

Blakebrook Public School

Information pack | May 2022



The NSW Department of Education is coordinating an emergency response effort that is unprecedented in terms of scale and impact. A large number of schools in the Northern Rivers region have damage to either the entire site or some buildings and facilities.

At the peak of the flood events, on Wednesday 9 March 2022, 331 schools had temporarily ceased operations.

The local North Coast School Infrastructure NSW office inspected 87 schools in flood-impacted areas that sustained a degree of impact from flood waters. Individual impact assessments were undertaken at 52 affected public school sites, each requiring the removal of rubbish, cleaning and securing of the site to ensure they were safe for entry.

Blakebrook Public School suffered extensive damage as a result of the flood events with floodwater entering the school and damaging all buildings on the site.

Blakebrook Public School

Blakebrook Public School suffered extensive damage as a result of the flood events. Students will continue learning from Coolmangar Public School until the completion of temporary demountable accommodation at Blakebrook Public School is complete in Term 2.

What has happened so far?

Walls and floors were stripped to the flood line, debris and rubbish have been removed and the school has been cleaned. Toilets, bubblers and water filtration systems have been repaired and hygienically cleaned ready for use. Contaminated furniture and learning resources have been removed. Water-damaged school records have been relocated or disposed of securely according to their condition. Temporary fencing has been installed.

Temporary accommodation

Seven temporary demountable buildings have been installed at the Blakebrook Public School site. Once the final temporary building is installed for administration, phone and data services can be restored so the school can return to site.

Planning for the rebuild

Blakebrook Public School will be rebuilt on the existing site. Planning and due diligence is underway to understand the scope of work required.

- A project manager has been appointed.
- Buildings are being inspected and assessed to understand the extent of damage and potential for repair, refurbishment or replacement.

- Technical experts are carrying out due diligence including heritage and environmental assessments.
- A tender has been issued for a 'managing contractor' which is a builder who will work with us to finalise the scope of work, design and timeline for the rebuild.

Building back better

The rebuild project will restore damaged facilities and provide the same number of spaces that the school had before the flood but also offer opportunities for improvement. Through the scoping and design process we will work with the school to:

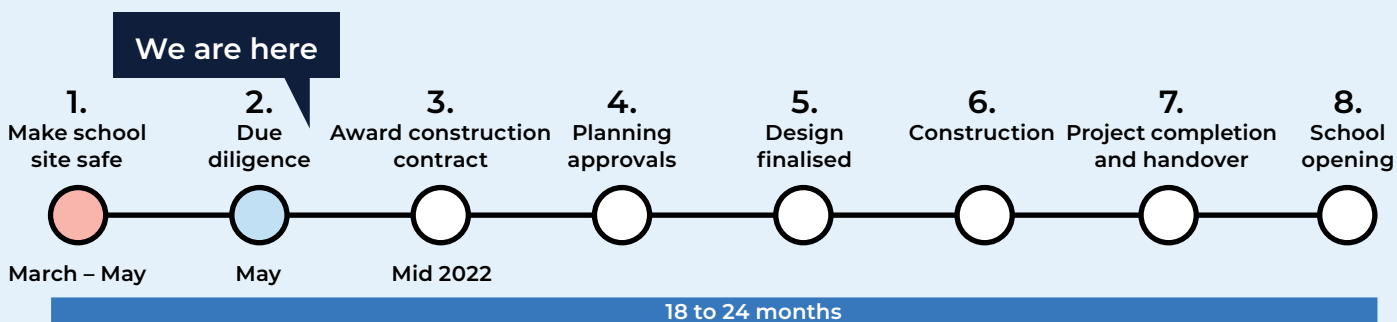
- consider the best layout for buildings and play spaces on the site.
- provide new and refurbished learning spaces that are better suited to modern teaching methods.

Flood resilience

A key consideration in the design and approach to the school rebuild will be to provide infrastructure and facilities that are flood resilient. Mitigations might include siting buildings on different parts of the site, changing the use and fit out of buildings in flood prone areas, or raising the level of buildings. A flood engineer has been engaged to review flood levels on the site to help inform building heights for the school.

Infrastructure planning process

Rebuilding Blakebrook Public School is expected to take between 18 months and 2 years, although we will do whatever we can to complete the project sooner. Construction timings will be developed in partnership with a builder and confirmed once one a contractor is engaged.



