

Submission
No 39

INQUIRY INTO PLANNING AND DELIVERY OF SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Organisation: Northern Sydney District Council of P&C Associations

Date Received: 11 February 2022



**Northern Sydney Regional Council
of Parents & Citizens Associations**
Web Version

Convenor: David Hope
<http://tinyurl.com/pandc-ns>

The Honourable Barry O'Farrell, Member for Ku-ring-gai
The Honourable Gladys Berejiklian, Member for Willoughby
The Honourable Jillian Skinner, Member for North Shore
The Honourable Anthony Roberts, Member for Lane Cove
The Honourable Jonathon O'Dea, Member for Davidson
Parliament of New South Wales
Macquarie St
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Honourable Sirs and Madams

Re: Critical Public School Capacity Issues in Mid-Lower North Shore

Our lower-mid North Shore Public schools currently provide fabulous learning experiences, and would like to continue to do so.

The purpose of this letter is to seek your because some of our local public Schools and/or part of their catchment areas, lie in your Electorate, and because the lower to mid North Shore currently faces serious education capacity issues which need to be addressed.

All four comprehensive public high schools, and most of the nineteen public primary schools in the area, are currently operating at well over intended capacity, and some have now reached maximum capacity, with no room for further demountables. Public schools generally are required to take all students living in their catchment area, and forecasts show student numbers will continue to grow for many years in this area due to general population growth and the significant increase in student numbers resulting from the State Government's Sydney Metropolitan Strategy ('Metro Strategy'). Where do these additional students fit when our local public and private schools are already full?

- a) There is an urgent need for emergency capital works funding for new buildings in our schools, as well as short to medium term plans to expand school sites; and
- b) planning legislation needs to be amended so Schools are classified as 'essential infrastructure', and capacity in local public schools must considered for the Metro Strategy and when approving any new development.

High student number growth rates: The chart below demonstrates the growth rate for many of our lower North Shore schools, as well as their current student numbers and their intended capacity. In the last 5 years many lower North Shore public Schools have experienced student growth rates far higher than the Northern Sydney Region rate of 10%, which had the highest rate in NSW! Apart from general population growth, growth also reflects impacts of the baby bonus, the Global financial Crises and associated shift of students from expensive private schools, older residents dying or moving out and young families moving into the area, and infill and new residential developments in the area. Student numbers in Northern Sydney Region are forecast to grow by another 8% over the next 5 years, but the lower North Shore's higher growth rate is set to continue with North Sydney

Local Government Area ('LGA') expected to have 10% growth, and some schools, like Artarmon PS are expected to experience 20% growth.

Lower North Shore Schools Capacity, Current Numbers and Student Growth Rates (based on NSW Public School February 2012 Census Figures)

Comprehensive Public High Schools	2006	2012	% change over 6 yrs
Chatswood	905	1263	40
Killara	1351	1527	13
Killarney Heights**	660	952	44
Mosman	766	886	16
Willoughby Girls*	830	926	12
Total Enrolments	4512	5554	23

<https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/media/downloads/about-us/statistics-and-research/key-statistics-and-reports/enrolments-feb12.pdf>

*WGHS is a single sex school and is able to control its student numbers, other schools must take all 'in area' students.

** KHHS catchment includes area in the lower north shore

*** KHS, WGHS and Mosman High are at maximum demountables already

*** *NSBH and NSGH are wholly selective schools and take largely out of area students so have been omitted.

The additional 1042 students equates to the equivalent of 37 new class rooms based on class sizes of 30 students. The figures above are contained in the DEC Census figures as at February 2012, however some schools have grown since then, for example, Mosman High School P&C reports their school currently has 914 students, which represents 19.3% growth over the period, and 3% growth during the current year alone.

