

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

Organisation: Randwick Girls High School Parents and Citizens Association

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NSW Legislative Council
Portfolio Committee No. 3 - Education

Inquiry into the planning and delivery of school infrastructure in New South Wales
Wednesday 13th July 2022

Submission by Randwick Girls' High School P&C Association

10th July 2022

Dear Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to present information to the Inquiry. I speak as a parent with students at Randwick Boys' High School and Randwick Girls' High School and I speak on behalf of the Randwick Girls' High School community where I am an officer on the P&C. I am a past Office Bearer of Randwick Boys' High School P&C and past Office Bearer at Randwick Public School P&C. I am wholeheartedly committed to public education but lament the current condition of our public high schools.

RBHS & RGHS buildings were designed last century with no significant upgrade in more than 50 years. We have over 900 students and 63 teaching staff going to school in substandard, unsafe and non-inclusive facilities.

Some of our main frustrations around the SINSW upgrade project are:

- Project uncertainty
- Lack of transparency
- Lack of communication
- Lack of accountability
- Inadequate community consultation
- Mixed messages from Treasury (budget lines)
- Protracted planning phase (4 years and counting)
- Noncommittal timeframe
- Noncommittal budget
- Slow updates to SINSW website
- The announcement of more and more projects, while current ones are languishing

Our school community would like a commitment from SINSW and Treasury about the promised upgrades to Randwick Boys' High School and Randwick Girls' High Schools.

We have provided vital information for members to consider and we will be happy to answer any questions you may have. We hope that this Inquiry brings about some improvement in the way infrastructure is delivered to schools in NSW.

Leanne Bergan
Randwick NSW 2031

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Glossary of Terms

AMU	Asset Management Unit
CBP	Community Building Partnership (NSW government)
DoE	Department of Education
EFSG	Educational Facilities Standards Guidelines
INSW	Infrastructure NSW
IWB	Interactive whiteboard
LGA	Local Government Area
MPC	Multi Purpose Centre (Hall)
P&C	Parents & Citizens Association
PMW	Planned maintenance works
RBHS	Randwick Boys' High School
RGHS	Randwick Girls' High School
SINSW	School Infrastructure NSW
SLA	Service Level Agreement
SSCG	Secondary School Community Group (Bondi)
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics

6th July 2022

Dear Committee members,

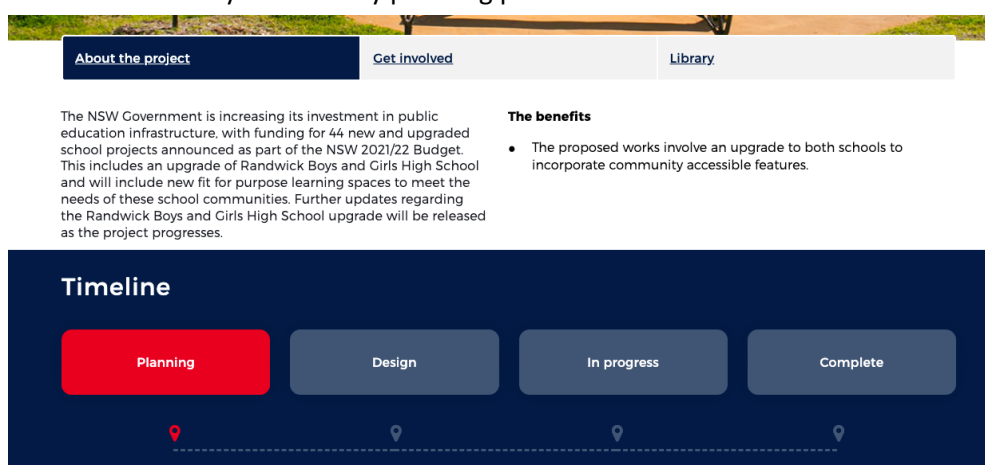
Thank you for the opportunity to present the experience of the Randwick Girls High School community with regard to the delivery of educational facilities and infrastructure. This submission is designed to provide you with as much information as we could source about the upgrade project for Randwick Boys' and Randwick Girls' High Schools.

