

Learning conditions should not be determined by a popularity contest

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Public schools desperate for capital works funding have resorted to applying to a community grants program.

Instead of governments adequately funding capital works projects in public schools, our schools have been competing against other community groups for a slice of money allocated to each NSW state electorate (about \$260,000).

The fate of applications to the NSW Government's My Community Project program will be announced in September, after members of the community were given the opportunity to rank their preferred projects during a voting phase.

There is a massive capital works backlog in NSW public schools.



Country Organiser Jack Galvin Waight told the [Newcastle Herald](#) that public school communities should not have to participate in popularity contests simply to get adequate resources for their schools.

"This is the job of both the state and federal governments, and they need to start looking after the majority of students, not just the elite private schools," Mr Galvin Waight said. The federal government provides capital funding for private schools but has not done so for public schools since 2017.

Schools applied to the My Community Project for funding to address safety concerns, one of the criteria for eligible projects. At the whim of the voting process, Gloucester Public School P&C's application for \$100,000 for inclusive playground equipment to replace "unsafe" equipment was funded, thanks to 981 votes. But not all schools were funded, leaving their needs unmet. For example, New Lambton Height Infants School received 471 votes for \$27,510 for a "functional retaining wall for a safe foundation for our school" and was not funded, missing out to a community playground (\$70,000/1245 votes) and theatre makeover (\$190,299/969 votes).

Mitchell High School was unsuccessful in its bid for \$43,554 for new chairs, to replace the "dilapidated" ones students sit on during exams held in the hall.