Primary Schools	2006	2012	% change over 6 yrs
Artarmon	662	858	30
Beauty Point	220	271	23
Cammeray	594	767	29
Castle Cove	353	465	32
Chatswood	670	823	23
Greenwich	340	432	27
Killara	246	282	15
Lane Cove	778	815	5
Lane Cove West	287	533	86
Lindfield	639	729	14
Lindfield East	704	738	5
Middle Harbour	395	519	31
Mosman	588	695	18
Mowbray	265	327	23
Neutral Bay	620	845	36
Northbridge	361	535	48
North Sydney (Dem)	540	709	31
Roseville	621	568	-9
Willoughby	733	939	28
Total Enrolments	9616	11850	23

<https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/media/downloads/about-us/statistics-and-research/key-statistics-and-reports/enrolments-feb12.pdf>

The 2,234 additional primary students in the last six years alone equates to the equivalent of 75 additional class rooms based on class sizes of 30 students (although infants have class size limits of 20-25 students). Currently approximately 10 primary schools have reached the maximum demountables limit for their site and need two storey buildings.

As many lower North Shore Schools reach 'overflowing', there is a growing disconnect between the education infrastructure provided in this area and the DEC guidelines for recommended space per student. For example, Willoughby Girls High School and Willoughby Public School together have approximately 1850 students on a combined site of the size that would accommodate 600 students under guidelines for building a new school on a 'green fields' site.

The State Government's "Metropolitan Plan for Sydney to 2036" ('Metro Strategy'): requires 44,000 new residential dwellings to be built in the lower North Shore and Ryde Area, and 29,000 in the Mid-Upper North Shore, however there appears to have been no consideration or funding provision for necessary education facilities to accompany them. The Metro Strategy considers employment, transport, recreational space and shopping centre facilities in areas in determining required residential targets, but does not take into account school capacity. Lower to mid North Shore schools cannot physically accommodate additional students from this volume of new dwellings.

An outdated demographic model: meant the current capacity issues were not foreseen or planned for, as it was assumed for school modelling purposes that all women on the North Shore would have all their children by the age of 25, and that families do not live in units. Many women on the North Shore bear children in their thirties and forties, and many families live in units due to the price of property, and because many migrants are culturally used to apartment living.

Schools and Deemed 'Surplus' land sold off: as a result of the flawed demographic model, in the past a number of local primary and high schools (Naremburn, Castlecrag, Cremorne Girls and Crows Nest Boys) have been closed and/or sold off, together with school land deemed 'surplus at that time. In recent times a previously closed high school (Smalls Rd in North Ryde) has been quietly transferred out of DEC to another government department for \$1 consideration, without going through the necessary approval procedures. This property needs to be restored to DEC and reopened as a high school as it is much needed to meet student growth in that area. Currently no school site in Northern Sydney is considered surplus, on the contrary, more sites are needed.

Class Size Limits: The huge growth in the area is the major contributor to the current situation; however the adoption of DEC requirements for smaller class sizes for kindergarten to grade 2 that has occurred over the past decade is also contributing to primary school demountables. Before this policy was introduced, there was greater capacity for schools to respond to increased student numbers by having larger classes. We do not see that a return to those days is the answer.

Private Schools are at capacity: and are constrained by the same land issues, so the majority of any future growth in local student numbers will necessarily be borne by the public school system.

Shifting catchment boundaries: is not the answer, as many schools with adjoining boundaries are similarly affected. It is an area-wide issue, not limited to small pockets.

Very Limited Opportunities to expand capacities of existing schools: Most of our local public schools are in built up areas, and have no capacity to expand unless neighbouring properties are acquired. Some issues are:

