



Willow Grove Primary School  
2520  
(Formerly Latrobe River State School &  
Willow Grove State School)  
1883-2023



## 1920-1930

By the 1920s the now 40 year old buildings were in a dilapidated condition. The school committee, which consisted of Mr. G Needham, W. Riley, C.P. Williams, H Lamont, and S. Needham, made a number of pleas to the Education Department for money to repair to buildings.

It was noted in the School Committee's minutes on the 20<sup>th</sup> of April 1920, "that a report of the conditions of the school be drafted, and renovations suggested, said report to be forwarded to the department." This was moved by Mr Geo. Needham and seconded by Mr. C.P. Williams.

At the meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> February 1921 the School Committee agreed to remove trees which are shading windows.

The building had been allowed to deteriorate to such a state of disrepair that £240 had to be spent on remodelling in August 1921. (Willow Grove P.S. 2520 Centenary) In the School Committee meeting on the 11<sup>th</sup> of May 1922, agreed "that offers be asked for repairing fence." Mr G. Needham offered to make further inquiries into purchase of a tank. Mr J. Balfour (chairman) was to "obtain the cost of material for shelter shed of the dimensions 20' x 12', height in front 10', rear 8'." It was also requesting that the school be scrubbed out. "Mr Abbott (principal) explained that there was an allowance of 18s 4p for maintenance of school but the amount was not sufficient to pay for scrubbing out the school."

The shelter shed was erected by Mr Irvine. The School Committee requested the Education Department contribute towards the cost of the shelter shed. They contributed £9.7.6 of the £21. A working bee on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> June 1922, erected a new fence.

In the report to the Department in May of 1922 the following comments were made about the buildings.

"much of the woodwork especially that forming window casements was past falling into decay. The windows need urgent attention, for none will close perfectly; and one was blown out completely by a strong wind, the decayed wood tearing away from the hinge. As this window faces the side often to storms we temporarily arranged matters by acquiring a window from the sheltered side.

Inside the building we found conditions much worse. The want of paint had caused warping of the timber....The floor itself is worn ...and it is quite evident that the joices

beneath are in a state of decay...the rear portion of the school was in semi darkness...The out offices ... are practically beyond repair, especially that used by the girls... and the structure is now in a position such that it can be blown over by the first strong wind.

To briefly summarize, we would recommend that the school be generally renovated, painted outside and inside, the floor repaired after being studded, that more window space be allocated, and that the outhouses be renewed as soon as possible."

In a bushfire in January of 1926 the school's fencing was destroyed. Head teacher, Mr Abbott "reported that 'Local residents, notably Messrs. W. Riley, C.P. Williams and his sons arrived on the scene and by desperate effort were enabled to save the garden fences, outbuildings and even the school itself.'" (Willow Grove P.S. 2520 Centenary) It took a year for the damage to be repaired.

The average attendance in May of 1921 was 20, with 24 students enrolled. In February of 1926 the average enrolment was 18.

In 1929 the motion to have the school moved to a more central location, the current site, was submitted. The process was beginning.

As I read the report about the school, I wonder how much has changed, we currently can't use the staffroom due to repairs in the roof because of mould and leaks, the Prep side of the P/1/2 class regularly has no lights (but no one can find a fault), the wooden windows have a lot of decay and some can't be opened, the woodwork on the outside of the old building is rotting, the toilets are old and are in need of refurbishment... so really nothing has changed in 100 years.