
From: Rebuild Subcommittee
Sent: Tuesday, 14 June 2022 6:56 PM
To: Portfolio Committee 3
Subject: Re: Planning and delivery of school infrastructure in New South Wales - Post hearing responses - 25 May 2022

Categories: Laura

Hi Laura,

I can confirm the transcript is correct. Please refer to the answers below for the questions taken on notice and some additional information.

Question 1

The CHAIR: What's their general vintage and design, if you could describe them to us, other than old? If they're not 100 years old, what period do they come from and what makes the 16 classrooms inadequate?

STUART HERRING: I'll take those questions separately. The first one, there are about five or six that would definitely be considered heritage listed. I can get back to you later with the period. In terms of what makes them inadequate, the key is a lack of breakout spaces. For where we have learning support, in some instances that has to happen out in the corridor or out in the open, exposed to others and to the elements. The other one is size and space, and a lack of other things, such as storage and wet areas, that teachers value.

Response 1

- One of the buildings dates back to the original school (100 years old). My understanding is there have been fires that have impacted these buildings throughout history, aspects of the buildings still date back to the original building. In this building there are circa 6 classrooms which need to be modernised internally. Key issues are size, lack of wet areas, appropriate breakout learning spaces, lack of heating / cooling and general maintenance (floors / lighting).
- Two other buildings would be from the 70s. These are two story solid concrete / brick buildings, one of which houses the library and one which houses 12 classrooms. The classrooms suffer from terrible acoustics / noise issues, lack of heating / cooling, lack of breakout learning spaces, lack of wet areas, outdated toilets, old carpets. They also suffered from mold, however this is hopefully rectified through the recent replacement of the roof. Through our lobbying we have had support to update the carpets, lighting and toilets in these buildings and the potential to find a solution to the lack of wet areas (yet to be confirmed).
- The other permanent buildings are the administration building, a hall and a more modern classroom (last 10 years) which houses two classrooms of a high standard though also lack cooling / heating. While the school has now outgrown the size of the hall, it is otherwise adequate.
- The remaining buildings are 8 demountables which take up valuable space.

Question 2

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: What role did parents have in the rezoning process?

STUART HERRING: I am not aware. It was a decision that came out just as my kids were starting at the school, so I was not a part of it. I don't know. I can try to ask and come back to you.

Response 2

The parents were not engaged in the rezoning process.

Question 3

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: It's correct to say that it was the department that suggested that a rebuild was necessary in the first instance. It wasn't something that the school community had said, "No. This school is just not working anymore. We need to rebuild it." The department had reached this conclusion and planted the idea that the rebuild was appropriate with the school community. Is that a correct assessment of how it unfolded?

STUART HERRING: I can't confirm that. I'd have to go and explore and ask

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: I'm happy for you to take it on notice if you want to have a look and see if you can provide a bit of detail about whether the department

STUART HERRING: Yes.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: I suppose what I'm getting at is whether the department initially raised the expectations that a rebuild is the solution and then changed its mind, or whether this is something that had been generated by the community against resistance from the department and finally they relented, and then they've backed down. If you could perhaps provide on notice some more detail about this.

Reponse 3

After discussion with former P&C members and the school Principal, my understanding is that the Department of Education engaged the school to progress a rebuild. Apparently it had been rumored for some time that a rebuild was likely to happen, which was much needed, particularly given the sharp rise in enrollments, the focus on Dee Why as a strategic centre for population growth, the limited green space, the increasing demountables on site and the state of some of the facilities. As such it was very disappointing to be told by Schools Infrastructure that we did not require a rebuild with very limited detail as to why nor how the Department of Education would address the issues.

Additional Information

It is worth noting that while the school was being considered for a rebuild, they were deemed ineligible to apply for initiatives such as the cooler classrooms program and solar due. Having missed out on the rebuild, we are now unfortunately unable to apply to these programs as they are now closed. These would have been valuable additions that would have had a real benefit for the school - particularly for the classrooms that sit in a block that suffers from poor acoustics. Despite the heat, the teachers often need to keep the doors shut to deal with the noise. This further highlights the need for investment to be available to establish a plan of action for schools that have been reviewed but not selected for rebuild to help address issues in more tactical way or to account for missed opportunities. While we are now receiving some investment in upgrades to toilet facilities, roofs and the administration wing, it can also be argued that these are long overdue maintenance works that have been delayed due to the potential rebuild. Despite these investments, we are still unable to apply for airconditioning or solar.

kind regards,
Stu Herring