Photo source: Cameron Dick MP

QAST
CASE STUDY

YUGUMBIR STATE SCHOOL

Yugumbir State School, a thriving state primary school in South East Queensland with 975 students and 107 staff, unveiled its newly refurbished tuckshop on 24 October, 2025.

This milestone project has redefined meal service capacity, workflow efficiency and community connection.

BACKGROUND

Originally constructed in 1986 to support just 300 students, the old tuckshop had been stretched well beyond its intended purpose.

Over time, the space had become restrictive, worn and inefficient.

Tuckshop Convenor, Kim Wood persevered, cooking large portions of food from scratch and working tirelessly with the limited environment.

Kim's dedication was instrumental not only in maintaining operations but in helping advocate for an upgrade. Kim's ability to balance efficiency with high quality meal preparation provided compelling evidence for the need to modernise.

AT A GLANCE

School: Yugumbir State School

Sector: State (P – 6)

Region: South East Queensland

Students: 975

Staff: 107

Tuckshop Convenor: Kim Wood

Days Open: 5 per week

Tuckshop operated by: School

Photo source: Cameron Dick MP

PLANNING AND FUNDING

In May, 2024, Yugumbir State School successfully obtained funding through the Queensland Government's School Playground and Tuckshop Upgrades Program.

The transformation was funded through a shared investment of approximately $880,000 sourced from:

- $460,000 – State Government Grant
- $200,000 – School contribution
- $200,000 – Regional contribution
- $18,000 – Yugumbir State School P&C Association – funded industrial ovens and freezers.

Planning commenced in August, 2024. The collaborative planning team – comprising of the Principal, Business Manager, Regional Infrastructure Advisor, Project Manager, Architect, Builder and Tuckshop Convenor – ensured the design would meet real work operational needs. Notably, the Principal advocated strongly for Kim's involvement in all stages of the design, recognising her practical knowledge of daily operations.

Construction began at the end of Term 1, 2025 and continued until the end of Term 3, 2025. The tuckshop was closed during this time.

WHAT HAPPENED DURING THE CLOSURE?

During the refurbishment period, Kim transitioned into a temporary administrative role, assisting with first aid, communications, student absences and front office support. While she excelled in this placement, she was keen to return to her "happy place" – the kitchen.

Meanwhile, construction oversight remained meticulous. The Project Manager facilitated consistent communication between school leadership, technical advisors and construction partners, helping ensure timelines, design integrity and requirements were maintained.

THE REFURBISHMENT

The renovation significantly expanded and reconfigured the tuckshop space. Improvements included:

- A footprint more than double the original size
- Commercial-grade equipment and stainless-steel fit-out
- Reworked roofing and structural reinforcement
- Upgraded hydraulic and electrical systems
- A new 2×3m cool room and 2×5m storage facility.

The result is a professional grade kitchen capable of delivering high volume, high nutrition meal services with ease.

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YUGUMBIR STATE SCHOOL'S PRIORITIES

The school's essential equipment priorities were:

1. Gas cooking capability
2. Large upright freezers and a cool room.

These additions have dramatically improved food safety, preparation speed and output capacity.

NEW EQUIPMENT INSTALLED

Key major purchases included:

- 2 x Moffat Turbofan Double-Stacked Convection Ovens – Approx. $11,694
- 2 × Polar G-Series Upright Freezers (1200L) – Approx. $3,739.89 each
- Turbo Air Hooded Salad Bar – Approx. $5,170
- LUUS 6-Burner Cooktop – Approx. $6,900
- Hobart Pass-Through Dishwasher
- Commercial stainless-steel wide island bench

The Yugumbir State School P&C Association's targeted contribution for ovens and freezers directly enabled larger scale cooking and storage systems – a game changer for meal preparation.

Moffat Turbofan Double-Stacked Convection Ovens

Polar G-Series Upright Freezers (1200L)

Turbo Air Hooded Salad Bar

LUUS 6-Burner Cooktop

Hobart Pass-Through Dishwasher

WHY THE RENOVATION MATTERED

With demand from nearly 1,000 students plus staff, the tuckshop has:

- Expanded capacity for volunteer engagement
- Reduced overtime stress on staff
- Allowed additional fresh and nutritious menu options
- Increased financial sustainability.

Weekly takings average $7,000 - $8,000 with themed events such as Halloween generating up to $3,500 in one day. Fridays now regularly approach 500 orders.

MENU IMPROVEMENTS

The upgraded environment has facilitated a noticeable shift toward whole food, freshly prepared meals. Student favourites now include:

- Sushi Bowls
- Pasta dishes
- Burritos
- Homemade cheeseburgers
- Veggie curry.

STAFF SPECIALS

The tuckshop also offers weekly staff specials on rotation, such as:

- Steak sandwiches
- Satay Chicken Buddha bowls
- Yiros
- Bao buns
- Toasted Turkish sandwiches
- Soups with homemade bread.

Staff orders now average 30 per week.

LESSONS LEARNED

Kim offers the following advice for schools undergoing similar projects:

- Be patient — expect slow visible progress — until suddenly everything aligns.
- Consider whether to stay open or closed — operating from another space (like a hall kitchen) can be unrealistic.
- Timing matters — aim for work over longer holidays when possible.
- Involve your principal early — their support is essential.
- Research equipment thoroughly — look at reviews, convenience and price.
- Choose upright freezers for easier access.
- Invest in quality ovens with multiple functions.
- Always choose a pass-through dishwasher — one-minute cycles save enormous time and labour.

Photo source: Yugumbir State School Facebook page

Photo source: Education Queensland

THE IMPACT

The Yugumbir State School tuckshop refurbishment represents more than building improvement, it signifies investment in student wellbeing, staff support and future ready school infrastructure.

With greater capacity, safer workflow, better storage, modern technology and morale boosting working conditions, the new facility stands as a model of how school food services can become central pillars of community health and school culture.