

Old Heidelberg Road - Have Your Say - SUBMISSIONS - Keep Gate closed

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Dear Mr Gilbert

PUBLIC ACCESS TO EASTERN PORTION OF OLD HEIDELBERG ROAD, ALPHINGTON
(YOUR REFERENCE 18,958)

SUBMISSION FROM: VICE PRINCIPAL & HEAD OF PRIMARY, ALPHINGTON GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback in relation to public access to the Eastern Portion of Old Heidelberg Road, Alphington (referred to in this letter as - OHR) to access the Darebin Creek.

I make this submission to the City of Yarra (Council) in my capacity as the Assistant Principal & Head of Primary of Alphington Grammar School (School, or AGS). I have worked as a teacher at AGS for 25 years.

OHR: Security Issue for AGS ELC and Primary Students

Public access to OHR presents serious security issues for Primary and ELC students of the School.

The Early Learning Centre (ELC) is attended by children as young as three years of age. ELC and primary students up to typically Grade Two are taught in a building within the School's premises which is separated from the other main School buildings by the OHR (Primary Building). Before and After-School Care for students typically up to Grade Six is also operated in this building. Additionally, all primary students access this building each week for specialist subjects such as art, music and Greek.

The nearest playground to the Primary Building is very close to OHR. The playground equipment and grounds on which it is situated require constant cleaning as a result of intruders entering the schoolgrounds and leaving rubbish and used drug paraphernalia in this area, as well as the removal of dog faeces left by the pets of nearby residents.

The existence of OHR within the School's boundaries compromises the level of security which is required to meet the needs of young children, and their teachers and carers. Public access to OHR is inconsistent with mandatory Child Safe standards expected of all schools.

Over recent years, with intruders increasingly accessing the School's premises and attempting to use student and teacher facilities such as bathrooms, the School has needed to implement various increased security measures in response. None of these are however failsafe, given that OHR is publicly accessible via the School's gates. CCTV cameras have been installed and additional security has been added to the entrance to the Primary Building. Even our youngest students have received 'stranger danger' training specifically in anticipation of the need to identify strangers on the School's premises. It is incredibly traumatic for young children to be confronted by strangers when they should feel safe within their own schoolgrounds, and this has occurred several times within recent years.

Teachers on yard duty and overseeing outdoor sporting activities regularly need to discourage clearly undesirable persons who are loitering for the purposes of wanting to photograph students.

Access to the Darebin Bike Trail

I appreciate that residents in the vicinity of the School may be hoping for access to the Darebin Bike Trail via OHR and the School's property. However, access to the trail and the river from the School's premises has not been possible for many years.

Safety considerations for the School's youngest children and their teachers should be paramount in this consultation process. A more appropriate solution to the question of access to the trail can surely be found. This would then enable the School to further enhance the safety and security of the School's children and teachers. I trust the seriousness of the dangers we face daily will be heeded before a tragic and foreseeable incident involving one of our children occurs.

Alphington Grammar School

Dear Mr Gilbert

PUBLIC ACCESS TO EASTERN PORTION OF OLD HEIDELBERG ROAD, ALPHINGTON
(YOUR REFERENCE 18,958)

SUBMISSION FROM: THE PARENTS & FRIENDS ASSOCIATION OF ALPHINGTON GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback in relation to public access to the Eastern Portion of Old Heidelberg Road, Alphington (referred to in this letter as - OHR) to access the Darebin Creek.

This submission to the City of Yarra (Council) is made on behalf of the Parents & Friends Association (PFA) of Alphington Grammar School (School, or AGS). I am the current President of the PFA, teach Greek to AGS Primary Students, and have a son who has attended AGS since Primary School.

Background – the AGS PFA

AGS has 530 students, ranging from 3 year old Early Learning Centre (ELC) students through to Year 12 students, and 110 staff, which includes teaching and non-teaching staff.

The PFA has actively supported the School for many years, and the PFA's work is undertaken and supported by both parents and AGS teachers.

Summary: OHR - a Serious Safety and Security Issue for AGS

The PFA has serious concerns with regard to public access to OHR, which prevents the School premises from being appropriately secured to the extent that parents of any children, and teachers, would rightly expect from any school.