- a) A number of the existing schools with very high student numbers have recently had adjoining properties go up for sale, but the DEC has either not been able to move quickly enough, or not had the funding available, and valuable opportunities to alleviate issues have been lost (eg Roseville PS, Cammeray PS, Chatswood PS).
- b) No High school received a Federally funded Building Education Revolution ('BER') building,
- c) Although all our the Primary Schools received much needed, and very much appreciated, BER buildings, a number of Primary Schools in the area have additional building needs.
- d) Killara High has just been allocated funding for a new building in the 2012/13 budget, however this will replace 10-12 demountables but not increase capacity, and KHS will still have 10-12 demountables remaining on their oval.
- e) **Double Storey demountables hindered by recent changes to planning legislation:** Other states have been using double storey demountable buildings, which would alleviate some problems in our very crowded North Shore Schools. The first two double storey demountables in the State were recently bought to install into Artarmon PS and Chatswood PS. It was then discovered that recent changes to National Building Regulations require 2 storey demountables to be accompanied by a large rain water tank and disabled access to the second storey. The cost, logistics and space issues resulting from these additional requirements mean double storey demountables will not be a viable option. Exemptions in the legislation are needed for public schools.
- f) **Selective Schools provide minimal accommodation to local students:** Two other local high schools, North Sydney Boys and Girls High, are both fully selective, and most students are from out of area. In addition, Chatswood High also has a selective intake of 60 students and Mosman High has a creative arts specialist intake of 60 in each year group. Some of the most pressured primary schools (Artarmon, Chatswood, Neutral Bay) also have academic 'opportunity classes' in their schools comprising many out of area students, although Neutral Bay classes will shortly be moved to another school, on the Northern Beaches, due to student growth.

Very Limited Opportunities to build new Schools: as the lower North Shore is well developed, so there are very limited pockets of land available, and costs are very high. In addition, as Local Councils must meet their Metro Strategy targets, so available land is quickly earmarked for development. For example, the ANZAC Club site owned by North Sydney Council would suit a primary school and alleviate excessive student number issues at Cammeray PS and North Sydney Demonstration PS, however North Sydney Council needs to meet their Metro target, and will get better returns from sale of this land to developers, as well as the benefit of ongoing rate revenue.

There have been recurrent rumours that there may be a Senior high school campus opened on the UTS Lindfield site, and that a small boys high school may be re-opened in the lower North Shore, in coming years, which will alleviate some pressure, however our understanding is that forecast student numbers will also require a new building of approximately 18 additional classrooms in each high school in the lower north shore as well. More primary school capacity is needed as well.

Major Capital Works Budget Inadequate to cope with Region Needs: Major Capital works budget is to fund major infrastructure repairs and new schools. The 168 schools in Northern Sydney are all at least 40 years old, and many need significant repairs. Currently there is a waiting list of major repairs totalling tens of million dollars. For many years under the former State Government, Sydney North Region did not receive a fair share of capital works funding, and this is continuing. Last year the Major Capital Works budget for Northern Sydney was only \$12m, which was used for major repairs needed in 3 schools. Funding will be considerably lower than this in 2012/13 financial year, as the only major capital work allocated funding in the budget was a new building for Killara High School 'KHS', however Chatswood High's stage 3 building has been deferred in preference to other projects,

and KHS will still be left with approximately four demountables based on existing student numbers, and more when student numbers increase.

Health and safety issues: there are health and safety and learning issues associated with the increasing numbers. Demountables have consumed playground space, and the volume of students and limited space available has necessitated some schools putting restrictions on playground games and running (which is hard, particularly for boys). Anecdotally there are more playground injuries in primary schools like broken limbs, and many primary schools are having to stagger recess and lunch breaks, which creates noise and distractions for those who are in class. Overcrowding can be more stressful for teachers, and adversely impact student learning.

The 'Head in the Sand' Approach Cannot Continue! Although schools are necessary infrastructure, as students are required by law to go to school, and although school capacity issues have reached critical levels in the lower north shore, they do not appear to be on the agenda at either State or Local Government level. The Metro Strategy summary document considers transport, shopping centres, employment centres and space, but not education capacity, and likewise, the March 2012 Northern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils ('NSROC') report 'NSROC Regional Priorities' considers issues like transport, aged care, access to open space, and environmental issues, but not education capacity.

Local Governments are required to meet Metro Strategy Targets imposed by the State Government, but are not required to consider school capacity. Likewise, Metro targets were determined at State level, without Schools being as 'essential' nor providing the funding or strategy to meet the demands on local public schools arising from up to 59,000 new residential dwellings. This cannot continue! Infrastructure takes some time to put in place, and we are already at a critical point.

Northern Sydney Region: This is not just a lower-mid North Shore issue, as the problem is expected to spread to the upper North Shore, Hills and Northern Beaches areas within 5 years. Some schools in these areas already have high student numbers, for example, Cherrybrook High School has approximately 50 demountables.

