Schools As Community Hubs

Report to the Premier
September 2014, No.1
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Sharing school facilities with the community and making them easily accessible to all users is a government priority.

Schools play a vital role in building strong, connected communities in South Australia. They are places where communities can connect, create and build collaborative partnerships with schools and with each other.

The *Schools as Community Hubs* initiative promotes schools as a focus for community life in South Australia by encouraging the use of school facilities and opening doors to community participation.

The *Schools as Community Hubs Action Group* was established in June 2014. It is a sector representative committee with members from state and local government and the community.

Members of the Action Group have been appointed to act as project champions within their sectors to raise awareness within the community about the initiative. The aim is to increase the number of schools sharing their facilities with the community and improving community access to information.

The Action Group has met four times since June 2014. Key achievements for this quarter include:

- facilitation of a workshop exploring the five strategies identified as key recommendations of the Change@SouthAustralia project presented to Cabinet in February 2014
- establishment of three working groups
- development of Action Plans by the working groups including identification of timeframes and key deliverables for the five strategies noted by Cabinet in February 2014
- design of the improved Schools as Community Hubs website
- agreement to a reporting framework setting key milestones at 30, 60, 90 day markers for the strategy action plans
- drafting of the Statement of Intent on the agreed policy position for the initiative.

Issues and challenges identified by the Action Group and for consideration in the next quarter include:

- child protection and screening requirements for community organisations, volunteers and not-for-profit sector
- release of Department for Education and Child Development (DECD) and Office for Recreation and Sport (ORS) *Community use of school facilities: A guideline for schools and community*
- concern about loss of casual community access to school facilities as a result of erection of fences to protect school assets
- public liability insurance requirement limitations
- common understanding about what are schools as community hubs
- long-term sustainability, resourcing and management of the initiative.

The Action Group presents its first report covering the period June to September 2014.
BENEFITS OF SHARING SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Schools have a vital role to play in building strong, connected communities in South Australia – the kinds of communities that are great to live in.

Government is committed to ensuring that local communities are able to access schools on the basis that community use of these facilities builds stronger social networks and enhances student learning and community wellbeing (Appendix 1). This commitment supports DECD’s implementation of Education and Child Development Local Partnerships by encouraging community planning and engagement.

The wellbeing, safety and education of students must remain the priority in our schools. It is the intention of the State Government for schools to be the centre of neighbourhoods and communities and to provide improved access to services, facilities and programs for all.

Sharing our schools with communities generates a sense of pride and improves school security by the increasing use outside of school hours.

Sharing school facilities has benefits for everyone through:

- developing sustainable partnerships between schools and their communities
- encouraging healthy and active communities
- building and fostering social networks
- empowering neighbourhoods and promoting goodwill
- broadening the use of existing government infrastructure
- creating resourcing efficiencies around local planning and infrastructure
- embracing safety and care awareness for schools and communities
- increasing opportunities of volunteering, training and employment.

“We will give schools back to the community and open up school facilities after hours.
We will place schools at the centre of community life.”

Premier Jay Weatherill
16 February 2014

“My government will reform governance arrangements and develop local partnerships across the state to enable greater community engagement in our schools’ planning and decision making processes.”

Former Governor General of South Australia Rear Admiral Kevin Scarce
6 May 2014

Appendix 1
Government’s Commitment
The concept around schools as hubs is not new. Many of our schools have already established relationships with their communities. They work collaboratively to achieve successful outcomes for students, families and the community.

National and international social research indicates that education, employment, healthy living conditions and social support networks all strongly influence the ability of families to provide the best environment for children to thrive.

Bringing services and programs together in collaboration with other organisations will lead to better outcomes for children and their families.

**Schools as Community Hubs: Sharing school facilities with our communities**

This initiative commenced with a community forum on 2 December 2013 at Adelaide High School. The Hon Jennifer Rankine, Minister for Education and Child Development and the Hon Leon Bignell, Minister for Recreation and Sport, welcomed over 1300 people from government, local councils, schools, social services, community groups and the sport and recreation sectors.

The purpose of the forum was to increase opportunities to share school facilities with the community. Eight school leaders described how they shared facilities with the community, addressing:

- the benefits they have observed
- what challenges their school experienced
- how these challenges were addressed.

Schools have always been an integral part of their communities and that strong bond exists between Clovelly Park Primary School and its community. This close connection is illustrated in a number of different relationships experienced by the school.

*Julie Bishop*  
Principal

“Communication and a willingness to actively partner with local community in programs and projects that will increase student’s sense of belonging and thereby their engagement at school needs to be improved if schools really are to be a community hub.”

