

**Submission
No 35**

INQUIRY INTO CLOSURE OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Organisation: NSW Government

Date received: 10/08/2015

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE CLOSURE OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Department of Education Submission, August 2015

Introduction

Since the beginning of government schooling in New South Wales in 1848 more than 7,400 schools have opened and more than 5,000 have closed, reflecting the state's dynamic demographic trends.

The Minister may close a school provided it is in accordance with Section 28 of *The Education Act 1990* (the Act).

In most cases public schools are approved to close when the majority of the parents of children attending the school agree to the closure. Recommendations about school closure, recess or amalgamation are made on the basis of what is in the best educational interests of the students. This could include access to curriculum offerings, performing arts and sporting opportunities.

The Department of Education (the Department) has protocols to guide consultation and provide for parents, staff and community engagement when a school's future educational provision is being considered.

Between 2000 and 2015, 83 schools have closed.

In the last 12 months, seven new public schools have opened with capacity to accommodate over 4,000 students, 20 public schools have been approved for closure and two public schools have been placed in recess. Of the 20 schools closed, five schools had no student enrolments when they ceased operations.

This submission provides the Department's response to each of the terms of the reference of the Legislative Council Select Committee on the Closure of Public Schools.

(a) The actual or potential closure or recess process for identified schools

The current status of each of the ten public schools listed in the Inquiry's terms of reference is provided in the table below. Detailed information on the process for each school is provided at TAB A.

School	Status	Date	Student enrolment when operations ceased
(i) Martins Creek Public School	Open	Approved to close at the end of Term 4 2015	
(ii) Wollombi Public School	Closed	Closed at the end of 2014	5
(iii) Pearces Creek Public School	Closed	Placed in recess in 2009 Closed at the end of 2014	4
(iv) Eraring Public School	Closed	Closed at the end of 2014	11
(v) Ellangowan Public School	Closed	Closed at the end of 2014	3
(vi) Wollar Public School	Open	Current operation continuing	
(vii) Bellimbopinni Public School	Closed	Closed at the end of Term 4 2014	5
(viii) Bylong Upper Public School	Open	Placed in recess at the end of 2014 Approved to close at the end of Term 3 2015	
(ix) Blackville Public School	Open	Current operation continuing	
(x) Rouchel Public School	Closed	Closed at the end of 2014	5

As at the 16 July 2015, 11 rural public schools additional to those listed in TAB A have closed and two have been placed in recess in the previous 12 months. The status of each of these is provided in the table below. Detailed information on the process for schools that closed and in recess is provided at TAB B.

Note for the purposes of this submission 'rural' schools have been defined as those schools that are in the 'remote, very remote and outer provincial areas' categories as used in the MCEETYA (Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs) Geographical Location Classification. This is a standardised, national educational definition.

School	Status	Date	Student enrolment when operations ceased
Sutton Forest Public School	Closed	Closed at the end of 2014	12
Badgery's Creek public School	Closed	Closed at the end of 2014	8
Crowdy Head Public School	Closed	Closed at the end of 2014	8
Spencer Public School	Closed	Closed in March 2015	2
Corinella Public School	Closed	Closed at the end of 2014	7
Milbrulong Public School	Closed	Placed in recess in 2013 Closed at the end of 2014	0
Reids Flat Public School	Closed	Placed in recess in 2013 Closed at the end of 2014	0
Windeyer Public School	Closed	Placed in recess in 2012 Closed at the end of 2014	0
Errowanbang Public School	Closed	Closed at the end of 2014	7
George Anderson Walpole School for Specific Purposes	Closed	Closed in June 2015	0
Bibbenluke Public School	Closed	Closed in July 2015	3
Tulloona Public School	In recess	Placed in recess from Term 2, 2015 No current enrolments – ascertaining future enrolments	0
Murrami Public School	In recess	Placed in recess from start of Term 1, 2015 No current enrolments – ascertaining future enrolments	0

Quandialla Central School, Euchareena Public School, Wyangala Public School and Numeralla Public School have begun the local consultation process (as of 16 July 2015).

(b) The processes, policies, procedures, accountability and decision making surrounding the closure of schools in New South Wales

Section 19 of the Act outlines the Minister's various functions, which include the function to establish and supervise the operation of government schools. Section 28 of the Act deals with school closures and anticipates two separate regimes for closing a school:

- Procedures described in Section 28 (1) – (9)
- A separate process for those schools described in Section 28(10)(a) – (c).

Procedures described in Section 28 (1) – (9)

Since 2011, no public schools have been closed using the procedures outlined in Section 28(1) – (9) of the Act

1. The Minister may close a government school, but only in accordance with this section.
2. The Minister is to announce by 15 June in each year, the schools that the Minister proposes to close. Any such schools are not to be closed until the end of the following year.
3. Within 21 days of any such announcement, the Minister is to establish a School Closures Review Committee and notify in writing the Principal and President of the

- legally constituted parents organisation of each school concerned of that decision.
4. The School Closures Review Committee is to review and make recommendations to the Minister concerning the closure of a school if the majority of the parents of the children attending the school have, within 21 days of an announcement under subsection (2), submitted a request in writing to the Minister that a review of its closure be undertaken.
 5. The School Closures Review Committee is to comprise:
 - a) an independent person appointed by the Minister, who is to chair the Committee,
 - b) the Secretary or nominee of the Secretary,
 - c) a nominee of the Local Government Association of New South Wales,
 - d) a nominee of the Federation of Parents' and Citizens Associations,
 - e) a nominee of the Secretary who is, in the opinion of the Secretary, a senior member of staff of the Department,
 - f) a nominee of the New South Wales Teachers Federation, and
 - g) a nominee of the Minister.
 6. In conducting a review, the Committee:
 - a) is to call for submissions and seek expert demographic and educational advice for both the present and future use of the school, and
 - b) is to seek out and have regard to the views of teachers, local communities and parents of the children attending the schools whose proposed closure is being reviewed, and
 - c) is required to meet with representatives of those teachers, local communities and parents.
 7. In making any recommendations concerning the closure of a school, the Committee is to have regard primarily to the educational needs of the local community concerned and of the State.
 8. The Committee is to report to the Minister by 30 September of the year in which it is established.
 9. If the Minister does not accept any recommendation of the Committee, the Minister is to make public within 21 days the reasons for the decision.

Procedures described in Section 28(10)(a) – (c)

There is a separate process described in Section 28(10)(a) – (c) for:

- a) a one-teacher school, or
- b) those schools where the majority of the parents of children attending the school approve of the closure, or
- c) those schools where the Minister is satisfied there are exceptional or emergency circumstances which require an earlier closure of the school.

The majority of public schools are approved to close under Section 28(10)(b) when the majority of the parents of children attending the school agree to the closure.

The Department has protocols to guide consultation and provide for parents, staff and community engagement when a school's future educational provision is being considered under the considerations outlined in Section 28(10). The Department's *Protocols for schools where recess, closure, amalgamation or other educational provision models are to be considered* is provided at TAB C.

Consultation processes for schools where recess, closure or amalgamations are under consideration for schools within the ambit of section 28(10) of the Act

A public school may be placed in recess, closed or amalgamated where there are questions as to the school's ongoing viability where different local circumstances result in declining enrolments.

In school communities where these questions or circumstances arise, local Directors Public Schools lead a local consultation process that engages parents, staff and local community

members and allows school communities to consider options for the school's future educational provision.

This is a locally driven process. While there are no set timeframes, in general consultation is conducted and an agreement reached within a 12 month period.

