



## St Ives High School P&C Association 2020 Student Transport & Traffic Survey

Since 2012 SIHS P&C has conducted regular parent surveys, and feedback regarding student transport and travel issues have been a common theme throughout.

In February 2020, with the support of the St Ives High School Executive, St Ives High P&C formed a Student Transport Working Group to investigate the scale and nature of the problems students currently face getting to and from school. We also formed a Traffic Working Group to investigate traffic congestion issues around the school and its' causes.

**Our guiding principle is the belief that the St Ives High Student Transport & Travel Plan should:**

**Be Fair and Safe for all students** – students should not be disadvantaged by the suburb they are travelling from or by participating in the school transport scheme. Travel arrangements should not compromise student safety (whether as a traveller or pedestrian).

**Be Sustainable** – provide a service that encourages students to make sustainable travel choices by offering a reliable service with sufficient capacity

**Aim to minimize congestion in the area around SIHS** – enable students to make transport choices that do not add to traffic congestion and impact upon pedestrian safety.

To investigate the issues and gather feedback from the SIHS school community, St Ives High P&C (SIHS P&C) commissioned and conducted a school-wide survey. The survey was launched on 26<sup>th</sup> August 2020 and ran for eleven days. An email with a **unique survey link** went to 896 primary email account holders on the St Ives High School family circulation list. Families were only able to use their survey link once. **400 families completed the survey, representing 517 students.** (See Data report for survey distribution breakdown). The survey closed at 6 pm on 5<sup>th</sup> September 2020 and had a **46% response rate**. It is important to note that **families were asked to answer the survey questions on a pre-COVID basis**; a comments box was provided for noting any COVID-related travel concerns.

**We are using the data and feedback from this survey to lobby for improved integrated transport services and measures to reduce traffic congestion and ensure pedestrian safety.**

# The Information Gap

## A Measure of St Ives High Family Satisfaction Levels with the Pre-COVID Student Transport Services to and from St Ives High

Of the survey respondents, 73% of students qualify for free student travel (378 students), which means they live in a suburb where the straight line distance from their home address to school is more than 2 km, or the walking distance from home to school is 2.9 km or further. This requires them to take transport to and from school.

Families with students who are eligible for a free student travel pass were asked to rate pre-COVID student transport services to and from St Ives High School. The rating was on a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 being Extremely Bad and 10 being Excellent. This is a Net Promoter question, and the purpose of it is to measure customer experience of the service, providing a core measurement for customer experience management programs. Promoters (score of 9 or 10) are 'loyal enthusiasts' who will keep using the service and recommend it to others. Passives (score 7 or 8) are unenthusiastic customers, in this case vulnerable to using alternative transport (i.e. driving). Detractors (score 0-6) are unhappy customers who will damage the 'brand' and public regard of the service through negative word of mouth. 283 families answered this question.

**Current transport services to and from St Ives High School achieved a Net Promoter Score of MINUS 63**

Net Promoter Score	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total
Family Response Count	4	11	19	25	37	59	36	47	33	3	9	283

**Promoters 4% - Detractors 67% = - 63%**

Count of Family Responses	Net Promoter Category				Blank*	Grand Total
	Detractor	Passive	Promoter			
State Representative						
Rob Stokes		2	2	0		4
Alister Henskens		39	15	2	5	61
David Elliot		1				1
Gladys Berejiklian					2	2
Jonathan O'Dea		48	35	10	103	196
Mark Taylor		1				1
Matt Kean		98	28	0	7	133
Victor Dominello		1				1
James Griffin		1				1
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>191</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>400</b>

\*Blank = No Travel Pass and not asked Net Promoter Question OR chose not to answer

## **The Main Student Transport Issues**

**There is a lack of integrated train and bus services scheduled to coincide with St Ives High School lesson and activity times, with sufficient capacity for the growing number of students travelling to St Ives High. This:**

- **Has a negative impact on the wellbeing of our children** who face unpredictable and lengthy journeys to and from their co-ed catchment high school.
- **Has a negative impact on the environment**, as many parents are opting to drive their children to school instead of using the transport services. This contributes to increased **traffic volumes** and **local congestion around the school, is bad for the environment** and **reinforces negative attitudes towards public transport.**
- **Creates a disadvantage for students who have to use transport to get to and from school and who wish to take part in extra-curricular activities that are part of school life.** Where there are no viable public transport options to get students to and from extra-curricular activities within an acceptable time frame, parents are forced to **drive** their children. This in turn creates an **inequality amongst students**; those who have someone who can drive them can participate, those who do not are unable to participate. Remember, for the majority of students, this is their local co-educational catchment school.

