



Artist impression of the Lennox Head Public School upgrade

Lennox Head Public School

Project update

March 2020

Investing in our schools

The NSW Government is investing \$6.7 billion over four years to deliver more than 190 new and upgraded schools to support communities across NSW. In addition, a record \$1.3 billion is being spent on school maintenance over five years, along with a record \$500 million for the sustainable Cooler Classrooms program to provide air conditioning to schools. This is the largest investment in public education infrastructure in the history of NSW.

Project overview

An upgrade is underway at Lennox Head Public School to cater for future growth in the area.

The upgrade will deliver eight new permanent teaching spaces, a new administration building, a canteen and Out of School Hours (OOSH) support facilities, a new sports court and associated landscaping works and a refurbishment of the special programs room.

Progress summary

- The project has been issued for re-tender due to a revised design requirement.
- The tender for the early works contractor has been released and is expected to be awarded early 2020.

- A required amendment to the Aboriginal Heritage Impact Permit (AHIP) is underway.
- Maintenance works recently completed includes painting internal and external areas in the toilet block, a new roof on Block E including gutters and downpipes, replacement of weldmesh panels and gates at the front of the school, and fencing repairs on the boundary of the school with the replacement of panels. Some additional fencing works remain and will be completed pending approval.
- Main construction works are forecast to commence mid 2020 with completion expected in mid 2021.

Next steps

- Appointment of the building contractor
- Commencement of early works package
- Approval of the AHIP and statutory approvals
- Site preparation works

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Why has the upgrade been delayed?

The discovery of significant aboriginal artefacts in November 2017 and again in December 2018 have delayed progress on the upgrade to Lennox Head Public School. At the time of the discovery in December 2018, the design phase for the project had been completed, the Development Application approved and the works had been tendered. A revision of the existing AHIP has commenced along with necessary design amendments.

When and how were the artefacts found?

The original artefacts were discovered in November 2017 during a due diligence investigation requested by Council. The findings initiated an AHIP as per the legislation. The Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment (ACHA) and subsequent consultation with registered aboriginal parties (RAPs) commenced in December 2017 and was approved by the Department of Planning, Environment, Industry and Environment (DPIE) in November 2018. The AHIP enabled test pits to be carried out in line with the approved salvage methodology to determine if there were further artefacts on site. The investigations found a significant number of artefacts within the test pits and work ceased in December 2018.

What is involved in the consultation process?

School Infrastructure NSW (SINSW) is working closely with the RAPs, OEH and Council to ensure the integrity of the land during construction work is maintained. SINSW will provide communication to the school and local community about the next phase and approved approach for the upgrade.

Has the original scope for the school upgrade changed?

No. The project will deliver eight additional classrooms, a canteen and Out of School Hours (OOSH) support facilities, a new sports court and associated landscaping works and a refurbishment of the special programs room.

What types of artefacts were found?

Initial site investigations in November 2017 found an axe head and pounding implement. The subsequent salvage in December 2018 identified hundreds of different artefacts each with their own significance.

Does the discovery of indigenous artefacts impact the school's ability to carry out certain types of maintenance?

Yes. The discovery of the artefacts mean that a variation to the existing AHIP is required to deal with the management of salvage to areas where there is ground disturbance. At present, ground disturbance and digging is not permitted which is preventing select maintenance projects from being carried out in the short term. The DPIE have provided approval for certain works including urgent concrete pathway repairs and drainage works to progress under the existing AHIP and were completed late 2019.

How will the school cater for growing enrolment numbers while construction works take place?

Additional demountable buildings have been installed at the school.

Is there a need to consider an alternative site for Lennox Head Public School?

No. The project requires consultation on the current design to determine impacts on ground disturbance but it is possible to build on the school grounds.

Will there be any ongoing implications for the school as a result of the discovered artefacts?

Yes. The implications of the AHIP that will be granted by OEH will be extensive, as such, works that require ground disturbance will have to be carried out in consultation with OEH, a consultant and the RAPs. The AHIP will have a 10 year expiry date and will cover the required salvage methodology for works involving ground disturbance.

What is the revised forecast completion for the upgrade?

The NSW Department of Education remains committed to delivering the upgrade to Lennox Head Public School despite delays. The SINSW project delivery team is working to obtain the required approvals and construction is forecast to begin in mid 2020. The forecast completion of the upgrade is mid 2021.