*Mark de Lange*  
Community Development Officer Adelaide Hills Council
What we heard from the Community

We heard from forum participants, online bloggers and emailers. They identified a number of strategies for sharing school facilities included in Appendix 2.

They saw the need for:

- a clear policy position on sharing schools facilities with communities
- a collective approach from all stakeholders to address barriers and determine solutions
- clear guidelines and a consistent approach to mandatory requirements to assist both schools and community to share school facilities
- information accessible to all potential users of school facilities
- support materials to assist schools and communities to share facilities effectively.

ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE

Schools as Community Hub Action Group

The formation of an Action Group was a recommendation from the Schools as Community Hubs forum (December 2013). The Action Group was established in May 2014 and includes representatives from:

- Department of the Premier and Cabinet
- Department for Education and Child Development
- Office for Recreation and Sport
- Local Government Association
- Sport and Recreation
- Social Services
- Community / Parents.

Jayne Johnston, Chief Education Officer from DECD has been appointed as the Chair. The list of Action Group members is included in Appendix 3.
This group is committed to developing creative strategies to share school facilities within the South Australian community. In this first quarter there have been four Action Group and three Working Group meetings. The terms of reference for the Action Group are included as Appendix 4.

The Action Group has:

- facilitated a workshop exploring the five strategies identified as key recommendations of the Change@SouthAustralia project presented to Cabinet in February 2014
- established three working groups for strategies one, two and three and developed draft action plans, specifying key deliverables and timeframes
- agreed to a reporting framework setting key milestones at 30, 60, 90 day markers for the strategy action plans
- designed an improved Schools as Community Hubs website hosted by YourSAy
- drafted a Statement of Intent on the agreed policy position for the initiative.

The five strategies have evolved as the Action Group has developed each of the action plans for implementation. As a result, the strategies are more focused and designed to achieve tangible outcomes. The strategies have also been renamed to better reflect their intention.

**Strategy 1 – Greater Access to Schools Online Tools**

As outlined in the recommendations to government this strategy is focused on the development of an online tool that will assist community organisations and groups to access information about facilities that are available for use at schools in their neighbourhood. Concepts for online tools will be canvassed as part of the Unleashed Community Challenge.

“I do not believe there is ever going to be one size fits all approach to schools as community hubs. Communities will determine what model best suits them and it could range from services for disadvantaged families, to sports hubs or community learning centres, to performing and visual arts precincts.”

Marie –Theresa Smith, Starclub Field Officer
Key Activities

- Draft action plan prepared for approval at the 29 October 2014 Action Group meeting.
- School data collection survey designed to be undertaken early in 2015 to provide the information required to create a suitable online tool.
- Agreed online concept to be scoped for approval early in 2015.

Strategy 2 – Models for Achieving Schools as Community Hubs

As outlined in the recommendations to government, this strategy intends to identify a number of school sites to pilot the Schools as Community Hub initiative and share their learnings. The experiences of these pilot schools will be used to develop online resources demonstrating the practical application of how schools and community can work together to share their facilities.

Key Activities

- Draft action plan was prepared for approval at the 29 October 2014 Action Group meeting.
- Development of a survey to assess current community use of school facilities by various communities to be implemented early in 2015.
- Development of online resources based on survey data in 2015.
- Development of a communication strategy for schools and communities to promote developed online resources in 2015.

At Mount Gambier North Primary School “our facilities are used for soccer and volleyball by the local new arrivals, as well as church services and celebrations.”

Jane Turner, Principal

“Schools should be the heart of the community and under the Federal Government’s BER schools were required to open their school halls to community groups.”

Tina Stephenson, Citizen
Strategy 3 – Building Communication and Engagement Awareness

As outlined in the recommendations to government this strategy is focused on increasing awareness around sharing school facilities through promoting the initiative on the YourSAy website and through social media.

Key Activities

- The Participation and Partnerships unit within the Department of the Premier and Cabinet (DPC) has continued to engage with the community on schools as community hubs, in order to gather information to inform the Action Group.

- An improved *Schools as Community Hubs* website is being designed to assist all users to access information, positive stories and practical examples about sharing of school facilities.

- The *Schools as Community Hubs* Linked-in group has been established and to date has attracted 140 members.

- A youth engagement workshop was held in partnership with the Youth Affairs Council of South Australia (YACSA) along with a youth survey that invited young people aged 12 to 25 to provide feedback on how they think schools could be used outside of school hours.

