

FALLING APART

Schools with most defects

1. Esperance Senior High School	121
2. Manjimup Senior High School	87
3. Kent Street Senior High School	86
4. Shenton College	85
5. Singleton Primary School	79
6. Riverside Primary School	74
7. West Greenwood Primary School	74
8. Armadale Senior High School	73
9. Baldivis Secondary College	73
10. Falcon Primary School	69



FAILING OUR CHILDREN

Pupils taught in rooms with sagging ceilings and cracked walls

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Photos revealing the shocking state of some of WA's public schools show classrooms with battens propping up sagging ceilings, gaping wall cracks, ceiling holes and asbestos warnings.

Leaked to The West Australian, the photos are from schools in dire need of maintenance to fix crumbling classrooms and run-down facilities identified in the Education Department's latest building condition assessment report.

Topping the list with 121 defects is Esperance Senior High School, which has for years displayed a sign warning visitors to the front office about the presence of asbestos.

Esperance P&C president Michelle Handley said two wings of the school, built in the 1960s, were decades past their use-by date with peeling paint, a leaky roof and holes in the ceiling.

"The buildings are failing," she said.

"Our students deserve more than temporary fixes and patched-up classrooms paid for by funds that should be spent on their learning."

A disturbing image of wooden battens supporting a cracked and bulging classroom ceiling above students' desks was taken at Greenbushes Primary School in the South West.

Massive wall cracks were photographed at Boyup Brook District High School.

The audit of the State's 833 public schools — tabled recently in Parliament — reported more than 10,400 defects, ranging from urgent works to fix structural corrosion, to lower-priority repairs including refreshing faded paint.

Shadow education minister Liam Staltari said as school resumed this week for term four, far too many students and teachers were returning to schools in disrepair.

"Many of the schools that recorded the most defects are in regional and outer suburban communities that have been crying out for help for years," he said.

Mr Staltari said the Cook Government "should be ashamed" of the conditions that many

children and teachers faced every day.

"This reality is compounding teacher stress and the sense of disrespect that we know is driving record resignations," he said.

"Like our public hospitals, our public schools are bearing the brunt of eight years of Labor's neglect and wrong priorities. And while these schools languish, the Government fast-tracks pet projects like the \$217.5 million racetrack at Burswood — using taxpayer funds that would transform many of these schools."

Education Minister Sabine Winton announced an \$11.3 million boost to target priority maintenance items in schools over the next two years, includ-

ing upgrades to roofs, ceilings and playing surfaces.

She said the highest priority defects identified in the audit had been rectified.

Ms Winton said the Government had cut the total number of school defects inherited from the previous Liberal-National government by 70 per cent.

"Since coming to Government, we've made it a priority to fix a significant backlog of maintenance issues at our public schools caused by years of neglect under the previous Liberal-National government," she said.

"A well-maintained school supports not just learning, but also pride and belonging among students, staff and their communities."

