

Rebuilding Casula Public School



“On December 20 2018, our school was struck by a hail storm that was deemed a natural disaster resulting in extensive damage to our school facilities including destroying seven classrooms.”

This was the plight that Robyn Evans – Principal of Casula Public School – and her 940 students and some 60 staff faced after devastating storms ravaged their school.

Casula Public School was just one of many who faced an enormous rebuild after massive storms tore through their district in late 2018...

... But fortunately for many of these schools, the Department of Education called on their trusted partner Facilities First Australia to step in and manage the rebuild.

“Over the six-week school holiday break, I was afforded the most AMAZING support by the ‘recovery’ team. Under the leadership of this team, our school was made safe and fit for purpose. It was MIRACULOUS, to say the least.” Says Robyn.

Experts in planning and delivery of school maintenance projects



The leadership Robyn is referring to largely fell on the shoulders of a man named Chris Karam – the Group Manager for South West Sydney for Facilities First. It was his role to organise design, construct and deliver the recovery plans.

“The Department of Education task Facilities First with the planning and delivery of maintenance projects for their schools across the state,” explains Chris, who has more than a decade of experience in the building and construction industries.

He and his team are building and construction experts who specialise in the planning and delivery of planned maintenance. Chris himself has more than a decade of hands-on experience in the building and construction

industries, as well as qualifications in the detection and removal of asbestos.

“Usually this falls under the banner of our Planned Maintenance division, which is a core service that Facilities First provides for the department. We have a strong process which we apply to these kinds of rebuilds that provides a clear structure for delivery... and additionally ‘Care is at the heart of everything we do’ at Facilities First..”

“For Casula Public School we needed to apply both of these to get the job done.”



A proven process to successful planned facility maintenance



The process that Chris is referring to has allowed him and his team to successfully deliver \$60 million worth of planned maintenance and other repairs for Schools in New South Wales.

It's a process that has been refined and proven over literally hundreds of projects, including more than 600 school roof replacements for the Department of Education as part of their Planned Maintenance contract.

This process for planned maintenance includes seven phases that start with scoping the project and leading through to handover when the job is complete.

Each of these phases proves a crucial milestone that allows Chris and his hand-picked team to deliver the very best outcomes for those directly involved.

Communication: The richest part of the process



While these steps are crucial to internal management, all those on the outside see is a well-oiled machine all committed to communicating in the most efficient manner possible to restore this beloved school to its former glory.

“The communication we were afforded was simply exemplary. We had formal meetings onsite, visible and timely support and weekly contact with key personnel. This communication was the richest part of the management process.” Recalls Casula Principal Robyn Evans...

Men working on roof construction site | Facilities First
“Chris Karam was without doubt the heart of this success...”

“Chris listened and actioned, responded and actioned, negotiated and actioned, revisited and actioned, acknowledged and actioned, followed up and actioned...”

“He was instrumental to our project running efficiently and professionally. He was surrounded by a brilliant team of leaders, managers and tradies that operationalised the rebuild and repair.”



Care is at the heart of everything we do



Almost 12 months after the storm hit Casual Public School the new learning environments were completed, temporary demountables removed and new grass laid.

This is a remarkable result considering the school never lost any productivity throughout the rebuild.

Students were able to continue to learn, grow and play in their temporary on-site learning facilities while the safe construction on the new facilities were completed.

Chris sees a lot of these situations... but creating great outcomes for the community is why he loves his role at Facilities First.

“That’s what makes it so special for me. To see that you’ve made a positive impact on the everyday lives of really good people. That’s why we do what we do.”

And for Robyn at Casula Public School?

“Our students, staff and community certainly felt ‘known, valued and cared for’... and for that in itself I am an incredibly grateful Principal.

“We are delighted with how our school looks. You should have seen the faces on our students the first time they re-entered their learning spaces. Facilities First made a difference for us all at Casula Public School.”





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or maintenance solution?

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