


ATTACHMENT A

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**NSW DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
SCHOOL ASSETS
STRATEGIC PLAN SUMMARY**



School Assets Strategic Plan summary

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Introducing the School Assets Strategic Plan

The NSW Department of Education has developed this high-level School Assets Strategic Plan (SASP) to set the direction and framework for the future of school infrastructure in NSW.

It details the challenges and opportunities surrounding the required school infrastructure needed to cater to the unprecedented increase in school populations expected over the next 15 years and beyond.

Over the last 6 years, the department has laid the foundations to transform public education targeting key areas such as:

- quality teaching
- school leadership
- enhanced school authority
- needs-based school funding
- bridging the achievement gap for rural and remote students.

Since then, we have endeavoured to embed reforms around each of these targeted areas in every classroom, across every school, to improve student results.

As our methods of teaching evolve to meet the ever-changing needs of students, this plan will keep pace; ensuring our schools can support our students' educational needs now and in the future.



Setting a new blueprint for the future

This plan sets out a case for building our future schools by:

- improving how we plan and deliver schools
- outlining the needs for school infrastructure to keep pace with enrolments.

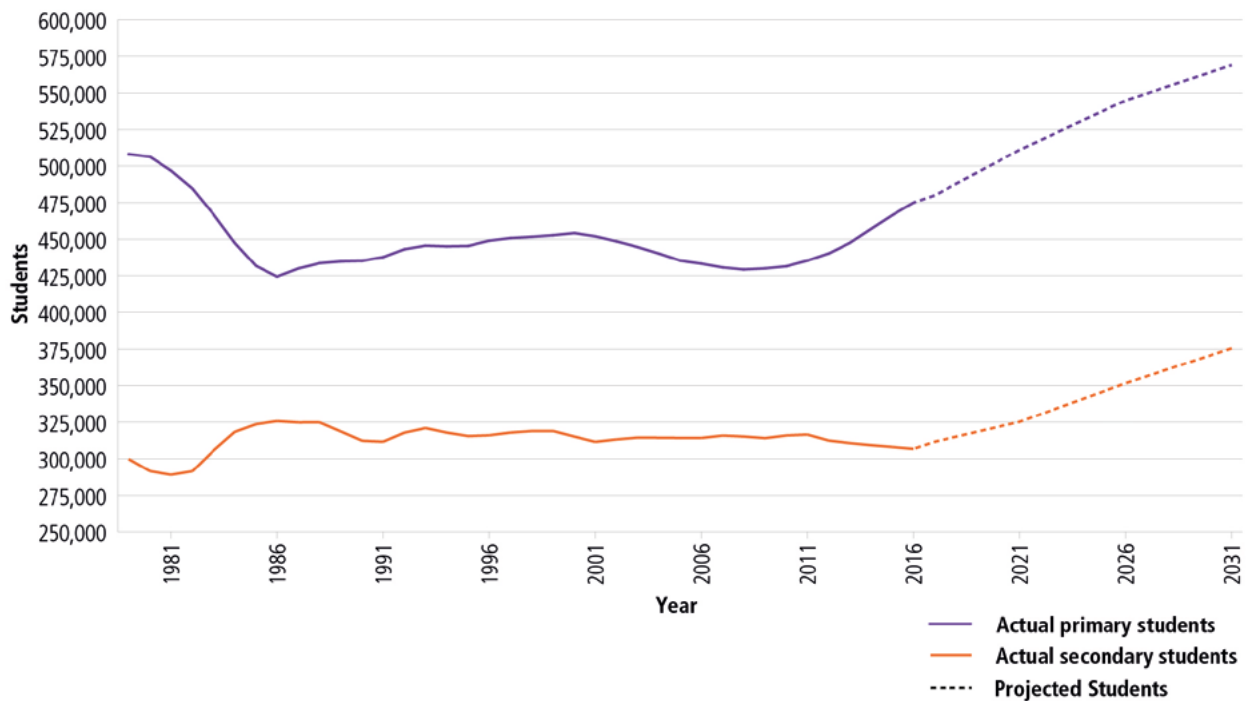
We recognise the government must balance competing funding priorities, and population growth presents a range of challenges for the state. This plan reviews all aspects of government school planning and delivery, and identifies measures to meet student demand.

In mapping the current situation and future changes, we have also quantified changes to how schools are planned to confront increasing demands.

This plan sets out a blueprint for action in six sections:

1. the growing school population
2. sustainability
3. better planning and delivery
4. fit-for-purpose infrastructure
5. stronger partnerships
6. joint and shared use.