**As a matter of priority, we would like to see:**

- **St Ives High have its own afternoon bus service to Gordon Train station, originating at St Ives High.** (This service is often currently described as being 'shared' with Killara High School, as the same buses serve Killara first and then St Ives). The Transdev proposal for the Intensive English Centre which is moving to St Ives High in Term 4 2020 provisions for up to four buses for IEC students. Currently enrolled St Ives High students need those buses now as a matter of urgency.
- **Additional dedicated and public bus services between Gordon Train Station and St Ives High School between 7 am and 9 am.** This will facilitate the attendance of senior students at Period Zero (7.47-8.50 am) as well as attendance at before school extra-curriculars starting at 7.30 am.
- **Additional dedicated and public bus services from St Ives High School to Gordon Train Station between 2:15 pm and 5 pm.** This will facilitate the attendance of senior students at Period 6 (3.15 to 4.18 pm) as well as attendance at after school extra-curriculars starting at 3.15 pm.
- **Increased frequency of train services from Gordon Train Station to beyond Hornsby (Asquith, Mt Colah, Mt Kuring-Gai, Berowra) between 2:30 pm and 5 pm,** to reduce the over-reliance on the **3.45 pm** train of students who live beyond Hornsby.
- **The re-introduction of the direct bus service from Hornsby Station to St Ives High School (H594), and/or, an extension of the existing 591 service between Hornsby and St Ives to include St Ives High before terminating at St Ives Shops.**

## **Main Traffic-related Issues**

**The traffic congestion on Yarrabung Road at school at bell times has reached dangerous levels, in particular in the afternoon. This is due to a combination of factors:**

- **A large student population on Yarrabung:** St Ives High School is situated next to St Ives Primary on Yarrabung Road. School enrolments at St Ives High and St Ives Primary have been steadily increasing year on year since 2014. **In 2020 there is a combined total of 1654 enrolled students at school on Yarrabung Road.** This number excludes the Intensive English Centre students who are due to start at St Ives High in Term 4 2020.
- **Lack of staggered bell times:** Bell times for the two schools are 15 minutes apart in the morning but only 5 minutes apart in the afternoon
- **Lack of parking provision for the volume of cars and no official Kiss & Drop Zone for students:** many drivers double park or stop where they shouldn't (e.g. in bus zones) or collect or drop their children in unsafe places (e.g. at the Zebra Crossing). This behaviour creates traffic bottlenecks, impedes sight lines for pedestrians and other drivers, and is a danger to everyone. It is increasingly difficult for school buses to navigate Yarrabung Road as badly parked cars make it difficult for buses to turn in to side streets. We are worried that it is only a matter of time before there is a serious road traffic accident.
- **The large number of non-local students at St Ives High School who use a bus service to/from Yarrabung Road:** In 2020 more than 60% of students (717) enrolled at St Ives High reside in a suburb outside of St Ives, which means they have to use some form of transport to get to and from school. In the afternoon, these students can only leave the area as quickly as the bus services from St Ives High permit. St Ives High currently does not have its own bus service, so cannot ensure students leave the area promptly if the buses are delayed getting to St Ives High.
- **The increasing number of parents choosing to drive their students to school** either because they perceive that the pedestrian journey to school is too unsafe or the Student Transport service does not meet the needs of their student.

**The reported pedestrian experience in the area around the school is very poor:**

Survey feedback shows many St Ives High students are being dropped and pick up in Yarrabung Road. Barriers to local students walking to school is the lack of safe pedestrian crossing points, under-provision of and poorly maintained pavements, high traffic volumes and resulting poor driver and pedestrian behaviour.

## The increased traffic load on local roads driven by:

- **A sustained increase in the number of student enrolments at St Ives High and St Ives Primary**
- **New Developments in the St Ives locale:**
  - Phase 1 of the **St Ives High Indoor Sports Centre** – opening November 2020
  - Proposed **Hockey Centre at Barra Brui Sportsground**, on-street parking on Hunter Avenue to cope with future demand
  - New 122 place **Childcare Centre at 6 Eastern Arterial Road**, vehicular access via Hunter Avenue.

