Suitability of Courallie High School Site for an Aboriginal Cultural and Education Centre.



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PART (A): Can the site be redeveloped in a way consistent with Dept of Education Objectives?

The site currently owned by the NSW Department of Education. It is a significant collection of purpose-built school buildings dating predominantly from **1970–1974** including;

- administration, general learning, library, agricultural science, technology/industrial arts, food technology, multipurpose/sports and science facilities;
- a later **2010 science building**;
- at least one demountable learning unit recorded in 2017;
- existing sporting/recreational infrastructure;
- a history of agricultural education facilities;
- continuing educational use of part of the site by **Barwon Learning Centre**;
- substantial existing utility/infrastructure investment.

There are **three major site constraints**:

1. **Flood risk is a fundamental site issue.**
2. **Some of the existing buildings contain significant asbestos**, including material classified as friable in the 2017 register.
3. Most of the major buildings are now approximately **52–56 years old**, meaning structural, electrical, hydraulic, accessibility, fire and energy-performance upgrades would need to be assessed before assuming they are economical to retain.

T**he site may be much more valuable as a redevelopment/reuse opportunity than the current condition of the old buildings suggests**. In particular, its historical agricultural and technology infrastructure could be relevant to a venture that incorporates this infrastructure.

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1. Site identity and history

The site is the former **Courallie High School**, subsequently the Carol Avenue Junior Campus of Moree Secondary College.

Courallie High School dates from **1972**. The Carol Avenue campus subsequently served Years 7–9 of Moree Secondary College, while Years 10–12 were at Albert Street. The NSW Government approved consolidation of the two campuses, with the Carol Avenue campus eventually closing as the secondary college site in December 2023. @NSWDepartmentofEducation

There is an important historical/legal issue here.

The NSW Parliament petition seeking establishment of a Space Science School states that the land was provided to the NSW Education Department by the **Hann family in 1970 for educational purposes**. That claim appears in the parliamentary petition, although I have **not yet located the original conveyance/gift instrument**. Parliament of NSW

That original instrument is something I would regard as **high priority to obtain**, because it could affect what the land can ultimately be used for.

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2. The site is not completely unused

Barwon Learning Centre remains associated with the Carol Avenue site.

The NSW Department of Transport's current school database lists:

Barwon Learning Centre — Lot 269 Carol Avenue, Moree NSW 2400.

It remains an operating specialist school. appln.transport.nsw.gov.au

The 2023 Barwon Learning Centre annual report also documents its continuing relationship with Moree Secondary College Carol Avenue. Sparo Reports

Therefore, before considering redevelopment, the **exact cadastral boundaries and occupation arrangements need to be established**.

This is important because "the Courallie site" may colloquially mean the whole former campus, whereas the Department may now regard different portions of the land as separate assets/occupancies.

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3. Buildings identified

The Department's 2017 hazardous-material register is useful because it effectively provides a partial building inventory.

The register identifies the following major buildings:

Building	Description	Approx. original date
B00A	Administration	1970
B00C	Multipurpose facilities	1970
B00D	Various/general facilities	1970
B00F	General learning	1930 recorded in register*

Building	Description	Approx. original date
B00G	Agricultural Science	1970
B00L	Library / General Learning	1974
B00M	Technological & Applied Studies	1970
B00S	Science Learning	1970
B00T	Science Learning	2010
Demountable	Standard learning unit	2012 placement

*The 1930 date for B00F needs verification because it is unusual within the otherwise 1970s campus and may relate to a relocated or inherited building rather than the original school construction. NSW Education

This is a much more substantial facility than simply "some old classrooms".

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4. Agricultural infrastructure — particularly significant

The 2018 asbestos register identifies a dedicated:

B00G — Agricultural Science building

It was recorded as a **1970 concrete building**, containing:

- staff toilet;
- class tools storage;
- machine storage;
- additional staff toilet;
- general storeroom;
- circulation/movement space.

