

# Reforming secondary education – Palmerston

The Northern Territory Government is committed to delivering on its vision to provide:

- An **excellent and equitable** secondary system that supports all students to achieve.
- A **guaranteed standard of local secondary school provision**, and a pathway to NTCET completion for all students, regardless of geographic location.
- A **model of delivery that is differentiated**, and informed by student and community need and industry pathways.
- An engaging learning design that **guarantees core literacy, numeracy and work readiness skills and drives improvements in student attendance and wellbeing**.
- A **shift away from middle schools** as a key NT government election commitment

Our reforms will build the aspirations and skills of young people so that their secondary schooling sets them up for future careers and meets the needs of the Territory.

## What is the proposed future design for secondary education in Palmerston?

The proposed future design for government secondary education in Palmerston is the creation of **two full comprehensive secondary schools (years 7-12)**. One school will be on the site of the existing Senior Secondary campus of Palmerston College in Driver and the other will be on the site of the current Middle Years campus at Rosebery.

The creation of the two new schools in Palmerston will provide the following benefits:

- capacity to accommodate the existing population and future growth in Palmerston;
- reduce transition points for secondary students. Students will be able to complete Year 12 where they start Year 7 which will enable greater continuity of learning and relationships for students and teachers;
- allow specialisation in each school, for example specific training pathways, and provide options for students and parents in Palmerston; and
- provide career pathways and development opportunities for staff.

The Northern Territory Government has also committed to establish a secondary school for students with disabilities in Palmerston. The new school is some years away, so in the meantime it is proposed that secondary students with a disability that require high levels of support remain at the centre on the Driver campus.

## How are we planning for this change?

There is significant detail and planning needed to prepare for the future of secondary education in Palmerston.

We are currently engaging with parents, students and staff to obtain feedback on the proposed future design. At the end of Term 1 2025, we will collate this feedback to enable government to make a decision on the future design.

By June 2025, all students, parents and staff will know:

- The finalised future design for secondary education in Palmerston;
- The plan to support students to transition into the new schools;
- Priority enrolment zones for new secondary schools; and
- Approach to managing staff changes and opportunities for staff to transfer to different schools

In Semester 2, 2025 further detailed planning will occur to ensure students, staff and school communities are ready to begin the transition to the future state of secondary education in Palmerston.

From Term 1, 2026, changes will begin in a sequenced and carefully managed way, ensuring students and staff are supported. For most schools, this would include the transition of one year level from 2026, for example Year 9 students at middle schools would start Year 10 at the expanding school in the first year. These changes will be managed to minimise disruption for students. The full transition to the new design of secondary education in Palmerston will be completed by 2028.

Throughout this exciting but significant change process, the Department of Education and Training (Department) will provide the appropriate support for schools, students, teachers and communities to ensure a smooth transition process.

## How are we engaging with the school community?

Engagement with school staff and school communities in Palmerston has begun and will run over the next several weeks. This will enable parents, school staff and students to provide input to help shape the future design of secondary education in Palmerston.

The Department has commenced engagement with the Palmerston College community through:

- A staff meeting on Wednesday 5 March 2025
- A school council meeting on Thursday 6 March 2025
- A meeting with Palmerston primary school principals on Thursday 6 March 2025

A short survey has been developed to capture as many perspectives as possible. This survey is available until 16 April 2025 at <https://forms.office.com/r/YMvADrz3K6?origin=lprLink> or through the QR code:



For a copy of the *Review of Secondary Education in the NT* or more information on the plan for delivering secondary reform, visit [www.education.nt.gov.au/secondary-education](http://www.education.nt.gov.au/secondary-education). Alternatively, if you would like to be in touch about the change email [secondaryreform.doe@education.nt.gov.au](mailto:secondaryreform.doe@education.nt.gov.au).

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Q. What are the benefits of moving away from middle schools?

Through consultation with teachers, parents and students, the *Review of Secondary Education in the NT* found that the middle school model in the NT isn't maximising outcomes for students. Moving to comprehensive schools will reduce the transition points for students and support greater continuity of relationships and learning. It will provide teachers with wider professional opportunities and provide more opportunities for schools to specialise.

### Q. What pathways will be offered to students in Darwin, Palmerston and Alice Springs?

All comprehensive schools in Darwin, Palmerston and Alice Springs will provide the full Australian Curriculum (year 7-10) and a core range of NT Certificate of Education and Training subjects and pathways (year 10-12) that will set students up to pursue post-school education, training and jobs.

Schools within each region will work together to identify specialisations and approaches to working as a network of schools to ensure all students can access a wide range of pathways regardless of their home school. The focus of individual schools will be released alongside the final school design in mid 2025.

### Q. How will priority enrolment areas change with the shift away from middle schools?

All students in Darwin, Palmerston and Alice Springs will have access to high quality government secondary education and a wide range of pathways, regardless of where they live.

Providing flexibility and options for families will continue to be an important part of secondary education in the Territory. There is no proposal to change the current priority enrolment policy where families and students are able to pursue opportunities and pathways at schools outside the area that they live.