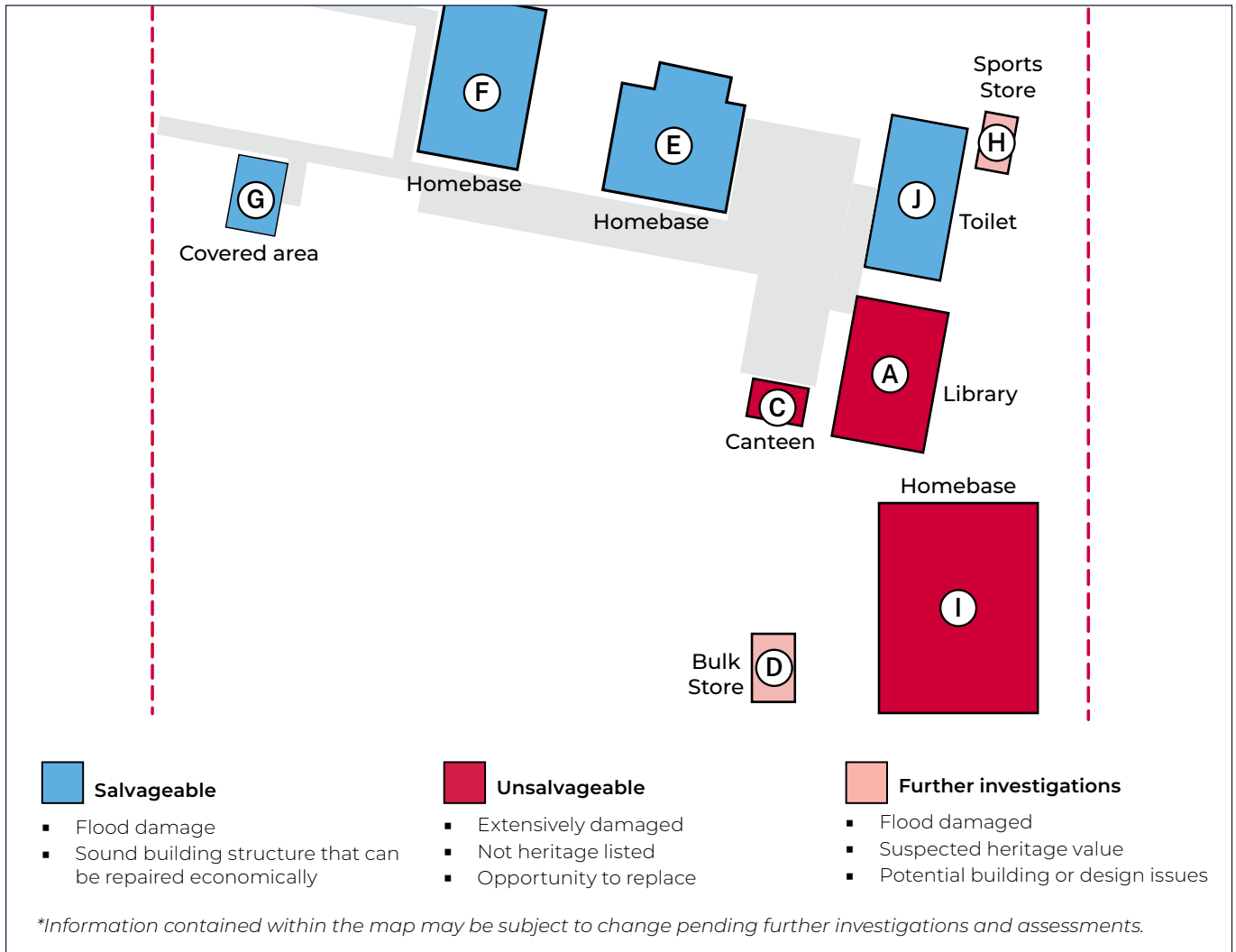
Note: The timeline may be impacted by weather, access to tradespeople, and current supply chain shortages across the Northern Rivers. School Infrastructure NSW is committed to using local contractors and suppliers where ever possible.

Northern Rivers Reconstruction Corporation

School Infrastructure NSW will work closely with, and seek recommendations from, the Northern Rivers Reconstruction Corporation during the planning, design and construction phases of the rebuild. From 1 July 2022, the corporation will act on any recommendations from the Independent Flood Inquiry, manage the rebuild of flood-impacted communities, and coordinate the planning and construction work across multiple government agencies.

Site assessment

Our initial research shows that some buildings and structures at the school are heritage-listed. We will work with a specialist heritage consultant to understand exactly what that may mean for the design of the rebuild. The more modern buildings – Blocks A, C and I – have been damaged quite badly and can't be salvaged. Replacing these buildings offers the opportunity to provide four, new, flexible learning spaces for the school – the same number as before the flood. The early thinking is that older buildings which have heritage value and need to be retained, could be used for non-teaching spaces like administration. We will also investigate raising the level of buildings or moving them to higher ground to improve the school layout and flood resilience.



Modern methods of construction

Where possible and appropriate, modern methods of construction will be used to deliver high-quality, permanent, new school buildings as quickly as possible. Manufacturing of building components off-site and assembling them on-site significantly reduces disruption and impact during construction while improving the speed of delivery and completion.

There are many benefits to these modern construction methods

We save time – it's around 30 per cent faster on the construction site.

There are great sustainability gains, including reduced carbon emissions, material waste and water waste on sites.

We are making a social impact, creating new jobs, expanding opportunities for local training and upskilling and harnessing inherent productivity and safety gains to improve working conditions in the construction industry.

It's safer to manufacture building parts in purpose-built spaces and the assembly requires less interface on sites.



Consultation and keeping your school community informed

School Infrastructure NSW adopts a consistent and strategic approach to general community communications and engagement across all of our projects.

We are committed to engaging with all stakeholders, including the local community, through the entire project lifecycle; from planning, design and delivery, to operations and maintenance.

Examples of when we will consult, communicate and engage with the school community while the project is underway may include:

-  **Engagement of consultants and contractors**
-  **School design**
-  **Construction milestones**
-  **Potential school or local community impacts**

School Infrastructure NSW will continue to share information with the Blakebrook Public School community as work progresses, by posting project updates on the website.

We thank you for your patience during this important program of work.

Stay informed

-  **Website**
Stay up to date by visiting the School Infrastructure NSW website schoolinfrastructure.nsw.gov.au
-  **Email**
Contact the Community Engagement team by emailing schoolinfrastructure@det.nsw.edu.au
-  **Phone**
Contact us between 9:00am and 5:00pm, Monday to Friday on **1300 482 651**