Because it is not possible to access the river or any public land from the School's premises, the PFA strongly believes that common-sense dictates that the School and the School community is the only suitable user of OHR.

PFA activities – background

The PFA conducts many of the typical fundraising activities that one would expect of any school PFA, such as bake sales, and fundraisers through Mother's Day and Father's Day gift sales.

Some PFA events and activities are also intended simply to foster a good community spirit, fun and connections within the School community.

Many school events are supported by the PFA with school parents volunteering at events as varied as: school musical evenings, concerts and productions; School Open Days; New Families Welcome BBQ; School House Night; Mother's Day High Tea Charity Fundraiser; Family Tavern Night; Primary School Disco evening; Twilight Family BBQ Festival; Christmas Carols and End of Year celebrations. These events may be conducted during School hours, during evenings and on weekends, and PFA members typically meet at the School in the evenings during the school term to plan the year's events.

I highlight the wide variety of events conducted at the School so that it is clear to the Council that school age children are present on campus well beyond school hours, when events such as these are hosted by the School. Children's safety, as well as that of their parents and other family members attending PFA events, is of paramount importance, and is presently compromised given the issues surrounding public access to OHR.

OHR and Security Issues

As a teacher, I am well aware that public access to OHR presents safety and security issues for the School, given that OHR is situated within the School's premises. Teachers have a heightened sense of vigilance, given mandatory Child Safe obligations, as well as concern for their own personal safety, given incidents that have occurred, such as intruders in students' bathrooms and teachers' facilities during school hours.

My teaching colleagues and I have first-hand knowledge of the need for vigilance during the school day. Undertaking yard duty during recess and lunchtime is a particular example, where the need to confront and deter loiterers is ever present. Teachers often need to discourage these intruders from taking photos of the students, and this task is not made easier with the relatively easy access to the School premises that OHR currently presents.

Access to the Darebin Bike Trail

I understand that nearby residents and other local stakeholders are looking for access to the Darebin Bike Trail via OHR and then School property, and this has prompted the current consultation process.

However, given the safety needs for the School's children, teachers and families, access should not be at the expense of these considerations. Nor indeed is access to the bike trail actually possible from the School's grounds. No doubt there are other more convenient and safer solutions

that could accommodate these needs so that there is no need to compromise the safety of the School's children, teachers and the wider AGS community.

Yours Sincerely

President, Parents & Friends Association
Alphington Grammar School

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Dear Mr Gilbert

PUBLIC ACCESS TO EASTERN PORTION OF OLD HEIDELBERG ROAD, ALPHINGTON

(YOUR REFERENCE 18,958)

SUBMISSION FROM THE SCHOOL COUNCIL OF ALPHINGTON GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback in relation to public access to the Eastern Portion of Old Heidelberg Road, Alphington (referred to in this letter as – OHR) to access the Darebin Creek.

This submission to the City of Yarra (Council) is made on behalf of the School Council, being the Board of Directors (School Council), which operates Alphington Grammar School (School).

Summary: OHR is a Serious Safety Issue for the School

Public access to the School via OHR presents serious safety and security issues on a daily basis for the School, its students, staff and other permitted school visitors.

Following the compulsory acquisition of a portion of the School's land and the erection of a combination of wire and high mesh fences along the Darebin bike trail, there is no ability to access the Darebin trail from the School's premises without climbing through wire fencing, (or indeed cutting through the fencing – which has occurred) therefore rendering the need for public access to OHR redundant and unnecessary.

This means that the School and its community is the only appropriate user of OHR.

Access to the river or any public land from the School's premises has not been possible for many years.

The School Council supports continuation of the discussions that the School has had with the Council and local residents in the past concerning OHR to achieve an outcome that guarantees the maximum protection possible for the School's students, staff and visitors while engaging in School business and activities on the School's premises. Those discussions should include the Greek Orthodox Community of Melbourne & Victoria, (GOCMV), being the owners of the bulk of the land on which the School is situated (the remaining smaller portions abutting OHR being owned by the School).