- The Minister’s Youth Council has also participated in a workshop and a documentary video of their views on sharing schools facilities has been produced.

- The scoping of a broader engagement and communication strategy has commenced with Action Group stakeholders which will include outcomes from the five strategies.

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**Schools as Community Hubs Engagement Group**

[www.linkedin.com/groups?home=&gid=6605771](https://www.linkedin.com/groups?home=&gid=6605771)

**YourSAy**

Schools as Community Hubs

**Strategy 4 – Statement of Intent**

As outlined in the recommendations to government the Action Group will establish an agreed policy position on the benefits of sharing school facilities with the community.

**Key Activities**

- DECD has led the development of the ‘Statement of Intent’ to enable the Action Group to progress further. The initial draft is due end of November 2014.

**Strategy 5 – Infrastructure and Planning Agreement**

The Action Group has identified the need to increase community use of school facilities through development and planning for future infrastructure between state and local government.

**Key Activities**

- This strategy will be explored further following the implementation of outcomes of Strategy 1.

- Work will commence in 2015 on exploring opportunities for sharing infrastructure and planning.
ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

As work progresses a number of relevant and related issues have been discussed by Action Group members. These include:

- child protection and criminal history screening requirements for community organisations, volunteers and the not-for-profit sector
- the release of the *Community use of schools facilities: A guideline for schools and community*. A joint DECD and ORS project to support the Safe communities, healthy neighbourhoods and Every Chance for Every Child strategic initiatives
- concern about the loss of casual community access to school facilities as a result of the erection of fences to protect school assets
- public liability insurance requirements for organisations that exceed more than 50 members on an ongoing basis
- continuing to build the commitment between stakeholders groups to achieve outcomes of the *Schools as Community Hubs* initiative
- having an agreed position on a common understanding about what are schools as community hubs
- long term sustainability, resourcing and management of the initiative.

“I see local food production and environmental conservation as huge priorities in our local communities. We don’t realise exactly how important they both are until they are lost. I see many schools that are closed off from the wider community.”

Scott Morgan, Citizen

School community libraries provide a public library service to rural and remote areas, a long standing collaboration between DECD and Local government. Without this partnership many rural and remote communities would not have access to library services.

Jo Freeman, Associate Director, Public Library Services
FORWARD OPPORTUNITIES

❖ The development of a shared engagement and communication strategy to broaden school and community awareness of the opportunities.

❖ Commencement of discussions with the Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure (DPTI) and local councils on a shared planning approach.

❖ Opportunities to connect with DECD’s community engagement work through the Education and Child Development Local Partnerships and explore increased school-community cooperation.

❖ Submission to present *Schools as Community Hubs* initiative as a case study at the Australian Early Development Census National Conference in February 2015.

RESOURCING

The work of the Action Group is supported by a Community Engagement Consultant resourced by DECD and located within the Participation and Partnership unit within DPC. The Community Engagement Consultant has lead responsibility for the community engagement and awareness activity for this initiative.
APPENDIX 1

SCHOOLS AS COMMUNITY HUBS

GOVERNMENT’S COMMITMENT

Hon Jay Weatherill MP, Premier of South Australia, on 16 February 2014 announced:

“We will give schools back to the community and open up school facilities after hours. We will place schools at the centre of community life.”

Governor of South Australia, His Excellency Rear Admiral Kevin John Scarce, stated on 6 May 2014:

"My government will reform governance arrangements and develop local partnerships across the state to enable greater community engagement in our schools' planning and decision making processes."

" And it will introduce changes that will provide greater opportunity for feedback from students, parents and staff – including use of online tools to seek community opinions."

South Australian Strategic Plan
- Increase the use of public spaces by the community (Target 1).
- Increase the proportion of South Australians participating in social, community and economic activities by 2020 (Target 23).

Strategic Priorities
Safe Communities, Healthy Neighbourhoods
Green Space for All
“Community facilities including green spaces such as sporting ovals, are a valuable resource that bring residents together. Schools often have excellent facilities. A publication will be distributed to all schools in 2013 to support schools in navigating the processes involved in sharing their spaces with the community."

Every Chance For Every Child
Making it easier for families to access health and development services.
“Community hubs at schools will offer services aimed at supporting families and children form the time they are born.”

Healthy child development and wellbeing
“...so we will work towards encouraging and creating neighbourhoods that support the healthy development of children, while promoting a sense of community safety and pleasant places to live, work and play.”

Department for Education and Child Development - Strategic Pan 2014-2017
Engage children, families and communities
“Children, young people, families and the wider community will be included in our planning and decision making processes.”
South Australian Legislation
Education Act 1972

102A Arrangements under land, buildings and facilities may be used for both school and community purposes.