Figure 1: Primary and secondary NSW government students, 1980–2031



1. The growing school population

For three decades, the NSW government school population has been stable, catering between 750,000 and 800,000 students. This began to change in the last 5 years, with student numbers increasing by around 30,000.

This was due to increasing birth rates in the mid-2000s, an increase in the number of females of reproductive age, intra state and international migration. The first of these children are now entering

the school system - they represent the start of 15 years of sustained growth in our student population.

By 2031, the number of students in NSW schools will increase from 780,600 in 2016 to 944,500 – representing a massive 21% growth in student numbers. This surge will not be uniform, as 80% will occur in Sydney, particularly in urban growth areas. Longer-term population projections indicate that Sydney’s growth will continue over the next 30 years.

Figure 2: Government primary student change 2016–31⁹

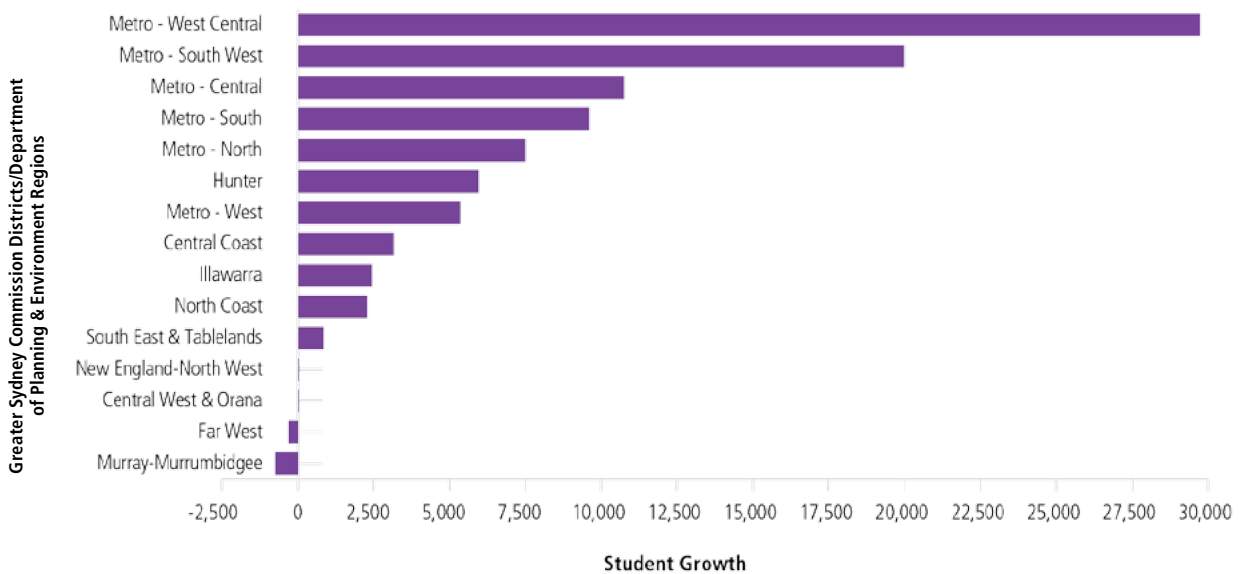
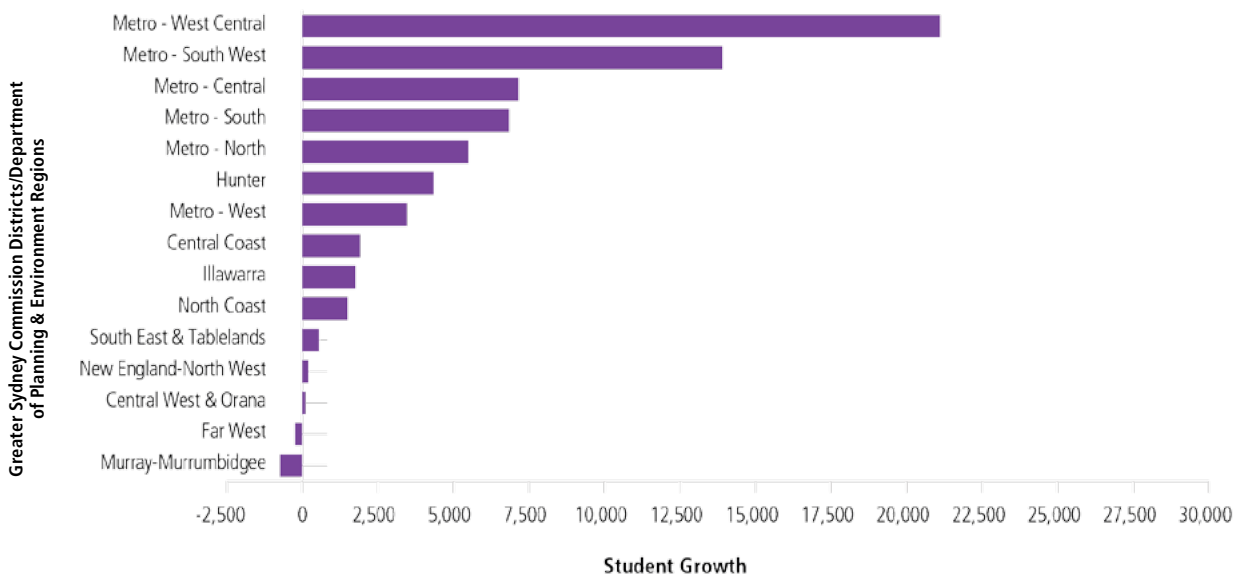