What Needs to Happen

- a) There needs to be Emergency Major Capital Works funding provided for new school buildings and for expansion of school sites, including through the acquisition of key adjoining properties that become available (for example the two residential properties on the Willoughby Girls High site), for lower North Shore High Schools and primary schools. Student growth rates are not going to level out in the foreseeable future either, therefore there should be buildings to accommodate them, not demountables.
- b) Legislation needs to be amended so that public school capacity is classed as 'essential infrastructure' and that all new developments can only be approved if there is confirmation from DEC that sufficient capacity exists, or can be proven will exist in the near future, in the 'in area' primary and high school for that development.
- c) Development of an integrated strategy by the State Government, in consultation with Local Councils, and accompanied by adequate funding, for the provision of additional education facilities needed in the lower North Shore and Northern Sydney Region, to meet current student growth and that arising from the Metro Strategy. Where necessary facilities cannot be provided, the Metro Strategy target for new dwellings for that Local Government Area must be adjusted downwards.
- d) For public schools in Northern Sydney Region that have small sites relative to large student numbers, key adjoining properties need to be identified, and affectation orders placed on these

properties, giving DEC the first right to purchase these properties, should they become available, so valuable opportunities aren't lost.

- e) Relevant Legislation needs urgently to be amended to facilitate installation of double storey demountables in Public Schools, providing an exemption from requirements for rain water tanks and disabled access to second storeys.

We implore you, as our State Members, to ensure that Education capacity is classified as essential infrastructure for the Metro Plan and other planning purposes, to ensure that there is sufficient education capacity in our local schools and communities now and going forward, and to ensure that sufficient funding is provided to meet all needs in this area.

The contact person for all correspondence in relation to this issue is Steph Croft, Councillor, Northern Sydney Regional Council of Parents and Citizens Associations. She can be contacted by

Yours sincerely
The undersigned Parents and Citizens Associations

(Signed by 24 School P&C's – details not included in Web Version)



Northern Sydney District Council of P&C Associations

NSW Legislative Council Portfolio Committee No. 3 - Education

Inquiry into the planning and delivery of school infrastructure in New South Wales

1. Introductory Remarks

1.1 About Us

The Northern Sydney District Council of Parents and Citizens Association is a District Council formed under the NSW Education Act, Section 115 (2). The District Council has been operating for over 40 years in various forms. We are an independent organisation, operated entirely by volunteers from our member P&Cs.

P&Cs in northern Sydney west to Ryde-Epping and the lower Hills can be members. We assist P&Cs by enabling networking between P&Cs on common problems; by helping with internal P&C issues and relationships with Principals and other senior staff; by advocating on issues such as infrastructure and by advocating for general improvements to school education.

We hold four meetings per year, which are attended by the Executive Director for our area, and other senior staff. We have guest speakers which have included the Secretary of the Department of Education, and the Chief Executive of NESAs.

When then-Minister Adrian Piccoli reformed the NSW P&C Federation in 2014, District Councils were excluded from membership of the Federation. We cannot be directed by the Federation, and we cannot (and don't wish to) direct school P&Cs, who are all independent bodies.

1.2 Our interest in Infrastructure

We have long-standing skin in the game.

From about 2010, we were receiving advice from some of our P&Cs about overcrowding in schools, with demountables being installed in increasing numbers and reducing outdoor play space. A parallel problem was the state of repair of many schools, and particularly things like leaking classrooms and limited/disgusting toilet facilities.

The area around Willoughby Girls' High and the co-located Willoughby Public School was perhaps the worst in terms of overcrowding. The general area around Mosman and the lower North Shore had seen a number of school closures over the years and options for dealing with the growing overcrowding were limited. The District Council began its own studies, led by the Willoughby Girls' High P&C President Steph Croft. Around 30 public school P&C volunteers were involved in collecting and analysing data for our own demographic studies, the results of which differed completely from what we were being told by the Department.

We held a public meeting on 26 November, 2012 at Willoughby Girls' High attended by the media and local MP Gladys Berejiklian. After that meeting we were granted a working group chaired by the Deputy Secretary responsible for assets, IT and HR.



