

Hurlstone Agricultural High School

Frequently asked questions

December 2020

The NSW Government is investing \$7 billion over the next four years, continuing its program to deliver more than 200 new and upgraded schools to support communities across NSW. This is the largest investment in public education infrastructure in the history of NSW.

At Hurlstone Agricultural High School, the NSW Government proposes to invest into the future of the school, to continue its legacy and contribution to agricultural education.

Following consultation with the school community, parents, alumni and industry in early 2020, we have reviewed feedback and refined plans. Students will benefit from contemporary agricultural education through a proposed farm and boarding upgrade including fit for purpose farming technology in a centralised farm hub.

The following Frequently Asked Questions provide further details about the proposed farm and boarding upgrades.

General

What is involved in the new model for state-wide agricultural education?

In December 2019, a new model for state-wide agricultural education was announced.

The announcement involved Hurlstone Agricultural High School keeping its name, retaining the dairy, receiving upgraded boarding facilities and staying at the Glenfield site. It also involves the establishment of Richmond Agricultural College – a Centre of Excellence in Agricultural Education in the Hawkesbury and a new agricultural speciality stream and new academic selective stream at Richmond High School.

What is now involved in the Hurlstone Agricultural High School project?

Since the announcement in December 2019, and consultation completed in early 2020, we have examined the need for investment in the farm, and how it links to educational outcomes.

Student outcomes and learning are at the centre of decision making. The farm upgrades at Hurlstone Agricultural High School will create fit for purpose facilities to support the next generation of students learning about contemporary agriculture and STEAM.

We are proposing to achieve improved agricultural education outcomes by upgrading the farm, co-locating key farming technology in a centralised farm hub and upgrading boarding facilities.

The Department of Education has also determined the size of land for divestment. This was influenced by feedback received in early 2020 by community and stakeholders who strongly supported retaining land for upgraded farming facilities and improved agricultural/STEAM education outcomes.

Where are you up to in the project lifecycle?

School Infrastructure NSW is currently in the master planning phase for this project. This consultation will assist us in further developing the project and achieving the necessary approvals to proceed to detailed design and delivery. We anticipate the business case will be lodged before the end of 2020, and that a decision will be reached on the project in early 2021.

How have you consulted about the Hurlstone Agricultural High School project?

Consultation with the school and local community, and other stakeholders interested in and impacted by the project was completed in February and March 2020. The aim of that consultation was to ensure stakeholders and community members were informed about the project during early planning and to gather feedback on the announcement made in December 2019. Since the information sessions and surveys, we have been considering all feedback received in the current stage of the project.

What is the timeline for the project?

The business case is expected to be lodged later in 2020. A detailed timeline for delivery will be confirmed as planning progresses.

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What are the benefits of the new masterplans for the farm and boarding at Hurlstone?

The masterplans and proposed upgrades to the farm and boarding will provide students with:

- improved educational outcomes in agriculture and STEAM
- new or upgraded boarding facilities for up to 180 boarders
- new fit for purpose, modern farm and dairy facilities offering expanded education experiences
- ease of farm management and operations
- more opportunities for students to view and interact with livestock
- collaboration opportunities with the new Centre of Excellence in Agricultural Education, universities and industry.

What are you currently consulting the community and stakeholders on?

We are consulting the community and stakeholders on the proposed boarding and farm upgrades and seeking feedback from industry and interested parties on potential partnership opportunities with the school.

This feedback will be considered as the project team refines the proposed farm and boarding upgrades during the next phase of detailed design and delivery.

The feedback from community and stakeholders during consultation in early 2020, which focused on the farm and potential upgrades, has been considered and taken into account within the current proposed masterplan for the farm.

How can I get involved in this consultation?

The health and safety of students, staff and community is our priority. We are temporarily changing some of the ways we keep you informed about this project to account for social distancing measures.

School Infrastructure NSW has developed a virtual consultation room to provide an alternative way to hear about our projects.

The virtual consultation will be open from 9:00am, Wednesday 9 December 2020 through the project website. You can visit at any time, day or night.

