



# Appendix one – Response from agency

---



Ms Margaret Crawford  
Auditor-General of New South Wales  
Audit Office of New South Wales  
GPO Box 12  
SYDNEY NSW 2001

DGL17/957

Dear Ms Crawford

I write in response to your letter of 26 September 2017 inviting a response from the Department of Education to the final New South Wales Auditor-General's Report, Performance Audit – Sharing school and community facilities (your reference: PA6599).

The Department of Education welcomes the report as an opportunity to review our practices in relation to sharing school and community facilities and enhance our support of shared school and community facilities.

I note the constructive suggestions made in the recommendations of the report and attach a formal response from the department to be incorporated into the published report.

I can advise that the department accepts the report's recommendations.

I would like to thank the review team of the Audit Office for working with officers from the department to make this audit a worthwhile and constructive exercise.

Yours sincerely

Mark Scott AO  
**SECRETARY**  
**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

20 October 2017

NSW Department of Education  
35 Bridge Street Sydney NSW 2000 GPO Box 33 Sydney NSW 2001 T 02 9561 8000 F 02 9561 8465  
[www.det.nsw.edu.au](http://www.det.nsw.edu.au)

**Department of Education response to the New South Wales Auditor-General's Report, Performance Audit – Sharing school and community facilities**

**Recommendation 1: Increase incentives and reduce impediments for school Principals to share school facilities, including:**

- a) review the methodology for calculating fees charged for facilities to ensure that shared use of school facilities does not result in a financial burden to schools or the Department**

The department will review the methodology for calculating fees charged for facilities. Currently, the department provides cost-recovery fees taking into account utilities costs (electricity, water and gas); and cleaning and waste removal costs. These fees were recently updated and are published as guidance only. Schools are able to set their own cost recovery fees.

- b) improve support provided to Principals by School Infrastructure NSW, including reducing the backlog of school-initiated infrastructure proposals awaiting approval**

The department will recruit additional resources to support schools in implementing community use of school facilities and reduce the backlog of school-initiated infrastructure proposals awaiting approval.

- c) develop service standards, including timeframes, for assessing and approving school-initiated infrastructure proposals**

The department will develop new service standards to respond to issues in assessing and approving school initiated infrastructure proposals. These will be based on responding to the issues and problems encountered in clearing the existing backlog, preventing the reoccurrence of this issue.

**Recommendation 2: Provide readily-accessible information about available school facilities to community groups and local councils**

The department will consult with schools to develop a solution that will make information about available school facilities accessible to community users.

**Recommendation 3: Ensure that the implementation of the new 'Joint Use of School Facilities and Land Policy' is adequately resourced, and has the support of Principals**

Schools Infrastructure NSW will develop a resource plan that incorporates appropriate staffing and resourcing to manage Joint Use Project Agreements.

The department will ensure that the ongoing implementation of the Joint Use of School Facilities and Land Policy retains the support of principals and considers individual school needs for each agreement. In developing the Joint Use of School Facilities and Land Policy, School Infrastructure NSW consulted extensively including with the Primary Principals' Association and the Secondary Principals' Council Asset Reference groups.

***Recommendation 4: Implement processes to monitor and regularly evaluate the implementation of shared use and joint use policies and promote better practice to drive improvements.***

The department will review the Joint Use of School Facilities and Land policy and the Community Use of School Facilities policy along with the supporting implementation documentation as part of the department's three year review cycle or when an event occurs which may require a review of or changes to the policy.

The department will also further develop the online management system to monitor implementation of the Community Use of School Facilities policy and assist schools in implementing the policy.