

Forbes Public School

Flood Recovery Update

28 November 2022

Supporting flood impacted schools

The NSW Department of Education coordinates the emergency, recovery and resilience response to support flood and weather-impacted school communities across NSW.

Flooding and weather events have impacted a number of schools in the Central West of the state. With water levels receding and emergency response organisations carrying out vital work to remove rubbish, clean and secure affected sites, School Infrastructure NSW is assessing the damage and starting the process of remediation.

What is happening at Forbes Public School

The Forbes Public School site remains non-operational. The School is utilising 5 teaching spaces at Forbes High School, and also carrying out some administrative tasks there. We thank the Forbes community for your patience, understanding and support as we work through this critical period.

Floodwaters have entered most areas of Forbes Public School causing extensive damage. An initial assessment has found most buildings need repairs, but we are confident they are salvageable.

Lower lying areas of the school were inundated and damaged by flood waters, including:

- Administration and staff common room
- 9 classrooms
- the canteen
- toilets
- library
- programs and counsellors' rooms
- IT/communications infrastructure
- lower sports field.

Some other areas of the school were not impacted as severely by flood areas, including:

- school hall
- Year One rooms
- the support unit.

School Infrastructure NSW and other key partners are working with the school to plan the necessary remediation steps. The priority is to get the least affected buildings safely reopened for onsite teaching and learning.

Simultaneously, where significant damage has occurred, we will source, deliver, install and furnish temporary buildings to ensure face to face teaching and learning can resume onsite for the whole school.

Current status

Step 1, the site assessment, has been completed. The Australian Defence Force has finished the initial clean up around Forbes and at the school. Subject matter experts have been engaged to undertake sanitary, mould and moisture testing and we are also working with experts including a hygienist to test for other contaminants, which will inform our remediation plan.

The remediation plan is essential to ensure the site is safe to enter for repairs. It's critical that the clean-up and repairs are done in line with the hygienist's advice to ensure cross contamination does not occur.

For more information contact:

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We thank the community for their help during the clean-up held on Tuesday 15 November. The buildings are now ready for our contractors to start their work in line with the remediation plan. We ask that the community does not enter the school site from Lachlan Street at this point in time, while contractors work in response to the remediation plan.

School Infrastructure NSW has been granted safety clearance to enter the site, and another site inspection has been scheduled for Tuesday 29 November together with the school leadership.

Forbes High School has been able to temporarily accommodate some Forbes Public School students.

Buildings A and B, better known as the support unit, have been deemed safe for occupation from Monday 28 November 2022. Contractors have been deployed to expedite re-establishment of critical utilities such as electricity, running water and sewerage.

Additional temporary administration buildings have also been installed at both Forbes Public School and Forbes High School to minimise congestion and operations of the High School. The temporary buildings will be utilised as administration offices for Forbes Public School.

Next steps

Planning is underway for the initial clean and repair work at Forbes Public School. Two generators have been sourced and will arrive at the school in the near future. A number of containers are being sourced for the school to use for salvage and storage. We will also provide essential resources for staff working within Forbes High School.

The local School Infrastructure team will work closely with school leadership to plan for a safe and progressive return to the site. Operational updates will continue to be provided by your Principal for weeks 8 to 11 of Term 4.

We will also start planning the design of the temporary school buildings on the Forbes Public School site to ensure it meets the school community's needs. The plan will take into account test results and expert advice about site conditions, and we will confirm the number and location of temporary buildings to ensure the needs of the 2023 student cohort are met, including any accessibility requirements.

School Infrastructure NSW will liaise with council about the location of buildings and to meet the necessary planning requirements for these temporary buildings.

Our teams are working as quickly as possible, while prioritising the safety of students, staff and contractors. A timeline for the installation of these temporary buildings will be shared with the community shortly. The timing of all work and handover of learning spaces will continue to be subject to local weather conditions.

We thank you for your patience and look forward to sharing information with you as work progresses. We are committed to providing regular update about plans and progress on this important work.

What else is happening in the region

The Central West Asset Management Unit (AMU) is inspecting schools in flood impacted areas. We are working with other emergency response organisations to remove rubbish, clean and then secure and repair affected sites.

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