Through the virtual consultation, community and stakeholders will be able to view information on the proposed farm and boarding upgrades, submit feedback through our designated feedback form, and arrange to speak to a project team member in more detail.

To access a physical or emailed version of the project content, please get in touch with us via email or phone.

Our information hotline and email address will continue to operate as normal.

Email: schoolinfrastructure@det.nsw.edu.au

Phone: 1300 482 651

As an interested alumni or industry professional, how can I partner with Hurlstone in the future?

We are interested in hearing from alumni and industry professionals on opportunities to partner with the school such as:

- Mentoring
- Research programs
- Industry partnership programs
- Advisory panels on urban agricultural programs and processes
- Marketing and development of Hurlstone products

The aim of these suggested partnerships is to provide students with practical, current, industry led learning and approaches.

The Farm

What is involved in the proposed farm upgrade?

Hurlstone will benefit from cutting edge agricultural technology in the proposed farm upgrade. A farm hub will be at the core of the upgrade and will co-locate farming enterprises, technology, machinery and housing for livestock.

It will also provide improved linkages to learning and boarding spaces. The new central farm hub means students will have access to modern technology, more viewing and animal interaction opportunities, co-located learning space, and greater collaboration opportunities with teaching staff, industry and university partnerships.

What facilities are proposed for the new farm hub?

All enterprises will be co-located in the new farm hub. The farm masterplan proposes to build the following new facilities:

- Dairy shed
- Milking parlour
- Dairy processing equipment
- Viewing area
- Co-located learning space
- Calf, beef, and pig sheds
- Hydroponic facility will be upgraded to include aquaculture
- Commodity shed and storage facilities
- Sheep shed and shearing facility
- Poultry facility (layer shed and chicken coops)
- Hydroponic facility

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The proposed farm upgrade also includes new farming equipment and irrigation systems. The hydroponic and horticultural facilities will be relocated to the farm hub.

It is anticipated that the sheep shed, shearing facility and poultry facility (layer shed and chicken coops) will be further developed over time. The farm manager house will be retained in its current location.

How have you made decisions about the agricultural education needs of Hurlstone?

An external industry expert, as well as key Department of Education staff, have been involved in assessing agricultural needs for the future of the school. This includes considering developments in the agricultural industry, agricultural/STEAM curriculum requirements, and the practical management of the farm into the future.

We have aimed to retain the historical value of Hurlstone by respecting the history and legacy of the school and its focus on engaging young people with farming and animals. Into the future, we see this morphing with a greater focus on modern agricultural processes to bolster the standard of education and further encourage young people to enter tertiary agricultural programs or work within the agricultural industry once they have left secondary school.

How is the farm layout changing?

We are proposing to build a new central farm hub, where new equipment and facilities will be located and where livestock housing will occur.

The farm manager and staff will have an administration area situated within the farm hub, enabling easier, direct contact and supervision of livestock and equipment. The farm hub will mean students will spend less time travelling between classes and have greater supervision during field work.

Grazing and cropping land will make up the remainder of the farm site, with the northern and southern areas of the site used primarily for this purpose.

What are the benefits of the proposed farm upgrade?

Irrigation of the farm will result in more efficient use of land and resources. The proposed upgrades will provide a sustainable water source for irrigation to drought proof the farm and therefore maximise stock level capacity and yields. The farming operations will be redeveloped to be more efficient, and effective for hands on farming opportunities for students.

Students will benefit from greater data capture as Hurlstone embraces more modern agricultural practices. This includes strengthening the quantitative data collection from production systems.

What sustainable features are being considered in the farm upgrade?

We are committed to investigating sustainable design elements such as solar panels for the farm upgrade and integrating these where possible in the designs.

Milking will be a sustainable production system and we will ensure we have efficiency and less wastage in the production and processing of milk.

More information will be provided on sustainability features as the project progresses.

What changes are proposed for the piggery?

The proposed new modern piggery will allow for greater pig comfort, ensure piglet safety, and will reflect current best practice.

