



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY INCLUSION
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Submission Cover Sheet

Inquiry into the management of ACT school infrastructure

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ACT school infrastructure

Submission for the inquiry into the management of ACT school infrastructure



**ACT Council of
Parents & Citizens
Associations**

The parent voice on public education

ACT Council of Parents & Citizens Associations is the representative body
for Parent & Citizen associations in the ACT.
Council represents over 60,000 parents in 89 ACT public schools.

*We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands and waters where we live, work and learn, and pay my
respects to elders past, present, and future.*

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Executive Summary

The ACT Council of Parents & Citizens Associations (Council) is a non-profit, non-government representative organisation whose objectives are to foster a quality public education system, provide support services for affiliate parent & citizens associations (P&Cs) and make representations to government on behalf of parents and carers across 89 public schools.

This submission is based on feedback from P&Cs, which includes their identification of school infrastructure and facilities priorities, feedback collected at member meetings and in some cases feedback provided by parents and carers. P&C infrastructure and facility priorities are included in Appendix 1.

At minimum, parents want schools to be safe, accessible and comfortable places. Parents and carers also want schools to be inspiring, welcoming places where students can shine. Council notes that parents and carers remain concerned about the presence and management of hazardous materials in schools.

P&Cs, parents and carers identify that capacity pressures at a number of schools is compromising the educational experience of students, with losses of school libraries, and specialist facilities such as art and music rooms. Although, schools have been able to access demountable classrooms to allow for school expansions, P&Cs identify that other increases to other school facilities such as bathrooms, playgrounds, outdoor spaces and car parking amongst others have been forgotten.

P&Cs have also raised the need for a clear and equitable framework to support maintenance of school infrastructure and facilities, at both the school and Education Directorate levels.

An extensive summary of recommendations is included below.

Should the committee require clarification or more information please contact our office on 6241 5759 or via email: contact@actparents.org.au

Summary of recommendations

Recommendation 1

Long-term funding is needed to ensure data informs hazardous materials management including maintenance and removal in schools.

Recommendation 2

The Education Directorate needs to continue to support schools communicate and engage with families on hazardous materials.

Recommendation 3

Council strongly urges the Education Directorate to address the recommendations of [the ACT Auditor-General's Report](#) to ensure clear and equitable framework to manage and oversee the maintenance of school infrastructure and facilities.

Recommendation 4

Council recommends a centralised team of property professionals is appointed to collaboratively lead development of school infrastructure and facility condition reports, management and maintenance plans (short, medium and long-term) in accordance with school needs.

Recommendation 5

The Education Directorate needs to have oversight over school infrastructure and facility maintenance to ensure that ACT schools are appropriately and equitably maintained.

Recommendation 6

Council contends that the identification of current and future school infrastructure needs in schools should be a collaborative community process with advice from qualified professionals, outlining an overall vision for the school, short, medium and long-term infrastructure plans and forecasting costs for budgeting

Recommendation 7

Council suggests that school communities be engaged in the identification of school infrastructure and facilities planning.

Recommendation 8

Council contends that parents would feel re-assured to see medium and long-term capacity plans for their schools.

Recommendation 9

Council urges the Education Directorate to remove all libraries and specialist facilities from all school capacity calculations.

Recommendation 10

The provision of Out of Hours School Care (OHSC) needs to be factored into capacity planning at the school and Education Directorate level. Capacity pressures should not prevent parents and carers from accessing OHSC for students.

Recommendation 11

Council recommends that demountable classrooms are only used for temporary increases in student capacity. Permanent growth in student projections should be accompanied by permanent classrooms with additional school facilities.

Recommendation 12

The ACT Government fund a cross-directorate approach to regional and town planning to ensure schools can begin planning for increases to capacity, and to allow land for new schools to be set aside

Recommendation 13

Council suggests the Education Directorate develop an equitable system to install heating and cooling in all ACT schools, for student and teacher comfort.

Recommendation 14

Council recommends the Education Directorate develop a clear system which supports public schools to protect and safeguard their infrastructure and facilities.

Recommendation 15

Council expects classrooms be designed to be accessible learning environments for students, to meet a variety of needs. Council considers that innovative solutions promoting accessibility should be prioritised in classroom design of new schools and those undergoing refurbishment.