Figure 3: Government secondary student change 2016–31¹⁰



2. Sustainability

The growing number of students will require the equivalent of 7,200 extra classrooms by 2031 based on existing approaches. This equates to 215 new schools, approximately 15 new schools a year; an outcome not financially sustainable. This plan, through the use of 3 quantifiable measures (as set out below), allows us to reduce the number of new schools needed to meet demand, and lower funding pressures by making better use of existing infrastructure and upgrading existing schools to accommodate more students in higher quality learning environments.

Three quantifiable measures refer to:

1. Increasing the use of minor interventions (e.g. prefabricated modular buildings)
2. Larger schools
3. Smaller new school sites

These measures will be informed by School Site Planning Standards, including maintaining a play space requirement for 10m² per student when considering minor interventions, existing school expansions and new schools. To maintain School Site Planning Standards, some new school buildings will need to be multi-storey and site layouts will require better urban design solutions.

3. Better asset planning and delivery

The unprecedented growth in student numbers presents an opportunity for a step change in thinking about how we plan and deliver schools in NSW.

We will adopt a new approach that plans schools collaboratively - determined by factors such as:

- geography
- number and size of schools
- alignment with planning areas
- school boundaries
- the mix of primary and secondary schools.

Six core principles will guide school planning:

1. integrating with other government reforms
2. supporting educational needs
3. implementing minimum standards
4. prioritising planning and funding

5. applying consistent methods and tools
6. strengthening reporting and transparency.

Improved planning will help meet demand while improving education outcomes

Schools Community Planning, a new initiative of the department, will fundamentally change the way we plan and use school assets. It begins with a place-based approach to align school infrastructure planning with the regions and districts used by the Greater Sydney Commission and the Department of Planning and Environment.

Schools Community Planning will then assess schools in a region or district to identify the best way to deliver schools for a community as a whole. We will prioritise plans in areas of highest need.

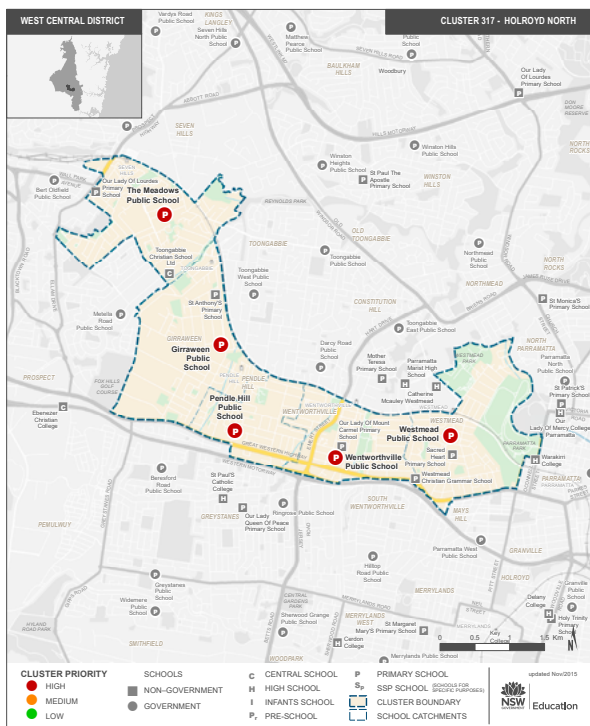
We will identify the most effective and efficient infrastructure solutions within a community by reviewing the:

- demographic trends
- educational requirements
- school condition
- catchment boundaries
- site sizes
- consolidation opportunities
- transport links
- co-location with other services
- community feedback
- partnership opportunities.

Improved data will drive Schools Community Planning, particularly to predict population and housing trends. We will update our data and plans annually based on the best and latest demographic data available, working closely with other agencies. We will streamline school planning with a new assessment method and assurance process.