Large numbers of pigs are not required to demonstrate the principles of pig management. The proposed new piggery will contain around 8-10 sows.

A well-designed, modern piggery will provide important insight into a significant animal industry and one that operates with a high level of sophistication. Many of the feeding and cleaning functions can be automated, reducing the labour demand. The new piggery is proposed to be co-located with the new dairy enterprise to centralise truck and vehicle movements, feed storage areas, and create an integrated effluent management system.

What changes are proposed for other enterprises?

Changes in farm size will have relatively little impact on beef cattle and sheep enterprises. These animals and current herd sizes will be accommodated with the proposed enhanced farm.

The current hydroponic facility will be relocated and upgraded to include an aquaculture facility.

No change is proposed to the current scale for poultry and it can be readily moved or replicated within the proposed new farm layout.

What are the advantages to housing livestock?

Housing livestock in well-designed facilities provides them with shelter and protection from the elements and enhances their overall well-being. It also reduces risks of predation and vandalism. This is most important for smaller livestock, like lambs, chickens, sheep, and calves. The dairy herd has access to pasture for grazing.

Housing for the dairy herd and co-locating the piggery will result in an integrated and more efficient effluent management system. This will improve the waste capture and treatment, improve the health of livestock, and reduce odour.

Dairy upgrade

What are the plans for the future of the dairy enterprise?

To support a more efficient and modern enterprise, a new milking parlour, livestock housing and viewing area is proposed to be built.

Hurlstone currently has approximately 65 milking cows, 16 dry cows, 14 heifers, 15 yearlings and 9 calves. Approximately 50 hectares of farmland proposed to be retained will comfortably support a herd of up to 80 milking cows, with adequate irrigation.

Why a new milking parlour?

A new milking parlour is proposed to replace an outdated facility. A herringbone, low line system is recommended to reduce labour and accommodate student interactions. A robotic system is a contemporary way to manage milking and includes integrated, advanced data capture. This provides a modern experience needed for agriculture students and the data lends itself to a range of agricultural/STEAM applications.

Why are you changing the current dairy?

The current milking facility is ageing, and the proposed new dairy shed, milking parlour and viewing area will allow for better learning outcomes, including better observation of new technology, and greater efficiency in the milking process.

Students will have an enhanced educational experience through:

- exposure to pasture and crop agronomy under irrigation
- viewing areas in the new facilities
- access to modern equipment and technology
- potential for on-site pasteurisation and small dairy processing operations.

What are the benefits to co-locating the dairy and pig enterprises?

Co-locating the dairy and piggery will provide an opportunity for an integrated and more efficient approach to effluent management.

The current system is functional; however, the redevelopment of the dairy and housing of cattle will require a new system, presenting an opportunity to build a more efficient effluent management approach.

What factors were considered in assessing the new dairy enterprise?

Key considerations for determining the scale and type of the new dairy enterprise included:

- education that reflects modern dairy industry challenges in agricultural/STEAM and current agricultural curriculum requirements
- scale and facilities which future proofs the enterprise and reflects industry standards
- viable markets for the volume of milk produced
- level of resources to provide educational outcomes (such as machinery, management, harvesting)
- opportunities for additional educational value such as tertiary partners, visiting teaching and student experiences.

A larger enterprise would not necessarily provide a better experience for students. A much smaller enterprise would incur similar infrastructure and labour costs, with fewer data capture and research opportunities.

How will the future dairy enterprise support the agricultural curriculum?

The proposed future dairy enterprise was assessed against the Agriculture Stage 6 Syllabus (2013) for relative value to support each component. The proposed future dairy enterprise would support student learning for:

- The farm as a unit of production
- Farm management
- Plants and their commercial production
- Technology (Plant production)
- Experimental design and research (Plant production)
- Animals and their commercial production
- Technology (animal production)
- Experimental design and research (animal production)

What are the benefits of the proposed new dairy enterprise?