The main steps in the process are as follows:

1. The local Director Public Schools and the Principal identify and monitor declining enrolment trends and discuss options for the future delivery of education at the school. These discussions focus attention on what is best for the students enrolled and look at possible causes and solutions.
2. Following these discussions, if the Director or the Principal believe a broader school community consultation is warranted to explore options for future educational provision, the Executive Director, Public Schools seeks approval from the Deputy Secretary, School Operations and Performance to proceed with a local consultation process.
3. If local consultation is approved and there are students still enrolled, a School Consultative Group is formed, consisting of the local Director, the affected Principal(s), a Principal representing their Professional Association, a P&C association or parent representative, a local NSW Teachers Federation Organiser and Departmental officer(s) to provide advice to the group if required.
4. The School Consultative Group arranges meetings and other communications with school staff, parents and the wider school community and considers:
 - demographic data, enrolment trends and reasons for these trends
 - the school's history and traditions and its broader role within the local community
 - options for the school's future including other delivery models and capacity in nearby schools
 - the opportunities for students in nearby larger schools that may not be available in the school, including curriculum offerings, performing arts and sporting options
 - the availability of alternate transport routes, including travel time and the condition of local roads
 - options for the future of the school's assets, equipment and memorabilia.
5. If the outcome of the local consultation process is that the majority of parents of students at the school agree to proceed to close the school, recommendations are made to the Deputy Secretary, School Operations and Performance, for the Minister's approval.
6. The Department then seeks approval from the Minister to close the school, relying on the Minister's powers under Section 28 of the Act.
7. Once the Minister approves the recommendation to close the school, the Director in consultation with the School Consultative Group, develops an implementation plan to ensure all preparations are in place for the closure of the school and transition to the new educational provision. This will include planning for:
 - the educational and welfare needs of remaining students, including uniforms and transport
 - the relocation of permanent staff, including the provision of staff support
 - the availability of counselling support, if required
 - communication within the local community with local councils, police, businesses and sporting providers, for example, and notification to the school's cleaning contractor
 - the management of the school's assets and resources such as furniture, technology, equipment, utilities, records and memorabilia
 - condition assessment and completion of any work required at the nearby schools to accommodate the incoming students.

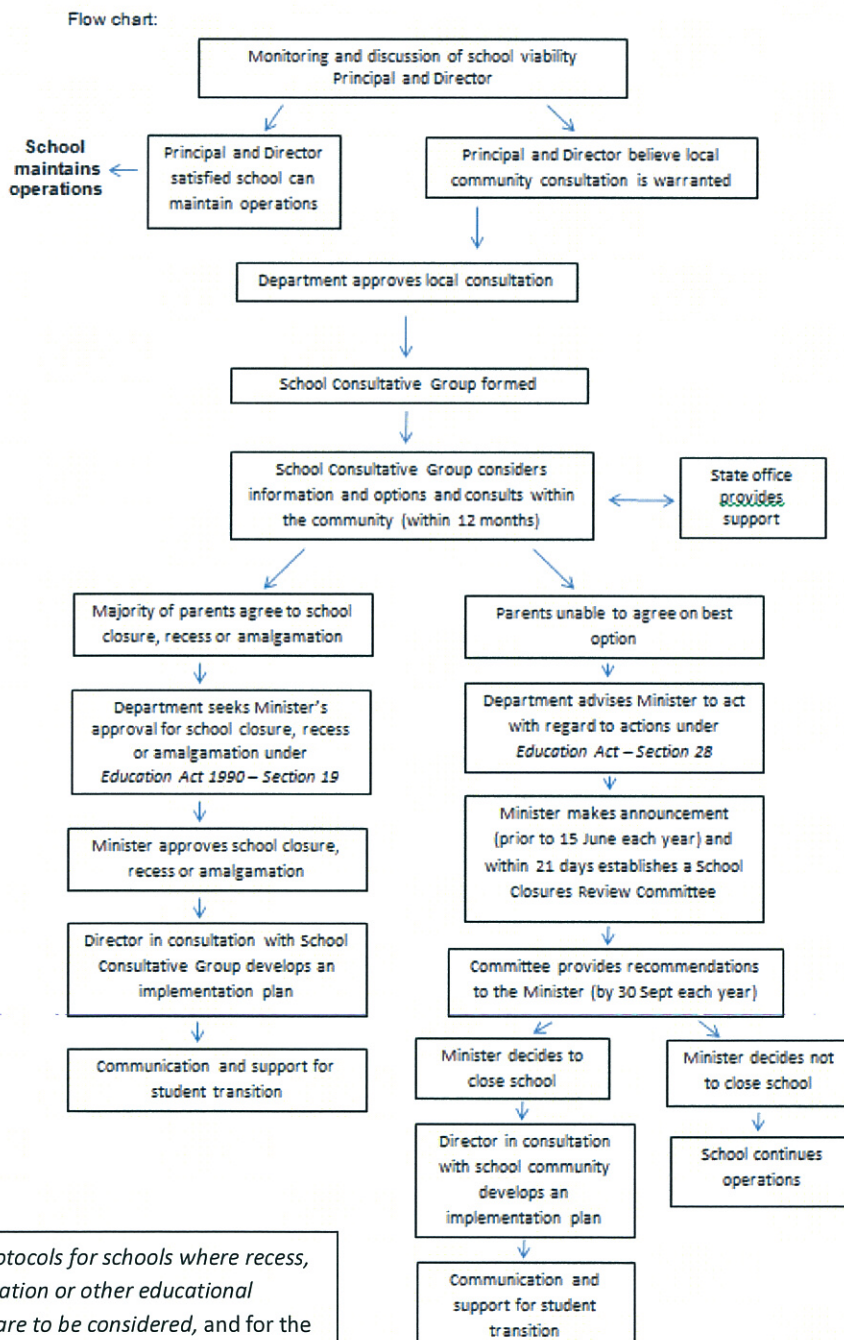
In some instances where local consultation suggests that enrolments trends, although declining may increase in future years, a recommendation is made to place the school in

recess rather than close it. In this case, permanent staff are transferred and the school becomes non-operational. Directors Public Schools continue to monitor local conditions when a school is placed in recess. A school placed in recess could become operational again if local demographic circumstances change.

If there is no agreement from the majority of parents to close the school, the Department can:

- continue to maintain operations at the school
- request that the Minister, in accordance with the procedures provided for under Section 28(1) – (9) of the Act, announce the school is closing and establish a School Closure Review Committee to make recommendations.

The flow chart outlines these key steps.



Adapted from: *Protocols for schools where recess, closure, amalgamation or other educational provision models are to be considered*, and for the purpose of this submission.

(c) Factors considered in determining the suitability of alternative schools in the case of a closure

Many factors are considered by the local consultation process when determining the suitability of alternative nearby schools. These considerations are reflective of local circumstances, but will typically include:

- the size of nearby schools and their capacity to grow
- the distance and travel times from one school to the next
- transport options including the conditions of local roads, existing and proposed bus routes
- provision for students with high or additional needs, if required
- the distribution of the local school's resources and equipment to nearby schools.
- in the case of the amalgamation of a number of school sites, the educational benefits for students being part of a larger peer group and school setting.

The principals of nearby schools or impacted schools are also members of the School Consultative Group to ensure that nearby school suitability is a key part of the consultative process. Principals of nearby schools communicate changes at their school to their school communities.

Some school communities decide that an amalgamation with a nearby school is the best outcome for students. In the case of Wyong and Wyong Grove public schools, the two school communities saw a number of benefits in amalgamation:

- greater choice in class structures
- additional executive entitlement
- greater opportunities to interact and socialise with same-aged children
- pooling of resources to enhance learning opportunities.

(d) The transparency of the consultation process surrounding school closures for schools within the ambit of Section 28(10) of the Act

The Department is committed to genuine engagement and consultation with transparent and effective processes.