The register found **no asbestos** in the inspected internal areas of this building. NSW Education

There is also independent historical evidence that the Carol Avenue campus had an **Agriculture Farm / sustainability learning hub**. A Local Land Services annual report records funding involving Moree Secondary College to establish a sustainability learning hub at the **Carol Avenue Campus Agriculture Farm**. Parliament of NSW

It means the site wasn't simply capable of teaching agriculture in classrooms; it appears to have had an **agricultural teaching area/farm associated with the campus**.

For an agricultural school proposal, we would investigate:

- surviving farm area;
- old animal facilities;
- yards;
- irrigation;
- water tanks;
- gardens;
- horticultural areas;
- machinery areas;
- sheds;
- soil profile;
- drainage;
- water entitlements/connections;
- any existing bore infrastructure;
- agricultural electricity supply;
- former paddock boundaries.

This could materially increase the site's value.

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5. Industrial / trade infrastructure

The site also had substantial technology facilities.

The State Library of NSW archive contains extensive material relating to the **Courallie High School Industrial Arts Department**, including:

- metalwork;
- woodwork;
- technical drawing;
- materials;
- workshop programmes;
- technology curriculum;
- machinery/tools;
- industrial arts organisation.

The archival material extends from the 1970s through the 1980s and confirms that industrial arts was a significant component of the school. State Archives NSW

The Department's infrastructure register identifies:

B00M — Technological & Applied Studies

The building contains:

- materials technology learning spaces;
- welding area;
- materials stores;
- outdoor workshop;
- kiln space;
- dust extraction space;
- design learning space;
- resource/project stores;
- music learning space. NSW Education

That is potentially a very valuable asset for a modern agricultural school.

For example, an agricultural school could use suitably refurbished workshop space for:

- agricultural machinery;
- welding;
- fabrication;
- irrigation;
- pump maintenance;
- fencing;
- farm machinery;
- engineering;
- robotics;
- precision agriculture;
- renewable-energy systems.

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6. Science infrastructure

There appear to be **two generations of science facilities**.

B00S — Science Learning — 1970

The register identifies laboratories, preparation areas, chemical storage, resource space and apparatus storage. NSW Education

B00T — Science Learning — 2010

This is particularly interesting.

The 2010 building includes:

- general learning space;
- science laboratory;
- preparation room;

- apparatus store;
- chemical store;
- staff study;
- seminar space;
- outdoor learning space.

Importantly, the 2017 register records **no asbestos found in the inspected internal areas of B00T**. NSW Education

That building could potentially be one of the better candidates for retention, subject to a current building-condition inspection.

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7. Library and learning spaces

B00L is recorded as:

Library / General Learning — 1974

It contains a considerable number of learning, study, workroom, library and storage spaces.

However, it has a **significant asbestos issue,** discussed below. NSW Education

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8. Multipurpose / sporting facilities

B00C is identified as:

Multipurpose Facilities — 1970

The building contains:

- multipurpose space;
- sports equipment stores;
- student canteen;
- change/shower facilities;
- toilets;
- sports storage;
- main switchroom. NSW Education

This is potentially useful infrastructure for a future school/community facility.

There is also documentary evidence that the basketball court required substantial rehabilitation. In a NSW Premier's Sporting Challenge funding allocation, the Carol Avenue campus received **$42,000** for renovation of the basketball court, including:

- moving/levelling ground;
- complete asphalt resurfacing;
- new fencing;
- line marking;
- replacement basketball rings/posts/backboards.

The stated reason was the age and condition of the court. NSW Education

So the sports infrastructure has already required capital investment, but it also demonstrates that the site possesses established sporting infrastructure.

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9. Asbestos – the biggest building-related issue

This is the most significant physical risk identified in the public records.

The Department's asbestos register was issued **24 March 2017**, following an initial survey in 2008. Therefore, it is **not a current asbestos survey** and must not be assumed to describe the site's condition in 2026. NSW Education

Nevertheless, it provides a very strong indication of the likely remediation problem.

Examples include:

➢ Administration

Asbestos was identified in:

- toilet partition walls;
- vinyl flooring;
- electrical backing boards;
- ceiling materials.