Northern Sydney District Council of P&C Associations

Long story short, we eventually found a major defect in the Department's demographics process, which was showing that student numbers would peak in 5 years and then fall away. Even a cursory sanity check would have given pause for thought.

As a result of our efforts, the NSW Government has developed a program that benefits the whole of NSW, backed by significant funding of around \$8billion for capital expenditure over the four years, providing, they say, 215 new and upgraded schools to support communities across NSW.

We recommended that professional, widely experienced infrastructure professionals be recruited to supplement the existing skills. The Department created NSW School Infrastructure with its Chief Executive reporting directly to the Secretary.

We have since seen a quantum improvement in meeting the challenges of rapid expansion in school numbers and run-down assets, both in managing the building of new school capacity, including complete new schools and additions to existing schools; and much improved maintenance.

We have continued to advocate for improvements to the provision of adequate schooling facilities. The new facilities generally provide modern designs which are very good learning spaces that provide flexibility in delivering the curriculum, and are better for both students and teachers.

We are generally pleased with the professional and energetic efforts that the Department has brought to bear, particularly given the size of the challenge with the added burden of COVID.

We are also grateful to our local MPs, who supported the infrastructure program for public schools, and including Gladys Berejiklian, not only as the local MP, but also as Treasurer and Premier.

We do, however, have some issues which we will address in our responses below.

2. Responses to 2021 Auditor-General's Report entitled "Delivering School Infrastructure"

2.1 "The objective of this audit was to assess the effectiveness of planning and delivery of new, upgraded and redeveloped schools to meet demand for public school education in New South Wales".

Before the arrival of School Infrastructure NSW (SINSW), the DoE's approach was amateurish and dysfunctional. It generally involved minimising expenditure, irrespective of needs and Benefit/Cost ratios whilst cooking up projects or actions to please the government of the day.

The Auditor-General's Report is an impressive piece of work which documents the DoE's improvement path towards best appropriate practice since the arrival of School Infrastructure NSW. It covers all the major processes of planning and delivery, and provides examples of where projects went off track.

It is clear that SINSW has systematically undertaken effective process improvement projects at the same time as being challenged by a very large works program.



Northern Sydney District Council of P&C Associations

Looking at the Conclusions on Page 2 of Auditor's Report:

2.2 "SINSW's ten-year Capital Investment Plans for 2018–19, 2019–20 and 2020–21 only identified priorities over a two-year horizon.

Developing a longer-term pipeline of priorities would signal the areas of greatest need and allow greater scope to consider a range of options to best meet those needs".

The problem with identifying projects publically is that it can raise expectations that are not met because priorities and funding can and do change. We have recently heard from one of our Primary Schools (Dee Why) that it is in exactly this situation and will be making a submission.

However, we agree that more public transparency is required, including the information that future projects are subject to Business Cases and other factors. One of the main factors is government insistence that only approved projects can be aired in public via government announcement.

2.3 SINSW "has developed a planning tool which allows it to prioritise **School Community Groups** based on weighted criteria. It has also developed an approach to identify potential projects within School Community Groups but has not yet put in place a structured process to prioritise which projects move to the business case stage to seek funding for delivery".

We support the concept of planning across a community of schools, so that the assets are most efficiently deployed. However, there has been a tightening of school boundaries so that parents now, mostly, **have the choice of only one public school.**

Parents choose schools for a variety of reasons, including

- convenience in transporting their child to school
- accessibility to before and after school care for working parents
- best fit for their child in terms of the school culture, and
- the reputation of the school.

In some cases, students are catching a school special bus to a school in an area that they or their parents rarely visit, when the nearest school is within walking distance.

We have a school in our Northern Sydney area that was built after the DoE's demographic problems were fixed. Its education model is based on teaching the students at their level of capability, rather than their age. The boundaries for that school and some other high schools in the area have been hard fixed starting this year – so that parents wanting traditional education at traditional well performing high schools in the area were deprived of choice for no good reason, and vice versa.