The processes outlined above are detailed in the *Protocols for schools where recess, closure, amalgamation or other educational provision models are to be considered* (provided at TAB C). The protocols were co-developed by the Department, the NSW Secondary Principals Council and the NSW Primary Principals Association to ensure the consistency and transparency of the processes that provide for parent, staff and community engagement when a school's future educational provision is being considered. This included consultation with the New South Wales Teachers Federation.

The protocols are available to the School Consultative Group so that effective procedures are known and understood by all involved.

While the Department takes intensive steps to listen to and address the concerns raised by parents and carers throughout the local consultation process, the decision to close a school is not always consensual. Students, parents, caregivers and community members are able to raise concerns, grievances and complaints and have them resolved in an impartial, prompt and just manner.

The Department's *Complaints Handling Policy (2007)* can be used to respond to community concerns as a result of the local consultation process. Complainants can also seek an external review of the Department's management of complaints from agencies such as the NSW Ombudsman's Office.

(e) The impact on the local school communities affected by school closures

The potential impact on a community as a result of a school's closure is considered in the local consultative process conducted by the School Consultative Group.

Decisions are made on the basis of what is in the best interests of the students. In each case the educational needs of all students have been carefully considered. It is these considerations that drive decision making.

(f) The role of cost-benefit analyses in the closure process if applicable

The educational benefit for students underpins recommendations made.

(g) Any other related matter

Nil

1. (a) (i-x) Specific schools TAB A

SCHOOL	Martins Creek Public School (P6 1 - 25 students enrolled)	NETWORK	Maitland														
Local consultation	<p>A School Consultative Group was formed in November 2013 to examine the educational provision at Martins Creek Public School, enrolment trends and to enable the school community to ask questions and voice any concerns. Consultation included a school community meeting attended by one parent, individual meetings and consideration of 17 written submissions.</p> <p>Many families who reside in the Martins Creek catchment area had already chosen to send their children to nearby schools citing access to broader educational and social benefits in larger school settings.</p> <p>Opposition to the closure of the school is centred on the additional support needs of one student. Specialist advice recommends that a carefully structured and managed transition plan be implemented for the student in transferring to a larger school, which the Department strongly supports.</p> <p>These concerns were the basis of complaints managed in line with the Department's Complaints Handling Policy and The NSW Ombudsman's Office.</p>																
Enrolment trends	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>2010</td> <td>2011</td> <td>2012</td> <td>2013</td> <td>2014</td> <td>2015</td> <td>2016</td> </tr> <tr> <td>14</td> <td>17</td> <td>17</td> <td>6</td> <td>6</td> <td>6</td> <td>0</td> </tr> </table>	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	14	17	17	6	6	6	0		
2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016											
14	17	17	6	6	6	0											
Other schools nearby	<p>Vacy Public School and Paterson Public School are 7.4 kilometres and 9.2 kilometres respectively from Martins Creek. Both schools have the capacity to make accommodations and adjustments to cater for the needs of all students at Martins Creek Public School. There are existing school bus services operating between Martins Creek and both schools, and impacted students are eligible for free bus travel. Enrolment transition to Vacy Public School, Paterson Public School or other schools will be supported by an individual case management approach. This will include financial assistance to purchase new uniforms for those transitioning to public schools.</p>																
Outcome	<p>In December 2014 the Minister approved the closure of Martins Creek Public School to take place at the end of the 2015 school year.</p>																
Status	<p>Martins Creek Public School will close at the end of the 2015 school year. The principal is currently waiting for parents to indicate the school that their children will be enrolled in for 2016. Transition plans will be initiated as soon as the schools are identified.</p>																

1. (a) (i-x) Specific schools TAB A

SCHOOL	Wollombi Public School (P6 1 - 25 students enrolled)	NETWORK	Hunter														
Local consultation	<p>A School Consultative Group was established on 20 March 2014 to consider how best to meet the educational needs of students at Wollombi Public School. This included examining the educational provision at the school, enrolment trends and to enable the school community to ask questions and voice any concerns. The School Consultative Group met on 13 occasions including individual meetings, Parents and Citizens' Association meetings and community meetings. The group also considered written submissions and an open response survey which attracted 49 respondents.</p> <p>Concerns were raised in relation to the proposed closure of the school by a number of residents from the Wollombi village area, many of whom did not have school aged children. These concerns were the basis of complaints managed in line with the Department's Complaints Handling Policy.</p>																
Enrolment trends	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>2010</td> <td>2011</td> <td>2012</td> <td>2013</td> <td>2014</td> <td>2015</td> <td>2016</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5</td> <td>11</td> <td>6</td> <td>6</td> <td>5</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> </tr> </table>	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	5	11	6	6	5	0	0		
2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016											
5	11	6	6	5	0	0											
Other schools nearby	<p>Laguna Public School, eight kilometres from Wollombi had the capacity to accommodate and cater to the needs of all students. Transition to Laguna Public School was supported by an individual case management approach which included financial assistance to purchase new uniforms for those transitioning to other public schools. For the students who transferred to Laguna Public School parents were eligible for the private vehicle conveyance subsidy.</p>																
Outcome	<p>In November 2014 the Minister approved the closure of Wollombi Public School.</p>																
Status	<p>Wollombi Public School closed at the end of the 2014 school year. Students successfully transitioned to Laguna Public School. One family chose to enrol at a non-government school setting and declined the offer of individual case management.</p>																

1. (a) (i-x) Specific schools TAB A

SCHOOL	Pearces Creek Public School (P6 1 - 25 students enrolled)	NETWORK	Richmond Valley																
Local consultation	<p>On 21 August and 12 December 2008 the school's staff met with parents to discuss concerns about the students' social and academic progress within a small cohort. Based on this information some parents, supported by Department staff, elected to transition their children to other schools.</p> <p>The 2009 school year started with four enrolments. Demographic data at the time indicated that there were no projected increases in enrolments. At a parent meeting on 6 February 2009 it was announced that the school would be placed in recess in March 2009. Any changes in local demographics would be monitored throughout the remainder of the year.</p> <p>All staff were appointed substantively to nearby schools. Resources and support were provided for the transition of all students.</p>																		
Enrolment trends	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>2002</td> <td>2003</td> <td>2004</td> <td>2005</td> <td>2006</td> <td>2007</td> <td>2008</td> <td>2009</td> </tr> <tr> <td>24</td> <td>30</td> <td>34</td> <td>34</td> <td>24</td> <td>20</td> <td>8</td> <td>4</td> </tr> </table>	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	24	30	34	34	24	20	8	4		
2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009												
24	30	34	34	24	20	8	4												
Other schools nearby	<p>Alstonville Public School, Wollongbar Public School and Teven-Tintenbar Public School are 9.5 kilometres, 11.7 kilometres and 9.8 kilometres respectively, from Pearce's Creek. Capacity existed in these nearby larger schools. The local bus service provided transport from Pearces Creek to these other schools.</p>																		
Outcome	<p>In March 2009 the school was placed in recess.</p>																		
Status	<p>In October 2014 the Minister approved the closure of Pearces Creek Public School. Students had successfully transitioned to Alstonville, Wollongbar and Teven-Tintenbar Public Schools in 2009.</p>																		