The proposed new dairy enterprise, supported by irrigation, livestock housing, effluent capture, pasture, and a feeding area, will provide many benefits:

- higher milk production
- improved animal comfort and heat stress control
- reduced biosecurity risks
- broader educational experience, exposing students to more machinery and cropping methods
- reduced economic loss during drought, through irrigation development
- opportunities for engagement with research hubs/ industry and external teaching and site visits.

New and upgraded boarding

What is the boarding capacity?

The boarding capacity will be 180 students, which aims for 30 students per year group with a 50/50 gender split. The overall enrolment capacity of the school is 1,080 with 985 day and boarder students currently enrolled. The overall enrolment capacity of the school will not be increased as a result of the proposed boarding upgrade. There are currently 42 boarders at Hurlstone in 2020.

What is the proposal for the new and upgraded boarding?

Following consultation with the school community, parents, alumni and industry in early 2020, we have reviewed feedback and refined plans for the proposed boarding upgrade.

The boarding upgrade involves refurbishment of Building A, removal of Building B, C and N, and replacement with new male and female boarding facilities. The new facilities will consist of a new building layout to create better separation of boys' and girls' dormitories with a co-ed outdoor common area on the ground floor.

The boarding upgrade focuses on improving the overall management, social interaction, and supervision of students.

Building E (heritage listed Clarke House) and Buildings D, O and N3 will be retained and will continue to be used by the school. Building Z will be used during the boarding upgrade for student accommodation and once the upgrade is complete, will be demolished and the land remaining converted into sports fields.

What sustainable features are being considered in the boarding upgrade?

The proposed upgrade of boarding facilities will incorporate energy efficient designs, which would reduce resource and energy consumption, and associated costs.

What is excluded from the boarding upgrade?

The following facilities are in good condition for continued use:

- Dining hall
- Kitchen
- Wellbeing centre
- Laundry facility
- Residential housing within Clarke House

What is the heritage status of Building A?

Building A is one of the original Hurlstone Agricultural High School buildings built in 1926. It is a former dormitory block located to the west of Clarke House.

Building A is a single storey face brick building with a gabled unglazed terracotta tiled roof and a verandah featuring rectangular rendered brick posts along the northern side. It is of high heritage significance and it is proposed that the building is retained and its spaces refurbished and purposed for boarding administration and shared facilities such as a gym, computer room, games and secure storage for bikes and musical instruments.

Two shower and communal laundry facilities which are attached to the southern façade of the building are not part of the original building. These are proposed for demolition and removal.

Land changes

Will any land at Hurlstone Agricultural High School site be sold?

The Hurlstone Agricultural High School site is part of the Glenfield precinct that is being master planned for a range of future uses. As part of this, some land surrounding Hurlstone will be rezoned for alternative uses including residential, public open space and commercial. The Department of Education has determined that approximately 82 hectares of its land will be available for divestment. This land will subsequently be rezoned by the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment.

How much land is the Department divesting?

The Department of Education owns approximately 159 hectares of land at the Glenfield site.

The approximately 112-hectare Hurlstone campus within this site includes classrooms, farm, dairy, sporting facilities, and boarding.

The Department of Education will retain approximately 77 hectares for the Hurlstone campus (school, farm, dairy, sporting facilities and boarding), the schools for special purposes (Campbell House School, Glenfield Park School and Ajuga School), and an area for a potential new primary school that may be required in the future. The farm and dairy will be retained on approximately 50 hectares alone.

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How have you decided on the size of land for the farm?

Land use decisions were made by prioritising teaching and learning outcomes for students and were influenced by industry experts, Department of Education staff and feedback from community consultation.

Implementing modern farming facilities and technology will achieve an improved future focused learning experience while maintaining all existing farm enterprises on a smaller parcel of land.

The size of a farm for a school is about considering the needs of students, not just farming outcomes that might apply in a non-educational context. A balance needs to be made between students having a meaningful educational experience and having a manageable fit for purpose facility.

What is the focus of the new farm layout?

While making decisions about the farm layout and land use changes, the team has focused on creating a harmonious integration between agriculture and urban development.

