

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to you as resident of Port Macquarie and parent of a 1st year high school student at Hastings Secondary College.

I understand the first major works that the school has seen in more than 20 years are soon to commence. I am grateful to the government for granting funding for this long overdue upgrade. Spending on such things as education and healthcare is a key vote decider for me.

Since being made aware of the realities of the work to be done, it would seem that the word upgrade hardly applies in this case.

It is my understanding that along with some gains and improvements, there will be some losses and some features that, despite their obvious need are being ignored. The items I am most concerned about include:

- no plan to rectify the issue of windows that don't open in the classrooms
- no plan to install air-conditioning in those classrooms currently lacking climate control
- the proposed works do not cater for future enrolment growth and barely seem adequate for the current number of enrolments
- no funds being allocated for the upgrade of the four science labs

I'm left wondering how such things as the list above could be overlooked? Do students at this school not have a right to climate control to enhance their learning environment? Are our planners so short sighted or out of touch with the growth of our region that future-proofing for growth in student numbers has been overlooked? And finally, do we simply pay lip service to the concept of promoting STEM learning in our secondary schools? Is that just a tag line when it comes to election time?

I also have concerns that the teachers and principal are not being listened to regarding how the works will be commenced to accommodate the needs of the assisted learning students. If my interpretation is correct, it seems that there will be several moves for them before their new area is ready. These are our most vulnerable learning cohort and a disruption to their fragile learning environment such as this will have severe negative consequences. I can only imagine that these decisions have been made by someone with little or no understanding of education environments. As a parent and a tax payer, this is a saddening and disappointing state of affairs.

Sincerely,
Derek Archer