Some materials contained **chrysotile**, and one ceiling material contained **chrysotile and amosite**. NSW Education

➢ Multipurpose building

Asbestos was recorded in:

- toilet partitions;

- ceiling sheeting;
- vinyl flooring;
- electrical backing boards. NSW Education

B00D

This is particularly serious.

The register records **vermiculite ceiling material classified as friable asbestos** across numerous areas.

Examples include:

- 63 m²;
- 24 m²;
- 33 m²;
- 66 m²;
- 17 m²;
- 98 m²;
- 16 m²;
- 73 m²;
- additional areas. NSW Education

Importantly, the register says in many of these cases:

"Clerical Error - No Sample Taken"

That means this is not equivalent to a modern, fully sampled asbestos survey. It makes the uncertainty **greater**, not smaller.

➢ Library — significant asbestos issue

B00L has particularly extensive recorded asbestos.

The register identifies friable asbestos associated with vermiculite ceiling materials in numerous rooms, including:

- senior study;
- workrooms;
- staff areas;
- library;
- movement/circulation areas;
- main area.

One entry alone records **240 m²** of friable asbestos material in the main area. NSW Education

This does **not** mean 240 m² of asbestos-containing building material necessarily remains today. It means that is what the 2017 register recorded.

A current hazardous-materials survey is therefore essential before deciding whether the library should be retained.

➢ Industrial arts / TAS

B00M also **has recorded asbestos**.

Examples include:

- toilet partitions;
- ceiling vermiculite;
- welding-area ceiling material;
- special learning space;
- staff study;
- vinyl flooring.

Again, several ceiling materials were classified as **friable asbestos** in the 2017 register. NSW Education

This could have a major impact on the economics of retaining the old workshops.

The workshops may be structurally valuable but economically unattractive if substantial asbestos removal and compliance work is required.

➢ Science — manageable asbestos issue?

The older B00S science building also **has recorded asbestos** in:

- laboratory ceilings;
- preparation area;
- chemical store;
- resource areas;
- circulation areas;
- some flooring;
- electrical backing boards.

Several ceiling areas were classified as **friable asbestos** in the 2017 register. NSW Education

The newer B00T science building is much more promising from the hazardous-material perspective: the 2017 inspection recorded no asbestos in the inspected internal areas. NSW Education

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➢ One recorded poor-condition asbestos item

The register contains a particularly important entry.

It records approximately **1 m² of asbestos-containing ceiling material** as:

- **Poor condition (4)**
- **Medium risk (2)**

and identifies both chrysotile and amosite. NSW Education

That is an important warning that the register was not merely identifying perfectly intact low-risk material.

➢ Electrical infrastructure

There is evidence of substantial electrical infrastructure, including distribution boards and a main switchroom.

However, the asbestos register repeatedly contains the warning:

"No inspection of live electrical installation."

That means the asbestos survey **was not an electrical condition audit**. NSW Education

Consequently, the electrical system should be regarded as:

UNKNOWN — high-priority investigation

A future facility would need an electrical audit covering:

- incoming supply;
- transformers;
- switchboards;
- submains;
- distribution boards;
- earthing;
- emergency systems;
- generator capacity;

- solar potential;
- data infrastructure;
- fire alarm;
- security;
- outdoor lighting;
- workshop supplies;
- three-phase capacity.

For an agricultural school, **three-phase electrical capacity** would be particularly important.

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10. Plumbing, sewer and stormwater

This is another major information gap.

I have **not yet found a public asset-condition report** documenting:

- water main size;
- sewer connections;
- stormwater network;
- detention infrastructure;
- pits;
- pipe condition;
- hydraulic capacity;
- irrigation network;
- tanks;
- pumps;
- fire-water infrastructure.

This should therefore be treated as an **unresolved infrastructure risk**.

The fact that the site has operated as a school for more than 50 years means services undoubtedly exist, but that does **not** mean they are adequate for a new modern school.

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11. Flooding – a fundamental constraint

This is the other major issue.

The NSW Government required flood assessment as part of the Moree Secondary College consolidation process. In 2023 the Minister stated that Department of Education due diligence included:

- flood impact assessments;

- accessibility studies;
- transport studies;
- community consultation. Parliament of NSW

This is important because it demonstrates that flood risk was not simply a community perception; it was sufficiently significant to form part of the Department's formal site due diligence.