Recommendation 16

Council would like to see medium and long-term plans to ensure all public schools are accessible by 2030.

Recommendation 17

Council suggests the Education Directorate support the extension of access to remote learning as a more accessible form of education for some students.

Recommendation 18

Council recommends that schools use environmentally sustainable materials, where there is no significant increase in affordability.

Recommendation 19

Council recommends that schools under capacity pressures be prioritised for traffic management plans. Additionally, permanent school expansions should include additional corresponding car parking and traffic management measures.

Recommendation 20

A wholistic approach to development approval for development sites near schools should include traffic and parking management plans, to avoid increasing safety risk to students.

Recommendation 21

Council considers schools could benefit from access to centralised expert advice in the design and location of bike and scooter storage facilities.

Recommendation 22

All school users need to have confidence that the Education Directorate has a clear and equitable process to prioritise accessibility modifications to school infrastructure and facilities.

Recommendation 23

Decisions to fence or not-fence ACT public schools should be made by the school community, with some input by local community. The protection and safeguarding of public school infrastructure and facilities, to reduce maintenance costs, must be prioritised over local community access.

Introduction

This submission outlines the concerns and issues raised regarding school infrastructure by P&Cs, parents and carers. Council recognises that a number of factors affect the condition of infrastructure across the ACT's 89 public schools, such as the date of construction, the presence or absence of regular maintenance and access to additional funding for example; direct funding by the Education Directorate, commercial arrangements or via grants.

At minimum, P&Cs and their parents and carers want ACT public schools to be safe, accessible and comfortable places. However, parents (and carers) also expect all public schools to be inspiring, welcoming places, where students can shine. To achieve this Council considers that schools and their communities need a clear and equitable framework to guide the management and maintenance of school infrastructure for future generations.

1. Management of hazardous materials in schools

A significant number of ACT schools (76) contain hazardous materials, generally correlating with the availability of materials and practices at the time of construction. Council recognises that older schools are more likely to contain hazardous substances and materials.

Council understands the occurrence, location and methods of treatment for hazardous materials in ACT schools is documented in a register. These registers are highly technical documents usually located within a school's front office. Council considers, the technical nature of the register and location of a physical copy in a school office limit accessibility by school communities, reflected by informal feedback in 2020. In response to community concerns regarding the presence and management of hazardous materials in ACT schools, Council successfully advocated for an expert panel and to increase accessibility to information on hazardous materials in ACT schools. Council is pleased that the ACT Education Directorate have been advised by the expert panel and information on hazardous materials in ACT schools is now more accessible, on the directorate's website.

Council is concerned that short term funding cycles have impacted the management of hazardous materials in schools. With limited resources available for hazardous material removal, schools may be focusing on less costly maintenance techniques. While Council acknowledges the importance of appropriate maintenance techniques to prevent and limit exposure to hazardous materials, we strongly believe rigorous longer-term planning and funding are required.

Council considers a wholistic assessment needs to inform hazardous material infrastructure management in each ACT public school. Such analysis needs to compare the costs associated with continued regular maintenance over time to determine the optimal time for removal. Council notes that in order to do this effectively, each school would need a detailed infrastructure and facility condition report, including assessment of fit for purpose and school needs. Council expects the Education Directorate and schools to continue to communicate and engage with families on hazardous materials.

Recommendation 1

Long-term funding is needed to ensure data informs hazardous materials management including maintenance and removal in schools.

Recommendation 2

The Education Directorate needs to continue to support schools communicate and engage with families on hazardous materials.

2. Planning of ongoing maintenance of school facilities

Council notes the findings and supports the recommendations of the ACT Auditor-General's Report into the *Maintenance of ACT Government School Infrastructure* Report No.11/2019.

With 89 public schools located across the ACT, Council expects a clear and equitable framework to manage and oversee the maintenance of school infrastructure and facilities. Based on feedback from P&Cs, Council believes the condition of school infrastructure and facilities across the ACT varies significantly. Additionally, it appears as though some public schools have been more successful in having the Education Directorate resource major maintenance works, whilst other

schools have been left behind. This suggests that maintenance of school infrastructure and facilities across the ACT has been inconsistent and inequitable.