The DoE has implemented a [choice program](#) in the Georges River area. In the junior years 7-10, parents have a choice between three schools - one each of co-ed; girls; and boys. Years 11 and 12 attend the co-ed senior college at Oatley. There are also two conveniently located selective high schools - Sydney Technical High School at Bexley for boys and St George Girls High School at Kogarah. We think this is a good initiative that both provides more parent choice and optimises the use of assets. We would like to see broader use of this idea.

It is a fact that some schools perform a lot better than others, and parents naturally want their children to go to a better performing school. Although there has been some improvements in this area in recent years, the DoE's management and HR systems are not delivering in terms of closing the gap.



Northern Sydney District Council of P&C Associations

“**Exhibit 5: Example of an under-utilised high school**” is an example of what happens when a school is allowed to deteriorate. That particular school is by no means Robinson Crusoe.

2.3 “...there were shortcomings in several business cases we reviewed. Business cases for projects already announced by government presented a limited number of options, and the process for eliminating other options was not transparent. Cost increases and contingency drawdowns for several projects indicate that scoping, costing and risk assessments could be improved, especially for complex projects”.

This is a well-known risk, and will be mitigated by more public transparency and improving processes. Nevertheless, there will still be times where governments make decisions contrary to the best practice analysis. The government of the day would then be responsible for explaining the reasons, which may, or may not, be perfectly justified.

2.4 “The current approach to ongoing monitoring, reporting and evaluation of project benefits places responsibility on the infrastructure delivery team. This team is not the most appropriate area to monitor ongoing benefits, which are expected to accrue many years after delivery and depend on actions in other areas of the Department”.

The Benefits Realisation process should ideally be carried out by an independent body, particularly for large projects.

END OF >>>Looking at the Conclusions on Page 2 of Auditor’s Report:

3. Other matters

3.1 Terms of reference 1(b) – 1 (i)

Portfolio Committee No 3 – Education

We have dealt with most of these elsewhere, except:

1(f) **delays in converting new school announcements.** This is an ongoing problem whilst there is not a 10 year plan, with the processes and circumstances well explained. One of our schools, Dee Why Public School, has written its own submission because they feel that they were promised an upgraded school which was cancelled without an adequate explanation.

1(g) **specific planning for new schools** in western Sydney, Canada Bay and far north coast. We have had contact with one school in this area, and understand the need across the in-fill areas of Sydney and other fast growing areas. The 10 year plan would give all areas knowledge of what might be in store, and information to put their case where necessary. We have ongoing concerns about rapidly growing areas between Sydney and Parramatta CBD’s along the areas adjacent to the Parramatta River.

1(h) design promoting health and safety. The main areas here are **lack of adequate shade structures**, and **lack of adequate play areas**. The case of Meadowbank campus is quoted below. The other issue is COVID safety, which is of concern to many parents. One P&C in our area has purchased air purifiers given their concerns, but have not been able to get approval to have them installed – even temporarily.

3.2 Exhibit 2: Cluster planning or planning in School Community Groups

We mentioned this above, and agree it is a good approach. However, it does have a tendency, with the inflexibility now associated with school boundaries, to put the customers, namely the students and their parents, last after the needs of the organisation.



Northern Sydney District Council of P&C Associations

We particularly pointed out the need to improve performance of schools to the same high level.

3.3 At the planning stage, the input from teachers, parents and students needs to be improved.

Principals, teachers and sometimes Directors don't always have the skills or the confidence to provide strong customer input to a professional group of infrastructure practitioners bent on just completing the works without the hassle associated with customer input, or where budgets become an issue. We hear that sometimes departmental school operations employees are discouraged from putting forward improvement ideas for fear of derailing the project, which of course is rubbish, or of incurring the wrath of their seniors. To this end we would recommend that an experienced teacher mentor be appointed to the customer team to help open up the possibilities that the local teachers may not see, or may be afraid to speak up about. The mentor should not be a line manager of that group of schools to restrict the chance of the person being afraid to speak up.

We understand that SINSW now has a group of operations staff to oversee such issues and that is at least a start to improving the consultation process.

P&Cs have reported back to us that parents don't get a lot of say in some instances – particularly during implementation, where the single individual P&C nominee to the Project Reference Group (PRG) is required to sign a very restrictive non-disclosure agreement. This means that they can't talk to their P&Cs about anything, and they are out-numbered and out-gunned by the project professionals.