1. (a) (i-x) Specific schools TAB A

SCHOOL	Eraring Public School (P6 1 - 25 students enrolled)	NETWORK	Lake Macquarie West														
Local consultation	<p>Given falling enrolments in September 2013 the Principal at the school raised concerns with the Director Public Schools NSW about the long term viability of the school.</p> <p>In October 2014 the Director Public Schools NSW was informed by the Relieving Principal that no students would be at the school at the beginning of 2015. Subsequently the Director contacted all parents to confirm this and offer assistance with transition of students to alternative schools.</p> <p>In December 2014 the Director Public Schools NSW in conjunction with the Eraring Parents and Citizens' Association held a meeting where advice and arrangements for recommendation of the school's closure were discussed.</p>																
Enrolment trends		<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>2010</th> <th>2011</th> <th>2012</th> <th>2013</th> <th>2014</th> <th>2015</th> <th>2016</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>31</td> <td>36</td> <td>35</td> <td>35</td> <td>11</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	31	36	35	35	11	0	0	
2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016											
31	36	35	35	11	0	0											
Other schools nearby	<p>At the end of 2014 of the four remaining students attending Eraring Public School none resided in the school's catchment area. These students travelled from Dora Creek, Cooranbong and Bonnells Bay. One of the students would commence secondary school in 2015. The parents of the remaining three students indicated that one student would attend Dora Creek Public School, 4.5 kilometres from Eraring; one student would attend Arcadia Vale Public School, 9.3 kilometres from Eraring; and one student would attend Cooranbong Public School, 10.4 kilometres from Eraring.</p> <p>The Department supported students with their transition to nearby Dora Creek, Arcadia Vale and Cooranbong Public Schools using an individual case management approach. This included financial assistance for school uniforms. Families accessed an existing free school bus service where available; the private vehicle conveyancing subsidy was also available.</p>																
Outcome	In December 2014 the Minister approved the closure of Eraring Public School.																
Status	Eraring Public School closed at the end of the 2014 school year. The students successfully transitioned to secondary school, Dora Creek, Arcadia Vale and Cooranbong Public Schools.																

1. (a) (i-x) Specific schools TAB A

SCHOOL	Ellangowan Public School (P6 1 - 25 students enrolled)	NETWORK	Clarence Valley												
Local consultation	<p>In 2012 and 2013 a number of meetings were held to inform the school community of concerns in regard to the school's declining enrolments.</p> <p>In 2014 a School Consultative Group was established. At the time a number of students in the local area were bypassing the local school and attending larger nearby schools, using existing bus services. It was agreed to continue community consultation with the view to recommend closing the school and initiating student transitions to nearby schools.</p> <p>On 20 February 2014 the Director Public Schools NSW met with the school's staff and parents. In light of the further reductions in student enrolments it was agreed the school community would recommend closure at the end of 2014.</p>														
Enrolment trends	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>2010</td> <td>2011</td> <td>2012</td> <td>2013</td> <td>2014</td> <td>2015</td> </tr> <tr> <td>26</td> <td>16</td> <td>11</td> <td>14</td> <td>3</td> <td>0</td> </tr> </table>	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	26	16	11	14	3	0		
2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015										
26	16	11	14	3	0										
Other schools nearby	<p>Schools in Casino and Coraki, located 18 and 20 kilometres respectively from Ellangowan were already catering for students living in the Ellangowan area. School bus services were available from Ellangowan to schools located in Casino and Coraki and for students travelling to Evans River. The Department supported students transitioning to their new schools using an individual case management approach. This included financial assistance to purchase new uniforms for those transitioning to public schools.</p>														
Outcome	<p>In September 2014 the Minister approved the closure of Ellangowan Public School.</p>														
Status	<p>Ellangowan Public School closed at the end of 2014 school year. Students successfully transitioned to Casino, Coraki and Evans River Public Schools.</p>														

1. (a) (i-x) Specific schools TAB A

SCHOOL	Wollar Public School (P6 1-25 students enrolled)	NETWORK	Wollemi														
Local consultation	<p>Enrolments at Wollar Public School had been below ten since 2011, with further declining numbers. Consultation with the community began in September 2013. Options were explored for the future delivery of education for students at Wollar Public School.</p> <p>In late 2014 and early 2015 enrolments increased at the school.</p>																
Enrolment trends	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>2010</td> <td>2011</td> <td>2012</td> <td>2013</td> <td>2014</td> <td>2015</td> <td>2016</td> </tr> <tr> <td>16</td> <td>9</td> <td>12</td> <td>5</td> <td>5</td> <td>8</td> <td>8</td> </tr> </table>	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	16	9	12	5	5	8	8		
2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016											
16	9	12	5	5	8	8											
Other schools nearby	<p>Wollar is 50 kilometres from Mudgee Public School and 51 kilometres from Cudgong Valley Public School. Bus travel for students would be long, with the school bus leaving Wollar at approximately 7.30am and returning at 4.30pm. Ulan Public School is 28 kilometres from Wollar, however there is no bus service from Wollar and travel is on an unsealed road.</p>																
Outcome	<p>A local decision to maintain the current educational provision at Wollar Public School was made due to a small increase in enrolments.</p>																
Status	<p>Maintain current educational provision at Wollar Public School. Enrolments will continue to be monitored.</p>																

1. (a) (i-x) Specific schools TAB A

SCHOOL	Bellimbopinni Public School (P6 1 - 25 students enrolled)	NETWORK	Mid North Coast														
Local consultation	<p>In 2013 the Principal raised concerns with the school community about declining enrolments and the school's sustainability, given the decline in current and projected enrolments.</p> <p>A School Consultative Group was formed in February 2014 to consider the school's future and the impact of any changes on students, staff and the community. The community strongly agreed that students would have a greater opportunity to experience the skills and talents of different teachers, extended contact with a broader range of students and more extensive extra-curriculum provision if they attended a larger school.</p>																
Enrolment trends	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>2010</td> <td>2011</td> <td>2012</td> <td>2013</td> <td>2014</td> <td>2015</td> <td>2016</td> </tr> <tr> <td>21</td> <td>21</td> <td>17</td> <td>11</td> <td>5</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> </tr> </table>	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	21	21	17	11	5	0	0		
2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016											
21	21	17	11	5	0	0											
Other schools nearby	<p>Bellimbopinni Public School is 12.4 kilometres from Smithtown Public School and 14.4 kilometres from Gladstone Public School.</p> <p>Two students would be transitioning to secondary schools in 2015. Two students transitioned to Smithtown Public School and one to Gladstone Public School. Both schools are a ten minute drive from Bellimbopinni Public School. Bus companies that served Bellimbopinni Public School were available to transport students to other nearby schools. The Department supported students transitioning to their new schools using an individual case management approach. This included financial assistance to purchase new school uniforms for those moving to a new public school.</p>																
Outcome	<p>In September 2014 the Minister approved the closure of Bellimbopinni Public School.</p>																
Status	<p>Bellimbopinni Public School closed at the end of 2014 school year. Students successfully transitioned to secondary school, Smithtown or Gladstone Public Schools.</p>																

1. (a) (i-x) Specific schools TAB A

SCHOOL	Bylong Upper Public School (P6 1 - 25 students enrolled)	NETWORK	Wollemi				
Local consultation	<p>In Term 4 2014, the school's Relieving Principal was informed by families who had children at Bylong Upper Public School that they intended to move their children to other schools at the end of 2014. With no student enrolments anticipated for 2015 and no future enrolments predicted, Bylong Upper Public School was placed into recess at the end of 2014.</p> <p>Further consultation between the Director Public Schools NSW and a representative of the community of Bylong took place on 18 March 2015. On 19 May 2015, a community meeting was held at the school and attended by four people. The meeting confirmed that there were no future enrolments and it was agreed to recommend that the school be closed.</p>						
Enrolment trends	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
	7	5	4	5	6	0	0
Other schools nearby	<p>Students who attended Bylong Upper Public School in 2014 are now attending Merriwa Central School, Rylstone Public School and Wollar Public School. These schools are 98.7 kilometres, 52.6 kilometres and 28.1 kilometres respectively from Bylong Upper. The students transferring to Merriwa Central School and Rylstone Public School were able to access the existing bus service. Enrolment transition was supported using an individual case management approach. This included the option for financial assistance to purchase new uniforms for students transferring to a public school.</p>						
Outcome	<p>In July 2015 the Minister approved the closure of Bylong Upper Public School to take place at the end of Term 3 2015.</p>						
Status	<p>All students have transferred successfully to Merriwa Central School, Rylstone or Wollar Public Schools.</p>						