Moree has extensive flood-management documentation. The current Council material identifies the Moree and Environs flood studies and floodplain risk-management plans as the basis for development controls. Flood Data

The 2017 flood study covers the **Gwydir and Mehi river systems and Moree township**. Flood Data

➢ Flood controls are becoming more stringent

This is especially relevant to redevelopment.

Moree Plains Council has been revising its flood DCP.

Council says the review was recommended following the 2021 floodplain-management review and that the new controls are being brought into alignment with the **NSW Flood Risk Management Manual 2023**. MPSC NSW

The proposed/updated framework specifically emphasises:

- minimising risk to human life;
- emergency access and egress;
- avoiding increases in flooding elsewhere;
- sensitive land uses;
- contamination risks;
- preventing intensification in high-risk flood areas;
- full flood-risk assessment where required. MPSC NSW

That matters enormously if the proposed future use is a **boarding school**, because students would potentially be sleeping on site and the risk category is consequently much more serious than for ordinary commercial development.

➢ Flooding and a boarding school

Our preliminary assessment is:

Day school	**Potentially feasible**, subject to detailed flood modelling and appropriate building/floor levels.

Agricultural day/boarding school	**Potentially feasible but significantly more difficult.**
Large residential boarding component	**High-risk planning proposition until the flood modelling is understood.**

A boarding facility introduces:

- sleeping accommodation;
- night-time evacuation;
- vulnerable occupants;
- staff accommodation;
- kitchens;
- food storage;
- emergency power;
- emergency water;
- higher life-safety requirements.

We would not recommend assuming that the existing site can support boarding accommodation until the **1% AEP and PMF flood behaviour and evacuation routes** have been mapped against the actual site boundaries.

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12. Site access

The site is located in south-west Moree, with Carol Avenue and the surrounding street network providing access.

There is also documented investment in school-zone infrastructure around **Boston Street and Carol Avenue**, including a Transport for NSW school-zone improvement project. Transport for NSW

That is a positive.

However, for a new agricultural boarding school, this would want a traffic engineer to assess:

- school buses;
- agricultural machinery;
- staff vehicles;
- boarding buses;
- service trucks;
- emergency vehicles;
- pedestrian separation;
- cycle access;
- parent drop-off;
- livestock/animal transport;

- heavy vehicle interaction.

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13. Transport and location

The site has a significant strategic advantage:

It is an established educational site within Moree rather than a greenfield rural site.

Moree itself has road, rail and air connections. The NSW Department of Education describes Moree as being connected by road, rail and air, with NSW TrainLink service to Sydney and regular regional air services. NSW Education

For a regional agricultural school this is useful because students could potentially be drawn from:

- Moree;
- the Gwydir Valley;
- Narrabri region;
- Warialda;
- Mungindi;
- Collarenebri;
- northern NSW;
- southern Queensland.

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14. The site has a particularly interesting agricultural history

This deserves emphasis.

We have now found **three independent strands of evidence**:

1. a dedicated **Agricultural Science building**;
2. an **Agriculture Farm** associated with the Carol Avenue campus;
3. historical industrial/technical facilities. NSW Education

That makes the site unusually well suited to a concept combining:

Agriculture + Technology + Science + Indigenous knowledge + regional industry.

It is a stronger proposition than simply reopening an old high school.

15. What the site appears to have already had

Based on the evidence assembled so far, I would provisionally describe the former campus as containing or having contained:

Academic

- general classrooms;
- library;
- science laboratories;
- computer/learning areas;
- seminar spaces.

Vocational

- agricultural science;
- agriculture/farm area;
- materials technology;
- wood/metalwork;
- welding;
- design;
- workshop;
- kiln;
- dust extraction.

Student services

- administration;
- staff areas;
- toilets;
- canteen;
- stores;
- change/shower facilities.

Sport

- multipurpose/sports facilities;
- basketball court;
- sports stores;
- outdoor recreation areas.

Specialist

- Barwon Learning Centre;
- outdoor learning;

- cultural/community functions.