## We would like to work with Transport NSW and Ku-ring-gai Council to:

### Reduce traffic volumes by:

- **Improving local transport services to and from the area for students *and* members of the local community**, many of whom will be using the new St Ives High Indoor Sports Centre.
- **Improving the pedestrian experience around the school** with well-maintained pavements and the provision of designated pedestrian crossings located at popular crossing points.
- **Updating the Ku-ring-gai Council St Ives High Student Travel Plan** and using it to help educate the school community about the viable alternatives to driving to and from school.

**Explore and implement solutions to address traffic management issues in the streets around St Ives High.** Solutions need to be 'future-proofed' as more community facilities open up in the immediate area, the numbers of enrolled students increase, and there is an expansion of public transport services.

### *Who are our customers, and what do they value?*

*The reliability of transport services will always be a key contributor to customer satisfaction.*

*A successful transport system that encourages greater active and public transport can deliver positive outcomes in terms of physical and mental health, social capital and social and economic participation.*

*Our plans to extend the network of separated walking and cycling pathways will help connect children and young people to schools and other facilities.*



## Essential Background

The St Ives High Catchment Area is unique, in that it includes the local St Ives Area plus Hornsby and suburbs north of Hornsby as far as Mount Ku-ring-gai. Over 50% of the current SIHS student population reside *outside* the Local St Ives Catchment. **Out of the 400 families surveyed, 73% of students (378) qualify for free student travel which means they rely on public transport to get to and from school.**

St Ives High no longer accepts out of area enrolments. Enrolments for 2021 have exceeded original estimates – from 210 Year 7 students to 260, which equates to *nine* Year 7 classes.

Student Numbers by Year Source: MySchool Website	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021 <i>Estimate*</i>
<b>St Ives High</b>	918	930	944	947	1006	1046	1114	1200
<b>St Ives Public (Primary)</b>	393	421	455	493	503	522	540	
<b>Total Number of Students</b>	1,311	1,351	1,365	1,440	1,509	1,568	1,654	

\*This estimate *excludes* Intensive English Centre Enrolments at St Ives High in Term 4 2020

The surge in student numbers at St Ives High School is a result of the rapid expansion of apartments in the drawing areas (in particular Asquith in the Northern Draw), strong HSC results, and parents moving into the St Ives High drawing areas in order to enrol their child.

The continued growth in enrolments at St Ives High has put a high degree of stress on current transport arrangements, in particular, the first bus service which runs from SIHS to Gordon Station in the afternoon (often referred to as the **shared** School Bus service with Killara High because these buses serve KHS first and then SIHS). **There are insufficient buses from St Ives High to Gordon Station at the right time for the number of students who need to catch a connecting service and very poor integration with the train service to the Northern Draw.** Our survey shows that the majority of students who live beyond Hornsby take up an hour to get to school on public transport. However, when they cannot get on the first bus to Gordon, and they miss the 1545 train, the majority take up to an hour and a half more to get home. Where students cannot get on the first bus to Gordon Station, their journey time home is double that of the morning journey time. This means a 50-minute journey turns in to an hour and half or more to get home. Students who only take buses home also experience increased journey times in the afternoon. 35% take less than 30 minutes in the morning to travel to school, but in the afternoon, this drops to 22%. Students with a travel time of up to an hour increases from 11% in the morning to 21% in the afternoon.

St Ives High is situated next to St Ives Public. Like St Ives High, this school has also seen a steady increase in student numbers. There is a corresponding rise in traffic congestion in the area around the school, and this exacerbated as many parents opt to drive their children because the transport service is erratic or inadequate. Traffic levels and lack of safe pedestrian crossings and footpaths deter students walking to school, which in turn makes the traffic problem worse.

**Student numbers at St Ives High have steadily increased year on year, but student transport services to and from the school have not kept pace.**

**In Term 4 2020 two events will occur at St Ives High School that will further increase demand for student transport and create more traffic challenges:**

**1. The Intensive English Centre (IEC) will move from Chatswood to St Ives High School.** During a non-COVID period, the **TransDev Growth Bus Proposal St Ives High School June 2020** identifies that this move could necessitate additional transport provision for up to 240 extra students, and they have accordingly provisioned for up to four buses to cater for these additional students.