1. Executive Summary

In June 2018 RBHS and RGHS were announced for upgrades by the NSW Government as part of a \$6b investment program.^(8.1) In August 2018 Schools Infrastructure announced that our schools would be prioritised for planning. (Appendix B). A project team was established including a Project Reference Group with one representative from each P&C. On 10th March 2021, a Business Case for the upgrade project was finalised and endorsed (Appendix A page 3). The business case highlighted that many of our facilities fall below current building and safety codes, do not meet current EFSG and in some cases do not exist to deliver core curriculum subjects. The business case concluded on page 21 that "Subject to detailed development in consultation with stakeholders in 2021, the project is *ready to proceed to delivery*." The project cost ~\$60m was finalised with Treasury in mid 2021.

In mid November the project management team confirmed to the schools that \$5 million (joint funding) was approved and that the money would be managed by the AMU (responsible for minor works). In subsequent meetings (without P&C representation) the projects were scaled back to "basics" that we consider to be maintenance e.g. replacing Hall floorboards at RBHS and replacing leaking louvres in the MPC at RGHS. As at July 2022, the project has not progressed from the initial planning phase on the Schools Infrastructure website, no upgrade work has commenced, no stakeholder engagement has occurred, NSW Budget papers fall well short of major upgrades and RGHS has not received any PMW funding since 2020 (~\$2m maintenance funding). Our school community is understandably frustrated that "major upgrades" seem to have morphed into basic maintenance of decrepit infrastructure.

Progress 2018 - 2022: four years of early planning phase!

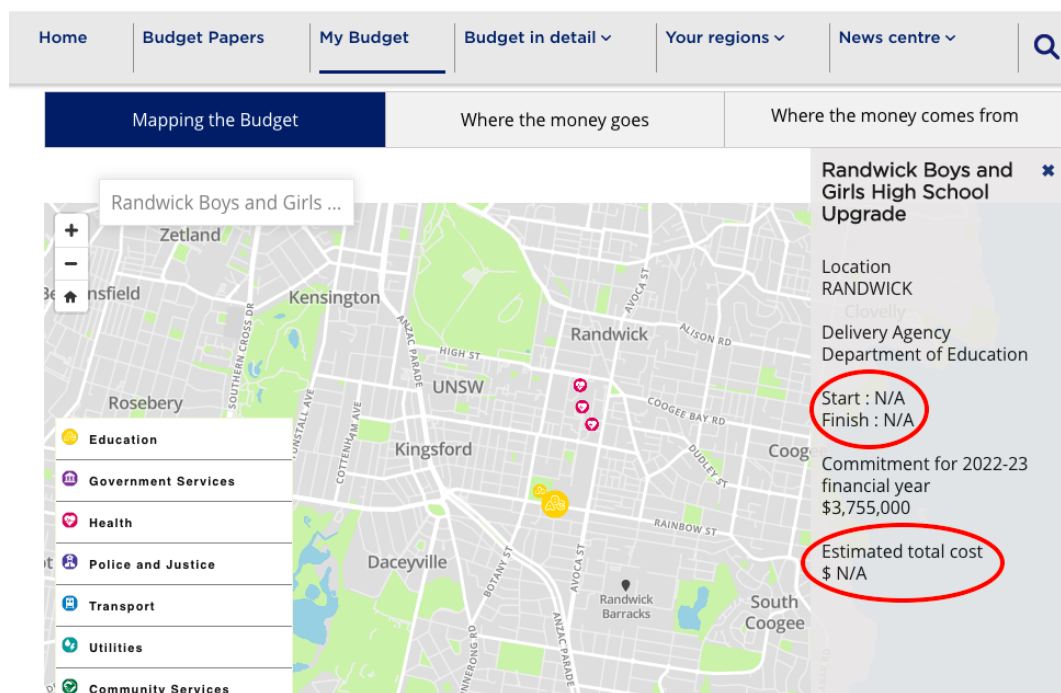


Randwick HS Project Funding (Appendix A page 20)

Funding Year	budget assumption	Actual Budget (8.2)
2020/21	\$930,000	\$0
2021/22	\$10,060,000	\$5,000,000
2022/23	\$29,370,000	\$3,755,000
2023/24	\$18,060,000	n/a
2024/25	\$1,460,000	n/a
TOTAL	\$59,880,000	n/a

Project uncertainty: no start or finish date, no estimated total cost?