Abbreviations used in this letter

- Council: the City of Yarra
- ELC: Early Learning Centre

- GOCMV: the Greek Orthodox Community of Melbourne & Victoria
- OHR: the Eastern Portion of Old Heidelberg Road, Alphington
- School: Alphington Grammar School
- School Council: the Board of Directors of Alphington Grammar School

Council's Consultation Letter: Additional Background

The following additional key facts are not outlined in the Council's consultation letter and should be drawn to the attention of all participants in this consultation process:

1. Gated school entrance since 1953:

A fence and gate has existed on OHR for decades when Parade College operated as a junior boys campus from 1953 on what is now the operational grounds of the School.

2. 1989: Alphington Grammar Established:

The GOMCV acquired the land on which Parade College was located, and Alphington Grammar School was established.

The former gate and fence in use by Parade College became unstable thus posing a significant safety risk and was replaced in 2019 with a new structure, high enough to better limit the ability of three year old ELC students to leave the School premises, which had not been the case with the former fence.

3. Pedestrian access to Darebin Bike Trail / Darebin Creek not possible:

The public shared bike/pedestrian path along the Darebin Creek cannot be accessed from the School's grounds without removing or cutting through the extremely high mesh fencing along the path adjacent to the School's boundary. There is therefore no legitimate need to enter the School's premises or access OHR, as OHR does not lead to any public land.

4. Ongoing Security Issues for the School:

The presence of OHR within the School premises prevents the School from fully securing its premises, fully screening visitors and preventing undesirable persons from accessing the School's facilities. This means that serious safety and security issues arise daily for all School students, staff, permitted school visitors, School volunteers and all other visitors. Unfettered public access to the School, while issues surrounding public access to OHR remain unresolved, is inconsistent with the School's mandatory Child Safe obligations.

On occasion these matters have required referral to Victoria Police, where undesirable and uninvited persons have been seen lurking in primary school students' bathroom facilities during school hours. More details of the specific kinds of safety and security issues are detailed in the submission from [REDACTED], the School's Principal. These events cause trauma for students (and their families) where they are

confronted with strangers accessing School facilities.

Notwithstanding these security issues however, the gates and fence erected in 2019 do not completely prevent all access to OHR.

School visitors: Safety and security needs and expectations

The School makes a significant contribution to community infrastructure in the provision of places for groups to meet, and the School Council is rightly proud of the School's contributions in this regard. Numerous other community and sporting groups, many associated with children, use the School premises on a regular basis, and are also entitled to the same degree of safety and security that the School seeks to provide its students and staff. The safety of these permitted visitors is also potentially compromised while the School is unable to properly secure access to School property and School facilities.

Other Access Points to the Darebin Bike Trail

The School Council appreciates that this consultation process is prompted by residents and other local stakeholders wanting convenient access to the Darebin Bike Trail. There is no need to achieve this via School property while other reasonable alternatives to achieve that outcome exist.

A safer and more convenient point of public access to the Darebin Bike Trail would be from the carpark located within the Latrobe Golf Club, given its proximity to the trail and river.

Common-sense suggests that the School and its wider community are the only appropriate users of OHR. A public access point to the Darebin Bike Trail should not be made through School property nor in any way that would permit intruders with no School related business to access the School's premises and compromise the safety of vulnerable children.

Conclusions

The School Council welcomes discussions with the Council to resolve these issues and work toward a practical and common-sense approach to the use of OHR that protects the safety and security of the staff and students of the School and all associated with the School who legitimately use its premises on a daily basis.

Yours Sincerely,

Chair of School Council
Alphington Grammar School

Dear Mr Gilbert

PUBLIC ACCESS TO EASTERN PORTION OF OLD HEIDELBERG ROAD, ALPHINGTON
(YOUR REFERENCE 18,958)

SUBMISSION ON BEHALF OF ALPHINGTON GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback in relation to public access to the Eastern Portion of Old Heidelberg Road, Alphington (referred to in this letter as - OHR) to access the Darebin Creek.

This submission to the City of Yarra (Council) is made on behalf of Alphington Grammar School (School) and the following stakeholders within the School's Community:

- Students: the 530 students enrolled at the school, who range from 3 year old Early Learning Centre (ELC) students through to Year 12 students;
- Staff: the 110 staff employed by the School, including teaching and non-teaching staff;
- Permitted School Visitors: there are a range of school and community groups who visit and use the School premises and facilities, with the School's permission, at various times on a daily basis throughout the week, weekends and school holiday periods. These groups and the nature of their visits and use is outlined in more detail below.