Maintenance framework

Council appreciates the planning of ongoing maintenance of school infrastructure and facilities is complex with differing planning and maintenance responsibilities resting at the school, Education Directorate, and by a service agreement with ACT Property Group. This may explain why school communities are confused about who is responsible for different types of school maintenance works.

Council believes that ACT Property Group are responsible for assessment and planned maintenance to ensure all schools comply with legislative obligations, for example fire monitoring systems. Accordingly, this service appears to provide oversight across all public schools, promoting consistent and equitable maintenance outcomes by qualified personnel. Information provided to Council suggests that this component of school maintenance operates consistently and equitably.

All other areas relating to the maintenance of school infrastructure and facilities appear to be met by schools and the Education Directorate's specific works program. Whilst we believe maintenance responsibilities are defined in the school operations manual, feedback from P&Cs indicates significant confusion within school communities over responsibility for planning of ongoing maintenance of school infrastructure and facilities. It is arguable that use of the term maintenance without further guidance is ambiguous. Maintenance, may be considered to include activities such as the painting of walls, replacing broken taps as well as larger projects like complete bathroom renovations. At the same time, it is unclear what types of projects might be eligible under the specific works program for 'major works.' Arguably, complete bathroom renovations may also be considered major works.

It is unclear whether schools are responsible for the development of building and infrastructure; condition reports, management plans and maintenance plans. Council expects school facilities and infrastructure management and maintenance plans should require approval by the school boards, consistent with the school boards' strategic planning and financial management roles. Templates provided by the Education Directorate, may assist schools and their boards plan for ongoing maintenance of infrastructure and facilities. However, feedback from P&Cs indicates that not all schools have condition reports, management and maintenance plans. Additionally, where schools have completed the condition reports and maintenance plans their content is expected to vary.

Council is unsure why educational professionals as school leaders are expected to perform condition reports, management and maintenance plans for school infrastructure and facilities. Irrespective of any templates or documentary guidance provided, Council considers, school leaders to be professional educators who cannot reasonably be expected to develop quality infrastructure and facility condition reports, management and maintenance plans. Council believes that maintenance of school infrastructure and facilities should operate similarly to other occupiers of government assets. Specifically, schools should be able to contact a centralised team of property professionals to collaboratively develop building condition reports, management plans, maintenance plans and oversee the maintenance in accordance with school needs. Coordinating a centralised team of property professionals to lead development of condition reports, management and maintenance plans will provide greater consistency in school infrastructure and facilities across the ACT.

Furthermore, P&Cs identify that most school maintenance activities are reactive as opposed to planned preventative maintenance. Information provided to Council by P&Cs on the state of infrastructure in their public schools indicates that a significant number of schools are aging and in need of major works, such as refurbishments to, replacement or upgrades to playgrounds, outdoor spaces, bathrooms and specialist facilities such as kitchens. Arguably, these types of projects are very expensive to undertake and may be complicated by the presence of hazardous materials. Council believes that in some cases major maintenance works have not been planned or budgeted for at all. This lack of medium to long-term planning identifies a need for the Education Directorate to have oversight over school infrastructure and facility maintenance to ensure schools are maintained.

Recommendation 3

Council strongly urges the Education Directorate to address the recommendations of [the ACT Auditor-General's Report](#) to ensure clear and equitable framework to manage and oversee the maintenance of school infrastructure and facilities.

Recommendation 4

Council recommends a centralised team of property professionals is appointed to collaboratively lead development of school infrastructure and facility condition reports, management and maintenance plans (short, medium and long-term) in accordance with school needs.

Recommendation 5

The Education Directorate needs to have oversight over school infrastructure and facility maintenance to ensure that ACT schools are appropriately and equitably maintained.

Identification of current and future infrastructure needs in schools

Council believes the current process to identify current and future infrastructure needs is undertaken by each school, usually by a schools' principal or leadership team. Feedback from P&Cs indicates that some schools consult broadly with their community to identify school infrastructure needs, whilst others rely on school staff. Council considers, reliance on school staff to identify current and future infrastructure needs in schools is fraught with risk. Firstly, while school staff are well-experienced to advise on the need for teaching-related infrastructure, Council expects that staff lack the qualifications to foresee and identify when bathrooms should be repaired, upgraded or replaced. Secondly, school staff may change frequently and with a change in personnel often a change in school priorities arises too.

