

**Submission
No 32**

INQUIRY INTO CLOSURE OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Organisation: The NSW Primary Principals' Association Inc (NSWPPA)

Date received: 12/08/2015

NSW Primary Principals' Association Inc Submission to the NSW Legislative Council **Select Committee on the Closure of Public Schools**

Inquiry into the closure of public schools in New South Wales

Introduction

The NSW Primary Principals' Association Inc (NSWPPA) is a professional association for Primary Principals of Public Schools throughout New South Wales with a membership of nearly 1800 Principals.

This submission summarizes the position of the NSWPPA and is consistent with the Association's views and opinions on the subject of this inquiry, as discussed at local Area and State Council Meetings.

This submission is authorized by Mr. Geoff Scott, President of the NSWPPA.

Contact:

Geoff Scott (NSWPPA President)

NSWPPA Office: UTS Room 5.483 Building 10 Broadway Campus

Postal Address: P.O. Box 810 Surry Hills NSW 2010

Submission

The NSW Primary Principals' Association (NSWPPA) recognises that, as part of the process of educational provision for students across the State, regular monitoring by the Department of Education (DoE) of enrolment trends, informs both the State Government and the DoE's planning, to provide local schools in sufficient numbers and of appropriate size to cater for all students presenting for enrolment. The NSWPPA also acknowledges that when significant population changes occur, local schools expand and contract their number of teachers and learning spaces to accommodate these changes. When the student population changes are significant and likely to be long-term, new schools have to be built in high-growth areas and some schools have to be placed in recess, or closed, when there is little or no likelihood of enrolment growth and there are alternative schools for students to attend.

The NSWPPA has participated in consultative meetings with DoE officers about school viability and educational provision on a regular basis, over many years. The Association appointed a number of member Principals in leadership positions within the NSWPPA, to form a Standing Committee on School Viability and Educational Provision. This Standing Committee and members of the Association's State Executive, discussed with our colleagues of the NSW Secondary Principals' Council, the need to ensure consistency and transparency in decision-making by the DoE, particularly when consideration was being given to closing a school, or placing a school into recess.

As the majority of schools affected by potential closure are small Primary Schools, the NSWPPA took most of the 'running' on this matter and met with senior DoE officers in 2013 with a view to producing a set of protocols that could be used by Principals and their Directors, as a basis for a consistent approach both to determining school viability and to communications with local communities. These protocols entitled ***'Protocols for schools where recess, closure, amalgamation or other educational provision models are to be considered'*** were confirmed for use by the DoE during 2014 and their implementation supported by the NSWPPA. The protocols have been distributed to all NSWPPA Principals by the Association and are also accessed through the DoE by Directors and are available for local communities to discuss when relevant.

The protocols are currently being implemented and an open and transparent process is in place. Senior DoE officers, Directors and Principals have also evaluated the protocols, the chronology of actions and personnel involved and some minor modifications have been, and will continue to be, implemented to ensure the procedures work as effectively as possible.