Summary: OHR is a Serious Safety Issue for the School

The Council, the School and other interested stakeholders have been in discussions for several years regarding the use of OHR, access to OHR, and the consequential safety and security issues that arise on a daily basis for the School, its students, staff and other permitted school visitors. These safety and security issues arise essentially due to a culmination of unfortunate past circumstances and oversights which have now resulted in an obsolete part of a public road being surrounded by private property on which the School, and indeed a previous school, is built and operates.

Following the compulsory acquisition of a portion of the School's land and the erection of a combination of wire and high mesh fences along the Darebin bike trail, there is no ability to access the Darebin trail from the School's premises without climbing through wire fencing, (or indeed cutting through the fencing – which has occurred) therefore rendering the need for public access to OHR effectively redundant

The School and its community is effectively the only appropriate user of OHR.

Safe and convenient access to the river or any public land from the School's premises has not been possible for many years.

Of paramount importance, and a major priority for the School, is ensuring the safety and security of all its students, staff and permitted school visitors.

The School therefore wishes to continue and amicably conclude the discussions it has had with the Council and local residents in the past concerning OHR, to achieve an outcome that guarantees the maximum protection possible for the School's students, staff and visitors while engaging in School business and activities on the School's premises. Those discussions should of necessity also include the Greek Orthodox Community of Melbourne & Victoria, (GOCMV), being the owners of the bulk of land on which the School is situated (the remaining smaller portions abutting OHR being owned by the School).

Abbreviations used in this letter

- Council: the City of Yarra
- GOCMV: the Greek Orthodox Community of Melbourne & Victoria
- OHR: the Eastern Portion of Old Heidelberg Road, Alphington
- School: Alphington Grammar School

Council's Consultation Letter: Additional Background

The School is concerned that the Council's consultation letter to nearby residents contained several inaccuracies and omitted key facts that are highly relevant to a complete understanding of both the history relating to OHR, and the problems now faced by the School as a result of these unfortunate circumstances.

The School requests that all other contributors to this consultation process are made aware of the following facts:

1. Gated school entrance since 1953:

A fence and gate has existed on OHR for decades when Parade College operated as a junior boys' campus from 1953 on what is now the operational grounds of the School.

2. 1989: Alphington Grammar Established:

The GOMCV acquired the land on which Parade College was located, and Alphington Grammar School was established. Given passage of time, and a lack of complete access to records, it is not entirely clear to the School at this time whether there was an understanding as to the status of the OHR's ownership, given that it was of course surrounded by the Parade College schoolgrounds at the time of acquisition by the GOCMV.

At some point, continuation of the formal licensing arrangements for OHR appears to have been overlooked, although the continuing, and current, overholding was recognised by the Council at its August 2020 meeting. Further, the School's use of OHR is formally recognised in the Yarra Planning Scheme as follows:

- OHR, as to its upper part, east of the School gate, between the Senior School and the Junior School, is designated as Special Use Zone (Schedule 3 - Alphington Grammar School purposes) as is the substantial part of the higher School land and facilities on either side; and
- The lower OHR area is in an Urban Flood Zone, which also traverses part of the lower School playing fields.

3. Changes since 1953:

a. 'Significant growth' – meaning and relevance not explained:

The 'significant growth' mentioned in the circular letter is not precisely explained, nor its specific relevance to OHR and the unique problems that it causes the School on a daily basis. That said, the School's families are typically situated within only a five to seven kilometer radius of the School. With enrolments for 2022 and beyond coming from families residing in the new development situated on the old Amcor paper mill site in Alphington, many of the School's families are likely Council ratepayers.

The following are some specific changes and events which are however relevant:

b. Restoration of gates – a necessary safety issue:

The former gate and fence in use by Parade College became unstable thus posing a significant safety risk. The risk was removed in 2019 by demolishing the old structure and replacing it with a new structure. The former fence was indeed low enough so as to present additional safety issues for the School, noting that its ELC students can be as young as 3 years of age, and potentially prone to running away or exiting the School premises with such a low and therefore scalable structure. It was also used as a 'climbing wall' for slightly older children, which was dangerous.

