services within Wodonga.
- The development is a compatible non-residential use within the General Residential Zone and is not expected to result in unreasonable amenity impacts on surrounding residential properties.
- Stormwater generated by the development will be managed through the existing campus drainage, retention and treatment infrastructure.
- The proposal is consistent with the strategic objective of supporting educational and community uses in appropriate locations while maintaining neighbourhood amenity.

Landscaping

45. It is noted that the application did not include a landscape plan, however it was stated within the applicants planning report that 'Landscaping would be commensurate with existing school grounds landscaping themes and be consistent with primary and secondary school 'Safer-by-Design' principles'.
46. It is common that for the scale of development such as that under consideration for this application to defer landscaping details until post permit via condition. On such basis a condition will be applied to permit requiring preparation of a detailed landscape plan, so that the development will secure an appropriate landscaping outcome.

Car and Bicycle Parking, Loading, and Other Services

Car Parking

47. The proposal does not involve any change to staff and/or student numbers. On such basis the carparking considerations of clause 52.06 are not relevant to this proposal.
48. It is furthermore noted that the development does not seek to alter any existing carparking or access arrangements within the existing school site.

Bicycle Facilities

49. The proposal does not involve any change to staff and/or student numbers. On such basis the bicycle provision considerations of clause 52.34 are not relevant to this proposal.

Waste

50. A waste management plan has not been provided in support of the proposal. The planning submission supporting the proposal outlines that there are no proposed changes to existing on site waste management arrangements.

- 
51. It is considered that given staff and student numbers are not changing, that there will be no new additional waste generation demand that would warrant additional waste management arrangement beyond that already in effect for current school operations. On such basis a waste management plan will not be a conditional requirement applied to permit.

Sustainability

Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD)

52. A Sustainability Management Plan has not been provided in support of the application. A standard DTP condition requiring preparation of a SMP in accordance with requirements of the Wodonga planning scheme will be applied to permit to ensure an appropriate ESD response is achieved.

Stormwater Management

53. The application is supported by a stormwater management plan outlining that the existing building to be demolished will disconnect from the site existing stormwater onsite assets connecting into LPOD, and the new building will reconnect into same. Council is noted not to have raised any concerns with proposed stormwater arrangements.
54. Subject to endorsement of the proposed SWMP, the proposal will result in appropriate stormwater outcomes in response to the requirements of clause 53.18.

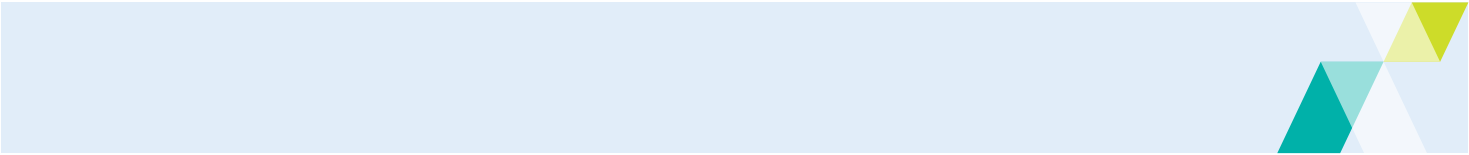
Tree Canopy Removal

Native Vegetation

55. All trees nominated for removal do not classify as 'native vegetation' and/or are exempt from the requirements of clause 52.17 on the basis of the following:
- The trees proposed for removal are planted amenity trees located within the existing school grounds, with exception to tree VLC22. Historical aerial imagery has been provided to verify such.
 - Tree VLC22 is a *Corymbia citriodora*, commonly known as a lemon-scented gum, and is not endemic to Victoria. On such basis it does not meet the planning schemes definition for native vegetation within Victoria.

Clause 52.37 Considerations

56. The following trees are identified as tree canopy trees requiring approval pursuant to clause 52.37:
- VLC22 – *Corymbia citriodora* (Lemon-scented Gum)
 - VLC25 – *Pyrus calleryana* 'Bradford' (Bradford Callery Pear)
 - VLC27 – *Pyrus calleryana* 'Bradford' (Bradford Callery Pear)
 - VLC31 – *Pyrus calleryana* 'Capital' (Capital Callery Pear)
57. It is considered to be acceptable that the proposed trees are necessary and/or appropriate for removal on the basis of the following:
- The trees are required to be removed to facilitate construction of the replacement Wirraway Learning Centre.
 - The Arborist Report concludes that the affected trees would experience major encroachment into their root protection zones as a result of the proposed development.
 - The proposal has been designed such that tree removal is limited to the extent necessary to accommodate the new building footprint.
 - The removal of the identified trees will enable delivery of upgraded educational infrastructure serving the ongoing needs of the school community.
 - The proposal does not involve the removal of remnant native vegetation.



Signs

58. The proposed extent of signage is considered appropriate for approval, in response to the relevant decision guideline considerations of clause 52.05, on the basis of the following:

- The signage is limited to building identification associated with the existing educational use.
- The signage is proportionate to the scale of the proposed building.
- The signage is integrated into the building design and will not result in visual clutter.
- The signage will utilise high-quality materials and finishes.
- The signage is not expected to adversely impact the amenity of the area or the safety and operation of the road network.
- The signage assists with wayfinding and identification of the Wirraway Learning Centre within the school campus.

Recommendation



59. The proposal is generally consistent with the relevant planning policies of the **Wodonga** Planning Scheme and will contribute to the provision of **education services** within the area.
60. The proposal is generally supported by council (no objection).
61. It is **recommended** that Planning Permit No. PA2604420 at 28 Drage Road, West Wodonga be issued subject to conditions.
62. It is **recommended** that the applicant and the council be notified of the above in writing.



Prepared by:

