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THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS MET AT PARLIAMENT HOUSE, HOBART, ON TUESDAY 7 JULY 2026.

REDEVELOPMENT OF DODGES FERRY PRIMARY SCHOOL

The committee met at 2.00 p.m.

CHAIR (Ms Butler) - Welcome everyone. Before we commence the hearing, I will introduce the members of the committee: to my left, I have Mark Shelton; myself, Jen Butler; we have Tania Rattray; Casey Hiscutt; our two secretaries, Scott Hennessy, Georgia Gray; and on our Hansard today we have Harrison. Ms Burnet is in apology for the hearing today.

Secretary, would you please read out the message from Her Excellency, the Governor in Council, referring the project to the committee for inquiry.

SECRETARY -

Pursuant to section 16(2) of the *Public Works Committee Act 1914*, the Governor refers the undermentioned proposed public works to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works to consider and report thereon: Redevelopment of Dodges Ferry Primary School. Pursuant to section 16(3) of the act, the estimated cost of such works being completed is \$25 million.

CHAIR - The witnesses giving evidence to the committee today are appearing on behalf of the proponent, the Department for Education, Children and Young People (DECYP). Could I ask each of you to state your name, your position and organisation and then make the statutory declaration?

Mr KANE SALTER, DEPUTY SECRETARY BUSINESS OPERATIONS AND SUPPORT, **Mr TODD WILLIAMS**, DIRECTOR OF FACILITY SERVICES, **Mr RON DALY**, EDUCATION LEADER LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS, DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE, AND **Mr PAUL COCKBURN**, DIRECTOR, HBV ARCHITECTS, WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

CHAIR - Thank you for appearing before the committee. The committee is pleased to hear your evidence today. Just before you begin giving your evidence, I would like to inform you of some important aspects of committee proceedings. A committee hearing is a proceeding in parliament. That means it receives the protection of parliamentary privilege. This is an important legal protection that allows individuals giving evidence to a parliamentary committee to speak with complete freedom without the fear of being sued or questioned in any court or place out of parliament. It applies to ensure that parliament receives the very best information when conducting its inquiries. It is important to be aware that this protection is not accorded to you if statements that may be defamatory are repeated or referred to by you outside the confines of the parliamentary proceedings. This is a public hearing; members of the public and journalists may be present and this means your evidence may be reported. Do you understand?

WITNESSES - Yes.

PUBLIC

CHAIR - Mr Salter, would you or one of your colleagues like to make an opening statement?

Mr SALTER - Thank you. Yes, I'll make a brief opening statement. This is our third project with the committee in around a week, but is another important and exciting project for the redevelopment of Dodges Ferry Primary School. Hopefully you saw at the site visit today, again, the strong collaboration between the school, the architect and the facilities team. I certainly thank them for their investment in time and expertise to get the project to this stage, which is an important part of the process. We look forward to the committee's session today.

CHAIR - Wonderful. Thank you very much for our witness tour this morning at Dodges Ferry Primary School. We really enjoyed that as a committee, and the student leaders were so articulate and knowledgeable about their school and we really appreciated the opportunity to meet with those young people and have a look around. We really appreciated that.

We've just had a request from Hansard: if you could speak into the microphones more clearly, it's difficult for us to pick you up otherwise.

That said, I'll start off with - we like to run through our report on a chronological basis; that way we don't miss any aspects of your submission. So, I'll kick off on page three with the question around what are the project's greatest remaining risks and which of those risks concern you the most? Quite an open question.

Mr SALTER - Thank you. I'd certainly say there's more opportunities than risks and the project, again, has had the strong collaboration between the school, the architect and facilities. We are confident in the estimates at this stage of the project and, as with all projects, we continue to test in those estimates at periodic times of the design process. We're confident around the infrastructure pre-assessment work that's been undertaken, confident around the traffic assessment that's been undertaken. So, I wouldn't suggest there's significant risks. We continue to risk manage at each stage of the project and I think fair to say that we're comfortable with where the various elements are at.

CHAIR - Okay. The school currently enrolls around 530 full-time students, we understand from our hearing today, but this proposed project is being expanded to a capacity of 725 students. How was the 725-student figure determined?

Mr DALY - My understanding is that it is based on spaces that can accommodate your general learning aspects. I guess when we talk about capacity, personally, I see two aspects to that. I see a capacity from that perspective, but an operational capacity, which I think is different, we talk about the general learning areas (GLAs) where the students will spend most of their time, but there also needs to be spaces that some of those specialist classes - such as your art and it could be science, or it might be music and so forth - can be conducted. When we talk capacity here, that's including those spaces. I think, hopefully, that explains how that works. So, capacity in terms of the way we look at it, doesn't necessarily work from a point of view for a school operation.

CHAIR - So, it's not a basis of modelling on projected housing growth in the area? Or is there any demographic consideration taken -

PUBLIC

Mr DALY - In terms of the projected numbers, there is a formula - and you might know that better than me, Todd - but it does take into account some of those things that you've just mentioned.

Mr WILLIAMS - Happy to add a little bit more context. What Ron was saying around the operational needs of a school is real. We have a basic capacity calculation that applies a simple calculation for every available space that can be used as a general learning area by 25 students. Currently, the school capacity is calculated at 675 and we are looking to increase that.

Partly the feedback we received from community was around the growing needs of the school and, if we were investing funds, the feedback that came through was ensuring that we were positioning for the future. In our submission, we've included the department's internal projection figures, which are used for a variety of reasons. There's always a balance, so it is hard to get good, up-to-date demographic information and there are differing means. Government does have a source, and we're working to improve that source. We also have had a good collaboration with council, who also have a good source of information, including the land availability and the land rezoning. You put all of that together and we believe we've come up with the right figure to plan for the next 50 years, which is the investment that we're making - is a substantial investment to position the school for the future.

Mr HISCUTT - Can I tease that capacity question out a little bit? There's 25 GLAs, including the three kinder ones, as I read the plans, at 25 - and I note this is where I'm going with this discussion - that equals 700 at 25 per room and the capacity is 750, which, as you said, I understand to mean other specialist spaces. But at the start of the day, all children need to start in a homeroom; they're not going to start their day in music classroom or the science classroom. Why do we use that number as a capacity when it clearly is not right? It's not the capacity of the school.

Mr WILLIAMS - We use that should we need to be able to use the space and we needed to have a consistent methodology. We do have schools that are under pressure, and those schools that are under pressure we do look to use a music room or an art room for a general learning area. It's a consistent statewide application that we use as a mechanism that we can then go further and have the local discussions - that does involve our learning area to talk about how schools use the spaces, because each school does use their space differently. But it's a method - and we track the occupancy, the capacity fee actuals biannually when the census is done, and that's a mechanism for us to hone in on those schools that are under pressure. Then we work with them further to see how we can support them.

Mr HISCUTT - I just feel like that methodology sets schools up to fail because they will be in a position where they won't be able to offer proper - it won't be known until too late that they are above what the real capacity is. It's a real concern of mine, so that's why I'm going into it.

Mr SALTER - Perhaps just to add, we don't aim to get schools to 100 per cent capacity. So, when we're looking at it, 80 per cent is what we're looking for, and when schools get above that, we know they're starting to potentially creep into spaces that they're using for other purposes. So, yes, we're not aiming to get to 100 per cent capacity.

PUBLIC

Mr HISCUTT - I would have thought it would be better to define that 80 per cent is 100 per cent and schools could bear the 105 or 110 per cent capacity, would be a more realistic way of looking at that instead of trying to keep it below. But I'll move on. I'll pursue this in other avenues.

Mr DALY - It does very much come down to, as Todd said, around how they structure their school, how they operate, class sizes, because it's based on 25. Ideally, a lot of schools will set up more in the low 20s. So, there's a whole lot of factors. I guess it's finding that - having that common measure that they can apply across the whole system.

Mr HISCUTT - It's a bigger issue than just Dodges Ferry, so I'll move on.

Mr SHELTON - Just a quick one. Before I start, as a member for Lyons, I've been to the school many times for the assemblies and seen the school grow over the years. So, I don't have to declare an interest but certainly always keen or more keen when one is in your patch than somebody else's, so to speak.

Ms RATTRAY - I'm still waiting.

CHAIR - Hear, hear.

Mr SHELTON - You're still waiting. But the main thing from a member of the committee's point of view that I always take on board is: provided there's been the appropriate consultation and community engagement and that sort of thing with the students, with the school and everything, and of course we gain that understanding as we go through the walk of a morning, but from your point of view, can you just explain, to get it on the record and to anybody that might be listening, the extent of the consultation that's happened and to hear everybody talking about it and understanding the fact that they've been under pressure for a long time. There's been a series of sort of minor upgrades, but it's got to that point where it needed to be done. So, community consultation is my request for you to just inform the committee.

Mr DALY - Obviously, I've been involved in the process from the start of the project and the development of our team.

Ms RATTRAY - Was that 2023?

Mr DALY - When I say start of the project, it would have been actually last year, 2025, so not involved with the 'get involved' community consultation.

CHAIR - It's been two rounds.

Mr DALY - That was the initial aspect and then from that point we've had our working group.

Mr COCKBURN - Yes, we've had project work groups for the last 12 months, which are fortnightly basis, and that has involved the school association - two members of the school association for that period. Before that, Ron and I didn't have anything to do with it.

Mr DALY - No.

PUBLIC

Mr WILLIAMS - I can talk to that. The 'get involved' campaign that we run for all our school redevelopments is an important connection with community and upfront before we start doing things, we go and talk to community about that and we did that. Through that process, we got some very strong views from community, which were welcomed. One of those was around their library and ensuring their library stayed central to the school. The other part was about futureproofing; making sure we built capacity into the future. That happens upfront before Ron and Paul were engaged, and then also part of that are staff forums and student forums. Unfortunately, Matt - as Matt Kenny is the principal - isn't here today, but Matt was central in those forums with the 'get involved' team and did have specific forums with staff and students to capture and listen. Then through the design process, when we have our concept plan to share, we've gone back out to community to share that with community. So, we're upfront, we're listening, designing and then re-engaging and the feedback has all been positive around the plans that we're presenting to you today for consideration.

Mr DALY - That's right. Through those fortnightly meetings - there's a representation, I guess, in those meetings. There's staff, there's school association, DECYP and architects, and then the workshops as well that have been conducted to gain further input from staff. Only recently there was another workshop with the kinder staff around the development of that space. So, it's been an ongoing process.

CHAIR - What we might do is make a jump in the report and we might drill down further into that community engagement, and then we'll go back to where we were at in the report, if that works for everybody.

The community engagement consultation report showed strong concern regarding the future of the library. We saw the library today. How did that feedback influence your final concept plan?

Mr COCKBURN - Very strongly. That was pretty much the first item that we had to address: the retention of that library as a no-go development zone.

CHAIR - Yes, and the core of the school, we gathered.

Mr COCKBURN - And the heart of the school.

Mr WILLIAMS - In the original - to start, to facilitate discussion with community, we did a high-level plan. That high-level plan talked about the food and the library coming together in the centre. The feedback from community was very strong, that they did not want the food with the library. We've then reconsidered the plan and realigned the food in an adjacent area that you saw today.

CHAIR - Community consultation repeatedly also highlighted the need for a dedicated before- and after-school care facility, yet this submission is largely silent on that provision. Why has that need not been identified as a project priority and where will that demand be accommodated once the redevelopment is complete? It just seems to be a pretty prevalent theme through - and I've had a number of submissions or conversations with members of the community, as I'm sure Mr Shelton has as well around that aspect.

PUBLIC

Mr WILLIAMS - Yes, certainly understand and value what outside-school-hour care brings to school communities. Absolutely.

CHAIR - And productivity for Tasmania so people can work.

Mr WILLIAMS - Yes, absolutely. Much needed and fully supported. The challenge with the project that we've presented is the scale of removing the modular units that we have - the modular classrooms and the modular amenity facilities - and replacing new. The highest priority for the project was around contemporary learning areas and, indeed, the contemporary support spaces which the school really lacks at the moment - not enough meeting rooms to bring professional support staff easily. So, they were the highest priorities. We are still progressing outside-school-hour consideration.

There is a \$10 million government OSHC (outside school hours care) program and Dodges Ferry is being considered under that, and we're working that assessment through right now and hopefully that will be presented in the coming months. We certainly value OSHC, outside school hours care, and there is a fund that we're looking to support schools to expand OSHC.

CHAIR - Is there a risk that the redevelopment will be completed without sufficient dedicated OSHC space to meet that community need? Rather, they are really just two distinct things now, are they?

Mr SALTER - I think they're two distinct things. But as Todd's outlined, the assessment for the use of the \$10 million funds, the minister's made some initial announcements on three schools, so we're working through the next stage of considerations for the minister to make decisions on. It's part of current decision-making processes.

Mr WILLIAMS - And certainly not going to pre-empt the outcome of the process that's working through. What I would say, though, is the work that we're doing under this project increases capacity and provides space for the school to have flexibility with its use and OSHC is a consideration in that. Yes, there is a little conflict in terms of times, before- and after-school care, but there is also an opportunity that the school will have more space at their needs.

Ms RATTRAY - I always had an interest in demountables. You'd probably recognise that across the table. But given that there are six demountable buildings and some of them are leased - I don't believe all of them would be leased, I think we saw where ones up the back were initially there for a short term and ended up being a long term - is there any opportunity to reuse any of the demountables for some OSHC care? Is that something that could be facilitated?

Mr WILLIAMS - What I would say about the demountables is that they're not contemporary and we use them as our temporary structures whilst we're sourcing a permanent solution. We do currently have six modular units on site and two modular amenity blocks, so there's eight altogether and that doesn't include those classrooms up the top that I referred to as the modulars before the modulars that became permanent. So, if you included that, there's probably another half a dozen on top of that. In regards to the reuse of the four that we lease - and there's the two toilet blocks that we lease as well, there's two modular units - and the approach that we use in that is that that forms part of our construction contract and the contractor then takes responsibility for that building. As we talked about, then there's an

PUBLIC

opportunity for parties to connect with the construction company around future use of that facility.

Ms RATTRAY - So, I guess the answer's is no, pretty much?

Mr WILLIAMS - I still believe there's an opportunity.

Ms RATTRAY - But effectively, in the short term, no.

Mr DALY - I think some of the spaces, those additional spaces, that the school will have access to will probably accommodate OSHC better than one of the terrapins or demountables. I guess the food multi-purpose space that's going to be created will probably fit that need if it is needed and the OSHC funding doesn't progress.

Ms RATTRAY - Or if it's progressed.

Mr DALY - Yes.

Mr COCKBURN - It's probably fair to say that the demountables are inappropriate because they don't have facilities attached to them; they're just simply classroom spaces.

Mr WILLIAMS - Yes, and that's the other part, is then you've got your supervision of students who are leaving the modular unit to go to the toilets, and obviously, hopefully in a contemporary world, you position those things close together to maximise supervision and safeguarding.

Ms RATTRAY - I'm always looking for good outcomes, Chair.

CHAIR - Opportunities, yes. We'll move on to page 8. Any questions on page 8? Page 9.

Ms RATTRAY - I was interested to read that Dodges Ferry is not serviced by TasWater for water supply and wastewater removal, so there's obviously some significant works that have to be undertaken to facilitate what infrastructure is needed for the school. I think it would be really useful to have what infrastructure is required and what consultation and communication has been undertaken and the solutions that have been arrived at with TasWater around that really important infrastructure.

Mr COCKBURN - I could probably talk about the need to upgrade some of the infrastructure in terms of water storage for various things, particularly firefighting. The firefighting capacity at present is significantly low. That's a big cost to do that - to replace all of that. You'll notice, after walking around today, the location for a number of water tanks for drinking water. Currently, the school gets water trucked in and we're hoping to alleviate that problem with the water storage that is rainwater, essentially. The wastewater treatment plant, which, to be honest, I've had little to do with because it doesn't form part of this project; it's a separate project with TasWater. I don't know if you can talk about that, Todd, a bit more sensibly than me.

Mr WILLIAMS - Certainly can. As part of our infrastructure assessment upfront, we understood the challenges of old infrastructure. When the current sewerage system was installed, the school certainly wasn't the size that it is today. To position for the future, we know

PUBLIC

that we need an improved sewerage system and, for some time now, we've been working with Sorell Council and TasWater on what the solution is. Through that discussion there's been an agreement reached for TasWater to fund a new sewerage system that will not only support the school, it will also support the local football club and the community centre. As we're going to be undertaking the major works, we've agreed that we would deliver those works as part of our project that's covered under the funding agreement with TasWater.

Ms RATTRAY - Have you identified what the cost from the department is going to be? We heard this morning that TasWater's contribution is in the order of \$600,000.

Mr WILLIAMS - Correct.

Ms RATTRAY - So, what is department's cost? I know Jason's all over it.

Mr WILLIAMS - Jason Followes, as the lead project manager, is all over it. There is not a cost to the department for that; TasWater have agreed to fund the installation. We are project managing that component and TasWater have agreed to pay for that project management component as well. Yes, the current cost estimate that we've based the funding agreement on at this point is approximately \$600,000.

Ms RATTRAY - Right. And the department has that in writing?

Mr WILLIAMS - We have that in a signed agreement, correct. Yes.

CHAIR - Can you also explain to us, or maybe Paul, if you could explain to us, how this new water and sewerage system will benefit and protect the school from bushfires?

Mr COCKBURN - The school, as mentioned earlier, is in a bushfire zone. It's considered - it has a BAL (Bushfire Attack Level) ranking of 19, and 29 for a small portion, so therefore it's subject to ember attack from a bushfire. The current capacity, I believe, is 90,000 litres, that will be increased to 288,000 litres of water storage for firefighting. The existing infrastructure on the site has a fire ring main with a number of fire hydrants attached to that. Those tanks will serve that and the capacity should be enough to fight bushfire attack on that school.

Mr SHELTON - Are those tanks poly or steel?

Mr COCKBURN - Steel. They're quite large, as you can imagine.

CHAIR - Fantastic. Any more questions on the water? Casey.

Mr HISCUTT - Not on the water, but on section 5.

CHAIR - Go for it.

Mr HISCUTT - Talking about Ferry Hall, and the statement in the thing says:

Building 12 (Ferry Hall) was considered for relocation/repurposing but contains extensive asbestos and lead paint ...

PUBLIC

Happy with that statement and where it's going, but it follows with:

the project budget contains no available funding for refurbishment or relocation...

However, the project funding has about, in total, \$6.7 million in contingencies and escalations. Is that a correct statement to say that that's the reason why this wasn't done, or because it would take away from other things that could be done with that funding?

Mr SALTER - I'm happy to go first. I mean, I think in the first instance, the hall isn't fit for purpose, and contemporary needs going into the future in respect of contingencies, perhaps as we've outlined in other projects, we think those contingencies are appropriate for this stage of the project. I wouldn't say that there's a correlation at all between those contingencies and the intended use of the hall.

Mr WILLIAMS - I'll add a little bit of context to it as well. Certainly, as you've seen today in the site visit, there are a number of other areas of the school that we aren't going to touch or refurbish. There are certainly higher needs for the school and the cost to remove and relocate and reinstall a facility is expensive. We have been engaged with council on the matter and, as we've discussed, for us, it's surplus to educational needs and will be marked as such in our construction contract. That was the discussion around should community or council wish to connect with us or the contractor, we could certainly make that building available. What we're saying is there are higher needs for the expenditure than paying for it to be reinstalled elsewhere.

Mr HISCUTT - I think I could accept that if the statement here was not a priority within the school's needs and infrastructure. But I just find it hard to accept it being the project budget being the constraint considering those contingencies that are there. But I'll leave that as a statement.

CHAIR - Just subsequent to Mr Hiscutt's question: is Ferry Hall - does it have any heritage values at all?

Mr COCKBURN - No, it doesn't.

CHAIR - I couldn't remember if it did.

Mr COCKBURN - Only from a community point of view. It's not on the register.

CHAIR - It's not listed at all on the register and there's no heritage values?

Mr WILLIAMS - It's not listed, no. Obviously a strong community connection because they understand that the community arranged quite some time ago for it to be located to the school. So, a strong connection, but no formal heritage values or recognition.

Ms RATTRAY - It talks about the project term as continuing the design and preparing to go to tender. So, is what we have before us - and I know I asked this question onsite earlier, but I'm always interested that the committee's looking at virtually the finished design that's been prepared.

PUBLIC

Mr COCKBURN - What you're looking at is a development application set of drawings. The design has, in its detailed form, been quite rigorous to those drawings that you see in front of you. It hasn't deviated from them.

Ms RATTRAY - Thank you. It's good to have on the record.

CHAIR - Moving on to page 10 or page 9.

Mr WILLIAMS - There's a good picture of Matt Kenny the principal with one of the school student consultation sessions.

Ms RATTRAY - That one?

Mr HISCUTT - I guess I'll take the opportunity of the student consultations and the 'get involved with the people' looking at the drawings with comments like 'Yas queen', 'It'll look good because it'll slay'. It's good to see the student participation in the communication there. Just needed those words on *Hansard*, that's all.

Mr DALY - It's a very positive part of our project that we get to connect with the students in that way.

CHAIR - Yes, they were a really articulate bunch of young people we spoke to this morning. Moving on to page 11, under Proposed Works, it has a dot point 'central food hub'. Why was a food hub considered a higher priority than some of the classrooms, say, or library and early year upgrades that were sought by the community? Could you explain for the record why that central food hub was prioritised?

Mr DALY - I mean, it's listed as a food hub but, for me, it's a multipurpose space. So, it may accommodate a class for a specialist, and that may be food and fibre down the track, because schools, the specialist offerings will often change depending on the skill set of the staff that they can attract to their school. It will be more than just a food dining space; it will be used as a classroom meeting - a larger meeting space as well.

Mr COCKBURN - A full staff meeting can occur in the food building, and it's probably the only place that's really appropriate to a full staff meeting, rather than a gymnasium, for example.

Mr DALY - And the location, adjacent to the gymnasium - the community spaces, I guess - the gymnasium, the library, it's creating a space for young people to connect.

CHAIR - One of the young men - actually, I think he was one of the school captains - we spoke to said there was going to be a full kitchen as part of that food hub. Can you give us some details around that?

Mr COCKBURN - There will be a full kitchen as part of that. It'll be a commercial kitchen. It'll be able to be simply separated from the other space to allow that flexibility that Ron was referring to. But we see it operating in a number of ways: one is separate to that space and the other one is for a full cafeteria experience within it. It sort of continues on in a link way between those two buildings that we've opened up, which is currently a narrow little passage

PUBLIC

through the building, and that becomes an outdoor space to the food hub as well - to the eating space.

CHAIR - In the catchment area that the Dodges Ferry Primary School serves, is there any evidence of food insecurity and the need for education for young people with food and nutrition? Do you have any evidence to support that in that catchment area? I know we do in other catchment areas across the -

Mr DALY - I think there is certainly an aspect of the young people that attend Dodges Ferry that do utilise some of the service around breakfast club and the hot lunches that are provided by the school. In terms of actual statistics, perhaps the ICSEA (Index of Community Socio-educational Advantage) may provide some insights around that and I can certainly find that information for you.

CHAIR - That'd be lovely. Thank you.

Mr WILLIAMS - I did mention this morning at the meeting, when I talked and explained to the committee about contemporary schools and contemporary learning, it's about the learning spaces and the flexibility and the indoor and outdoor, and it's absolutely about the support spaces where professionals can come in. Even more so today it's about food and about bringing young people together to learn about food, but to eat together as part of that as well. In the contemporary developments we're doing, food is a central part of that and many schools - and I can't remember how many times they had breakfast club and hot meals - but you heard the young people talk about that today and the benefit that that brings.

CHAIR - There's also vegetable gardens as part of the curriculum, I believe?

Mr WILLIAMS - I believe so, yes.

Mr DALY - Yes, food and fibre curriculum - part of the health curriculum as well, there's a nutrition element to that.

Ms RATTRAY - Just a question around the decommissioning of the current canteen space, which would have a kitchen facility of some sort - we didn't actually head into there. Is that going to be repurposed, that particular area?

Mr COCKBURN - Not at present.

Ms RATTRAY - So, what'll happen? It'll just -

Mr COCKBURN - It's a kitchen; it's not a full commercial kitchen. Nevertheless, it's a tuckshop.

Ms RATTRAY - It's functioning.

Mr COCKBURN - It's functioning.

Mr WILLIAMS - It's a small kitchen that's connected to the gymnasium - in close proximity to it.

PUBLIC

Ms RATTRAY - Right. So, it'll remain as such?

Mr WILLIAMS - It'll remain as such. It is also the area that we're looking at to support OSHC, the outside school hours care, and a kitchen is important for that. There's an adjoining music area which we see, potentially, the music area, the kitchen and the gymnasium supporting OSHC as well. So, the small kitchen - canteen - we still see value in that as it currently stands because the gymnasium area is really the community connection area, which seems logical to keep that as part of it.

Ms RATTRAY - As part of it, even though - and forgive me if I'm misunderstood you - but you already indicated that the OSHC area would be well suited to the hub area as well. So, you're not going to have two lots of spaces, are you? Or potentially, yes?

Mr WILLIAMS - I think there's flexibility - is what we've talked about it.

Mr DALY - It could accommodate it.

Mr WILLIAMS - We're still working that OSHC program through. The connection to that community zone is what I was talking about with the canteen and keeping the canteen and potentially, in the future, having OSHC in that front community zone. But there is opportunity for the other spaces in the school, should they be needed.

Ms RATTRAY - So, the current canteen kitchen area is fully compliant? There won't have to be any funds spent on that to bring it up to any particular regulation?

Mr COCKBURN - No, it'll probably go the other way; some of the equipment that's currently in the canteen will shift across to the new food building.

Ms RATTRAY - For instance.

Mr COCKBURN - For instance.

Ms RATTRAY - And I like the sound of that.

Mr COCKBURN - Yes. There are combi ovens in there, there are dishwashers that could be reused, that sort of thing. That's the sort of equipment we're talking about being shifted from the existing premises to the new one.

CHAIR - Another dot point refers to reconfiguration of existing roadways, bus drop-off, car drop-off and visitor car parking to allow extensions to the administration building and gym. There's also another dot point: reconfiguration of existing roadways, bus drop-off, car drop-off and visitor/staff car parking. Could you for the record talk us through the traffic management changes or proposed traffic management changes. I believe that there's a new space which should be exclusive to buses, drop-offs and pickups and also an extension of the car park.

Mr COCKBURN - Yes, I can talk about that. It was quite early in the design process that we came to the realisation that we didn't want to spend a lot of this funding on civil infrastructure - that being car parks and roads. Yet, there was a need to solve a problem: a conflict between buses and cars, primarily, in that main car park. The solution we arrived at was using the top road, the one that passes the football club for bus drop-off, and retaining the

PUBLIC

existing car park in its current form in the front of admin for drop-off and staff car parking. There is a need to extend that slightly. Under the planning scheme we're required to provide one car space per full-time employee, which is 55. We were 16 short of that in its current form, so we have had to extend the car park on the side heading towards the football oval by 16. That's aligned in a manner that if it develops further, can connect up with the football club parking around the oval and also make that connection through to allow on game day cars to exit through the school, so they get two exit rows back onto Old Forcett Road. We had a traffic engineer look at this in detail and provide two reports for the purposes of the development application.

CHAIR - Has there been any consultation with the bus operators yet?

Mr COCKBURN - Not that I'm aware of.

CHAIR - Or that will happen to ensure there's enough space for them to exit and enter?

Mr COCKBURN - Look, we had our engineers do what they refer to as 'sweep paths' on vehicles - they have the software to do that. Based on the survey information they were given, that hasn't presented any problems.

CHAIR - I've got one more question on page 11. Construction is scheduled to occur while the school remains operational. What arrangements are planned to minimise disruption to student learning? Because I think that's going to be a really difficult process to manage, I imagine.

Mr WILLIAMS - Yes, certainly front and centre in all our redevelopments and in all the work that we do with schools, the focus is obviously about maintaining safe school operations. I know that Paul and the team have been working closely to look at a stage process that allows that to happen. Perhaps Paul could -

Mr COCKBURN - Yes. Look, this is something that we worked through during the project working group meetings. The staging outcome, if you like, that we arrived at was one whereby the kindergarten forms stage 1. That's a pretty simple stage because that affects nobody. So, we're happy with that one.

Stage 2 is fairly intense. That's the most challenging, and we've talked this through with the school and how they might manage it. So, there's still a bit of work to do in that particular area, I think to refine that and no doubt, though, we'll work through that as well with the contractor when that stage 2 happens.

Stage 3 is largely refurbishment and small construction area of admin. That becomes simply a matter of rehousing admin during that stage.

Mr SHELTON - With stage 2, I mean that's the noisy one - the demolition of the building and whatever goes along with that. Is the start of stage 2 - are you looking at a holiday period for that to happen?

Mr COCKBURN - We would definitely look at a holiday period for the demolition. You're right, it's noisy. There's, in some cases, asbestos removal, that sort of thing. So, we'd ask the contractor to schedule that in that manner.

PUBLIC

CHAIR - Page 12, any questions? Page 13. I'll move on to page 14.

Mr HISCUTT - Just because we have brought this up before and it was brought up on the site meeting as well, but we talked about energy here, I just wanted to see why solar was not considered as part of this refurbishment with the 25? Again, some of those contingencies could have been used for that?

Mr SALTER - I mean, I'll add the contingencies, again, that we think they're appropriate for this stage of the projects. I'm not looking to draw down on contingencies right now. If we get good tender outcomes, then there'll be a range of priorities considered in terms of solar and where that fits in the separate solar program. Todd.

Mr WILLIAMS - Obviously we have a renewable energy program that we've been rolling out now I think for about four years, which has been really well received and we have been targeting our highest energy use sites and investing solar in those and starting to get some good benefit from that. That program is about to come to an end and the focus on Dodges Ferry has been the priorities under the capital fund to do that.

Mr SHELTON - Just to follow that on quickly, I know I'm jumping to page 18, but following our previous discussions over the last couple of weeks, I know there's a couple of lines in there talking about the contingencies and what might happen if there were favourable conditions either through the tender or whatever. You talk about additional GLAs and, in this case, hopefully that's not needed because you've planned for the need, and solar might be an option when it comes round to if the conditions are favourable.

Mr WILLIAMS - We certainly hope they are and that's the intent, and we've got a pretty aggressive program to get out to tender this year. We want to get our documentation right to go out to tender because we know good, solid documentation is well received by the construction companies. Yes, we're very hopeful that we get a positive tender result. Then any of the win out of that tender, should it should it fall that way, is absolutely going to be reinvested in the Dodges Ferry Primary School, and that will be a conversation with the school around the priorities at that time.

Ms RATTRAY - We saw onsite today the result of the Kevin Rudd cash -

CHAIR - Building Revolution.

Ms RATTRAY - That's it - that was made available to schools a number of years ago. And to be perfectly honest, I thought the actual material that was used was a bit drab for a school. So, I'm interested in the materials that are going to be used, and given there was some beautiful mosaic work at the school, but I'm not sure that that'll be part of the budget to be able to do more of that. I'm just interested in what's envisaged. You talk about locally sourced materials. So, yes, just some indication. I don't particularly and I'm sure the school doesn't want to see too much more of the grey cement walls.

Mr COCKBURN - Look, we're not using that material - that's precast concrete I think you're referring to.

Ms RATTRAY - It's all right on a bridge.

PUBLIC

Mr COCKBURN - I won't comment on the previous architect's work, but look, it's -

Ms RATTRAY - They were in a hurry that lot.

Mr COCKBURN - We're looking at concrete blocks for a lot of the buildings; these concrete blocks are a bit more sophisticated than the ordinary grey block.

Ms RATTRAY - Got a bit of pattern on them or something.

Mr COCKBURN - Got a bit of pattern, got a bit of texture. They're a light-coloured thing - we've gone for lighter-coloured buildings. We're looking at a higher-level painted cement sheet, for example, that sort of thing. We're not building up a large pallet of external cladding materials; we're keeping it relatively simple and plain.

Ms RATTRAY - No timber clad?

Mr COCKBURN - No timber clad.

Mr WILLIAMS - We're after robustness. But also I said as well that that -

Ms RATTRAY - Yes, well, it's got to look smart.

Mr WILLIAMS - The right balance, absolutely. I'm confident in Paul and his team to be able to find that right fit in the Dodges Ferry community.

Mr COCKBURN - Yes, it is a balance, and you don't want to leave a legacy of maintenance for the school with their limited recurrent maintenance budgets. But equally, you don't want to provide something that's too austere and unfriendly.

Ms RATTRAY - So, locally sourced -

Mr COCKBURN - Locally sourced: the blocks are made in Tasmania; the framing timber is Tasmanian, and there's a lot of that. There's a limited amount of steel work in the job and there's not much else to the cladding, to be honest. It's simple and purposeful.

Ms RATTRAY - Great.

CHAIR - Can you just run us through, in very general detail, a little bit about the landscaping of the proposed project, knowing that it's a really beautiful bush environment on the waterfront at Dodges Ferry. Could you give us some information about what you plan to do with the landscaping of the site?

Mr COCKBURN - The landscape architects we've engaged have worked very closely with us over the last 12 months to develop a concept. That concept is largely about ensuring that each general learning area has a direct connection to a quality external space - that external space is age-appropriate. For example, the kindergarten is - and this often chews up a large part of the landscape budget, kindergarten works are usually a bit heavier - specifically to that kindergarten building. Whilst it's good to have flexibility within certain general learning areas, kindergartens aren't like that, so we've got to set up that appropriately. That occurs next to the

PUBLIC

existing nature play area so it's an appropriate sort of connection to that for the littlies because I understand that the littlies, being the kinders and the preps, they're the ones that use that nature play area more so. The older kids use the oval - that sort of thing. That's why it's set up like that. The landscape spaces are directly connected to classroom spaces that are age-appropriate.

CHAIR - And will the jet ski prevail?

Mr COCKBURN - I'm not sure about the jet ski. I'd have to -

CHAIR - All the kids loved it.

Mr COCKBURN - We'll take that on notice.

Ms RATTRAY - It's on the top of the list.

A WITNESS - The school will make that decision, I think. It's going to have to go somewhere. They did love it.

Mr HISCUTT - I think it needs to get seriously put on top of the priority list of figuring out where to put it, I think.

CHAIR - Maybe it could be part of the arts scheme?

Ms RATTRAY - I've got another project for that.

CHAIR - Okay. I digress. Moving on to the arts scheme.

Ms RATTRAY - The committee is always interested in what might be part of the arts scheme's significant budget in any build. We always like to think that somebody might listen to what we suggest and have a functional and something that's going to stand the test of time. I'm just interested in what's been proposed there. I've even given you some homework, Paul, to head up north and have a look at some internal panels in the new Northern Recreational Hub, which are exceptional, and it was part of their arts scheme. You might be able to bring back some photos to share with the school community around some of that. I've suggested that it'd need to be in the refurbished foyer so that everyone gets an opportunity to see it. But is there some work that's already been done?

Mr COCKBURN - We're yet to have meetings, which are set up by Arts Tasmania. We haven't actually engaged in that process, therefore we haven't had any real, meaningful discussions about it yet. But I, like you, Tania, am a very big fan of the program. I think you're right; I think the school having this budget is going to have the highest level of arts value there is. So, I think it's a significant part of it and I take your point. I think there's a very good opportunity there for the front of the school to display something.

Mr WILLIAMS - I'm particularly pleased that you're giving Paul some homework, too. I'm liking that.

Ms RATTRAY - I did say, 'Do you get up north much?' And he said, 'I spend half my time there'. I said, 'Well, there you go'.

PUBLIC

Mr COCKBURN - Absolutely. It's true.

CHAIR - You can get a coffee at the Recreational Hub.

Ms RATTRAY - The interior walls that have been used as part of the arts scheme funding are exceptional.

Mr WILLIAMS - We are always looking to connect well with the school and the artist to get functional benefit as well. That's part of the process that we'll go through with arts at work. If Paul can absolutely feed into that process, that's more than welcome.

Ms RATTRAY - It's just some example of where you might be able to show the school community what can be done that meets the requirements of the arts scheme but also has some functionality about it. There might be some nod to the ferry building.

Mr COCKBURN - It may well be. I think part of our role is to set up the brief with Arts Tasmania to initiate discussion or at least give the artist something to respond to in their submissions. Now, the trick with this, as far as I can see, is that you don't want to be too prescriptive about it because they're going to bring something to this process that you would never have even thought of, and that's the beauty of having artists engaging -

Ms RATTRAY - You know I only have art appreciation, don't you?

Mr COCKBURN - Yes.

Ms RATTRAY - I have no functionality.

Mr HISCUTT - Just as a comment, with all the amazing murals that we saw done by the kids and mosaics, perhaps we should just buy \$80,000 worth of tiles and let the kids have at it. That might be another way to look at it.

CHAIR - Not such a bad idea.

Ms RATTRAY - Might be able to fix up the grey wall.

Mr HISCUTT - Exactly.

CHAIR - It's very much part of the culture in that community - mosaics.

Mr HISCUTT - Yes. Don't know if the idea was that - it wasn't said too much in jest.

Ms RATTRAY - They were beautiful. That was the first question I think that was asked when we arrived for our site visit -

Mr HISCUTT - Is that mosaic staying?

Ms RATTRAY - is that mosaic on the front wall of the - I presume that was the gymnasium - is that going to stay? Then we saw more as we walked around. I was impressed.

PUBLIC

Mr COCKBURN - We're not losing any. In fact, there's a corner of that building we're enclosing to form a meeting room, but it's got a mosaic on one part of it. We're actually framing the mosaic and keeping the wall, so it'll become part of that inside space.

CHAIR - Move on to the project management.

Ms RATTRAY - Now to the nitty-gritty.

Mr HISCUTT - I know I've said it twice already, but I'm going to come back to the contingencies. One thing, noticing that the contingencies on page 18 doesn't, for some reason, include the final line item in the project management, general project and post occupancy contingency, isn't included in the contingencies, apparently. That has 5.4 but the actual is 6.7. At the start of the brief, you said we're comfortable with where the pricing is at. I mean, the pricing for the building is apparently \$14 million, and obviously the consultants and some of those other things, but the rest of it is contingency. If we're comfortable with the building being at that price, at this point in time, why are we building a 26 per cent contingency? We're expecting it to go more than a quarter above what we're currently comfortable with it being.

Mr SALTER - I'd clarify my comment to say that based on the QS (quantity surveyor) advice, we're comfortable with what's currently shown as direct construction, as well as the contingencies combined together. This is normal project management to have appropriate contingencies: design contingency before you get to 100 per cent detailed design, then the market escalation for going to tender and then during construction, having a construction contingency. So, when I'm saying I'm comfortable with the combined program budget estimates that are supported by the QS and the architects.

Mr HISCUTT - I guess what I'm struggling very much is with the word 'contingency' being used in this aspect, because it sounds as though you're saying that you're comfortable that the building is going to cost \$20 million, because that's \$14 million plus the contingencies and that's where we're currently comfortable that the construction of the building is going to cost \$20 million and not \$14 million. But this line item has the construction cost at \$15 million, and I'm struggling to see how that's a contingency and not a -

Ms RATTRAY - A natural construction cost.

Mr HISCUTT - Yes.

Mr SALTER - I'll go to Todd in a second, but we're being transparent in the different elements that make up the estimated construction cost. It'd be easy for us just to wrap them up together, but in terms of, again, an industry norm in terms of how we're presenting this information.

Mr HISCUTT - But is it a contingency if you're expecting to use it? Isn't that contingency if we don't achieve things or if there's surprises; that's what we expect to use a contingency for? Whereas this sounds as though they're already budgeted in for.

Mr WILLIAMS - If I may, I think it is a language thing. Is it a budget? Yes, it is a budget to reflect the stage and point that we're at. Point taken, yes - and I think we spoke about this the other day about Devonport - we've tried a number of different ways to present the information over the last probably three years, and I can see that it's still causing some drama.

PUBLIC

If we were at the end of the project, we could wrap up and go this all was contingency. But at this point, based on the advice that we're getting, these are the allowances that we're being told to make. Yes, they will shift over the next few months before we get ready to tender because we've got more detail. Then they will shift post-tender because we will have checked with market and market will have told us what the market escalation is. Then again it will shift over the two years while we draw down on our construction contingency budget item. I think the most important thing that, if I can just explain that, the allocation to Dodges Ferry Primary School to support the future of the school is \$25 million, and that's the investment that we'll make in Dodges Ferry Primary School.

Mr HISCUTT - I guess, as a committee trying to achieve value for money, it shouldn't just be, 'this is the amount of money we've got to spend, let's spend it', it should be 'what is the value of that money?' That's a statement, not a question.

I guess to ask the question in another way: the tender closes in October 2026, which is three to four months away, if things are running on track, do you expect at that stage that the construction tender, whoever that may be, will say it'll cost \$14 million or do you expect them to say it'll cost \$20 million when the final line item on that document comes through?

Mr COCKBURN - We'd expect them to be closer to \$20 million.

Mr HISCUTT - Yes, so it's not a - language. Language, I guess, is the question.