Additionally, P&Cs note that some schools appear to have been more successful in seeking resources and or extra support from the Education Directorate in completing maintenance and infrastructure works. In some cases, it appears that schools have benefited due to their relationship with the Education Directorate rather than on need. Council believes this has resulted in neighbouring schools' infrastructure and facilities varying in condition, functionality and appeal. In some cases, the condition of school infrastructure and facilities furthers perceptions of segregation between the haves and have nots. To address concerns of equity, Council recommends that centralised professional supports are needed to assist schools with the identification and planning on infrastructure needs at the school level. Providing centralised professional infrastructure and maintenance supports to schools, will promote consistency and equity (*Recommendation 4*).

Recommendation 6

Council contends that the identification of current and future school infrastructure needs in schools should be a collaborative community process with advice from qualified professionals, outlining an overall vision for the school, short, medium and long-term infrastructure plans and forecasting costs for budgeting.

Regular maintenance of schools

Feedback to Council highlights that some public schools have lacked maintenance plans and regular planned maintenance. In such cases only reactive maintenance may have been performed. Council considers that a lack of planned maintenance over time, can adversely impact schools and their communities down the line. Council recognises that the movement of families and staff through schools, increases the risk that short-term planning is favoured. In older schools, this lack of regular planned maintenance is likely to substantially increase the amount of work and resources required to bring school infrastructure and facilities in line with current standards. P&Cs of these schools identify that the school community often feel that their school has been forgotten. A small number of P&Cs have cited major bathroom works are required. In some cases, older schools have bathrooms with old materials and grout, where the smell is so potent students avoid going unless in an absolute emergency. Parents and carers are concerned that bathroom avoidance may have longer-term health implications.

Furthermore, Council is seriously concerned that a small number of schools haven't had corresponding budget allocations to cater for medium and long-term planned maintenance. Whilst provision of a centralised infrastructure and facility maintenance team, would go some way to address these concerns, Council believes there is a need for increased oversight from the Education Directorate to prevent schools being disadvantaged by earlier decisions (*Recommendation 5*).

Council expects that the infrastructure and facility priorities of P&Cs will be different to those of students and staff. A copy of school infrastructure and facility priorities provided by some P&Cs is available at Appendix 1

Recommendation 7

Council suggests that school communities be engaged in the identification of school infrastructure and facilities planning.

3. Capacity planning

Planning for new schools and increases to existing schools' capacity has been an ongoing concern for P&Cs, parents and families over recent years. Council remains concerned that the ACT Governments' commitment to building new schools, and expanding others is too slow and places an unreasonable capacity pressure on existing schools.

Capacity pressures, school infrastructure, facilities and planning

School infrastructure and facilities should allow schools to operate in an educationally best practice manner. Currently, the capacity pressures in some schools all over the ACT are so strong that, compromises are being made to accommodate more students. Over the last few years P&Cs have identified the permanent loss of school libraries, loss of specialist facilities such as music and art

rooms, school halls which are unable to cater for whole of school events, insufficient bathrooms, insufficient traffic and parking; and rostered access to facilities at lunchtimes: libraries, playgrounds, outdoor spaces. Whilst short-term compromises may be acceptable, Council considers that the ACT Government needs to decide how long these compromises are in place. Feedback from P&Cs clearly indicates that families want schools which don't compromise on educational experiences. At the same time, P&Cs recognise and appreciate that their school principals work tirelessly to meet student needs within the available budget and infrastructure.

Recommendation 8

Council contends that parents would feel re-assured to see medium and long-term capacity plans for their schools.

Libraries, Specialist facilities and OHSC

As identified above, many schools under capacity pressures have lost important school places such as libraries, music and art rooms to make way for additional classrooms. Feedback from P&Cs clearly shows that parents, carers and students consider libraries and specialist facilities part of an essential best practice education. School communities want libraries and specialist facilities to benefit future generations of students. Council strongly recommends the Education Directorate remove all libraries and specialist facilities from school capacity calculations.