1. (a) (i-x) Specific schools TAB A

SCHOOL	Blackville Public School (P6 1 - 25 students enrolled)	NETWORK	Wollemi														
Local Consultation	<p>At the beginning of Term 3, 2013 the Relieving Principal at Blackville Public School informed the Acting Director Public Schools NSW that there were no longer any students enrolled at the school.</p> <p>The Acting Director Public Schools NSW arranged a community meeting for the following week to discuss the school's future educational provision. Thirty community members attended. Prior to the meeting being held two students enrolled at the school and another five students enrolled at the school soon after.</p> <p>At the end of Term 2, 2015 there were seven students enrolled.</p>																
	<table border="1"> <tr> <td data-bbox="655 1503 711 1733">2010</td> <td data-bbox="655 1279 711 1503">2011</td> <td data-bbox="655 1055 711 1279">2012</td> <td data-bbox="655 831 711 1055">2013</td> <td data-bbox="655 607 711 831">2014</td> <td data-bbox="655 383 711 607">2015</td> <td data-bbox="655 154 711 383">2016</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="711 1503 767 1733">11</td> <td data-bbox="711 1279 767 1503">8</td> <td data-bbox="711 1055 767 1279">11</td> <td data-bbox="711 831 767 1055">4</td> <td data-bbox="711 607 767 831">2</td> <td data-bbox="711 383 767 607">7</td> <td data-bbox="711 154 767 383">8</td> </tr> </table>	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	11	8	11	4	2	7	8		
2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016											
11	8	11	4	2	7	8											
Other schools nearby	Blackville is 51 kilometres from Premier Public School, 57 kilometres from Quirindi Public School and 62 kilometres from Willow Tree Public School.																
Outcome	A local decision to maintain the current educational provision at Blackville Public School was made due to increased enrolments.																
Status	Maintain current educational provision at Blackville Public School. Enrolments will continue to be monitored.																

1. (a) (i-x) Specific schools TAB A

SCHOOL	Rouchel Public School (P6 1 - 25 students enrolled)	NETWORK	Wollemi														
Local consultation	<p>In Term 2 2014 the Relieving Principal was informed by the two families whose children were enrolled at Rouchel Public School that both families intended to enrol their children at Aberdeen Public School.</p> <p>A School Consultative Group which included the two families whose children were enrolled at the school, was established in July 2014. No concerns were raised by parents who had already decided that Aberdeen Public School was a more suitable school for their children.</p>																
Enrolment trends	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>2010</td> <td>2011</td> <td>2012</td> <td>2013</td> <td>2014</td> <td>2015</td> <td>2016</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5</td> <td>7</td> <td>7</td> <td>8</td> <td>5</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> </tr> </table>	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	5	7	7	8	5	0	0		
2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016											
5	7	7	8	5	0	0											
Other schools nearby	<p>The families enrolled their children at Aberdeen Public School, a larger primary school 25 kilometres from Rouchel. An existing bus service runs between Rouchel and Aberdeen. Students were eligible for free bus passes. The Department supported students transitioning to their new school using an individual case management approach. This included financial assistance to purchase new school uniforms.</p>																
Outcome	<p>In November 2014 the Minister approved the closure of Rouchel Public School.</p>																
Status	<p>Rouchel Public School closed at the end of 2014 school year. Students successfully transitioned to Aberdeen Public School.</p>																

1. (a) (xi) List of other rural schools closed and placed in recess in the last 12 months TAB B

SCHOOL	Sutton Forest Public School (P6 1 - 25 students enrolled)		NETWORK	Wollondilly			
Local consultation	Enrolment trend data indicated a continuing decline in student enrolments. On 28 October 2014 a School Consultative Group was formed to consider the school's viability and future education needs of students.						
Enrolment trends	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
	20	31	33	32	12	0	0
Other schools nearby	Of the 12 students enrolled in 2014, four students would attend secondary school in 2015. For the remaining students, four schools with capacity were in close proximity. Exeter Public School, Berrima Public School, Bowral Public School and Moss Vale Public School are located 6.4 kilometres, 14.2 kilometres, 14.9 kilometres and 14.9 kilometres respectively from Sutton Forest Public School. The four schools that students enrolled for 2015 were in close proximity to the students' places of residence and bus services were operational to the schools. Financial assistance was provided to purchase new uniforms. The students were supported by staff from Sutton Forest Public School and their nearby schools including attendance at transition days.						
Outcome	In December 2014 the Minister approved the closure of Sutton Forest Public School.						
Status	Sutton Public School closed at the end of the 2014 school year. Students successfully transitioned to secondary schools and Exeter, Berrima, Bowral and Moss Vale Public Schools.						

1. (a) (xi) List of other rural schools closed and placed in recess in the last 12 months TAB B

SCHOOL	Badgerys Creek Public School (P6 1 - 25 students enrolled)	NETWORK	Macarthur														
Local consultation	<p>The residents and landholders of Badgerys Creek, including the Department of Education received notification from the Federal Government that all properties in the area were to be vacated by June 2015. Badgerys Creek Public School is situated on land that is designated for use in the development of a second airport for Sydney.</p>																
Enrolment trends	<p>On 17 July 2014 a School Consultative Group was formed to consider the future education needs of students.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>2010</th> <th>2011</th> <th>2012</th> <th>2013</th> <th>2014</th> <th>2015</th> <th>2016</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>42</td> <td>36</td> <td>26</td> <td>23</td> <td>8</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	42	36	26	23	8	0	0
2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016											
42	36	26	23	8	0	0											
Other schools nearby	<p>Luddenham Public School located 6.6 kilometres from Badgerys Creek Public School, was determined by the School Consultative Group as the most appropriate nearby school for the students to attend. For 2015 one student relocated to the Orange district and sought enrolment in that area, one student enrolled at Cecil Hills High School and parents of the six remaining students enrolled their children at Luddenham Public School. Financial assistance was provided to purchase new uniforms. The students were supported with their transition to their new school including school visits.</p>																
Outcome	<p>In December 2014 the Minister approved the closure of Badgerys Creek Public School.</p>																
Status	<p>Badgerys Creek closed at the end of the 2014 school year. Students successfully transitioned to secondary school, Luddenham Public School and a school in the Orange district.</p>																

1. (a) (xi) List of other rural schools closed and placed in recess in the last 12 months TAB B

SCHOOL	Crowdy Head Public School (P6 1 - 25 students enrolled)	NETWORK	Hastings														
Local consultation	<p>In response to falling enrolments, on 27 March 2014 a School Consultative Group was formed to consider the future education needs of students at the school.</p> <p>In 2014, of the nine students attending Crowdy Head Public School, two students resided within the school's intake zone. The other students travelled from Harrington and Cooperbrook. Of the nine students, six students would attend secondary school in 2015.</p>																
Enrolment trends	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>2010</td> <td>2011</td> <td>2012</td> <td>2013</td> <td>2014</td> <td>2015</td> <td>2016</td> </tr> <tr> <td>11</td> <td>11</td> <td>14</td> <td>8</td> <td>8</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> </tr> </table>	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	11	11	14	8	8	0	0		
2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016											
11	11	14	8	8	0	0											
Other schools nearby	<p>Harrington Public School and Cooperbrook Public School are located 7 and 21 kilometres respectively from Crowdy Head. Both schools had the capacity to accommodate students from Crowdy Head Public School and meet their educational needs. Enrolment transition was supported using an individual case management approach. This included financial assistance to purchase new uniforms.</p>																
Outcome	<p>In September 2014 the Minister approved the closure of Crowdy Head Public School.</p>																
Status	<p>Crowdy Head Public School closed at the end of the 2014 school year. Students successfully transitioned to secondary school, Harrington or Cooperbrook Public Schools.</p>																