“The Minister may, if of the opinion that it is expedient to do so -

a) permit Government school land, building or facilities to be used for community purpose upon conditioned determined by the Minister;

b) provides assistance to community bodies (whether by the making of grants or loan or otherwise) upon conditions that secure the schools rights to make use of land, building or facilities of the bodies.”

National Partnership Agreement on the Nations Building and Jobs Plan (2009 - 2011)
Building Education Revolution

“BER will provide new facilities and refurbishments in schools to meet the needs of 21st century students and teachers.”

“D5. To build learning environments to help children, families and communities participate in activities that will support achievement, develop learning potential and bring communities together.”
SCHOOLS AS COMMUNITY HUBS

FORUM

WHAT WAS SAID

CASE STUDY OBSERVATIONS
- Many schools are already sharing facilities and doing it well.
- A profoma is required to assist schools in way to promote sharing of facilities.
- Schools need to act as stewards of community facilities.
- Case studies are useful and promote good practice which should be shared.
- We need to look out and beyond our normal sphere.
- We need to work together to share sport and recreational opportunities in the community.
- What's in it for me? There are potentially lots of benefits to all.
- It's about non-school / educational organisations co-working in schools.
- Community development promoting a whole of life connection.
- Needing to do the work that is tailored for each school.
- Who is not here? And why? How do we engage them?
- It's about releasing the barriers that are holding us back.
- Viewing sporting groups as great partners.
- Leveraging opportunities and accessing collaboratively more funding opportunities.
- The relationship with the principal is crucial and it gives the community and the school its identity.
- Develop 'Hub Partners' by establishing performance agreements for shared use.
- Schools need to be designed to meet both educational and community standards.
- School facilities are great for groups that can pay but problematic for groups who can’t offer financial contributions.
- School facilities is beyond sport i.e. Library, IT, gardens etc.
- How do we plan together to build school / community facilities? It’s about efficient planning and design.
- Opening up facilities to accommodate early years children’s needs.
- Communities for children need to be the focus.

OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES TO BE ACHIEVED
1. Create a database with relevant information on assets and contact information.
2. Identify and involve all stakeholders including children and young people.
3. Need to create enduring partnerships.
4. Build relevant partnerships both with schools and governing councils.
5. Use existing resources and leverage these.
6. Resolve the ambiguities around child protection, safety and security.
7. Need a strategic focus.
8. Establish long-term sustainability around the benefits of shared use of utilities and land.
9. Creation of Council / Community / School Agreements (MOU, Contracts, License, Lease)
10. Require a collective planning approach at the high strategic level.
11. Need a single purpose agreed up front – high order teaching and learning outcomes
12. Have an outcome focused approach for the intention whether that’s for the children, community, council, recreation and sport etc.
13. Need to have a go to person on this issue, a possible ‘fixer’.
APPENDIX 3

SCHOOLS AS COMMUNITY HUBS
ACTION GROUP

REPRESENTATIVE MEMBERS

Department for Education and Child Development

Chair: Jayne Johnston, Chief Education Officer
Member: Anne Millard, Executive Director
Member: Terry Sizer, Education Director, Pirie, Upper Mid North, Flinders
Member: Kim Hebenstreit, Principal, Thebarton Senior College

Department of the Premier and Cabinet

Member: Gail Fairlamb, Director, Participation and Partnerships
Member: Jane Russo, Community Engagement Consultant

Office for Recreation and Sport

Member: Paul Anderson, Executive Director
Member: Kylie Taylor, Director
Proxy – Ilia Houridis, Director

Local Government Association

Member: Wendy Campana, Chief Executive Officer
Proxy – Pat Gerace, Executive Director
Member: Dr Felicity-ann Lewis, Mayor, City of Marion
Proxies: David Beaton, Berri Barmera Council and Kim Ritter, City of Tea Tree Gully

Sport and Recreation Sector

Member: Jan Sutherland, Chief Executive Officer, Sport SA
Member: Mark Hubbard, Chief Executive Officer, Basketball SA

Social Services Sector

Member: Ross Womersley, Executive Director, SA Council of Social Services
Proxy - Dr Greg Ogle, Senior Policy & Research Analyst, SA Council of Social Services

Community / Parent Representative

Member: Barb Harrison, Marryatville High School Parent and Friends
Proxy – John Skinner, Marryatville High School Parent and Friends

Group Secretariat Support
Participation and Partnerships, Department of the Premier and Cabinet
APPENDIX 4

SCHOOLS AS COMMUNITY HUBS ACTION GROUP

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Title

The Schools as Community Hubs Action Group (the Action Group) is a representative committee committed to actively collaborating on broadening the use of sharing school facilities with the South Australian community.

