



MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday 12th August 2019

Urgent Funding Required: Warracknabeal Education Precinct

Stuart Grimley MP has spoken in Parliament today, calling on the State Government – again – to commit \$16million which is urgently needed for Stage 2 of Warracknabeal's Education Precinct.

After touring the unfinished Precinct and existing dilapidated schools last week, Mr Grimley said the reality of the schools' condition is "much, much worse" than expected. There is limited-to-no air conditioning, heating or specialist areas ie Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) or arts spaces.

Given the \$515million maintenance package announced by the State Government last week, many parents in Warracknabeal are understandably confused and frustrated. The Secondary School will be the recipient of \$220,817 of this half-billion-dollar commitment but this has led some parents to question why this money can't be put towards the new school within the Precinct. There are huge cracks, leaking holes, exposed cables and possums falling through holes in the roof (as recent as Thursday 5 September) at the 1927-built Secondary School.

Stage 1 works for the Precinct were completed late last year, however the 2019/2020 State Budget did not include funding for Stage 2 of the Education Precinct. As preliminary planning works take between six and nine months, if the works don't begin immediately, the hopes of Stage 2 being funded in next years' State Budget are very slim.

Mr Grimley has met with the Minister for Education in August as a follow up to a letter sent to the Minister in July. He was advised that minor touch-up works could be made available to the school via an emergency works brokerage process.

Reportedly last winter, rain would pour through the ceiling lights and teachers would need to turn them off as it wasn't safe to leave them on, leaving students to experience the worst of the cold weather and learn in the dark. Teachers have on occasion used a spray bottle to spray on the kids to keep them cool in warmer months.

Principals from the Warracknabeal Secondary College (WSC), Primary School (WPS) and Special Development School (SDS) have been planning to bring the three schools into one precinct since before 2003. This would reduce running costs and allow a greater number of students access to modern facilities.

Currently only 30% of SDS, 40% of WSC and 50% of Administration buildings have been completed, leaving the Secondary College students unable to use their unfinished science lab and other senior school specialist spaces.

A \$25,000 desk for one administration worker sits within the new administration building completed in stage 1, yet children are sitting in almost century-old learning spaces.

Once rivalled by other regional areas for its creative programs, the Warracknabeal Special Development Schools has also now been forced to reduce its program offering.

Quotes Attributable to Stuart Grimley MP:

"The Warracknabeal Education Precinct has been the epitome of political neglect over the past decade and a half by *both* sides.

I spoke with students who were stoically proud of their school...even though the rundown environment in which they learn fails to motivate or inspire.

If this school was within the metropolitan or major regional city boundaries, it would make front page news and demand immediate action.

I've said it before and I'll say it again: we shouldn't be playing politics with our children's future, especially their learning.

Teachers should be teaching, not worrying about electricity issues and chasing possums away from their students as has been reported."

Stuart's full speech can be viewed [here](#).

Stuart Grimley MP - Media Adviser:

Olivia Nicholls / 0459 419 755 / olivia.nicholls@parliament.vic.gov.au

Finish What You Started Warracknabeal community group contact:

Karly Kirk / 0407 273 487 / <https://www.finishwhatyoustarted.com.au/>