NSW Budget
2022-23



2. Demographic

RGHS is situated in the Randwick LGA. It has 909 students: 63 teaching staff and 11 non-teaching staff. (8.3) Randwick Boys' High School and Girls' High Schools are the only single-sex comprehensive government schools within the Eastern Suburbs Secondary School Community Group (SSCG), which includes 6 government and 20 non-government high schools. A community survey in 2019 supported the call for RBHS to become co-ed however the department decided to retain the schools in their current form to offer single-sex choice. Approximately 59% of RGHS students are non-local and 41% are local. (8.4) There is a disproportionate number of local enrolments in non-government schools with only 26% of eligible students enrolled in a government high school – this is *less than half of the state-wide average*. (Appendix A)

3. The Need For Upgrade

The Business Case highlights that “Learning spaces that are not Fit For Purpose (FFP) do not allow the delivery of best-practice pedagogies which lead to improved educational outcomes. Moreover, schools without FFP learning spaces may not be able to deliver specialised courses of the NSW curriculum, *limiting students' options and future opportunities*. Without upgrades, the acute contrast with private school provision within the Eastern Suburbs will remain. At present, both schools have significant areas that do not meet the definition of fit for purpose learning spaces set out in the EFSGs. In addition, a number of functional areas are not present – Senior Learning (both schools) and STEM/TAS (girls school) are not provided. *This affects the educational attainment of students, as well as the enrolment of students from the area.*” (Appendix A page 36)

The schools were designed and built over 50 years ago, the spaces are poorly arranged, the facilities are dated and in need of upgrade including ventilation systems that no longer operate, unflued gas heaters, poor lighting and emergency systems and concrete cancer. These poor conditions are impacting our school operations and pose considerable health and safety risks to students and staff. The current standard of facilities is also constraining the ability to offer community use.

Specific shortfalls include:

- existing buildings do not comply with the Building Code of Australia (BCA);
- the schools contain concrete cancer
- access and egress does not comply with the Disability Discrimination Act;
- services and equipment do not comply with fire safety regulations;
- a new substation is required to support electrical infrastructure;
- the older style school facilities do not meet current pedagogy and are not future-focused;
- most specialist spaces do not meet EFSG requirements;
- classrooms have unflued heaters (require air conditioning);
- STEM Learning Spaces are needed to allow delivery of current curriculum (only 2 of 6 science labs have been upgraded in the last 10 years);

- food tech kitchens, some science labs and workshops are now obsolete. The existing kitchen learning space currently used to teach Cert 11 Hospitality F&B is not fully compliant with the Hospitality Course Information Guide.
- there are no EFSG TAS spaces;
- classrooms are not equipped for future-focused learning;
- there is no fitness unit;
- there is no senior learning unit (and insufficient senior study space);
- lack of computer learning space within the Library;
- lack of Botany/Zoology learning spaces to support popular subjects such as Marine Biology;
- lack of acoustic treatment for performance teaching spaces.

4. Benefits of Upgrade

Upgrades to RBHS & RGHS would create increased in-catchment enrolment, allowing students to walk or ride bikes to/from school, reducing motor vehicle use for school runs. Upgraded facilities would bring a sense of pride, inclusion and connection to the local community and provide more opportunity for community use. With the proposed upgrades, it can be expected that community use will grow significantly in terms of sports facilities, halls and classrooms. (Appendix A page 34,40)

Students who learn in fit-for-purpose, future-focused learning spaces have more opportunity to develop creativity and innovation; communication and collaboration; research and information fluency; critical thinking, problem solving and decision making; digital citizenship; and technology operations and concepts. Classrooms that provide ambient temperature control, soundproofing and good quality airflow help students to focus and engage. The flow-on effect is higher test scores and higher lifetime earnings. Students deserve this opportunity and teachers deserve an improved working environment.

5. Impact of the delays

Upgrade uncertainty is putting considerable stress on our school community and maintenance backlogs are now compounding the problem with ~\$2m of recurrent PMW budget missing for 2020 and 2021. There are ongoing morale, health and safety concerns for teachers and students. We have seen a 7% decline in enrolments with feedback from potential families that the school looks neglected and run-down. Due to the upgrade uncertainty P&C has faced grant funding constraints. Our 2018 CBP grant funding for a Solar power project would have provided clean, renewable energy and saved the school ~\$14,000 per year in energy running costs (Appendix C).

