

OUR CROWDED SCHOOLS - SPECIAL REPORT

Bureaucrats in way of kids

Artist Ayarra Bird with some of her artwork that will be on sale at Bondi Beach Public School on October 22 and 23.



SCHOOL MISSION GETS CREATIVE

BONDI Beach Public School is hosting an indigenous art sale to raise funds to help pay for a new classroom building.

Organiser Georgia Howard said more than 300 authentic and affordable works from emerging and established artists in remote Central Australia would be on offer on October 22-23 from 10am to 4pm.

For every painting sold, 70 per cent would support the indigenous artist community and 15 per cent would go to the Watarrka foundation, to help provide resources to three primary schools.

The remaining 15 per cent would go towards the P & C, which is calling on the State Government to accept its offer of a 50/50 funding partnership to deliver a new classroom building at the school to manage overcrowding.

The school's population has grown by 189 per cent, from 207 in 2006 to 599 this year and is at 104 per cent capacity.

P & C president Robert Keldoulis said if the State Government accepted this offer, money raised from the sale could help fund the new building.

"We want to get away from the cap-in-hand mentality and partner with the government to improve the education of our kids, which will benefit society," Mr Keldoulis said.

"It's about doing something commercial to achieve a positive social outcome."

Mr Keldoulis is meeting with MPs and Department of Education staff to discuss the proposal on Tuesday.

The art sale launches on Friday, October 21 at 7pm.

Department staff meant to leave

Kate Bastians

A FORMER Department of Education director says it was expected bureaucrats would move out of the top level of a building at Bondi Public School when it was needed again for classrooms.

Former Sydney Regional Director Phil Lambert moved department staff out of the bottom level in 2013 as the student population grew but the top level is still used by a handful of bureaucrats from the Bondi District Office, despite figures showing the school is at 141 per cent capacity.

"The intention was that we would continue to review the growth of the school and should (the population) reach a point, that it would logically lead to transferring department staff to another location subject to ongoing review," Dr Lambert told *Wentworth Courier* from Italy.

"My view was that if it was justified, they would move out and that looked like the likely scenario with the growth in numbers and the movement of staff out of the bottom floor was a signal of that intention.

"I didn't give any guarantee but I said it should be monitored and reviewed every six months to ensure it was justified to move them out as that would come at a cost."

Dr Lambert led the development of Australia's first national curriculum and is now an education consultant and adjunct professor at the University of Sydney.

On Friday, shadow education minister Jihad Dib wrote to Education Minister Adrian Piccoli to ask why bureaucrats had not been moved out of the building, which was purpose built for four classrooms before it became a regional office about 30 years ago.

He called on local members Gabrielle Upton and Bruce Notley-Smith to come up with an alternative location for the staff at a meeting with the P&C executive next Tuesday.

P&C vice president Rachel Blackley said the department was planning a "costly Band-Aid solution" to convert their old hall into two classrooms if the staff did not move out.

"Dr Lambert has confirmed the top level was to be returned to the school when it was needed so it's time for the department to follow through with that commitment," she said.

"They need to let us know exactly when they will vacate the classrooms and return them to the school."

Mr Piccoli said nine extra classrooms had been provided at the school since 2013 to provide for the school's growing roll.