Mr WILLIAMS - We're talking the same but different, aren't we?

Mr HISCUTT - Yes, that's what I would look at it.

Mr WILLIAMS - This is that presentation, because, yes, you could add together the construction cost, the market conditions and the contingency and say, well, that's construction. In the past we've been asked to break that figure down more.

Mr HISCUTT - I guess it's a - thank you for the answer. I still think there's some challenges for me there - is probably the issue.

Mr WILLIAMS - Absolutely. And welcome the questioning because we're still trying to land on how best to present that breakdown, noting that it's reflective of the time and the advice that we're getting.

Mr HISCUTT - I guess at this point, in October, we're going to get a tender for \$20 million and then over the course of the construction there will be a surprise - a pipe is not where it is - a variation will cost - so the actual cost is then going above the \$25 million because of those variations that are above.

Ms RATTRAY - But it can't. It can't go above because there's no more money.

Mr COCKBURN - You'll notice market conditions and escalation forecast are \$22.88 million now.

Mr HISCUTT - An escalation I can understand.

PUBLIC

Mr COCKBURN - There's a big number in that for the simple reason that we don't really know what the tender market's going to do. We could have favourable conditions, as Mark alluded to earlier, but you can have unfavourable ones, too. So, if that eventuates what is your, dare I say, contingency?

Mr WILLIAMS - I'm hopeful that it's closer to \$15 million and I don't want to pre-empt the outcome of the market. I wouldn't want to go there.

CHAIR - That was my next question: how was that \$2.88 million, or around there, for the market escalation allowance calculated and what construction inflation assumptions were used? Do you have that information? I know it's part of your quantitative survey.

Mr COCKBURN - Yes, it's our QS's experience of recent times, and it'll be a percentage applied to the overall construction budget cost estimate. What we're seeing from quantity surveyors at the moment is a higher number, based on a whole range of things to do with what the building industry is currently operating at. When things are busy, things get more expensive, that sort of thing. And things beyond your control, like wars in the Middle East.

Ms RATTRAY - It's interesting because that's not what we heard last week in the north-west, around the quantity surveyor and their predictions.

Mr WILLIAMS - Yes, I said last week I won't get Kane started on quantity surveyor estimates. But what we are seeing at the moment is the tender results that we're getting for the jobs we have on the go and they aren't of the size of Dodges Ferry, as an example, but nonetheless, the market is coming under what the quantity surveyor estimates are and that's current - that's what we're seeing up until now. There is a regional basis to that, and the north closer, whereas the south and the north-west are coming in under. That's just a general statement about what we're seeing from the market.

Mr COCKBURN - It's also a case of prequalification of contractors. Now, there's not a huge gene pool there when it comes to this sort of number.

Ms RATTRAY - I think they're about to add one up in the north.

A WITNESS - Are they?

Ms RATTRAY - Yes. Well, I know they are. I know a lot.

CHAIR - She's in the know.

Ms RATTRAY - I'm in the know.

Mr WILLIAMS - Which is good. We welcome that. We welcome competition.

Mr COCKBURN - This particular job is not highly complicated construction. It just happens to have a reasonably large number attached to it. It's no more than residential construction, so that's the -

Mr HISCUTT - The actual format of how to put it together - could be built by -

PUBLIC

Mr COCKBURN - Maybe that's attractive to some. We just simply don't know until we actually go to market.

CHAIR - It does make it hard for us, as a committee, to be able to assess value for money when there's \$10 million out of this project that we're really not sure whether or not that's value for money. I suppose that's why it makes it difficult.

Mr SALTER - Perhaps to assist the committee, I'm sure we can provide the detailed QS advice as follow-up information. In terms of value for money, then we're taking the expert advice, looking at that holistically in terms of what we can deliver. So certainly, we obviously feel that there is absolute value for money in terms of the extent of works that are being undertaken with the best advice that we've got at the moment.

Mr WILLIAMS - We did talk last week about the language again: net construction versus gross project construction or gross project funding because you cannot deliver a project without consultants involved. We have to pay all the planning experts to give all - these are requirements to deliver it.

Ms RATTRAY - We want Paul to have a job. I mean, we're not saying that.

Mr WILLIAMS - We need him to do that to make sure we're compliant in the facility that we're building. When we had that conversation about net construction versus gross project and the gross project - and this is just coming back to your comment, Chair, about the funding that you're concerned about the value - we can't do or deliver the construction without that expenditure. And yes, there are matters in there - furniture, equipment and IT - that provides absolute benefit to the school in if we have a contemporary learning area we do at the same time want to take the opportunity to provide contemporary IT, contemporary furniture. It is that opportunity for the next 20 to 30 years to bring the school up to a contemporary standard, and all of those pieces are really vital to that end product. That's all the gross funding discussion.

CHAIR - We will take that on notice.

Mr HISCUTT - Yes, if we could. I think that would be very useful to then just give another - I haven't seen the quantity surveyor's report so it'd be good to know how that is broken down and that might provide some more clarity. I think it's hard with the percentage based - I find that very difficult because a greenfield site versus a brownfield site, they seem to just put 3 per cent or 10 per cent or whatever. But some buildings are more difficult to construct than other buildings and more difficult to design than other buildings, so flat percentages just -

Mr COCKBURN - Yes, they'll weight that accordingly.

Ms RATTRAY - Obviously I asked the question earlier about what we're looking at in the presentation here is going to be actual, and I was informed that yes, it's pretty much. So, there won't necessarily be any need for a design contingency. Would that be fair to say?

A WITNESS - Correct.

Ms RATTRAY - Correct. There's \$750,000.

PUBLIC

Mr HISCUTT - There's your solar panels.

Ms RATTRAY - Just saved 750 grand.

Mr WILLIAMS - Yes, just off the back.

Mr COCKBURN - Unless we use part thereof to get us to the detailed design.

Mr WILLIAMS - The other part that I would add to that is that yes, the design that you're presented hasn't changed significantly, but there has been considerable work done to get to that point. This is about the timing it takes to get you the information. There's a couple of months of lead time for us to prepare the report and get a report and then get it so that it's available for public viewing. What we have is the concept hasn't changed significantly from that point, so I'm having that rider on it because the design is still evolving and the detail is still coming through.

Mr HISCUTT - I'm guessing that's where the \$1.55 million is?

CHAIR - I do have a question on that: has any value engineering been undertaken to reduce costs? And if so, what elements were removed from the original master plan? Was there something original that's already been cut?

Mr WILLIAMS - We talked at the site today about school priorities and where additional school priorities lie. As we talked about, there are a number of learning areas that we're not redeveloping at this stage. Hopefully we get a favourable tender response and we'll reinvest that money. It is normal process for the project team to explore opportunities, value management, as we work through the project, and this project is no different to those. I'm sure Paul can share with you some of those discussions.

Mr COCKBURN - If you think back to - there was a previous master plan, not done by me but another architect, and that didn't have an early learning centre. You had a two-storey building on the site up past the library, the library was attached to a food hub, that sort of thing, but it didn't include an early learning centre. One of the things we sort of did sort of with the school was to work through the process to get us to the point where we thought an early learning centre was actually really important; now, that wasn't considered previously. So, things evolve and hopefully the best outcome is what prevails.

