



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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Standing Committee on Education and Community Inclusion
ACT Legislative Assembly
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Submitted by Garran Primary School Board and P&C Committee

To whom it may concern

RE. ACT Legislative Assembly Inquiry into the Management of School Infrastructure

Garran Primary School has been engaged in School Infrastructure discussions with the ACT Education Directorate over the past 5 years. The School has been at maximum capacity over this time to the point where it has impacted on daily operations and delivery of education. Over this time we have seen the demands on the School increase as enrolments have steadily increased despite the Education Directorate limiting the School's Priority Enrolment Area to Garran only.

While the popularity of the School is welcoming, it presents major logistical and infrastructure challenges. In this context, we acknowledge the submission to the Inquiry by Mawson Primary School P&C (Submission #10 published on 4 May 2021) specifically the demographic implications of the growth of the Woden area -current and future, as well as the Capacity Issues in Schools section.

Garran however, exists in a geography which presents additional problems influenced more so by population growth across the Canberra region as a whole. The Canberra Hospital has grown in concert with Canberra over many decades and is located adjacent to the School. The daily operation of the Hospital coupled with constant construction on the Hospital site presents additional and unique challenges for the School which are becoming more acute.

The following points summarise the School's infrastructure challenges:

- The main School buildings are reaching the end of their useful life and require re-building. Asbestos is present in these buildings which mean they are not easily renovated and doing so presents major health and logistical challenges.
- The orientation of the School is such that it shares its front boundary with the Canberra Hospital. When the School was constructed it was not contemplated that the then Woden Valley Hospital would become Canberra and the wider regions main and only tertiary hospital. The development of the National Capital Private Hospital has impacted the School for the past 5+ years and with the upcoming Canberra Hospital Expansion project this will continue well into the future.
- The new emergency, surgical and critical care building that is the Canberra Hospital Expansion project will massively change the traffic flows around the School resulting in not only more traffic through the School but also traffic that can be dangerous to our School community and vulnerable students. The School has major traffic issues and parking is limited such it only staff are allowed to park onsite (currently controlled by traffic coordinators and boom gates). No parking for parents or visitors is available on the School site, leaving them to contend with Hospital staff, patients and visitors for parking.

- The recent addition of the COVID -19 Surge Centre next to the School has taken the School's only oval which means it currently has no access to quality green space for sporting and physical education activities. The only spaces left within the School's boundary are barely grassed, not flat and not of oval size. They are severely inadequate for the current population of the School.
- The School's green area has been further reduced by the steadily growing population of demountables being installed across the School site to cope with additional demand. Garran now has the third highest number of these classroom structures of any school across the ACT. Even with these additional demountable classrooms the School has no space for extra-curricular activities nor core educational and curricular subjects associated with art, performing arts, music and STEM.
- The School's teachers have inadequate workspaces given the lack of overall space. Many of the meeting rooms have been converted into classrooms resulting in a lack of space for planning and other small group activities. The staffroom and library are both currently used for classes at certain times of the day.

We welcome this Inquiry into the Management of School Infrastructure as growth within Canberra and the aging nature of some of our infrastructure presents challenges. The School Board has raised Garran specific concerns on several occasions with the Minister for Education and also the Minister for Health given the impact of the Hospital and associated facilities on the School.

We urge the ACT Government to develop a long term, transparent plan for investment in our ageing educational infrastructure that is appropriately prioritised. This enables schools and their communities to plan and better understand how to manage their infrastructure at a local level. We welcome further conversation with the ACT Government and the Education Directorate on Garran's immediate needs. We acknowledge the good natured and productive discussions to date and hope that they will result in permanent solutions to the challenges raised above in the near future. We would be happy to speak with the Committee about this submission and the challenges facing Garran Primary School.