The low height of the former structure meant that its visibility from the rear window of many modern cars was limited, and the Council will be

aware of the tragic death in 2003 of a young School student who was pinned between the fence and a reversing car.

(Photos of the old and new structures are attached).

c. Lack of pedestrian access to Darebin Bike Path / Darebin Creek:

In order to create access to the bike path, trees and the fence would need to be removed and a substantial structure installed in a manner which would dominate the natural character of the creek. (We believe that an old footbridge was washed away many years ago, but never replaced by the relevant authorities).

The public shared bike/pedestrian path along the Darebin Creek cannot be accessed from the School's grounds without the removal of the extremely high mesh fencing along the path adjacent to the School's boundary. There is therefore no legitimate need to enter the School's premises or access OHR, as OHR does not lead to any public land.

The map contained in the consultation letter does not satisfactorily indicate the School's grounds (i.e.: private property immediately surrounding and bordering OHR on both sides), nor the inability to safely access the Darebin trail from the School's grounds (without vandalising School property or Council erected fencing). Attached for further assistance is a survey plan (overlaid on an aerial photo by Peter Rickard, surveyor, taken in 2016).

d. Ongoing Security Issues for the School:

The presence of OHR within the School premises prevents the School from fully securing its premises. This means that serious safety and security issue are ever present on a daily basis for all School students, staff, permitted school visitors, School volunteers and all other visitors. The School is bound by and must comply with mandatory Child Safe obligations, which is difficult if open and uncontrolled access to the School's premises and facilities is necessary. Open access to the School flies in the face of Child Safe safety standards and the expectations of the School's parents.

On occasion these security issues have required referral to Victoria Police, where undesirable and uninvited persons have been seen lurking in primary school students' bathroom facilities during school hours. More generally, on a regular basis the School faces:

* uninvited intruders accessing or attempting to access students' bathroom facilities during school hours;

* uninvited intruders accessing staff facilities such as bathrooms and staffroom areas;

* regular detection of illicit drug taking paraphernalia being discarded post usage in student bathroom facilities, school grounds and in student areas generally;

* uninvited intruders attempting to photograph school students during school hours and/or during participation in school activities on school premises;

* dogs: nearby residents of the School regularly walk and exercise their dogs on the School oval – this presents safety issues in particular when younger students are nearby unleashed dogs in particular. In addition, sanitation and hygiene issues are a constant concern for staff and students using the oval for sporting activities, when dog owners fail to collect their dogs' faeces.

* a variety of adult sporting groups enter the School grounds in an attempt to train or avail themselves of the School's facilities without prior request, permission or authority, and regularly leave significant amounts of rubbish on the School premises, and use the School's bathroom facilities (or, worse still, relieve themselves in the School's playgrounds and around gardens or trees).

These issues cause the School significant concerns and additional infrastructure costs given the obligatory Child Safe Standards to which it is subject. The School has incurred significant expenditure in relation to security measures including cameras and CCTV intended to deter and identify vandals, intruders and trespassers, and has also received regular callouts from the School's security company which monitors the School premises.

For completeness, it is important to note that 'school' is no longer a 9am to 3.30pm weekday proposition. For example: facilities and other staff commence work at the School well prior to classes commencing, Before-School Care operates from 6am each school day, After School Care Programs for primary school aged children run until 6pm on each school day, and Holiday Camp programs run by external providers on weekdays during school holidays are often available (and accessible to children regardless of whether they attend the School).

4. Residents' complaints:

The School is concerned that the circular letter does not specify the nature, volume or dates of complaints said to have been made by residents. A suitable (de-identified of course) summary should be provided by the Council to all consultation contributors, so that their relevance can be balanced against the genuinely serious safety and security issues outlined above which the School faces on a daily basis.

5. School and Council Engagement:

The School's senior management has been actively engaged in cordial dialogue for several years in relation to the various issues relating to OHR,

and in particular the serious safety and security issues facing the School while that portion of OHR precludes the School appropriately securing and/or restricting access to the School's premises.