This is a considerably richer asset base than I initially expected.

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16. Condition assessment: preliminary rating

Based purely on the documentary evidence:

Asset	Preliminary assessment
Land/site	🟢 **Potentially valuable**
Educational zoning/use history	🟢 **Strong**
Agricultural potential	🟢 **Very strong**
Existing classrooms	🟠 **Requires building audit**
1970s buildings	🟠 **Age-related risk**
2010 science building	🟢/🟠 **Potential retention candidate**
TAS/workshops	🟠 **Potentially valuable but asbestos risk**
Agricultural Science	🟢 **Potential retention candidate**
Library	🔴 **Major asbestos uncertainty**
Older science	🔴/🟠 **Asbestos/remediation issue**
Administration	🟠 **Asbestos + age**
Sports	🟠 **Existing but requires condition audit**
Electrical	🔴 **Condition unknown**
Water/sewer	🔴 **Condition/capacity unknown**
Stormwater	🔴 **Critical investigation required**
Flood risk	🔴 **Major constraint**
Transport	🟢/🟠 **Potentially manageable**
Development potential	🟢/🟠 **Potentially substantial**
Boarding-school suitability	🟠/🔴 **Flood/evacuation dependent**

➢ What is still uncertain

We still need primary documentation for:

Land/title

- current title;
- deposited plan;
- exact lot/DP boundaries;
- easements;
- covenants;
- the 1970 Hann family gift instrument;
- current ownership;
- whether the former school and Barwon Learning Centre occupy separate portions.

Buildings

- current gross floor area;
- building footprints;
- construction drawings;
- structural drawings;
- roof condition;
- foundations;
- termite history;
- air-conditioning;
- accessibility;
- fire compliance;
- current building classification.

Services

- electrical capacity;
- transformer;
- water;
- sewer;
- stormwater;
- communications;
- gas;
- fire services.

Environmental

- current asbestos survey;
- contaminated-land assessment;
- lead paint;
- soil contamination;
- underground tanks;
- old fuel/oil storage;
- agricultural chemical residues;
- groundwater;
- salinity.

Flood

Most importantly:

- current site survey;
- finished-floor levels;
- 1% AEP flood level;
- PMF level;
- flood depth;
- velocity;
- hazard category;
- floodway/flood-storage mapping;
- evacuation route;
- time to isolation;
- impact of proposed filling/buildings.

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17. Overall forensic conclusion

"Can the old Courallie High School buildings be reopened?"

That may not be the best economic proposition.

The better question is:

"What is the optimum 2026 education campus that can be created on the existing Courallie/Carol Avenue land, using the valuable infrastructure that remains?"

That could mean retaining selected buildings while demolishing others.

For example:

Retain / investigate

- 2010 science building;
- agricultural science building;
- structurally sound workshops;
- multipurpose/sports facilities;
- selected general learning spaces.

Potentially demolish

- buildings with extensive asbestos;
- buildings with poor structural condition;
- buildings with inadequate accessibility;
- buildings whose refurbishment cost approaches replacement cost.

New construction

Then build modern:

- classrooms;
- boarding facilities if flood-safe;
- agricultural laboratories;
- digital/precision-agriculture centre;
- machinery workshop;
- horticulture facilities;
- cultural learning centre;
- administration;
- dining/kitchen;
- renewable-energy systems.

That would potentially turn the site from an **obsolete 1970s high school into a 21st-century regional education campus**.

On the evidence now assembled, we would rate it as a **potentially significant strategic education asset for Moree**, particularly if the objective is something different from simply recreating the former high school.

The combination of:

agriculture + agricultural land + workshops + science + sporting facilities + established educational land + Moree location

makes the opportunity here novel and promising.

The major obstacles are:

flood + asbestos + ageing infrastructure + unknown current services.

None of those automatically makes the site unusable. But they determine whether the project should be:

A. refurbishment,
B. partial demolition/redevelopment, or
C. almost complete redevelopment using the land and selected surviving assets.

The preliminary preference would be **B — strategic partial redevelopment**, rather than attempting to restore every existing building.

