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**THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

ELEVENTH ASSEMBLY

**Standing Committee on Social Policy – Report No. 3 – Inquiry into E-Petition 007-25: Build
a new gym for Lyneham High School**

Government Response

**Presented by
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Introduction

The ACT Government welcomes the Standing Committee on Social Policy Report No 3 - *Inquiry into E-Petition 007-25: Build a new gym for Lyneham High School*, following the petition signed by 562 signatories and tabled in the Legislative Assembly for the ACT on 6 May 2025.

The ACT Government is committed to an inclusive, equitable and high-quality public education system. The Government is continuing to invest in ACT public schools to ensure they are great places to learn and work, through building new schools and upgrading existing schools. Modernisation and renewal of school infrastructure support students and school staff to continue to access facilities that are safe, suitable, support learning outcomes and inclusive education.

Following the Government commitment in 2020 to upgrade the gymnasium (gym) at Lyneham High School (the School), the Government provided \$5.746 million investment in the 2024-25 ACT Budget to deliver this commitment and refurbish the existing Lyneham High School gym.

The Inquiry has provided a valued opportunity to receive community input about the refurbishment, and the Government has considered this input and the Standing Committee's Report.

The Government is delivering on the Government commitment to upgrade the gym. Refurbishment of the gym will provide upgraded facilities that will enrich the learning and recreation experience of students, and provide value for money investment, for the benefit of the School and community.

Standing Committee on Social Policy – Report 3 – Inquiry into E-Petition 007-25: Build a New Gym for Lyneham High School

Recommendation	Government Response (AGREED/AGREED IN-PRINCIPLE/EXISTING GOVERNMENT POLICY/NOTED/NOT AGREED)
Recommendation 1 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government utilise demand metric tools to include a measurement of community sports use when it comes to determining scope of school gymnasium upgrades or replacements.	Existing Government policy The Government’s investment decision aligns with the <i>Capital Framework</i> investment logic, identifying and selecting investments that provide benefit to society and the wellbeing of our community and environment. Capital investment decisions are informed by robust analysis, including consideration of the School’s current and projected educational, capacity and operational needs, as well as community needs, outcomes and benefits. This investment will transform the existing gymnasium to support curriculum delivery through improvements in the available internal floor space. While the upgraded facility will not be competition level, opportunities may exist for community groups to use the gymnasium for other sport, training and recreation activities.
Recommendation 2 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government reconsider its decision to reduce the scope of works at Lyneham High School from the double gymnasium designed and briefed in 2022, taking into account: - the current non-compliance of the Lyneham High School gym with modern building codes, - the needs of students and staff using the gym safely for physical education and wet weather contingencies,	Noted The ACT Government has not reduced the scope of works at Lyneham High School. During the last term of Government, the Government engaged with the School and School Board to identify school priorities and undertook feasibility and design to identify indicative delivery options to inform an investment decision by Government. One indicative option proposed a new gym and additional learning spaces through an upgrade to the existing gym. However, no decision was made to progress this option. The School’s enrolments have fallen slightly in recent years. While Lyneham High School currently has high levels of utilisation, current enrolment projections indicate a stable enrolment range for the foreseeable future. High school enrolments in the inner north district can continue to be met through existing capacity.

• the benefits of being able to hold whole-of-school assemblies, • the demand of indoor, competition-standard sports and recreation facilities in the Inner North, • the inadequacy of the current capacity formula for determining gymnasium use and need for expansion, and • evidence provided to the Committee indicating that investing in significant upgrades to the existing gym, given its insufficient size, would be an inefficient and inappropriate use of public funds.	The Government is delivering the 2020 Government commitment to upgrade the Lyneham High School gym. The Government provided \$5.746 million to refurbish and modernise the gym, using the existing gym footprint, through the 2024-2025 ACT Budget. The School will continue to hold smaller year group assemblies and carefully timetable the use of high demand infrastructure like gymnasiums and other large School spaces. The upgrade will occur in line with the ACT Government Basic Brief for Construction and relevant Australian Standards and National Construction Code (NCC).
Recommendation 3 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensure that, in any consultation with school communities on potential capital works upgrades, all options under consideration are shared with the community unless a final decision has already been made to select one option over others.	Noted The Government is committed to ensuring that decisions of Government are informed by current information, including contemporary data, research, and lived experience. The Government values the input of the community and recognises that meaningful engagement and transparency strengthen community outcomes and will continue to consult and engage with the community about decisions that affect them. Recognising announcements should not raise community expectations of a future course of action unless the action has already been determined by Government, the community may not be broadly consulted about options considered through Budget proposals. Appropriate information sharing and consultation avenues will be used to seek the ideas and input of students, families, Traditional Owners and the wider community. The Government will undertake consultation and engagement about public school infrastructure investments with the community transparently and with clarity about the scope and intent of consultation and engagement.

Findings	ACT Government Response
Finding 1 The Committee finds that the current Lyneham High School gymnasium is not fit for purpose for students and out-of-hours community users.	Noted Refurbishment of the Lyneham High School gym will provide upgraded facilities that meet school and student physical education and recreation needs. Upgraded facilities will also benefit the School and the community through providing access to upgraded facilities available for use outside of school hours.
Finding 2 The Committee finds that whole school capacity data is insufficient to determine the usage rates and expansion needs of gymnasiums given their use for physical education (especially during wet weather), school assemblies and out-of-hours use by community sports	Noted The Government considers school capacity on an annual basis and responds to school capacity changes and fluctuations ongoing, including where these may change during the school year. The Government has considered the previous, current and future capacity needs of the School, includes the School's current usage arrangements and operational needs. This information informs school infrastructure investment decisions. The ACT Government will continue to monitor and respond to public school capacity, demand and enrolment projection needs across the ACT public school system and continue to guarantee students a place at their local school.
Finding 3 The Committee finds that the ACT Government failed to make it clear to the Lyneham High School Principal and Leadership that the construction of a new double gymnasium, as detailed in the April 2022 'Lyneham High School New Gymnasium Design and Master Planning Project Brief', was not guaranteed at that time.	Noted The ACT Government has previously acknowledged and restates that community and school expectations could have been better managed by the Education Directorate during the initial feasibility and planning that occurred during the previous term of Government. The Government will undertake consultation and engagement about future public school infrastructure investments with the community transparently, with improved clarity about the scope and intent of consultation and engagement.

Finding 4 The Committee finds there was insufficient evidence presented to the Lyneham High School Leadership and community prior to the ACT Government’s decision on the scope of works in the 2024–25 ACT Budget to refute the community of the belief that the Government commitment was to build a new double gymnasium.	Noted Following the 2020 Legislative Assembly election, the Government made the Government commitment outlined in the 2020 Education Policy Position Statement, to upgrade the gymnasium at Lyneham High School.
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Conclusion

The Government looks forward to delivering this important infrastructure renewal project for the Lyneham High School community.

The project is currently in the planning and procurement phase, and procurement to engage a construction delivery partner has occurred.

Consultation has occurred with the school to identify curriculum-driven priorities. There will be further engagement with the school and school community during the design stage.

The Government will continue to invest in upgrades across the school system and will continue to work with schools to ensure high priority school infrastructure needs are addressed across the public education system.