



Byron Bay High School

Parents & Citizens Association

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11 January 2023

Dear Ms Tamara Smith MP, The Honorable Ben Franklin MLC, Mr Andrew Broadley, Mr Joshua Booyens,

Byron Bay High School (BBHS) Parents and Citizens Association (P&C) is requesting urgent investment into building infrastructure at BBHS.

The BBHS P&C firmly believes in the school's motto - The Future is Ours - however we hold real fears that despite the school's dedication to quality education, there has been no building infrastructure investment since its opening in 1987, meaning that young people from one of the fastest growing regions in NSW are being left behind.

We wholeheartedly agree with NSW Government Education policy that [school infrastructure empowers teachers to prepare students with the skills and capabilities they need to thrive in a rapidly changing and interconnected world](#). However, without the appropriate infrastructure this regional education hub is significantly hamstrung from preparing our children for the future.

The P&C finds it unacceptable that students in the Byron area are unable to access a public education institution that is fit for purpose to prepare them for the future world of work. Our request for immediate new infrastructure is focused on ensuring our young people can learn, grow and thrive into the future.

The P&C is suggesting 2 initiatives; a state-of-the-art Creative Arts Space (CAS) and a Covered Outdoor Learning Area (COLA).

Initiative 1 - A state-of-the-art Creative Arts Space (CAS)

The creative economy has been identified by UNESCO as an area of massive growth globally, particularly for youth employment, and we know that creative skills are some of the least likely to be supplanted by automation. Despite the coronavirus pandemic, the creative economy has shown strong resilience and continues to grow. The creative economy currently employs more people in Australia than the mining and agriculture sectors combined and has been identified in a report by Deloitte as a key driver of economic growth.

At BBHS the current performing arts centre, funded from a generous benefactor donation and P&C fundraising, was opened in 2003 and is no longer fit for purpose. A purpose-built state of the art Creative Arts Space would achieve the multiple goals outlined by the [NSW school infrastructure program](#). It would provide a flexible contemporary learning space to prepare students for future careers in the performing arts economy.



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We propose that the Department of Education build a Creative Arts Space comprising a 300-seat theatre, recording studios, practice facilities and a dedicated visual arts area. The CAS should be equipped with up-to-date digital technology to assist students to collaborate both with each other and other students outside the immediate region to achieve their learning goals. The CAS would be a multi-purpose learning site that would encompass education in the areas of drama, music, digital media (podcasting and radio), film, lighting, stage production, event management and visual arts.

An investment in a state of the art CAS at BBHS is an investment not only for the students and families of BBHS but also the Northern Rivers performing arts sector and economy. It fully aligns with the [NSW Government's vision](#) for the State to be known for its bold and exciting arts and culture scene that engages the community, an approach that is especially relevant to the Byron Shire which is already the jewel in the crown for international festivals. Our region already attracts creative economy employers and we need to ensure our students have the awareness, skills and knowledge to take up these employment opportunities either as school leavers or returning to the area after tertiary education.

We strongly believe the new CAS needed at BBHS firmly aligns with the NSW Government school infrastructure program and its strategic objectives to develop and sustain the arts. Further, it will ensure our young people have a defined pathway to gainful employment in the arts economy.



Current Performing Arts Centre. Opened in 2003 with community funding. Shed structure.



Inside the PAC. Small capacity. Very basic technical equipment. Not fit for purpose.

Initiative 2 - Covered Outdoor Learning Area (COLA)

It seems unfathomable that BBHS currently has no outdoor covered exercise area, which we believe should be a standard facility in all public schools, but especially those located in sub-tropical areas which experience both high rainfall and heat, such as Byron Bay. We believe that building a COLA is an urgent and vital infrastructure upgrade, that fits within the NSW government [Climate Change and Adaption Strategy](#). We request that the government



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urgently places BBHS on the [list of schools currently receiving funding](#) for a COLA. The benefits are many and obvious and include:

- Protection for students and staff from sun exposure and harmful UV radiation.
- A covered area for outdoor exercise in wet weather
- Increased useable outdoor area to reduce overcrowding at lunch and facilitate COVID-safe behaviour
- An opportunity to address climate adaptation and sun-safe behaviour
- An outdoor area that supports outdoor learning initiatives and provides improved education outcomes



This is the outdoor exercise basketball courts that requires a COLA. It has full sun exposure and is not usable during summer months due to hot temperatures.

The P&C believes both these initiatives are high worth investments, addressing urgent and profound deficits in the school infrastructure. These proposals not only benefit the students of BBHS but also the wider community of the Northern Rivers.

We request a meeting at your earliest convenience to discuss how you can help in the delivery of these initiatives.

Yours sincerely

Michelle Pullen
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BBHS P&C

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