6. Current gates do not inhibit access:

Notwithstanding the serious safety concerns which public access to OHR presents to the School, the School has not completely inhibited all access to OHR. The statement to that effect in the consultation letter is incorrect. Typically, there is at least always pedestrian access to the School during School hours, and indeed for even greater periods to enable access by the various permitted visitors to the School.

School's permitted visitors: Safety and security needs and expectations

The School makes a significant contribution to community infrastructure in the provision of places for groups to meet. In addition to the students and staff attending the School daily, the following groups use the School premises on a regular basis, and are also entitled to the same degree of safety and security that the School seeks to provide students and staff. Without the ability to effectively secure access to the School, and appropriately limit unchecked public access to the School, via an appropriate solution to the issues relating to OHR, the safety of these permitted visitors is also potentially compromised.

I effectively write on behalf of all of these groups, which are unlikely to be aware of the ability for uninvited persons to access the School premises while they are legitimately engaging in activities such as the following:

- Inter-school sports: Other school students and their teachers attend the School premises regularly for the purposes of inter-school sporting competitions.
 - Inter – school activities: Such as debating, music and drama performances are typically held at the School during the evenings.
 - Volunteers: The School has a strong community of, in particular, family and past students attending the school to assist with activities as varied as second-hand clothing sales, homework clubs and exam preparation programs.
 - School sporting facilities leased to community groups: The School's gymnasium is used every evening and on weekends by the Collingwood Basketball Association. All sporting participants are school aged children.
 - Community language classes: Greek and Chinese language schools also use the School's facilities outside of School hours.
 - Community Cultural Groups: Use the School premises with permission for activities such as fundraisers, book launches, remembrance and celebration days and similar such events.
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- Gateways Advanced Learning Programs: Are run for primary school aged children on weekends.
 - Local schools: Use the School's facilities for activities such as their concerts and end of year activities.
 - School Holiday Programs: Are often run by external providers, on weekdays during school holidays, for primary school aged children, and regardless of which school they attend.

Alternative Access to the Darebin Bike Trail

Our understanding is that this consultation process is prompted by a desire by residents and other local stakeholders to more conveniently and safely gain access to the Darebin Bike Trail. There is no particular need to locate the access in the vicinity of the School nor via School property.

From our observations the most obvious point of safe, convenient, and attractive access would be from the carpark/club house area within the Latrobe Golf Club. We believe that this locality is well lit, more proximate to the trail and river, and whilst within a golf course, is located away from the risk of golf balls. The locality is visually safer given the frequent passage of adults accessing the course and its facilities from the carpark. The option also minimises interference with vegetation, costly structures and dominance of more natural creek environs.

Further Considerations for Discussion

Flood Capacity

OHR is substantially on flood prone land. The existing grass surface of the School's oval retains the flood capacity and ensures no increase in stormwater. Additional paving within the floodplain is undesirable.

Best Use

What is the highest and best use of OHR? This question reflects prudent management of land by all stakeholders. OHR on its own is too constrained to be other than an access way, and is contained and surrounded within private land owned by the GOCMV and the School, and on which the School operates.

Common-sense suggests that the School and its wider community represent the best user of OHR.

Conclusion

Alphington Grammar makes a significant contribution to the community infrastructure available in Yarra City. OHR as part of the larger Alphington Grammar campus enables an effective sports area for the School's 530 student and numerous other school students in the various sporting competitions in which the School participates.

The School welcomes discussions with the Council to resolve these issues and work toward a practical and common-sense approach to the use of OHR that protects the safety and security of everyone in the community including the most vulnerable – Our Children.

