

# Empire Vale 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.

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

# Empire Vale Public School

Empire Vale Public School suffered extensive damage during the flood events. Flood water entered the school and damaged buildings, including classrooms, the administration building, library, playgrounds, oval and toilet blocks. Students are currently learning from Southern Cross Public School.

## What has happened so far?

The site has been made safe and secured. Cleaning and sanitising has been completed on buildings, grounds and non-porous equipment. Walls and floors have been stripped to the flood line with contaminated materials removed.

Furniture and learning resources have been removed as a result of contamination by flood water. Temporary fencing has been installed.

## Planning for the rebuild

Empire Vale 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 prior to the floods 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

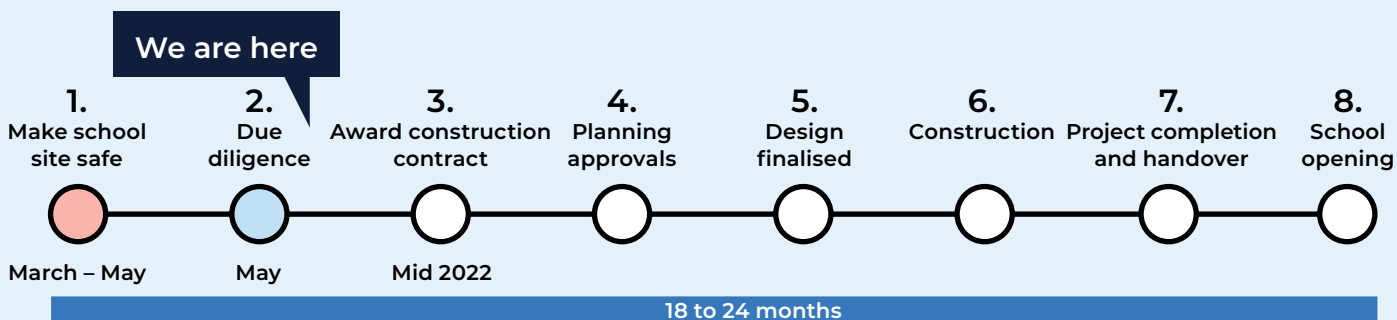
A key consideration in the design and approach to the school rebuild will be to provide infrastructure and facilities that are flood resilient.

Mitigations might include siting buildings in 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 Empire Vale 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.



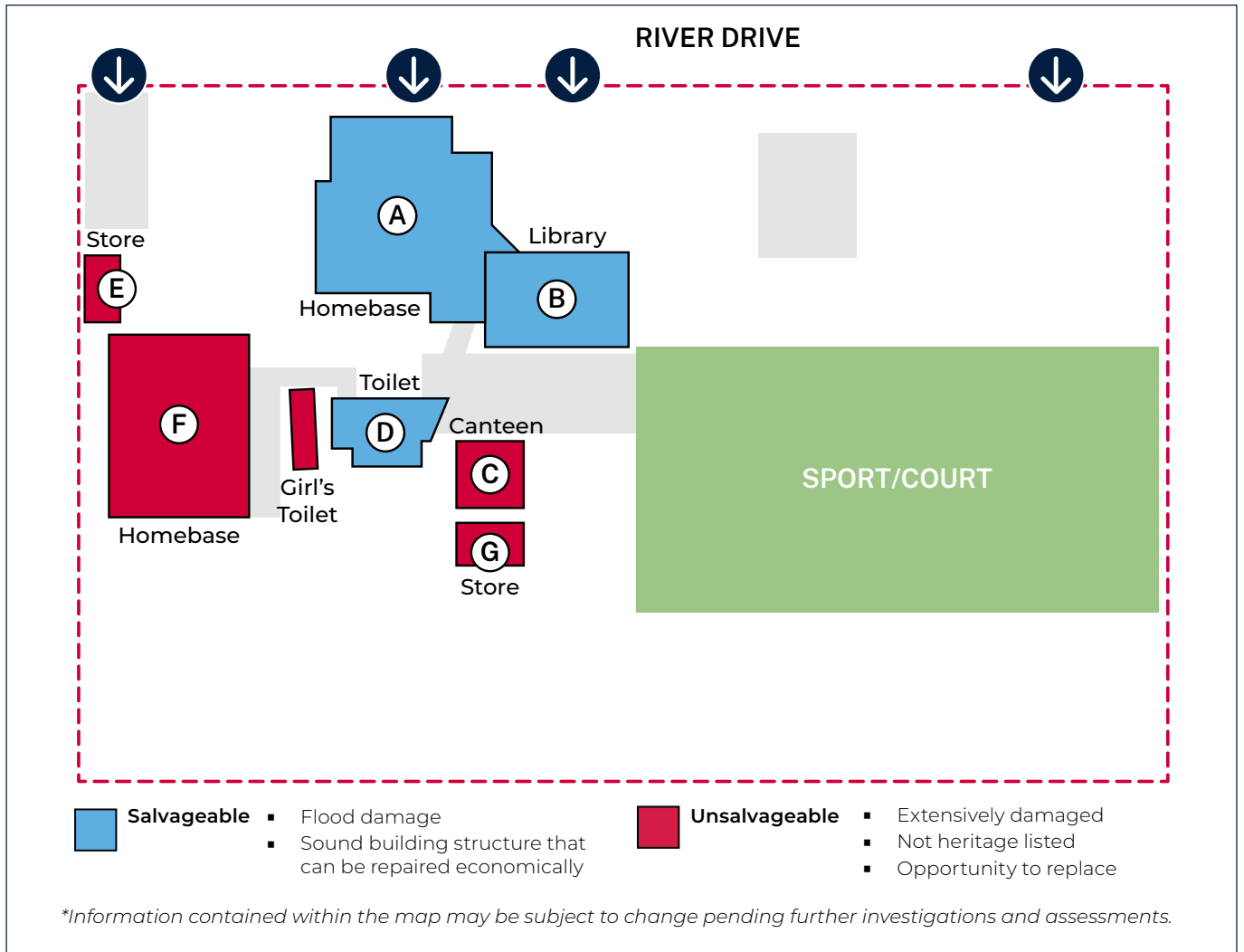
Note: The timeline may be impacted by weather, access to tradespeople, and current supply chain shortages across the Northern Rivers. School Infrastructure NSW is committed to using local contractors and suppliers where ever possible.

## 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

Based on our initial site visits and assessments, Block F – which is used for learning – is beyond repair. The girls toilets, canteen and storage areas are also considered unsalvageable. The two historic, masonry-clad buildings – Blocks A and B – add character to the school so we are looking at how they can be retained and refurbished. Initial engineering assessments indicate that those buildings can't be raised. We will carefully consider what they are used for and how they are fitted out to minimise disruption following any future flooding events. The rebuild project will provide three new, flexible learning spaces for the school, the same number as prior to the floods.



# 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 Empire Vale 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](https://schoolinfrastructure.nsw.gov.au)



### Email

Contact the Community Engagement team by emailing [schoolinfrastructure@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:schoolinfrastructure@det.nsw.edu.au)



### Phone

Contact us between 9:00am and 5:00pm, Monday to Friday on **1300 482 651**