

January 31, 2024

ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
TO BE HELD
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 31, 2024

SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA NO. 2

JAY NANKIVELL
GENERAL MANAGER

MAYORAL MINUTE

1. MAYORAL MINUTE NO. 2/24 - DATED JANUARY 31, 2024 - WILLYAMA HIGH SCHOOL (D24/4372) 3

ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

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ITEM 1MAYORAL MINUTE NO. 2/24SUBJECT: WILLYAMA HIGH SCHOOLD24/4372**Summary**

Broken Hill experienced a period of severe heat, humidity and record rain during the Christmas 2023 School holiday period.

It was confirmed on 19 January 2024 by NSW Department of Education - School Infrastructure that the Willyama High School had been impacted by mould in various areas of the school due to the severe weather conditions during the school holidays.

Whilst the scope of works at the School was being assessed, the Leadership Teams and NSW Teachers Federation representatives from each local school have been working closely with the NSW Department of Education support staff to develop solutions to provide face-to-face classes for all affected students.

On 23 January 2024 NSW Department of Education – School Infrastructure notified the Willyama High School community of an update on the mould impacting the School and the remediation work that was planned to be undertaken, advising that sampling results received had revised their recommendations for remediation measures. The update advised that the work will now be more extensive, will take longer, and will not be finished in time for the start of the school year on 8 February 2024.

School Infrastructure NSW is arranging to relocate classrooms and other educational facilities from across the state to a site at the Broken Hill High School during Term 1 and as soon as practical, Willyama High School will temporarily operate as an independent school on the Broken Hill High School site whilst the remediation works are being carried out at the Willyama High School.

Whilst the relocation of classroom facilities takes place, Willyama High School students will start Term 1 on the usual dates February 8 (for Years 7, 11 and 12) and 9 February (for Years 8, 9 and 10) at various local schools in three curriculum stage groups. Years 7 and 8 (stage 4) will be located at the Broken Hill North Public School in available classrooms, Years 9 and 10 (stage 5) will be located at Morgan Street Public School on the primary site and Years 11 and 12 (stage 6) and Special Education Classes will be located at the Broken Hill High School in accessible spaces for Special Education and specialist classrooms for HSC students.

It is pleasing that the local schools have worked together to ensure Willyama High School students continue to learn in face-to-face classes, but for some children, this upheaval and uncertainty may affect their learning.

I have been contacted by numerous community members and parents raising concerns that the extent of the mould and the cost of remediation works will see the State Government close Willyama High School indefinitely.

Closing Willyama High School and leaving only one High School in Broken Hill is not an option and would be short-sighted of the Government when Broken Hill is on the cusp of a population increase due to the impending commencement of additional mining and renewable energy activity in the region (Cobalt Blue Mine, Hawsons Mine and the Hydrostor Project). These specific projects gaining support from the State and Federal Government as projects of national significance.

With an estimated 2,200 new mining jobs being created by 2026 and a commitment from mining companies to promote a residential workforce, Broken Hill requires two High Schools to support its future population growth and ensure quality education for our children. Furthermore, adequate levels of schooling and choice is a critical factor for families to consider when relocating to the City and adds to Broken Hill's overall liveability.

Council's vision to grow our population to 25,000 will be dependent on plans to strengthen the foundations of our economy by investing in the City's infrastructure, services, and programs to promote economic, social, and cultural growth and embrace the opening of new mines and investment in the renewable energy industry.

This Mayoral Minute recommends that Council seeks a guarantee from the State Government that the Willyama High School will not permanently close and that affected school students are provided the opportunity of subsidised access to tutoring should their learning be affected by the disruption and upheaval caused by the temporary closure of the High School.

Recommendation

1. That Mayoral Minute No. 2/24 dated January 31, 2024, be received.
2. That Council write to the NSW State Government seeking a guarantee they will not permanently close Willyama High School; and that two High Schools will be maintained in the City.
3. That the NSW State Government provides subsidised access to tutoring for Willyama School students whose learning may be affected by the temporary closure of the High School; and that these subsidies be available for the duration of the temporary closure.

Attachments

There are no attachments for this report.

T. KENNEDY
MAYOR



CITY COUNCIL

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