

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Call to Fix School Infrastructure**

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P&C Federation Vice President Yvonne Hilsz and Secretary Alan Gardiner recently gave evidence at an ongoing inquiry into NSW government school planning and infrastructure. Among the many issues discussed were the poor state of toilets across many NSW public schools.

The inquiry was informed that common problems with public school toilets include disrepair due to inadequate maintenance, damage by vandalism which does not get promptly repaired, inability of students to wash their hands due to lack of soap, and general lack of cleanliness. Some toilets are in such poor condition that students avoid using them.

All these factors directly impact children's health and wellbeing.

However, this issue is just one symptom of more fundamental problems. For many years, public school infrastructure in NSW has been characterised by lack of funding or adequate planning. The result in many schools is a rapid growth in student numbers with which school infrastructure struggles to keep up. This has led in many cases to not only poor toilets, but poor infrastructure overall, such as rundown classrooms and an over-reliance on temporary classrooms.

P&C Federation Vice President Yvonne Hilsz commented “P&C Federation has over the years made a number of submissions to the NSW Government on these matters, but the problems still persist.”

One underlying problem is that school infrastructure projects are often determined by short-term political factors, not community need. An investigation by the Audit Office of NSW found numerous school infrastructure projects were prioritised mostly by election commitments. This dilutes the effectiveness of long-term planning and significantly impacts the educational outcomes of children attending schools that are deprioritised.

Unfortunately, School Infrastructure NSW is so secretive about their processes, that P&C Federation Secretary Alan Gardiner told the inquiry that getting answers from them is like “talking to a void”. This lack of transparency and responsiveness is not conducive to positive change.

The health, safety and wellbeing of children in public schools is paramount and should no longer be compromised. For this reason, P&C Federation’s advocacy committee intends to pursue this matter with the NSW Government, and we call on School Infrastructure NSW to implement the recommendations of [P&C Federation’s submission](#) and [the Auditor-General’s report](#) as a priority.

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