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PART (B): Suitability of Aboriginal Education and Cultural Centre

In principle, the Courallie/Carol Avenue site could be very well suited to an Aboriginal Education and Cultural Centre—and arguably the concept is a better fit for the site's existing educational infrastructure than simply trying to reopen the former high/agricultural school.

The key is that it should be conceived as an **Aboriginal-controlled education, culture, training and community campus**, rather than simply converting the old classrooms into a cultural centre.

1. Why the site has strong potential

1. It already has an educational identity

The land was reportedly gifted to the NSW Education Department in 1970 for educational purposes. The current NSW Parliament petition specifically cites the Hann family's educational-purpose gift. Parliament of NSW

That history could provide a strong foundation for an education-focused reuse, although I would want to obtain the original title/conveyance documents before relying on the restriction legally.

2. There is already Aboriginal educational infrastructure in Moree

The Department of Education's Aboriginal Education and Communities strategy specifically supports Aboriginal Learning and Engagement Centres, designed to combine academic, wellbeing and cultural support while maintaining Aboriginal students' cultural identity. NSW Education

Moree also has existing organisations that could potentially become partners rather than duplicating services—for example, Moree Dhiiyaan Aboriginal Centre, Moree Local Aboriginal Land Council and Nhuubala Yugal Education Centre.

That suggests the Carol Avenue site could potentially become a **larger education/cultural campus linking existing organisations**, rather than competing with them.

2. What we propose

We would divide the site into perhaps **six interconnected functions**.

A. Gamilaraay Cultural Centre

A major central building could contain:

- cultural exhibition space;
- Gamilaraay language centre;
- oral-history archive;
- cultural collections;
- art studios;
- weaving;
- carving;
- music;
- dance;
- digital media;
- meeting rooms;
- Elders' rooms;
- visitor/community reception.

The architecture should be designed around **Country, story and cultural authority**, rather than simply putting Aboriginal artwork into conventional school buildings.

B. Aboriginal Education Campus

The existing classroom infrastructure could be selectively refurbished for:

- secondary education support;
- HSC tutoring;
- literacy/numeracy;
- university preparation;
- vocational education;
- adult education;
- teacher training;
- digital learning;
- scholarships and mentoring;
- career counselling.

This would align particularly well with the Department's stated Aboriginal Learning and Engagement Centre model. NSW Education

C. Country and Environmental Learning Centre

This is where I think **Courallie could become particularly distinctive**.

The existing agricultural history of the site could be upgraded with teaching in:

- traditional ecological knowledge;
- Caring for Country;
- native plant propagation;
- bush foods;
- traditional fire management;
- water management;
- wetland ecology;
- native grasses;
- revegetation;
- cultural mapping;
- biodiversity monitoring;
- contemporary agriculture.

This could connect directly with the **Gwydir wetlands and broader Gamilaraay Country**.

Rather than treating Indigenous knowledge and agriculture as separate subjects, the centre could teach:

Country management + modern agriculture + Indigenous ecological knowledge.

That would make the project quite different from an ordinary cultural centre.

D. Youth and leadership centre

The site could include a dedicated youth component:

- youth centre;
- mentoring;
- school-to-work programs;
- sporting programs;
- music;
- media;
- digital technology;
- leadership programs;
- cultural camps;
- career pathways.

There is already an established youth-service ecosystem in Moree, including Miyay Birray Youth Service Inc..

The centre could therefore provide **space and infrastructure for existing organisations**, rather than trying to replace them.

E. Cultural tourism

There is potentially a major tourism dimension.

The centre could become a destination for visitors wanting to understand:

Gamilaraay Country → history → culture → Freedom Ride → contemporary Aboriginal life → agriculture → wetlands → art.

That would complement existing cultural facilities such as Yaamaganu Centre.

The centre could offer:

- guided cultural tours;
- exhibitions;
- cultural interpretation;
- Aboriginal art;
- performances;
- bush-food experiences;
- school excursions;
- university field schools;
- professional cultural-awareness training.

This could create an **economic development component**, rather than making the project entirely dependent on government education funding.

F. Research and knowledge centre

This could be one of the most valuable components.