Capacity pressures in schools are also impacting Out of Hours School Care (OHSC) providers. The demand for space to accommodate classrooms for students means that OHSC services are often limited to the spaces they can use within a school. An inability to increase physical space, limits the number of students that can be cared for. Increased school capacity also increases a demand for OHSC. Accordingly, OHSC services are struggling to meet demand, with waiting lists. Waiting lists for OHSC, impacts parents and carers ability to work and may require alternative care or work arrangements.

Information provided to Council indicates that schools with capacity pressures are developing year to year plans to accommodate student numbers. Often capacity planning does not include P&Cs or the broader school community. However, P&Cs really want to be included in capacity and projection planning. Council contends that parents would feel re-assured to see medium and long-term capacity plans for their schools.

Recommendation 9

Council urges the Education Directorate to remove all libraries and specialist facilities from all school capacity calculations.

Recommendation 10

The provision of Out of Hours School Care (OHSC) needs to be factored into capacity planning at the school and Education Directorate level. Capacity pressures should not prevent parents and carers from accessing OHSC for students.

Urban infill and increases in density

Increases to urban density arising from urban infill is seeing permanent increases in the demand for schooling across the ACT. The effect of permanent increases in capacity are best demonstrated by the enrolment data for schools in the Inner North, most of which are at or above capacity. Council

considers that demountable classrooms are only a temporary measure, to cater for temporary increases in student enrolments. P&Cs believe that permanent growth in student projections should be accompanied by permanent school classrooms, with increases to corresponding school facilities. Many P&Cs of school under capacity pressures have identified the use of demountable classrooms without increases to the capacity of bathrooms, the library, playgrounds, outdoor spaces, halls and parking.

Regional and town planning in areas of new development (green field) factors in the need for schooling at the time of planning. However, Council contends that regional and town plans fail to adequately consider the impact urban infill development (brown field) has on schooling. Council believes that failure to consider and address the impact on schooling at regional and town planning phases for urban infill development (brown field) prolongs uncertainty and reduces alternatives. Council strongly believes that sustained developments such as those in centralised town centres creates the need for new local schools. Considering the impact of urban infill on schooling may include the government setting aside land for public schools prior to selling land and having to later source suitable land.

Recommendation 11

Council recommends that demountable classrooms are only used for temporary increases in student capacity. Permanent growth in student projections should be accompanied by permanent classrooms with additional school facilities.

Recommendation 12

The ACT Government fund a cross-directorate approach to regional and town planning to ensure schools can begin planning for increases to capacity, and to allow land for new schools to be set aside.

4. Heating and cooling in schools

A significant concern for P&Cs is the lack of air conditioning in schools or ineffective heating and cooling in schools. Parents and carers understand that students and teachers work best when they are comfortable. Council considers the Education Directorate should maintain data identifying schools without adequate heating and cooling. As identified earlier, Council would be supportive of a coordinated and systemic approach to ensuring all public schools are heated and cooled to ensure student and teacher comfort and maximise educational outcomes.

Recommendation 13

Council suggests the Education Directorate develop an equitable system to install heating and cooling in all ACT schools, for student and teacher comfort.

5. Sporting facilities suitability and demand

A number of P&Cs have highlighted the poor condition or state of disrepair of sporting facilities at their school, such as ovals and courts (basketball and netball). Council recognises that school ovals can be challenging for schools to manage and maintain. Often public school ovals double-up as shared community green space. Whilst public school ovals may be well used by neighbouring community, too often misuse by some creates additional management issues for the school. P&Cs identify that school staff are often required to remove hazards from sharps to animal faeces before students can access school ovals. Public school sporting facilities are also subject to vandalism,

often requiring repairs. These occurrences can have a significant effect on school morale and increase less visible costs to school, for example staff time.

In some cases, public school communities have sought fencing which has been effective in safeguarding and protecting school infrastructure and facilities. Council strongly believes that school fencing should be a decision made together by schools' and their communities. Council considers, that whilst neighbourhood use may be considered in the decision-making process, the protection, management and maintenance of school infrastructure and facilities should be given more weight.

