

MAYORAL MINUTE 2

I have recently received representation from concerned families and the Parent's and Citizen's Association (P&C) that the Avoca Public School is being considered for closure. A prospect that has left the school community deeply distressed about the future of their children's education and the reduction in educational resources of our Shire.

With a long tradition of educational excellence and involvement in the community since 1876, Avoca Public School offers all students a happy and safe place to grow, play and learn.

The NSW Department of Education (the DoE) have confirmed that Avoca Public School will be in recess from Term 2, 2025 with students being transitioned to other schools during Term 1 2025. Once a school goes into recess the DoE review enrolments around the school to determine the outcome which will likely take approximately two years.

The recess and proposed closure of Avoca Public School would have significant repercussions on the local community. The school is a central hub for families in the area, offering not just education but a safe and supportive environment for students. The recess and proposed closure would disrupt the sense of community that has developed over decades, leaving families without a key support system.

Avoca Public School students will face longer travel times, and the schools they are transferred to will also experience added strain as they accommodate the increased number of students. The longer commutes to other schools that students will face will reduce the amount of quality time they have in the mornings and afternoons.

Berrima Bus Lines will also be affected, as they currently provide essential transportation to and from Avoca Public School. This is just one example of many suppliers, local businesses, and community members who will be directly impacted by the DoE's proposed actions.

While I acknowledge that difficult decisions sometimes need to be made, I believe that we, as a Council and as a community, must take every possible step to ensure that we are prioritising the well-being and future of our children. I ran for Council because I am deeply committed to building a community that supports families and empowers children to achieve their fullest potential, and this decision directly contradicts those goals.

I propose that Council write to the Minister for Education and Early Learning and ask that she take into account the wider ramifications for our community, the students, and the families who depend on Avoca Public School.

Recommendation:

That Council write to the Minister for Education and Early Learning to seek a review of this decision and to keep Avoca Public School open.