We will also work with Treasury and Infrastructure NSW to develop a strategic gateway school community planning assurance process, that helps to identify the most cost-effective solutions for the delivery of school facilities.

Figure 4: Example of Schools Community Planning



4. Fit-for-purpose assets

We know well-maintained and functional classrooms provide better student outcomes. As part of this planning process, we audited NSW school facilities to assess how well they can deliver what is required for the future.

This plan sets out a budget and reporting framework in 5 areas that apply to school maintenance and servicing:

- functional upgrades
 - e.g. temporary classrooms are replaced by permanent classrooms with future-learning capabilities
- school maintenance
 - e.g. classroom repairs are done, including repainting and wear-and-tear repairs
- servicing assets
 - e.g. a sports oval and playing area is regularly mowed
- school renewal
 - e.g. existing toilet blocks are replaced in line with the standards
- compliance
 - e.g. vegetation is cleared in line with bushfire asset protection zone requirements.

Functional upgrades are required for facilities like science laboratories and libraries. But if we are to equip our schools for the century ahead, we must also strengthen the capacity for ‘future-learning’, a pedagogy that demands more flexible learning spaces with better technology.

Our Futures Learning initiative integrates teaching and learning strategies with technology into the design of classrooms and learning spaces. We develop flexible, adaptable spaces that increase student engagement, encourage collaboration and blend technology into learning.

We will equip existing spaces in NSW schools for future-learning.

We need to invest in acceptable maintenance and renewal

We have also reviewed the standards we should aim for in maintaining school facilities. By 2031, if we maintain the current expenditure for planned maintenance:

- our maintenance liability would grow significantly
- many school buildings would reach ‘poor’ or ‘end-of-life’ condition. This does not mean that buildings are unsafe, just not fit for purpose.

This would have an unacceptable impact on education.

Instead we are increasing maintenance funding to stabilise the maintenance liability and better prioritise maintenance projects.

Schools will continue to face environmental and compliance costs

NSW schools are already active in improving energy and water efficiency, but more can be done. We intend to drive more improvements through a School Energy Strategic Plan: Energy and the Built Environment 2036.

We will also continue to meet regulatory requirements for:

- accessibility
- heritage
- workplace health and safety
- environment.

As more children with a disability choose to attend a mainstream, rather than a special purpose school, the cost of upgrading schools for accessibility will be significant but hard to quantify.

5. Stronger partnerships

Working with the private sector will deliver schools faster

Typically, government buys new land for a school after rezoning has occurred, with the intention to build a school once announced. The value of the land generally increases, which in turn lifts the value of surrounding land, increasing what we pay for a school site.

By making some policy shifts, we can work with the private sector to better capture the value of schools to the community.

We will work with Treasury, Property NSW and the Department of Premier and Cabinet to develop opportunities for partnering with the private sector to deliver school infrastructure through value capturing the economic benefits of providing new schools.

We will also continue to work closely with the non-government schools sector and this will include sharing data and integrating asset solutions, such as shared and joint use facilities.

6. Joint and shared use

Part of the changing mindset in building the schools of the future, will be greater joint or shared use of school and community facilities.

Joint use involves a school sharing and funding facilities with a community partner, such as managing a sports ground with a local council. Shared use is where a school controls a facility on its grounds but allows related community use during out-of-school hours.

As we redevelop smaller school sites to accommodate more students in improved teaching spaces, we will increasingly turn to joint and shared use. Research shows this can also strengthen community relationships and social cohesion while offering extra income for schools.

Promoting joint use will need better planning because joint use agreements can be complex and require a long-term commitment. The department will foster joint use by:

- issuing standard agreements

- coordinating agreements in a systematic ways
- piloting joint use planning with some councils and organisations.

We will implement an enabling framework to facilitate greater intra-government land exchange and shared joint-use facilities.

Student growth will continue

This plan sets out the need for education infrastructure to 2031, and proposes strategies to meet it. This will mean making fundamental changes to how we plan, fund, build and maintain school infrastructure.

We will continue to refresh the assumptions used and refine our long term modelling, and provide detailed analysis to support the immediate funding needs over the forward estimates as part of the budget process. However, although the enrolment growth has been modelled over 15 years, this growth is anticipated to be maintained for the next 30 years.

School infrastructure should be viewed as an investment in the future of our state. Having the right infrastructure will improve the attendance, retention, performance and wellbeing of our children, which will in turn improve social cohesion and economic prosperity.

For more information, visit:

www.schoolinfrastructure.nsw.gov.au

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