6. Desired Outcomes

- There should be no new school infrastructure announcements until the backlog of schools already announced is addressed. The schools already on the new/upgrade list should be completed or at the very least moved beyond the planning phase.
- There should be clear SLAs from planning phase to project completion. Reasonable timeframe eg planning <12 months and project completion <4 years from announcement.
- There must be transparency of process and increased P&C engagement.
- There should be a community liaison officer available for contact from the planning phase to project completion.
- A draft Business Case must be made available to P&C for consideration and comment.
- A final Business Case must be made available to P&C prior to Treasury submission.
- Estimated total cost of the project should be reflected in the budget line, not just an approved partial expense for the current financial year. The SINSW website should also reflect this information promptly.
- The timeline on the SINSW website should include more meaningful information and accurate milestones including Treasury approval and budget information.
- A project should be publicly announced and updated on the SINSW website once approved by Treasury - for improved accountability.
- Any meeting to discuss project variation with school Principals must include a P&C representative.
- Meaningful, ongoing updates from project team/group to P&C meetings.
- Meaningful communication (from DoE/SINSW or representative) with the school community at all stages of an upgrade, including the planning phase.
- The upgrade program should factor in accountability from SINSW and provide certainty for schools.

RGHS P&C specifically seeks confirmation as to whether RBHS and RGHS are receiving major upgrades of ~\$60m total; or only receiving \$3.7m as per current budget line. We have received no meaningful update from either the DoE or SINSW. Our Local Member Dr Marjorie O'Neill and other members have made multiple requests for information on our behalf, especially through Budget Estimates - Questions and the Portfolio Committee No. 3 - Education. (8.5 pages 11-12; 8.8 pages 22-23; 8.9, 8.10 pages 4, 52-53; 8.11 pages 69-70; 8.12)

7. Images



8. Sources

- 8.1. <https://www.schoolinfrastructure.nsw.gov.au/news/2018/06/biggest-schools-building-program-in-history-gets-even-bigger.html>
- 8.2. <https://www.treasury.nsw.gov.au/documents-resources/documents-library>
- 8.3. <https://www.myschool.edu.au/school/41155>
- 8.4. <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/la/papers/pages/qanda-tracking-details.aspx?pk=90615>
- 8.5. <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/lcdocs/other/16789/Compiled%20supplementary%20questions%20-%20PC%203%20-%20Education%20and%20Early%20Learning%20-%20%20Budget%20Estimates%202021-2022%20-%20V2.pdf>
- 8.6. <https://www.schoolinfrastructure.nsw.gov.au/find-your-school.html>

Supplementary Questions/Hansard:

- <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/lcdocs/other/16897/Answers%20to%20supplementary%20questions%201-263%20-%20Hon%20Sarah%20Mitchell%20MLC%20-%20Education%20and%20Early%20Learning.pdf>
- <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/Hansard/Pages/HansardResult.aspx#/docid/HANSARD-1323879322-106513>
- <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/lcdocs/other/12625/Answers%20to%20supplementary%20questions%20-%20PC%203%20Education%20and%20Early%20Childhood%20Learning%20-%20Mitchell%20-%20received%2030%20September%202019.pdf>
- <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/lcdocs/other/16896/Answers%20to%20QONs-%20Hon%20Sarah%20Mitchell%20MLC%20-%20Minister%20for%20Education%20and%20Early%20Learning%20-%20received%2029%20March%202022.pdf>
- <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/Hansard/Pages/HansardResult.aspx#/docid/HANSARD-1323879322-126129>

9. Appendix

- A. Randwick Final Business Case v1.6 final
- B. DoE - Schools Infrastructure RBHS & RGHS Project update flyer
- C. Solar My School RGHS Feasibility Study
- D. Correspondence 2019-09-18 RBHS P&C and SINSW
- E. Correspondence 2020-02-29 Leanne Bergan to Matt Thistlethwaite
- F. Correspondence 2020-03-27 Response to Leanne Bergan from SINSW
- G. Correspondence 2022-05-04 Response to Sarah Brill from SINSW