

10 years of neglect for Medowie community

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It has been a decade since the NSW Liberal-National Government promised the Medowie community a public high school, despite the area struggling with over-capacity primary schools and the approval of more than 1000 new homes.

Federation President Angelo Gavrielatos joined local parents and MPs in the Port Stephens precinct this morning to back the community's longstanding calls for a public high school in Medowie.

He highlighted the Berejiklian Government's neglect of public education in Medowie, where the Government has instead funded the establishment of two private high schools, while it plans to expand a further two high schools in Raymond Terrace, 16km away.

"This is next level stuff," Mr Gavrielatos said as he met parents with state Member for Port Stephens Kate Washington and federal Member for Paterson Meryl Swanson.



"So, the state and federal governments are funding the establishment of two private schools instead of a public school, effectively denying parents the choice - which is an entrenched Liberal education platform - of enrolling their kids in their local public school.

"By funding private schools before building a local public high school, the government has effectively abandoned its obligation as a guarantor and provider of public education."

Former Liberal Education Minister Adrian Piccoli promised before the 2011 NSW election to make a public high school in Medowie "shovel ready". Nothing has been done by the Liberal-National Government since that promise.

Medowie now has a Catholic high school, an independent Christian School and two over-capacity public primary schools, but no public high school. It is considered an area of significant growth, with 1000 new homes currently approved for development.

Instead, the Berejiklian Government has announced plans to expand two existing high schools in Raymond Terrace without any consultation with the community.

Mr Gavrielatos said these expansion plans appear to have been designed to rule out a public high school in Medowie.

“Kids have only one right when it comes to education, and that is enrolling at their local school,” he said. “In this instance the state and federal governments are undermining that right, creating obstacles and forcing kids in Medowie to be bussed to other schools outside of their area.

“The Government is undermining and obstructing access to public secondary education for all in Medowie.”

Ms Washington said a high school in Medowie would cater to the thousands of families in Medowie, and those on the Tilligerry Peninsula, Salt Ash and the north-western shores of Port Stephens.

Instead, she said, “a thousand public high school students cram onto buses without seatbelts and travel to Raymond Terrace”.