



Wadestown School

Board of Trustees

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News from the Board – September 2018

This newsletter from the Board of Trustees provides a detailed update on the various property projects in place across the school.

The previous update on the state of various projects in the school was in May this year. A reminder that last December after ongoing frustrations with the Ministry of Education's handling of these (MOE funded and managed) projects in the school, which had extended well over two years, they provided a written apology to the school community.

For more details, context or if you are new to the school, these Board News are available here: [Dec17](#), [May18](#).

Unfortunately as you will read below, it has continued to be a source of great frustration that delays, errors and poor project management by the MOE and their contractors has continued through this year.

However the Board has been relentless in pressuring the MOE to follow through with it's commitments to Wadestown School.

On the positive side, we also wish to share news with regard to the plans for redeveloping the grounds and playgrounds in the school.

The state of the various projects in the school is as follows:

New Classrooms

Despite approaching the end of term 3, the MOE is still attending to defect issues with these new classrooms and is still to attend to our concerns about the general finishings of the grounds in this area (for example unfenced bank, unsealed area of the quad). We have been assured these and other defects are a priority.

New Canopies and Decking by New Classrooms

This refers to the completion of a continuous canopy around the front of the new classrooms to meet the existing verandah and replacement of the old verandah 'clearlight' around the entire block.

This work was partly funded by the MOE and partly by the school.

The work is largely complete.

Purakau Ave Access Way

This refers to the MOE's major project constructing a new emergency vehicle access way from the top of Purakau Ave, turning right and curving up to the asphalt area of the tennis courts. The MOE needs to complete this work to achieve compliance for the new classrooms.

Whilst in our May Board News, we noted that the MOE's "12 week timeframe" for this project should be seen as a best case scenario given our experience to date and that winter weather could have some impact, we are now in week 19 and there is still at least 2-3 weeks to go to complete this work.

This unacceptable delay has had a significant impact on the operation of the school, especially with regard to the immediate grounds, the tennis courts and the non-access for those children who normally use Purakau Ave to get to school, as well as the general disruption to the usual operation of the school.

In addition, the MOE has now finally accepted, on the urgings of our Principal, that they have created a safety risk at the top of the upper retaining wall and are undertaking urgent work to erect fences around this area and also down by the field.

Unfortunately the school had no option but to accept that all of this work was going to be undertaken by the MOE and in the manner they have undertaken it.

Tennis Courts

Unfortunately given where and how the MOE has chosen to construct this new access way, there has been a loss of some of the playing surface of the single fenced tennis court such that it now cannot be used for tennis. This had not been envisaged or communicated before the work on the access way commenced.

The Board has submitted to the MOE that this is an unacceptable outcome and that we seek their rectification of this by shifting the tennis court slightly to the north so as to have a full playing surface once again.

The Board acknowledges the impact on the Wadestown Tennis Club and is seeking a solution.

New Walkway

A condition of the school agreeing to the location of new classrooms at the bottom level of the school was a commitment by the MOE to construct a new walkway down to this level in the north east corner of the school grounds.

A reminder that this walkway will go from the current pathway (that runs up behind the old PE shed) down the sloping ridge (currently beyond the wooden fence and which is the exposed bank at the top of the new retaining wall) to the corner behind the new classrooms.

This is another significant MOE project.

The Board has been urging the MOE to address this as a high priority.

Concept plans were considered by the Board in June and a preferred option was selected to inform the design and engineering work to commence.

Regrettably, despite the MOE having stated in writing a year ago that funding is committed for this project, the MOE is now saying it does not have the funding in place.

The Board is dismayed by this and has stated that this is totally unacceptable given that it was a pre-condition of the new classrooms and given earlier statements that funding for this project was committed.

Unfortunately it means that this work, which we had hoped may occur later this year, will not commence until later (and we have no certainty on this). It also means valuable time is lost as we fight for honouring of this commitment.

Admin Block Remediation Work

This involves relocation of the office, sickrooms, staff room etc to elsewhere (likely room 9) while 'leaky building' remediation work is completed.

In May's Board News we noted that this MOE project (which was supposed to occur in term 1 this year) did not happen and that the original estimate of 8-12 weeks work had stretched out to 22 weeks!

The latest estimate is an expectation of closer to 27 weeks work.

