



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY INCLUSION
Mr Michael Pettersson MLA (Chair), Mr Jonathan Davis MLA (Deputy Chair),
Mr Peter Cain MLA

Submission Cover Sheet

Inquiry into the management of ACT school infrastructure

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Dear Standing Committee on Education and Community Inclusion

Please find the Lyneham Primary School Board's submission to the inquiry below. If you have any further questions, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Warmest

Mia

Mia Swainson
Chairperson
Lyneham Primary School Board

**Lyneham Primary School Board Response to Inquiry into School Infrastructure
Planning for the ongoing maintenance of school facilities, including the process to identify
and address current and future infrastructure needs in schools.**

School infrastructure, including maintenance, has been a matter of concern for the Lyneham Primary School Board over several years. The school's Principal and Business Manager have been working with the Education Directorate to resolve several matters. While promises have been made, some matters of high risk remained unresolved as of March 2021.

1. **Building Condition Report.** The Board has been advised that the most recent partially completed Building Condition Report for Lyneham Primary School was completed in 2013. There is a process that has been started, but we urgently require a building condition report to be completed in a timely manner, to make sure areas of high risk are identified and a risk-based program of maintenance can be undertaken. We are further concerned about the building condition as it can impact on the pride that children feel in attending school and in their learning. In the 2020 school satisfaction survey, results for 'my school is well-maintained' were below equivalent school types. With just 60% of students and staff agreeing that the school is well-maintained and 70% of parents/carers. These results were well below other school satisfaction results.
2. **Senior Boys bathrooms.** The senior boys' bathrooms have a permanent odor of urine. This is despite deep cleaning and regular cleaning. This odour emanates from the bathroom and is commonly smelt by students, staff members and community members. In my view, the toilets are unhygienic and potentially unsafe, both physically and mentally. They are a deterrent to senior boys who need to wash their hands, something that is very important during the COVID-19

pandemic. The Board has been advised that the only way to remove this odour is to replace the whole bathroom, as the odour is coming from the grout between the tiling.

3. **General maintenance.** Despite the best efforts of the Lyneham Primary School Principal, Building Services Officer and Business Manager, several maintenance issues are not able to be addressed within the regular school budget. Some of these are of increasing concern to the health and safety of staff and students. The school board is concerned about these general maintenance issues leading to an increased risk of injury and litigation. An example of a general maintenance issue that we are experiencing include the plaster and paint. In several rooms there is plaster coming away from the walls. Further, it has been many years since the whole school was painted and the school looks run down.

As a board, we are concerned that poor building maintenance increases the risk to student and staff safety and wellbeing, potentially resulting in costly repairs and litigation. It could also contribute towards our schools' good reputation, and that of public schools in the ACT more broadly, being tarnished.

The management of capacity issues in schools, including the use of temporary facilities for schools running above capacity and the plans for schools running below capacity.

We would like to see a review of the current process for determining school infrastructure capacity. Following this review, we would specifically like to see two changes to the method for calculating school infrastructure capacity assessments:

1. Specialist teaching spaces. That the infrastructure capacity assessment process allows for specialist teaching space. Specifically, where classrooms contain special equipment or configurations, that these classrooms be excluded from 'normal' classroom capacity calculations. At Lyneham Primary School, this would include the specialist spaces of our dance classroom, as it has a special floor, curtains and mirrors, and the science classroom, with a special set-up of sinks and desks. Further, these specialist teaching spaces were funded under the Commonwealth Government's Building the Education Revolution program. To refurbish these specialist spaces a little over 10 years after they were built is not in keeping with the good faith shown by the Australian government in funding this infrastructure development.
2. Maximum class sizes to be adjusted to meet Directorate policy, rather than working from an average of 25 students per classroom. Directorate policy is for a maximum of 21 children per classroom in K – 2 and maximum of 30 in years 3-6. A simple average between this maximum class size and that of the older year levels does not adequately recognise that a significant portion of the school cannot support 25 children per class.