1. (a) (xi) List of other rural schools closed and placed in recess in the last 12 months TAB B

SCHOOL	Spencer Public School (P6 1 - 25 students enrolled)	NETWORK					Wyong														
Local consultation	<p>Prior to 2010 there had been a significant and ongoing decline in student enrolments at the school. Parents had been increasingly seeking enrolment for their children in neighbouring schools, citing access to the significant educational and social benefits of a larger school setting.</p> <p>The Director Public Schools NSW had planned to initiate conversations at school regarding its viability, but given there were no students enrolled at Spencer Public School from 2 February 2015 this did not occur.</p>																				
Enrolment trends	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>2010</td> <td>2011</td> <td>2012</td> <td>2013</td> <td>2014</td> <td>2015</td> <td>2016</td> </tr> <tr> <td>18</td> <td>16</td> <td>18</td> <td>12</td> <td>11</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> </tr> </table>	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	18	16	18	12	11	0	0						
2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016															
18	16	18	12	11	0	0															
Other schools nearby	<p>Neighbouring schools had the capacity to accommodate additional students as parents sought transfers from Spencer Public School. On 2 February 2015 the parents of the two remaining students chose to enrol their children at Wisemans Ferry and Central Mangrove Public Schools respectively. Wiseman's Ferry Public School and Central Mangrove Public School are 27 kilometres and 27.3 kilometres respectively, from Spencer Public School.</p>																				
Outcome	<p>In March 2015 the Minister approved the closure of Spencer Public School.</p>																				
Status	<p>Spencer Public School closed in March 2015. Students successfully transitioned to Wisemans Ferry and Central Mangrove Public Schools.</p>																				

SCHOOL	Corinella Public School (P6 1 - 25 students enrolled)	NETWORK	Lachlan
Local consultation	<p>In August 2014 a School Consultative Group was formed to consider the future education needs of students, in response to declining enrolments.</p> <p>As a result of individual meetings with current parents and seeking expressions of interest for future enrolments it was established that there are no confirmed enrolments for the next three years. All parents had indicated their preference for their children to attend a larger nearby school.</p>		
Enrolment trends	2010 15	2011 9	2012 10
Other schools nearby	2013 8	2014 7	2015 0
			2016 0
Outcome	<p>Of the seven 2014 enrolments at Corinella Public School, one student would attend secondary school in 2015, two students enrolled in non-government schools in Forbes and the remaining students enrolled in Bedgerabong Public School, a distance of 27 kilometres from Corinella. Enrolment transition was supported using an individual case management approach. This included the option of financial assistance to purchase new uniforms for those students moving to a public school.</p> <p>In December 2014 the Minister approved the closure of Corinella Public School.</p>		
Status	<p>Corinella Public School closed at the end of the 2014 school year. Students successfully transitioned to secondary school, Bedgerabong Public School and non-government schools.</p>		

1. (a) (xi) List of other rural schools closed and placed in recess in the last 12 months TAB B

SCHOOL	Milbrulong Public School (P6 1 - 25 students enrolled)	NETWORK	Wagga Wagga														
Local consultation	<p>In March 2013 the then School Education Director met with the school community to discuss the school's declining enrolments and its future. The families of students enrolled in 2013 relocated to other regional centres for 2014. There were no students enrolled for 2014. The school was placed into recess at the end of the 2013 school year.</p> <p>At subsequent meetings, including the nominated representative of the Milbrulong Parents and Citizens' Association it was agreed to place an advertisement in the Eastern Riverina Chronicle requesting expressions of interest for enrolments in 2015. As there no expressions of interest or enquiries for future enrolments it was agreed that closure would be recommended for the end of 2014.</p>																
Enrolment trends	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>2010</th> <th>2011</th> <th>2012</th> <th>2013</th> <th>2014</th> <th>2015</th> <th>2016</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>9</td> <td>7</td> <td>7</td> <td>7</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	9	7	7	7	0	0	0		
2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016											
9	7	7	7	0	0	0											
Other schools nearby	<p>The families of students enrolled at the school at the end of 2013 relocated to Wagga Wagga and Griffith. Milbrulong is 10.3 kilometres from Lockhart Central School. One student enrolled at Lockhart Central School. Students were supported by the principal during the transition periods.</p>																
Outcome	<p>In December 2014 the Minister approved the closure of Milbrulong Public School.</p>																
Status	<p>Milbrulong Public School closed at the end of the 2014 school year. Students successfully transitioned to Lockhart Central School, Wagga Wagga Public School and Griffith Public School.</p>																

SCHOOL	Reids Flat Public School (P6 1 - 25 students enrolled)	NETWORK	Upper Lachlan Shire														
Local consultation	In October 2012, the then School Education Director met with staff, parents and the community of Reids Flat Public School to discuss declining enrolments and the school's future. There had been extensive consultation with the Parents and Citizens' Association and local community during 2012. It was predicted that there would be only one potential enrolment in 2013. In subsequent meetings and direct contact with the parents it was recommended that the school be placed in recess for 2013.																
Enrolment trends	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>2010</th> <th>2011</th> <th>2012</th> <th>2013</th> <th>2014</th> <th>2015</th> <th>2016</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>6</td> <td>5</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	3	6	5	0	0	0	0		
2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016											
3	6	5	0	0	0	0											
Other schools nearby	In November and December 2012 the remaining student was transitioned to Boorowa Central School with support from the principal and Departmental officers, this included assistance to purchase new uniforms. Boorowa Central School is 57.4 kilometres from Reids Flat.																
Outcome	In December 2014 the Minister approved the closure of Reids Flat Public School.																
Status	Reids Flat Public School closed in 2014. The remaining student in 2012 successfully transitioned to Boorowa Central Public School.																

1. (a) (xi) List of other rural schools closed and placed in recess in the last 12 months TAB B

SCHOOL	Windeyer Public School (P6 1 - 25 students enrolled)	NETWORK	Macquarie														
Local consultation	<p>On 9 February 2012 the then School Education Director met with the community to discuss the school's future educational provision as result of declining enrolments. The school was placed in recess on 24 April 2012. At subsequent meetings the community requested that the school remain in recess while they attempted to gather enrolment numbers. The community was unable to increase student enrolment numbers.</p> <p>There has been extensive consultation including meetings, emails and telephone conversations with the local community during 2012, 2013 and 2014 prior to and while the school was in recess. At a community meeting on 10 October 2014 the Director Public Schools NSW advised that as the school had been unable to attract enrolments the school would be recommended for closure.</p>																
Enrolment trends	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>2010</td> <td>2011</td> <td>2012</td> <td>2013</td> <td>2014</td> <td>2015</td> <td>2016</td> </tr> <tr> <td>11</td> <td>7</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> </tr> </table>	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	11	7	0	0	0	0	0		
2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016											
11	7	0	0	0	0	0											
Other schools nearby	As the school had been in recess for two years there were no current enrolments. The two potential student enrolments were already attending Hargraves and Cudgegong Valley Public Schools.																
Outcome	In December 2014 the Minister approved the closure of Windeyer Public School.																
Status	Windeyer Public School closed from the end of the 2014 school year.																