We cannot see that there would be much confidential information at these Project Reference Group (PRG) Meetings, and the current ban on communication outside the PRG is merely an attempt to isolate and perhaps bully the parent nominee.

A gagged parent nominee adds very little or negative value to the consultation process, as the presence of a parent ticks the consultation box even if the parent has disagreed.

We are now recommending that our P&C people do not sign non-disclosure agreements in their current form. The current process is far from best appropriate practice.

Effective early consultation with these customer groups, properly informed of the options by the project team and senior educators, is a pre-requisite to best outcomes.

3.4 Strategies for Issues (Page 19)

SINSW is developing Service Need Strategies to cover broader geographic areas and issues. This approach may help include more schools across NSW in the strategic planning process that would otherwise not be covered based on the prioritisation framework.

SINSW has advised it is planning to develop strategies for 14 geographical regions and six issues:

- Rural and Regional NSW
- Inclusive Education
- Intensive English Centres
- Contemporary Learning Environments
- Environmental Education Centres
- Improving School Utilisation.

We see this as a favourable development.



Northern Sydney District Council of P&C Associations

We have an **Inclusive Education Sub-Committee** which is working on helping P&Cs set up interest groups in their own P&Cs and in advocating for better outcomes at their own schools. We also welcome individual parents.

3.5 Play Space

We note on page 22 of the Auditor-General's Report quotes a figure of ten square metres play space per student at primary and secondary schools. In another submission to this Legislative Council Inquiry we note that Northern Sydney Health Promotion Service (NSW Department of Health) recommends 25 square metres per student play space. We wonder whether the new soon-to-be-opened Meadowbank Education Precinct, which includes a high school and a public school meets either of these standards, or broader health and safety standards.

4. Our Conclusions and Observations

4.1 The Auditor-General's Report Recommendations

We support the Auditor-General's recommendations, and the target date for implementing them.

We also acknowledge the improvements to processes and the innovative use of technology that have been made to date.

In the current circumstances, with the challenging works and business improvement programs, and COVID, we see that a bit of slack in meeting all the recommendations is reasonable.

4.2 The Report's Main Body

- Introduction
- Prioritisation and planning
- Developing business cases
- Project governance and management systems

We appreciate the level of detail and the insight into the Department's planning and implementation processes provided.

4.3 Customer Input

Customers include parents, students, Principals, teachers and perhaps other community leaders. The processes should allow for early engagement of well-informed and empowered customers for best outcomes. The Auditor-General addresses this on Page 26.

On Page 21: "The School Learning Environments and Change group was integrated into SINSW in 2019. This group involves teachers in school infrastructure projects to better manage change through a consultative approach". What about parents and students? See further comments under 3.3.

4.4 Non-Disclosure Agreements

The present method of forcing the parent representative to sign this agreement isolates the person from their community and disempowers them. This is unacceptable, and we recommend that P&C nominees decline to sign these poor practice documents in their present form.

4.5 Planning for teaching staff

We would like to see more activity in HR planning in an integrated planning approach. The current method of staffing is already creaking, and more focus and innovation is required. There is need for innovation to meet the future demands for school teachers and para-professionals.

*David Hope – President 0419 247 547
On behalf of our below-listed Executive Committee,
Northern Sydney District Council of P&C Associations.*



Northern Sydney District Council
of P&C Associations

District Council Executive 2021

Position	Name	School P&C
President	David Hope	Davidson High School
Vice President	Mark Van Kerkwyk	North Sydney Demonstration Public School
Vice President	Keith Oliver	St Ives High School
Secretary	Vacant	
Treasurer	Alan Gardiner	Killara High School Also - Secretary of the NSW P&C Federation
Executive	Mark Hunyor	North Sydney Demonstration Public School
Executive	Jason Wong	Lindfield Learning Village
Executive	Samantha King	Brookvale Public School
Executive	Weidong Tian	North Sydney Boys High School
Executive	Sarah Humphreys	The Forest High School
Executive	Marian Guirgis	Ryde Secondary College