Yours Sincerely

Alphington Grammar School

5	<p>Granting public access through school grounds represents a serious risk - who would be responsible for managing this risk?</p> <p>Plus the street surrounding the school are completely chaotic at drop-off/pick-up time without also creating a public thoroughfare for cyclists & walkers.</p> <p>An alternative could be an an/off ramp where the Darebin Creek trail underpasses Heidelberg Rd? This would give access to the track from either side of Heidelberg Rd (which currently doesn't exist & necessitates crossing a busy road.)</p>
6	<p>Please keep it private for the school. It is not safe to have members of the public walking through a school campus. The early years centre is just to the left of the school gate. Access to the Creek is being built from Farm Road for nearby residents.</p>
7	<p>I have very real concerns over public access through the school grounds. Surely the childrens safety needs to be the chief priority here.</p>
8	<p>If this was a public school it wouldn't be open for discussion. The school would get the rights to use the land end of story.</p> <p>The comments I have seen about this on various forums reek of racism and it's disgusting.</p> <p>There are plenty of ways to access the creek. There are other areas that I'd love to walk through for better access but I can't, so I just go around. Simple really.</p>
9	<p>This may be public land but it has direct access to a school. The safety of the children should be the ONLY consideration.</p> <p>There are plenty of paths to walk on, and this is a ridiculous proposal.</p> <p>I am a local resident and walking through this area is completely unnecessary.</p> <p>Time and money could be better spent on other things of much greater importance to the WHOLE community.</p>
10	<p>Keep as is - only Alphington Grammar School should have access. There are large groups of kids walking from the primary to secondary school buildings, and having this open to the public is a safety risk.</p>
11	<p>The land should stay with the school to help protect the safety of students rather than people passing through at all times. Plenty of other places people can access the creek.</p>
12	<p>SUBMISSION FROM ██████████ & ██████████ - PARENTS OF AN ALPHINGTON GRAMMAR SCHOOL STUDENT -</p>
13	<p>Alphington Grammar School - various letters - Principal , Head of Primary , President PFA, Chair of School Council</p>

Dear Mr Gilbert

PUBLIC ACCESS TO EASTERN PORTION OF OLD HEIDELBERG ROAD, ALPHINGTON
(YOUR REFERENCE 18,958)

SUBMISSION FROM– PARENTS OF AN ALPHINGTON GRAMMAR SCHOOL STUDENT

We refer to the consultation process regarding public access to the Eastern Portion of Old Heidelberg Road, Alphington (Road).

Background – Our Interest

Our child attends Alphington Grammar School (School) - he is currently in the Primary School, and has attended the School since his kindergarten year in 2015.

In the interests of full disclosure, we note that while xxxxx is a member of the School Council as a parent representative, we make this joint submission in our capacity solely as parents of a student at the School.

The Road and School Safety Concerns

One day in 2018 while in Grade Two our child told us that two of his classmates had encountered a stranger in the toilets of the School's Primary Building. They alerted their teacher immediately. We were obviously alarmed, as were other parents who became aware of this incident.

We subsequently came to understand that the Road is not part of the School's property, rendering it impossible for the School to appropriately secure the premises against unwanted intruders, who may potentially want to harm School students and teachers. We learned of new safety measures and training for the Primary School students that were implemented in response to the increasing safety risks posed by incidents such as this. We highlight this incident to also note our understanding that the public can, unfortunately, access School property as a result of access issues surrounding the Road.

Using the Road

We appreciate that the Council needs to undertake a public consultation process in the interests of community input and transparency.

However, given that the Darebin Bike Trail along the Yarra is separated from School property by an extremely high mesh fence, we see no valid reason why persons not on School business should need to enter the School, nor why they should have any legitimate need to access a relatively small parcel of land that is the Road.

Surely only the School's students, teachers and staff, and those connected with the School have a genuine need to walk over the Road while they go about School related business. This is really the only meaningful manner in which the Road can actually be used – ie: by those attending the School. The concept of anyone other than those on School business 'using the Road' is a misnomer, given its location within the boundaries of the School.

We have met people in social situations who have been indignant as to their inability to ride their bikes up from the Darebin Bike Trail, through the School's property and continue cycling around Alphington. They were not nearby, nor even City of Yarra, residents. We are surprised to say the least that people cannot appreciate the obvious safety risks that the School would face if the general public were able to access the School's

	<p>property from the Bike trail. This would seem to be an inevitable longer term consequence of the Council accommodating the complaints of residents wanting greater access to the Road. As parents, we are extremely concerned as to the prospect of any increased public access to the School's property and facilities as an outcome of this consultation process.</p> <p>We urge the Council to take the safety needs of the School's students, staff, parents and wider School community seriously – surely these needs should prevail over the desires of nearby residents to walk over a small parcel of land that is bounded by the School, does not lead anywhere and cannot be used in any meaningful way that is not connected in some way to the School.</p>
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