SCHOOL	Errowanbang Public School (P6 1 - 25 students enrolled)	NETWORK	Orange				
Local consultation	<p>In September 2014 a School Consultative Group was formed to consider the future education needs of students in response to falling enrolments. On 19 November 2014 the Director Public Schools NSW met with all parents of the students enrolled at the school. At this meeting parents accepted and agreed that the current and projected low school enrolment numbers was such that the school was no longer viable. Many parents had already enrolled their children in nearby schools for 2015.</p> <p>A number of students from the Errowanbang area were bypassing the local school and were already attending public schools in Orange. An existing bus service transported students to the schools in Orange.</p>						
Enrolment trends	2010 31	2011 39	2012 37	2013 13	2014 7	2015 0	2016 0
Other schools nearby	<p>Government schools in the area include Canobolas and Blayney High Schools, Blayney, Bletchington and Millthorpe Public Schools. Of the seven students enrolled in 2014, three would go to secondary schools in 2015, one each to Canobolas and Blayney High Schools, and one to a non-government school. Of the remaining students, one enrolled at Blayney Public School, one at Millthorpe Public School, and two at Bletchington Public School.</p> <p>Errowanbang is 28.8 kilometres from Blayney, 21.3 kilometres from Millthorpe, 34.3 kilometres from The Canobolas Rural Technology High School and 34.4 kilometres from Bletchington. Existing buses were able to transport students to these schools. Students were supported to attend transition and orientation programs at their new schools. There was also financial assistance to purchase new uniforms for those transitioning to public schools.</p>						
Outcome	<p>In December 2014 the Minister approved the closure of Errowanbang Public School.</p>						
Status	<p>Errowanbang Public School closed at the end of the 2014 school year. Students successfully transitioned to secondary school, Blayney, Millthorpe and Bletchington Public Schools.</p>						

SCHOOL	George Anderson Walpole School for Specific Purposes (SSP) (P6 1 - 25 students enrolled)	NETWORK	Gosford
Local consultation	<p>George Anderson Walpole School for Specific Purposes (Educational and Training Unit) had no students enrolled from 22 May 2015.</p> <p>The management of juvenile detainees at the Kariong Juvenile Correctional Centre was returned to the responsibility of the Department of Justice. Juvenile Justice detainees were transferred to the Cobham Juvenile Justice Centre and Frank Baxter Juvenile Justice Centre. The conversion of the centre to an adult facility required the closing of George Anderson Walpole School and the transfer of all staff to other school settings.</p> <p>Section 28, 10c of the <i>Education Act</i> allows the Minister to close a school if the Minister is satisfied that exceptional or emergency circumstances exist which require a school closure. The circumstances surrounding the transfer of detainees to other Juvenile Justice Centres resulting in the closure of George Anderson Walpole School meets the criteria for exceptional circumstances.</p>		
Outcome	In June 2015 George Anderson Walpole School was approved to be closed.		
Status	George Anderson Walpole SSP closed in June 2015.		

SCHOOL	Bibbenluke Public School (P6 school 1 – 25 students enrolled)	NETWORK	Queanbeyan														
Local consultation	<p>In Term 1 2015 three students were enrolled at Bibbenluke Public School. In May 2015 the three students transferred to Bombala Public School. As a result there were no students enrolled at the school and no prospective enrolments.</p> <p>In June 2015 the Director, Public Schools NSW met with school staff and invited any interested community members to discuss the educational provision at Bibbenluke Public School, no community members attended.</p>																
Enrolment trends	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>2010</td> <td>2011</td> <td>2012</td> <td>2013</td> <td>2014</td> <td>2015</td> <td>2016</td> </tr> <tr> <td>13</td> <td>12</td> <td>13</td> <td>11</td> <td>13</td> <td>3</td> <td>0</td> </tr> </table>	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	13	12	13	11	13	3	0		
2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016											
13	12	13	11	13	3	0											
Other schools nearby	<p>The three students enrolled in Term 1 2015 were supported by the Department officers in their transition to Bombala Public School, a distance of 14 kilometres from Bibbenluke. The students commenced at Bombala Public School on 25 May 2015.</p> <p>An existing school bus service transports Bibbenluke students to Bombala. Financial assistance was provided to parents to purchase new uniforms and meet other costs of transitioning to their new school.</p>																
Outcome	<p>In July 2015 the Minister approved the closure of Bibbenluke Public School.</p>																
Status	<p>Bibbenluke Public School closed from the start of Term 3 2015. The students successfully transitioned to Bombala Public School.</p>																

SCHOOL	Tulloona Public school (P6 1 - 25 students enrolled)	NETWORK	Barwon				
Local consultation	<p>In early Term 1 2015 the Relieving Principal was informed by families at the school that by the end of the term, only one child would remain enrolled. All other families would be moving from the area. The Director Public Schools NSW consulted directly with the school community and staff regarding the recommendation to place the school in recess. Further discussions with the family and the Principal occurred, including educational options for the remaining student.</p> <p>On 26 March 2015 the parents of the remaining student informed the Relieving Principal that they had enrolled their child at Croppa Creek Public School to begin in Term 2 2015.</p> <p>On 15 May 2015 a School Consultative Group was formed and met to discuss options.</p> <p>On 28 May 2015 the School Consultative Group recommended that the school resume operation at the start of 2016 with five anticipated Kindergarten enrolments.</p>						
Enrolment trends	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
	9	7	4	4	4	0	5 (anticipated)
Other schools nearby	<p>Cropper Creek Public School is 48.5 kilometres from Tulloona. Enrolment transition to Croppa Creek Public School was supported by staff from each school and the Department's Learning and Engagement Officers. Support also included financial assistance to purchase new uniforms.</p>						
Outcome	<p>In April 2015 the Minister approved Tulloona Public School to be placed in recess from the beginning of Term 2 2015.</p>						
Status	<p>Tulloona Public School is in recess. Predicted enrolments are currently being monitored.</p>						

SCHOOL	Murrumbidgee Public School (P6 1 - 25 students enrolled)	NETWORK	Griffith														
Local consultation	<p>In response to falling enrolments a School Consultative Group was formed to consider the future education needs of students at the school. While there was wider community support to keep the school open, all current parents had indicated a preference to enrol their children at Whitton or Leeton Public Schools, due to the educational benefits of a larger school. Whitton is 22.5 kilometres and Leeton Public School 23 kilometres from Murrumbidgee.</p> <p>Consultation with the community continues through 2015 regarding educational provision in 2016 and beyond as a number of new enrolments are anticipated.</p>																
Enrolment trends	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>2010</td> <td>2011</td> <td>2012</td> <td>2013</td> <td>2014</td> <td>2015</td> <td>2016</td> </tr> <tr> <td>28</td> <td>28</td> <td>31</td> <td>29</td> <td>23</td> <td>0</td> <td>17 (anticipated)</td> </tr> </table>	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	28	28	31	29	23	0	17 (anticipated)		
2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016											
28	28	31	29	23	0	17 (anticipated)											
Other schools nearby	<p>All students from Murrumbidgee Public School transferred to Whitton Public School in 2015. Murrumbidgee Public School provided support including individual transition plans for students and families were provided with new school uniforms. Transport NSW now provides a bus service to take students to Whitton Public School.</p>																
Outcome	<p>In December 2014 the Minister approved Murrumbidgee Public School to be placed in recess from the beginning of the 2015 school year.</p>																
Status	<p>Murrumbidgee Public School is in recess. There are no current enrolments and community consultation will continue as this situation is monitored.</p>																



Protocols for schools where recess, closure, amalgamation or other educational provision models are to be considered.

The NSW Department of Education and Communities, the NSW Primary Principals' Association and the NSW Secondary Principals' Council have developed protocols to guide consultation processes when a school's future educational provision is being considered.

These protocols apply to all NSW government schools, regardless of their size.

If recess, closure, amalgamation or an alternative educational provision model is seen to be an appropriate response, these steps should guide further decision making.

