



Media Release – Kariong Mountains High School (KMHS) Committee – 12 Nov 2008

Passion and Local Vision

Today is a very special day in the history of the Kariong-Mountains communities. We stand on the site where pre construction work has commenced for the Kariong Mountains High School, which will be completed and ready for opening for first term 2010.

The KMHSC wish to acknowledge the support, spirit and effort of the many local citizens who have at various times fought for a school for our communities, a fight of over 15 years.

In October last year the then Education Minister Mr John Della Bosca made the announcement the new high school was to be built within the Mt Penang Precinct. From Jan 2010, students will have their own high school and will be able to establish their own identity within the wider communities in which they live, a principle we believe is greatly needed in today's society.

This current community action commenced in 2002 with the formation of the KMHS Committee and will cease when the first student enters the school. At that time of formation there were those, even within the community that were unsure the high school could be achieved. However, this dedicated group of people, armed with the knowledge that a high school for the local communities was desperately needed were able to negotiate the path of bureaucracy. This was achieved by a consistent and professional approach, working with the facts, containing emotion and attempting to anticipate the next steps.

Our committee has worked with a number of government departments, at all levels, over the last 6 years with a view of ensuring that our case was able to address the "why". Our work on this issue has demonstrated that as a community we believed in the cause we were fighting for and we and the community would only accept one result.

The message the KMHS Committee has for any community action group is "Don't Give In", stick with the facts, remain true to your goal and target, as others will attempt to hijack your community action for their own needs, and stay one step ahead of the game. This was a battle that most thought couldn't be won. This increased our resolve and the will to win, but ultimately the real winners are the children.

The negative to this campaign is that something that should be as simple as building a high school in the right location became such a long and drawn out challenge. Proper government and department planning and engagement would have resulted in this school being built much earlier.

Whilst the commencement of the building gives this community a level of satisfaction, the work of this committee is not finished. Our committee continues to push for the tabling by the RTA and DET of the overpass of the Central Coast Highway, to ensure that this is also ready when the first student enters the school and we as a committee will continue to monitor and engage to ensure the success of this project through to completion.