Hurlstone exists in a unique urban agricultural interface, that differs from an educational experience that might occur in rural or regional NSW and a contemporary farm layout should reflect this.

How will access throughout the farm change?

Access through the site will change as the layout is improved and enterprises upgraded. Grazing land will be located to the north and south of the school and farm hub and dedicated stock routes will be required. As part of Transport for NSW's Cambridge Avenue road upgrade, a cattle underpass is proposed to be created below the new road to enable access to the northern farmland.

What changes are being made to sporting facilities?

Department of Education land is being reconfigured to gain the best outcomes for the school and farm. Once the boarding facilities are complete, Building Z will be demolished, and new sports fields will be built in its place. The existing oval is located on land that will be rezoned.

We acknowledge that the picket fence around the existing oval is valued by the school and alumni and we are investigating options on how to respectfully preserve and repurpose this piece of school history.

The new sports fields will be purpose built for the school, and it is the Department's intention to also pursue shared use of community sporting facilities that may be built in the surrounding development in the future.

Three new sports ovals are currently being proposed as part of the wider rezoning of the area surrounding the school.

Is a new primary school part of this masterplan?

As part of this masterplan, an area north of Roy Watts Road will be reserved for a future proposed primary school.

Will there be changes to existing access roads?

Roy Watts Road will terminate at the boundaries of Hurlstone Agricultural High School and the schools for special purposes (Campbell House School, Glenfield Park School and Ajuga School), removing transport and public interfaces with farm and students. This will only occur once new proposed access routes are delivered to the schools for special purposes via surrounding land development.

What other changes are being made to Department facilities?

The Department of Education's Glenfield office and Asset Management Unit storage facility will be relocated.

As part of this masterplan, a green open vista will be maintained at the schools for special purposes.

Other government agency projects

What is involved in the rezoning of land surrounding Hurlstone by the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment?

The Department of Education land has identified land in Glenfield that is no longer required for educational purposes. This land will be rezoned by the Department of Planning, Industry, and Environment as part of the Glenfield precinct. It will be rezoned for a variety of uses including housing and commercial uses within walking distance of the Glenfield Train Station.

For more information on this, please visit <https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Plans-for-your-area/Priority-Growth-Areas-and-Precincts/Glenfield>.

What is involved in Transport for NSW's Cambridge Avenue upgrade?

Transport for NSW are consulting on proposed Cambridge Avenue extension, which intersects Department of Education land. This extension includes a four-lane dual carriageway between Canterbury Road and Campbelltown Road. Consultation is now open through Transport for NSW and feedback welcomed on the recommended option and design.

For more information, contact Transport for NSW on 1800 370 601, email cambridgeavenue@rms.nsw.gov.au or visit rms.work/cambridgeave.

How will the Cambridge Avenue project impact the Department of Education land?

School Infrastructure NSW is working closely with Transport for NSW about linkages for livestock, staff, and students between Hurlstone's northern grazing land and the newly proposed central farm hub.

The farmland north of Cambridge Avenue is suitable for ongoing grazing and cropping. It will remain available for this purpose and a suitable vehicle, pedestrian, and livestock access beneath Cambridge Avenue will be incorporated.

Glossary of terms

- **Agricultural/STEAM** – disciplinary subjects of agricultural and science, technology, engineering, arts and maths. The term STEAM is used because of the important nature of the arts in communicating and delivering agriculture to the market.
- **Hurlstone** – Hurlstone Agricultural High School
- **Department of Education** – responsible for ongoing operation of Hurlstone Agricultural High School, includes school staff, property and land management and divestment
- **School Infrastructure NSW** – also referred to as SINSW, an infrastructure delivery agency who is tasked with project managing and delivering the proposed upgrades at Hurlstone Agricultural High School
- **Project team** – a combination of SINSW and Department of Education staff who work together to deliver the proposed upgrades at Hurlstone Agricultural High School

For more information contact:

School Infrastructure NSW

Email: schoolinfrastructure@det.nsw.edu.au

Phone: 1300 482 651

www.schoolinfrastructure.nsw.gov.au