Recommendation 14

Council recommends the Education Directorate develop a clear system which supports public schools to protect and safeguard their infrastructure and facilities.

6. Classroom design

The classroom design of ACT schools varies depending on the era of construction. Newer schools tend to have more flexible learning spaces which can be adjusted to meet the changing needs of a school population over time. However, the oldest ACT schools tend to have a more traditional design while those in-between feature large open plan rooms designed for three to four classes. P&Cs, parents and carers want to see carefully planned classroom design that is reflected in the construction of new schools and the refurbishment of older schools. Critically, large open plan classrooms that are often noisy reverberating environments, can reduce a students' capacity to engage in learning. Experience suggests that this often effects students with sensory needs, learning difficulties and those with disabilities.

Council supports inclusive education, where every student is supported to access and engage with high quality learning; and be an active participant in their school community. Council believes that a range of education settings should be available to choose from such as mainstream classroom with support, small education units within mainstream schools and dedicated schools to meet student need. Following the experience COVID-19 many parents and carers found remote learning more beneficial for their child or young person. At present only a very small number of public schools offer remote learning capability.

Recommendation 15

Council expects classrooms be designed to be accessible learning environments for students, to meet a variety of needs. Council considers that innovative solutions promoting accessibility should be prioritised in classroom design of new schools and those undergoing refurbishment.

Recommendation 16

The Education Directorate need to assist schools to develop medium and long-term infrastructure and facility plans to ensure all public schools are accessible by 2030.

Recommendation 17

Council suggests the Education Directorate support the extension of access to remote learning as a more accessible form of education for some students.

7. Environmental sustainability of school infrastructure and facilities

Recommendation 18

Council recommends that schools use environmentally sustainable materials, where there is no significant increase in affordability.

8. Parking and bike storage facilities

P&Cs, parents and carers consistently identify the need for better parking and traffic management across ACT schools. The development of traffic management plans, and active travel routes by Transport Canberra City Services has delivered slight improvements to school traffic and parking at some schools. Council is unsure whether all public schools have traffic management plans.

Additionally, some schools under capacity pressures continue to identify increased concerns over traffic and parking safety. Council understands that school car parks are not designed to cater to the entire school population at a point in time. Council notes that insufficient car parking, combined with a lack of clear drop-off and pick-up systems appears to plague all schools. However, school expansion places significant demand on school car parking and drop-off and pick-systems, which Council considers must increase safety risks.

Furthermore, some schools are facing additional traffic and parking issues with an increased volume of near-by construction and development. P&Cs have reported obstructed views from illegal on and off-street parking, and difficulty to access school or legal on-street car parking due to additional demand, which is considered to increase student safety risks. See Appendix 1 for specific parking and traffic issues.

Some P&Cs identify inadequate bike storage facilities, such as those which are poorly located or not fully enclosed. Council appreciates that P&Cs and schools often work collaboratively to provide school infrastructure and bike storage facilities are an example of the types of projects undertaken. Council believes that inadequate storage facilities for bikes and scooters, may increase the likelihood of theft.

Recommendation 19

Council recommends that schools under capacity pressures be prioritised for traffic management plans. Additionally, permanent school expansions should include additional corresponding car parking and traffic management measures.

Recommendation 20

A wholistic approach to development approval for development sites near schools should include traffic and parking management plans, to avoid increasing safety risk to students.

Recommendation 21

Council considers schools could benefit from access to centralised expert advice in the design and location of bike and scooter storage facilities.

9. Accessibility for students, staff and parents and carers with disabilities

Parents and carers expect schools to be accessible places for all. Council expects new schools to be designed and constructed to meet accessibility standards. Council acknowledges that accessibility is a particular issue for the ACT's older public schools. Understandably, retrofitting

older schools is costly, complicated by additional factors such as the presence of hazardous materials and may include the need for re-design.

Council understands, schools with students requiring modifications to allow accessibility are prioritised.

Recommendation 22

All school users need to have confidence that the Education Directorate has a clear and equitable process to prioritise accessibility modifications to school infrastructure and facilities.

The Education Directorate need to assist schools to develop medium and long-term infrastructure and facility plans to ensure all public schools are accessible by 2030 (*Recommendation 15*).