### Q. Will additional funding be available to support this change?

In 2024, the Northern Territory Government signed the *Better and Fairer Schools Agreement* with the Commonwealth Government, providing a significant funding uplift to schools from 2025 to 2029. The funding uplift under this agreement will support the transition to the new secondary system.

### Q. How will teachers be supported to prepare for teaching new subjects and year levels?

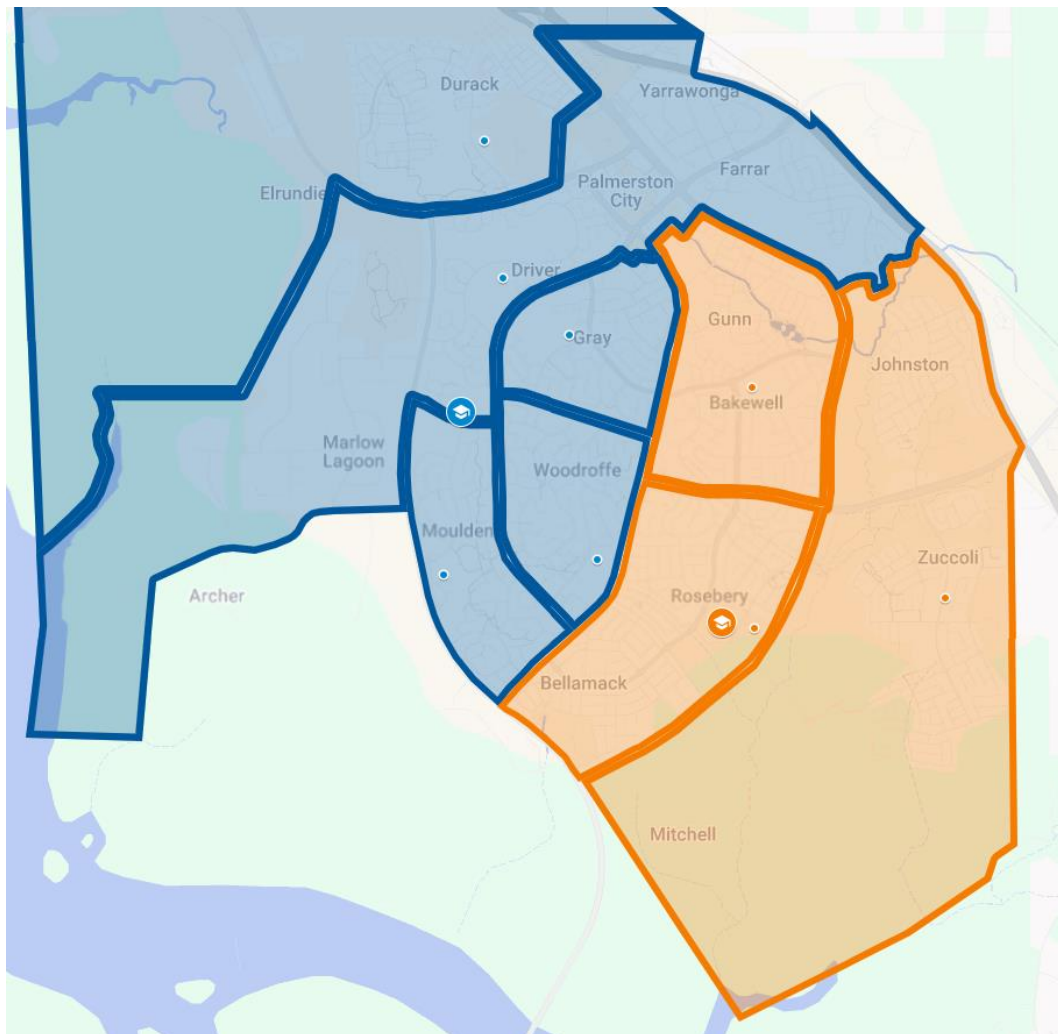
The shift away from middle schools provides our teachers with exciting opportunities to diversify the year-levels and subjects they teach and deepen the connections with students from 7-12. Professional development will be provided to current middle school teachers to prepare for teaching NTCET subjects, and to support current senior secondary school teachers to enhance their understanding of middle years' teaching and learning approaches



### Q. Will there be investment in infrastructure to support the change away from middle schools?

The Department of Education and Training is currently working with the Department of Logistics and Infrastructure to assess existing facilities at middle and senior secondary schools and to identify any minor or major works that would be required to deliver comprehensive school education. This may include upgrades to science facilities and new facilities for technical specialisations.

## Proposed Priority Enrolment Areas for Palmerston

The proposed priority enrolment areas for the two Palmerston secondary schools align with the existing priority enrolment areas of the Palmerston Primary Schools.



Secondary School	Primary Schools in Priority Enrolment Area	Total enrolled student population Years 7 to 12 2024
 Secondary School (on the Driver Campus)	Durack Primary School Driver Primary School Gray Primary School Moulden Park Primary School Woodroffe Primary School	1,553
 Secondary School (on the Rosebery Campus)	Bakewell Primary School Rosebery Primary School Zuccoli Primary School	1,502