**2. Phase One\* of the new St Ives High Indoor Sports Centre will open,** providing two basketball-sized courts and supporting facilities that can be used by the school and community all year round. Once operational, St Ives High will be increasing its offering of extra-curricular before and after school activities, which will drive increased demand for transport options outside of regular bell times. Travel to and from SIHS outside of regular bell times is already problematic and prevents many students from being able to participate in current extra-curricular activities.

**External users are also seeking to expand their operations in the new facility.** The North Shore Basketball League estimates that, without COVID regulations, weekly attendance of members and spectators is projected to jump from 700 a week to in excess of 1000 members and spectators a week. The club operates from 4 to 7 pm on weekdays and at weekends. The majority of patrons currently drive to the venue due to the lack of a viable public transport alternative.

\*Phase Two will see the addition of a further two basketball-sized courts and corresponding expansion of facilities predominantly funded by Ku-ring-gai Council. No timeline on this as yet.

**We would also like to note the following planning applications which will also have a significant impact on local traffic when they are realised:**

- i. the **proposed Hockey Centre at the Barra Brui Sportsground.** KMC has identified that its existing off-street car park will not have the capacity to cater for the majority of the future parking demand or for drop-off/pick-up arrangements. Parking demand will likely try to spill onto local roads, and one proposed mitigation strategy is the provision of alternative parking on Hunter Avenue.
- ii. **the approved 122 place childcare currently being built round the corner from St Ives High at 6 Arterial Eastern Road (DA 0631/16) with vehicular access via Hunter Avenue** and basement parking for 31 cars. Hours of operation 7 am to 7 pm. Of most concern is the estimated additional car movements between 7-9am of 98 trips.

Frequent, integrated bus and train services are vital to ensure equality of access to the educational and sporting opportunities St Ives High has to offer its students. This is an important part of a students' education and positive high school experience. Out of the 400 families surveyed, 24% of students participate in before school activities, 65% of which travel to school by car. 20% of the families surveyed said that their children could not participate in before school activities because of the lack of public transport services to get there in a reasonable time.

## Appendix

### Transport to School for Regular Bell Time

In the morning, [school buses](#) commence at 8:20 am from Gordon Station with services departing Gordon at 8:20, 8:25, 8:35, 8:39 for St Ives High School. The 8:39am bus arrives at 8:47 (if there are no delays) giving students 3 minutes to get to class or be recorded as late. The public bus, 582, departs Gordon Station at 8 am (arriving 0812) and 0828 (arriving 0841).

To get to morning extra-curricular activities, such as band rehearsals or boot camp at 7:30 am, there is a [582 bus](#) departing Gordon Station 7:07 (arriving 7:11) then no bus for 34 minutes until 7:41 arriving 7:45 am. The only direct bus service between Hornsby Station and St Ives High School ([route 594H](#)) was **cancelled** a year ago. It left Hornsby at 7:04 am and 7:24 am taking approximately 25 minutes to St Ives High. The 591 bus between Hornsby Station and St Ives terminates at St Ives Shops, a 2km 25-minute walk to St Ives High. It is not possible to get to music program rehearsals on time by public transport since the direct bus was cancelled.

### Transport From School - Regular Bell Times

In the afternoon, students who live beyond Hornsby Station and need to get the 3.45 pm train, get priority boarding on the school buses. : 9046 (3.22 pm arrives 3.38 pm), 9005 (3.26 pm arrives 3.33 pm), 9005 (3.30 pm arrives 3.37pm), 9078 (3.40 pm arrives 3.48 pm) and 9084 (3.50 pm arriving 4 pm) after which there is a public 58 2 bus that runs every half an hour or so to Gordon Station.

**The first bus service from St Ives High to Gordon Station is shared with Killara High School, originating at Killara.** When this service is late getting to St Ives High, our students miss the 3:45 pm train from Gordon, and there is a **half-hour wait** for the next train servicing stations beyond Hornsby. As at 26<sup>th</sup> February 2020, St Ives High had issued 170 Push Passes, three bus loads of students.

In addition to Push Pass students, students travelling to Hornsby and some local students (28%) also need take the school bus to Gordon Station so that they can catch a connecting service. It is clear from family feedback that there are currently insufficient school buses to Gordon Station for the number of students who need to catch them.

#### Early Bell – Tuesday 2.15 pm

Survey feedback has highlighted the lack of bus services to take students home after the early finish at 2.15 pm on Tuesdays [19 mentions]. Most students falling into this category live in St Ives, St Ives Chase, North Wahroonga, Mona Vale and Ingleside.