The Board has told the MOE that due to the impact on the operations of the school, the only viable time for this work to occur is in the first half of the year when room 9 is empty and children have not relocated across from Weld Street into this class room.

We are urging the MOE to organise itself and its contractors such that work commences immediately at the end of this school year. This would mean the remediation work may be finished in mid 2019 based on what we have been told is the latest estimate.

In advance of this, the Board acknowledges the further disruption this project will have on the school and especially our teachers who will lose access to their staff room and may need to use portaloos around this area while access to bathrooms is closed off. It is another frustration but there is no option but for the work to be undertaken to resolve historic building issues.

Main Block Rose Street

A consequence of the MOE taking three years to decide on and then build the new classrooms is that the school is about 2-3 years behind on its 'normal' (Board managed) capital works program.

The usual 5 year capital funding has been fully earmarked for the Rose St main block of the school and this will be a Board / school (not MOE) managed project.

Delays with all of the above projects means that the Board's stated intent in May's Board News to engage an architect to plan the works was put on hold. Uncertainty over the admin block means we cannot commit to redevelopment of the main block as the space may be needed. We expect to revisit this before the end of the school year.

Demolition of Rooms 7 and 8

Until all of these school works are complete, demolition of these classrooms is postponed until the school is ready. This is because there may be a short term need for these rooms to be used for administration or teaching purposes.

It is also possible that the foundations and 'platforms' on which the classrooms sit can be retained and be utilised as additional flat / playground areas but this will require MOE approval as demolition of this block is their decision.

Grounds and Playgrounds

The greatest frustration of all for the Board is that the MOE's delays and various works have stalled our plans to progress with a major upgrade of grounds and playgrounds using funds raised by the school community.

As is clearly evident from the impact on the school's grounds of heavy machinery, vehicles and building works, any work on developing grounds, fields and play areas cannot be done and then be put at risk. As an example, the area adjacent to Rooms 7 and 8 is likely to be a suitable area for developed playground ideas but this is likely to be needed for demolition works and related access (and demolition is contingent on the other projects being completed).

However the Board has decided that now is an appropriate time to commence the process for developing an overall concept plan for the school's grounds. There are some areas in the school that we believe could now be redeveloped as part of an overall grounds / playgrounds plan.

Landscape Architect / Designer

The Board is pleased to advise that we have engaged Mark Newdick for the school grounds / playgrounds redevelopment project.

Mark's business is the Local Landscape Architecture Collective. Mark has extensive experience and has helped produce plans for many schools. He has won numerous awards for his work over time and is well respected in the education sector.

The initial brief is for Mark to develop an overall master concept plan, broken down into a variety of mini-projects which can then be prioritised and worked on.

School-wide Consultation on Grounds / Playgrounds

The first task being undertaken by Mark will be a consultation exercise engaging parents, teachers and children with regard to ideas about what could work in an overall plan for the schools grounds.

A survey will be issued later this week to parents.

The Board looks forward to your feedback and thoughts on this much-anticipated exercise.

We are pleased to be getting underway with this process after the frustrations experienced whilst acknowledging there are still some large and disruptive building projects ahead.

Working Bee

We hope to see as many parents as possible on Saturday for the annual working bee. The working bee greatly helps the school with a range of maintenance and small building projects and is always a highlight for the children on the following Monday when they arrive at school and notice the work done.

Thanks in advance to those of you who are able to come. All help is most welcome. If you are unable to come along and wish to make a donation, details are in the school newsletter or you can pay funds into the PTA's account.

Thanks also to Malcolm McKee who has organised the working bee and to Stuart and Jodi Baines of Aspen Landscapes who, despite having no children at the school any longer, love the day so much they are back again and organising the garden work being undertaken.

In closing, the Trustees again thank everyone for their patience. We especially appreciate the additional demands these projects in the school have placed on our Principal who has been addressing issues every day in the school.

Thank you to our teachers at Rose Street who have also had to endure these issues over a long period of time and have voluntarily undertaken additional playground duties in recent months.

Thank you to our children who have coped with these changes going on in our school but who have impressed our teachers with the way in which they have innovated and found new and creative ways to play.

The Board will continue to provide periodic updates on property related matters.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Neil Paviour-Smith". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Neil" and last name "Paviour-Smith" clearly distinguishable.

Neil Paviour-Smith
Board Chair