Perhaps framed as the "**Gamilaraay Knowledge and Research Institute"**

with partnerships involving:

- universities;
- TAFE;
- schools;
- Local Aboriginal Land Council;
- Elders;
- landholders;
- Local Land Services;
- National Parks;
- Murray–Darling Basin organisations;
- agricultural research organisations.

Research could cover:

water + wetlands + agriculture + biodiversity + climate + cultural landscapes + traditional knowledge.

That would make the centre relevant well beyond Moree.

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3. The existing buildings could actually be useful

The previous audit makes this particularly interesting.

I would **not** recommend retaining everything.

Instead:

Likely retain / investigate

2010 science building
→ environmental science, water science, digital mapping, laboratories.

Agricultural Science building
→ Country management, horticulture, native plants.

TAS/workshop building
→ art, cultural fabrication, woodworking, carving, metalwork—subject to asbestos and building-condition assessment.

Multipurpose facilities
→ community meetings, sport, dance, performances.

Selected classrooms
→ education, mentoring and training.

Potentially replace

Some of the heavily asbestos-affected 1970s buildings may be uneconomic to refurbish.

This gives an opportunity to build **new culturally appropriate architecture within the old campus framework**.

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4. The major problem: flooding

This remains the site's biggest constraint.

The Department of Education itself undertook flood-impact assessment as part of its Moree campus consolidation due diligence. Parliament of NSW

Moree is continuing to strengthen its flood-development controls, with Council's current framework based on the NSW Flood Risk Management Manual 2023. MPSC NSW

For a cultural centre, however, flooding may be **more manageable than for a residential boarding school**.

You could potentially design the site so that:

- critical cultural collections are above flood levels;
- archives are in a protected building;
- electrical infrastructure is elevated;
- evacuation routes are protected;
- vulnerable uses are located in the safest part of the site;
- gardens and Country-learning areas occupy lower-risk open areas;
- flood-compatible landscaping is incorporated. **Incorporation of a wetland feature so flood flow may be directed there is a good option.**

We would **not** put irreplaceable cultural collections in an old building simply because it already exists.

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5. There is also a very important cultural heritage question

Before any major earthworks, the site should undergo an Aboriginal cultural heritage assessment.

The broader Moree planning framework recognises the importance of protecting Gamilaraay cultural places and objects and incorporating Connection to Country into development. NSW Government

And importantly, this shouldn't be a conventional consultant-led heritage exercise where Aboriginal people are simply "consulted".

The project should ideally be **Aboriginal-led from the beginning**:

Elders → Gamilaraay knowledge holders → local Aboriginal organisations → young people → architects/planners → government.

The physical design should emerge from that process.

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6. Gamilaraay Education, Culture & Country Centre

Rather than calling it simply an '**Aboriginal Cultural Centre',** it should be named using the three pillars:

- **EDUCATION**

School → TAFE → university → employment

- **CULTURE**

Language → history → arts → Elders → youth → cultural knowledge

- **COUNTRY**

Water → wetlands → agriculture → biodiversity → land management

That would give the project a much stronger economic and educational rationale.

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7. Our preliminary suitability assessment

Factor	Assessment
Existing educational use/history	🟢 **Excellent**
Size/infrastructure	🟢 **Strong**
Cultural potential	🟢 **Very strong**
Aboriginal education	🟢 **Very strong**
Agriculture/Country learning	🟢 **Exceptional potential**
Youth programs	🟢 **Strong**
Cultural tourism	🟢 **Good potential**
Existing community ecosystem	🟢 **Strong**
Accessibility	🟠 **Needs assessment**
Existing buildings	🟠 **Selective reuse**
Asbestos	🔴 **Major remediation issue**
Flooding	🔴 **Major design constraint**
Cultural heritage	🟠 **Detailed assessment required**
Overall potential	🟢 **HIGH**

Our overall view: 8/10 as a potential Aboriginal education/cultural campus

The opportunity is to use the existing site and some of its infrastructure as the foundation for a **new Gamilaraay-led campus**.

That could make Courallie a genuinely regional institution rather than simply another community centre.