2. Rationale

There is increasing interest from communities in using school facilities for community activity. This includes both the use of grounds and buildings. The State Government has been working closely with local communities and schools to develop schools as places where community hubs can host a range of activities that respond to community needs.

The benefits of this approach are:

- Broadening the use of existing government infrastructure
- Encouraging healthy and active communities
- Building and fostering social networks
- Developing sustainable partnerships with community
- Creating more efficient use of infrastructure through coordinated local planning.

The Schools as Community Hubs initiative aims to make school facilities easily accessible to all users outside school hours. This Action Group has been established to enable stakeholders to work collaboratively to overcome the barriers and generate solutions to enable the sharing of school facilities with their local communities.

To enable this to occur the Action Group will:

- foster collaboration between local and state governments, sport and community organisations, schools and governing councils
- drive the culture change around the concept
- act as project champions
- ensure that safety and education of students must remain the priority in schools.

The Department for Education and Child Development’s (DECD) new partnership arrangements are focused on providing services and programs to support families and children from the time they are born until the end of their schooling. This has involved co-locating services within schools.
This **Action Group** will now broaden this initiative by incorporating the sharing of school facilities with the community as an integral part of the *Schools as Community Hubs* initiative.

*Schools as Community Hubs* will enable schools to be centres of their communities. *Schools as Community Hubs* will provide easily accessible services, programs and facilities to all.

### 3. Appointment of the Action Group

The establishment of the **Action Group** was noted by Cabinet on 13 February 2014 with the Premier agreeing to appoint the members. The **Action Group** will comprise of representatives from local and state governments, community and sporting organisations.

A stakeholder group of representatives from the DECD, Department of the Premier and Cabinet and the Office for Recreation and Sport will make recommendations to the Premier for the appointment of members.

### 4. Membership

**Chair**

The Chair will be a senior executive from DECD appointed by the Premier.

**Group Members**

The **Action Group** members will comprise of senior representatives appointed by the Premier from organisations such as:

- Local Government Association
- Sport and Recreation Sector
- **Social Services Sector**
- Department for Education and Child Development
- Department of the Premier and Cabinet
- Office for Recreation and Sport
- Community / Parent Representative.

*Refer to Schedule 1 – Member List*

**Working Parties**

Working Parties are able to be established under the auspices of the **Action Group**. These working parties will design and deliver strategies aimed at progressing shared facilities. **Action Group** members may nominate to lead working parties which will be made up of relevant representatives from local and state government, sport and recreation sector and the wider community.

**Term of Membership**

Membership of the **Action Group** and the working parties is initially for up to two years.

### 5. Reporting

The **Action Group** will report to the Premier on a quarterly basis on actions to progress *Schools as Community Hubs*. 
6. Purpose

The Action Group will progress the Schools as Community Hubs initiative and determine the feasibility, resourcing and prioritisation of a number of strategies around sharing school facilities with the community. A strategy plan will be developed with recommendations agreed to by the Action Group to go to Cabinet.

7. Role

The role of the Action Group will be to:

• drive the culture change around schools as community hubs
• act as champions for the initiative
• work collaboratively across industries, sectors, governments, schools and communities
• determine the feasibility and practicality of the implementation of a number of short and medium term strategies
• meet agreed key deliverables as specified by the determined short and medium term strategies
• oversee and monitor agreed set milestones of the working parties.

8. Responsibilities of Members

Members will:

• advocate Schools as Community Hubs broadly within their organisations and their sector
• propose solutions to the barriers of sharing school facilities
• nominate leader for working parties on the strategies
• establish a 12 month work plan for strategy implementation
• respond to communications and to engage with the community LinkedIn group
• support resourcing and funding arrangements for the strategies
• report to the Premier quarterly on progress to date
• attend and participate in meetings.

The strategy plan will have agreed key performance indicators against each of the recommended strategies and progress on achieving key milestones will be reported to the Premier.

9. Meetings

The Action Group will meet quarterly, with provision for additional meetings as required.

Working Parties will be convened to action the strategies from the yearly plan and will meet as required.

10. Secretariat

Secretariat support will initially be provided by the Participation and Partnerships team within Department of the Premier and Cabinet to the Action Group.

All working party meetings will also be initially managed and convened by the secretariat.