10. Accessibility of school facilities by local communities

In the ACT, public school facilities, particularly playgrounds and ovals have customarily been accessible to local communities. However, over recent years many public schools have resorted to fencing school facilities to protect and safeguard assets from the impacts of vandalism and to mitigate risks associated with hazard management. Information from P&Cs identifies that schools which are fenced often have better and well-maintained outdoor facilities such as outdoor classroom areas, ovals, and playgrounds. Council expects that fencing a school reduces costs associated with vandalism and decreases the less visible staffing costs required for hazard management. Accordingly, schools with fencing and their P&Cs appear to have more resources to invest in outdoor school infrastructure and facilities. Council appreciates that decisions to fence a school may restrict access to local communities, however, we consider that protection, safeguarding of public school infrastructure and facilities and cost reduction must be prioritised.

At the same time, Council recognises and respects that school communities (staff, students, families, P&C) may not support school fencing. Council recommends that decisions to fence a school be made by the school community, with some input from local community.

Local community organisations are able to formally access school facilities with an agreement in place, with a cost-based recovery fee. Council believes that charging small fees allow schools to recuperate costs whilst promoting social capital of the local community.

Recommendation 23

Decisions to fence or not-fence ACT public schools should be made by the school community, with some input by local community. The protection and safeguarding of public school infrastructure and facilities, to reduce maintenance costs, must be prioritised over local community access.

11. Other relevant matters

Not applicable.

Appendix 1 – Priorities of P&Cs

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Anonymous School

The P&C's Top 5 infrastructure priorities:

1. Bathroom upgrades across the whole facility (this includes both student and adult bathrooms).
2. Installation of an air lock and upgrade of the front office for safety, security and accessibility.
3. Outdoor covered walkway roof replacement to make it weatherproof.
4. Traffic flow solution and provision of adequate car parking. [Students and families exiting the front gate of the school currently have to cross a road/carpark within the school grounds.]
5. Levelled playing area within school grounds.
6. Resurfacing of the basketball court adjacent to the school so that it has an even surface.
7. Improvement to the lighting outside the front office and into the car park, as at the moment there is none. When we attend the school grounds when it is dark (particularly in winter) for P&C meetings, and after school events, it is very dangerous when walking through the car park as visibility is zero.
8. The netball courts require resurfacing so they have an even surface. New rings are also required for the courts.

Campbell Primary school

The P&C's Top 5 infrastructure priorities:

1. Sporting facilities. Fixed courts; pitches and associated goals/nets. Clever infrastructure that can create multi use courts. Existing sporting facilities are in a state of disrepair in many schools (Campbell Primary and Campbell High. For example broken basketball rings, holes in asphalt courts.
2. Maintenance (of cleanliness/gardens/sporting facilities/buildings). Management and supervision of BSO's requires additional support from Directorate maintenance groups.
3. Classroom design and function.(Including more information on open plan pedagogy and how to mitigate impact on children who are not middle of the road.)
4. Additional carparks as well as changes to surrounding street parking to 2 or 3 hour to allow parking spaces to be free for pick up and drop off.
5. Safety for children walking to and from school due to hazardous traffic conditions. There are few footpaths in the suburb adding to safety concerns and limiting ability for children to walk to school or to pick up points. Consultation with other government bodies to build footpaths around the suburb.

Cranleigh School

The P&C's Top 5 infrastructure priorities:

1. Upgrade/repair of both Top and Bottom Main Playgrounds, including fencing & irrigation system to accommodate sporting facilities for student use; new Australian safety standardized play equipment that includes disability accessibility/sensory needs of students.
2. New access path from Preschool playground to lower main playground, to allow safe access for students with disabilities. This will allow safe access to our designated Emergency Evacuation Point within the school.
3. Swipe cards for safe accessibility of all doors throughout the school.
4. Repair to identified leaking areas of school roof.
5. Creation of extra car parking spaces for both parent access and staff parking.