Step 1: The Director and Principal discuss options for future delivery of education of a school. This could be initiated by the Director or Principal. These options include:

- Maintain operations.
- Consider that the school be placed in recess, amalgamate operations with nearby schools, devise an alternative educational provision model, or be closed.
- The Director provides a briefing to the Executive Director.

Step 2: The Executive Director seeks approval from the Deputy Secretary to consult locally.

Step 3: If recess, closure, amalgamation or other educational provision model is to be considered the Director/Executive Director contacts the Local Member, NSWPPA Executive, NSWSPC Executive and NSW Teachers Federation.

Step 4: The Executive Director develops a Fact Sheet for the information of the DEC Senior Executive and NSW Teachers Federation.

Step 5: If local consultation is approved by the Deputy Secretary, a School Consultative Group is formed consisting of:

- The Director
- Principal (with access to support from their relevant Professional Association)
- Principal of the impacted school or schools, if amalgamation or other educational provision model is a consideration

- P&C representative or parent representative (if there is no legally constituted P&C)
- If required, a relevant DEC officer to provide particular advice and support, such as Human Resources or Assets
- Local NSW Teachers Federation Organiser.

Step 6: The School Consultative Group organises staff, and the parent community (including the school's P&C Association) meetings to:

- Use data to assess current conditions and consider the best educational provision for students at the school.
- Discuss the school's role and contribution to the local community.
- Provide a summary of research to explore other educational delivery models.
- Discuss options for the school's future delivery model.
- Discuss future options for students, principal and staff.
- Discuss future options for the school's assets and resources.

Step 7: The Director and Principal meets with principals of nearby schools, including where students are likely to transfer, to ascertain that:

- The needs of transferring students will be met.
- Local communication about changes at the school is consistent.

Transport NSW confirms suitable travel arrangements can be put in place, if required.

The Consultative Group is informed of proposed arrangements.

Step 8: The Director concurrently works with State Office to ensure arrangements are made for school's staff, assets and finance.

- The relocation of permanent staff is negotiated, including provision of staff support from the WH&S Directorate.
- Accelerated condition assessment of work required at the nearby schools given the incoming transfers, if required.
- Consideration is given to responsibility for the management of the schools finances.
- Notification is provided to the school's cleaning contractor.

The School Consultative Group is informed of interim arrangements.

***Step 9:** The Director continues the recess, closure, amalgamation or other educational provision model process, if:

- The majority of parents of students at the school decide to negotiate recess, a school closure or amalgamation, or
- The school is a one teacher school, or
- The Minister is satisfied that there are exceptional or emergency circumstances which require an earlier closure.

***Step 10:** If no parental consensus is reached, an Executive Director can:

- Maintain operations.
- Seek approval to place the school into recess or closure.
- Request that the Minister announces a proposed school closure and requests the establishment of a School Closure Review Committee (Section 28, Education Act, 1990).

Step 11: The Director in consultation with the School Consultative Group develops a recess, school closure, amalgamation or other educational provision model implementation plan, to ensure key support and resources are available.

- Student educational and welfare needs, including new uniforms and transport.
- Relocation of permanent staff.
- Counselling support.
- Communication strategy, including communication with local councils, shops, sport providers and police.
- Assets management.
- Financial management - with reference to the *School Closure Support Guidelines* where applicable.
- Resources management, including technology, furniture, equipment, utilities, records and memorabilia.
- Timelines.
- The role of the P&C and local community.

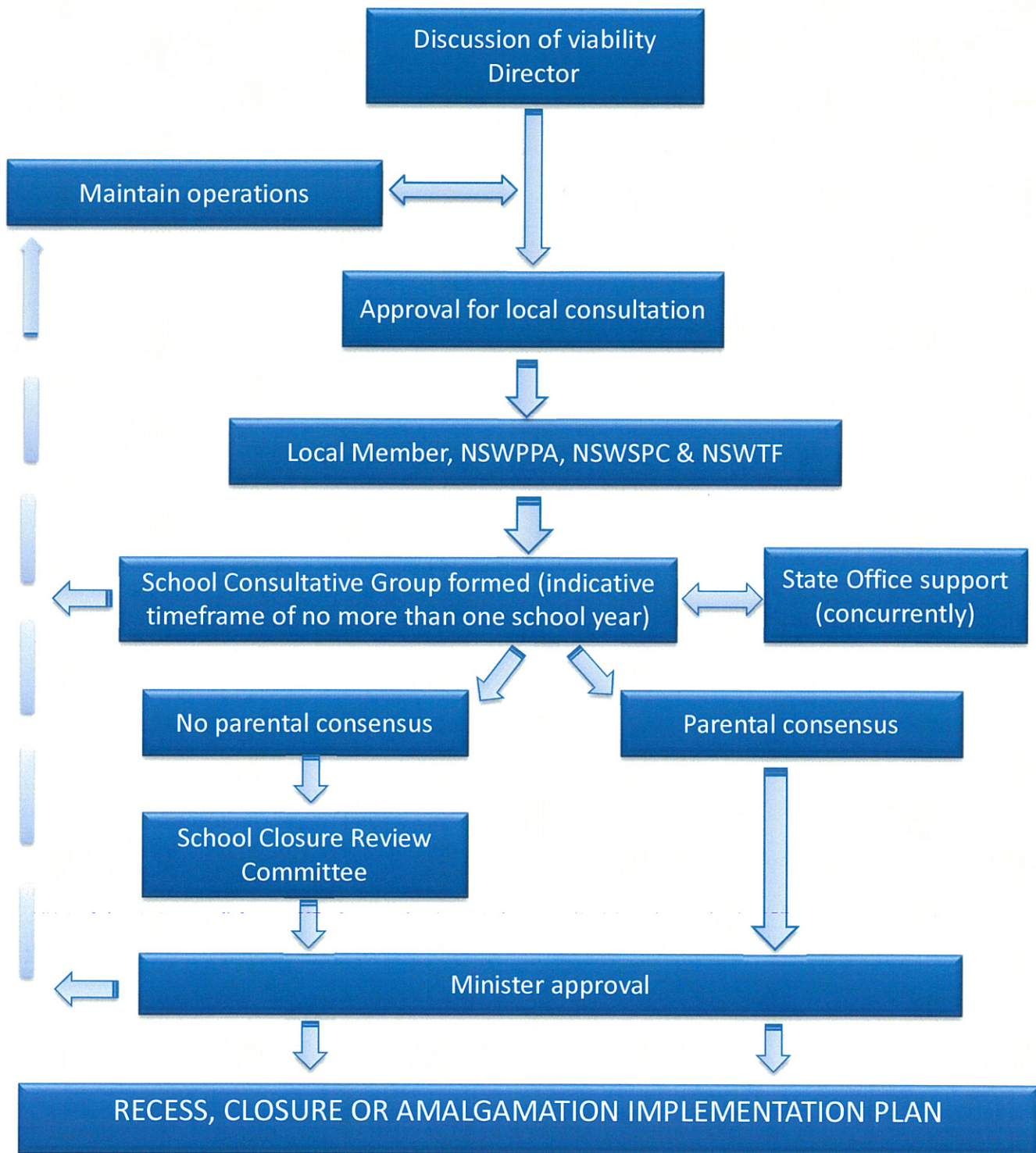
* Steps 9 and 10 are determined by the 1990 Education Act (Section 28).

Appendices:

- A. Protocols flowchart
- B. Sample Fact Sheet



Appendix A: Protocols Flowchart





Appendix B: Sample Fact Sheet

The _____ School site will be placed in recess at the end of the _____ school year. This has been a difficult decision made by the school community. This document will help to explain how that decision was made and how students and their parents will be supported.

Why is the school site being placed in recess and the students moved to other schools?

Enrolment trends							
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Total enrolments							

How will consultation occur?

What will happen to the students at the school?

What will happen to the school's facilities and land?