Farrer Primary School

The P&C's Top 5 infrastructure priorities:

1. Outdoor play ground equipment and regulation sized netball and soccer pitch.
2. Landscaping, including paving and fencing (needs replacement as is, not with the tall back barricade)
3. Space for library / art or specialist subjects
4. School hall that fits students and parents.
5. Bathroom upgrades

Gordon Primary School

The P&C's Top 5 infrastructure priorities:

1. Air conditioning in the main units (demountables already have air con).
2. Maintenance and appropriateness of play equipment, including shade structures
3. Out-dated/missing parking signage and line markings
4. Lighting in all toilet blocks
5. Need for a covered bike rack (previous issues with theft as people can easily climb into the cage even if the gate is locked)

Mawson Primary School

The P&C's Top 5 infrastructure priorities at:

1. Airconditioning in all classrooms
2. Bike racks
3. Bigger/more playground equipment
4. New permanent classrooms to replace the demountable ones
5. Permanent soccer pitch/goals – could be hired out to local clubs, or used as the basis of a school-based team or club

Miles Franklin Primary School

The P&C's Top 5 infrastructure priorities:

1. Toilets - Both refurbishment of existing children's toilets which are showing their age and the addition of enough staff toilets to meet standards.
2. Cover for demountable class room - Cover (e.g. verandah) in front of one of the portable class rooms so children don't get wet entering the class room during inclement weather. Also, so that children's bags aren't exposed to the weather at all times.
3. Additional playground equipment with shade
4. Addition of a sensory play space

5. Play equipment outside of school fences - Addition of play equipment outside of school fences to remediate the reduced access the fence causes the general community.

Monash Primary School

The P&C's Top 5 infrastructure priorities:

1. The school carpark. This carpark is currently unsafe for students, parents and carers and staff at Monash Primary School. Also, students who require a disability carpark need to wheel out into traffic. There have been countless near misses which is incredibly concerning,
2. The heating and cooling system. This does not currently work effectively or efficiently in every classroom at Monash Primary School. Students and staff should not have to learn and teach in these conditions.
3. The school oval. The oval has deteriorated and in urgent need of repair for it to be safe for students and staff. The artificial turf is in such poor condition that many parents and carers have reported finding it in their children's underwear. It also has no lighting which means the school cannot generate income from it from those who wish to hire it at night.
4. Accessible toilets. The current ones are in unacceptable condition and Monash Primary School needs to be able to provide facilities that are clean and functional as a basic human need.
5. Space for learning and sharing. Monash Primary School cannot fit their entire student population in their school hall. This also means there is no space for parents and carers to attend events such as assemblies. Additionally, Monash Primary School requires extra classrooms to ensure they do not lose spaces such as the library, STEM and Japanese (which is now held in the former Monash Community Hub).

Neville Bonner Primary School

The P&C's Top 5 infrastructure priorities:

1. Parking and Traffic Management (lack of parking in school grounds, but also seems like no thought goes into spaces such as drop-off and pick up zones). We have a lot of illegal parking, even though there are still plenty of spaces a short walk away.
2. Play spaces (grass areas for running around) – as the school grows, play space shrinks.
3. Consideration of pressures on other resources as the school grows eg canteen space/facilities, toilets, admin spaces, bike sheds. We started with 500 students, but are now approaching 900, but still have the same size canteen space, kitchen space, admin space etc.

Telopea Park School

The P&C's Top 5 infrastructure priorities:

1. More space. Our school is at capacity and we are very concerned about the incredible residential growth in the area which will feed into the High School. It's unsustainable but our school continues to be de prioritised and treated unfairly.
2. air conditioning and insulation
3. Toilets. Dated, dirty, old. In particular in the high school the P&C has received plenty of feedback that high school students will avoid using the toilets because they are so unpleasant. We are concerned about physical health issues such as dehydration, and issues caused by "holding on".
4. Parking around the school. Numerous near misses have our community very concerned. The main offenders seem to be not related to the school, but people trying to get around the school at peak times, overtaking parking cars, swerving on the wrong side of the road, driving erratically and in a frustrated manner.

Torrens Preschool

The Top 5 infrastructure priorities:

1. Adequate heating to suit the building purposes and uses.
2. Update of entrance doors
3. Review and update building structure on a regular basis. For example interior painting, new carpet.
4. Maintenance of gardens, not just cut grass and trim hedges.