Mr HISCUTT - Again, this is a naive new committee question, and I guess this is where -

Ms RATTRAY - How long are you going to use this line for? We've had five references since you started.

A WITNESS - There'll have to be a cutoff somewhere, won't there?

Mr HISCUTT - We've had three meetings in two weeks, alright?

CHAIR - Three. I was going to say I think it's your third.

Mr HISCUTT - This is my third meeting, so I can still use that for a little bit longer. Now you've made me forget the question. Move on.

PUBLIC

Mr WILLIAMS - Give him a break, please.

Mr SHELTON - I know it's not part of this, but the issue of contingencies and 20 to 30 per cent of the value is all sitting there at this point in time. How difficult would it be, Kane, for a one-page summary of: this is what we said at the time, post-tender, and it's actually come in at this? Is that a difficult thing to give to the committee, post-tender?

Mr COCKBURN - Post-tender? We're probably talking - tenders will come back in September.

CHAIR - I don't think it would come to us.

Ms RATTRAY - No. That's for the Public Accounts Committee; the all-powerful Public Accounts Committee.

Mr SHELTON - And we see the need -

CHAIR - Out of curiosity.

Mr SHELTON - Out of curiosity.

Mr COCKBURN - What you might be referring to is a pre-tender estimate, which will have sufficient detail to cover the detailed documents, obviously, but also the numbers have got to be right to enable us to go to tender anyway. It's got to be smack on budget, pretty much.

Mr WILLIAMS - Our process is such that we will not go to tender unless we're comfortable we can deliver the outcome that we've presented. That's the approach. The transparency around our numbers - we're more than happy to be transparent around where things achieve and we have our annual reports where we produce the information and through other mechanisms as well. I'm not sure how it fits with the committee's brief, but I suppose it's -

Mr SHELTON - I don't either.

Mr WILLIAMS - It's a long way around saying we're happy to be transparent, but we don't know the right mechanism.

CHAIR - Did your question come to you?

Mr HISCUTT - Yes, it was just about that value management and I guess the statement and, again, this is why I'm saying it, about new to this committee, because the statement was made it's \$25 million - basically, we'll spend \$25 million but if what we can produce here comes in as what we're expecting it to do, perhaps that \$2 or \$3 million that is less than was sufficient to get this school to the standard because that's what's been put here, that's identified needs. Perhaps, that \$3 million would be better at the Scottsdale Primary School instead of -

Ms RATTRAY - That science lab?

Mr HISCUTT - just because there's \$3 million more extra left in this budget, we'll spend it to increase some new things that aren't here. I guess how do I judge the value for money,

PUBLIC

which is part of my role in this committee - that's a rhetorical question - when that might not be the best use of that money for Tasmania just because the budget says that it's this that we just have to spend to that?

Mr SALTER - I mean, I wouldn't describe it as we just have to spend that. It is a significant amount of money for this project. I suppose during the consultation stage and prioritisation there's things where the school in conjunction with the architects has all these - we don't think we can initially meet. They might still be high priorities. Equally, if we got an unfavourable result, then we've got to go through that value management exercise to prioritise even further. So, as much as possible, we want to complete works at the site so that we're not going back there for another 20 or 30 years. So, comfortable that a favourable result still means that there's high-value things that can be done in the school that will benefit for a long period.

Mr COCKBURN - Just going back on that, the very first estimate we looked at for this project was over by I think it was one and a half million dollars. So therefore we had to sort of value-manage that out of the job and what got value-managed out were those classrooms that you saw today - prep, I think they are. If you get a favourable result, presumably that would go back in.

Ms RATTRAY - The ones with the wood on them?

Mr COCKBURN - No, no.

Ms RATTRAY - No, not those.

Mr HISCUTT - No, the first ones.

Mr COCKBURN - No, just next to those that are original from 1989 or whenever they were built. They haven't had any work since then.

Mr HISCUTT - Refurb.

Mr COCKBURN - As a project working group, we're very conscious of those being left as the poor cousin off all these new buildings. Therefore, we sort of scheduled them up in terms of renovation and that put us over budget, effectively, so we've dropped that off. A favourable tender result, presumably that'd go back in.

Mr HISCUTT - That's useful to know. Thank you.

Mr WILLIAMS - If I may, whilst we absolutely want to support Dodges Ferry's position for the future, we have a number of other schools in need and absolutely want to support those schools. So, if there is opportunity without taking away from Dodges Ferry, we would absolutely look at that.

CHAIR - Just on that, how confident are you or is the department that construction can commence in January 2027 and finish by July 2028, given the current market conditions? How confident are you?

Mr WILLIAMS - We're confident at this stage.

PUBLIC

Mr COCKBURN - Yes, we're confident.

Mr WILLIAMS - We've got an aggressive program, and we've got our development application in with council and we're working that through.

Mr COCKBURN - I think we're pretty confident with the start date. It gives us a fair bit of time from when the tenders come in to awarding the contract and doing, if any, value-management that's necessary. The 12-month period is essentially for new build and the last six is for renovations.

CHAIR - Any further questions from the committee?

Mr HISCUTT - A lot of general questions that over the time I won't have any more, but there was the statement made about pre-qualified tenderers but the fact is that, as you said, most of the construction in this is not necessarily a \$15 million project; it is lots of series of -

Mr COCKBURN - It's largely residential.

Mr HISCUTT - Do we ever, as a government, take that into consideration and therefore break it down into different buildings to allow for more tenderers and therefore more potential market to reduce costs because there's more people available to do it, is that a consideration? Is that a reasonable question?

Mr COCKBURN - You'd really want to run one contract on one site. I have been involved in projects in the past where a larger contractor has subbed out parts of it.

Mr HISCUTT - I guess I'm not saying: use different contractors but recognise the fact that they could have - recognising the fact that it's not a complex build, so it just would take a smaller company.

Mr COCKBURN - It's more to do with the overall management of the site and management of a contract and financial stability of the company and all those sorts of things.

Mr WILLIAMS - The desegregation is allowed under the government procurement policy. I think it's a risk-management decision, from our perspective, to help manage risk and deliver a quality outcome.

Mr HISCUTT - That's a good answer. Thank you.

CHAIR - Okay. I think we have enough information from today's deliberations from you. Before you leave the table, though, I have some standard questions; if you could answer yes or no to these questions. Does the proposed works meet an identified need or needs or solve a recognised problem?

WITNESSES - Yes.

CHAIR - Are the proposed works the best solution to meet identified needs or solve a recognised problem within the allocated budget?

WITNESSES - Yes.

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CHAIR - Are the proposed works fit for purpose?

WITNESSES - Yes.

CHAIR - Do the proposed works provide value for money?

WITNESSES - Yes.

CHAIR - Are the proposed works a good use of public funds?

WITNESSES - Yes.

CHAIR - There's also a statement after evidence, which I ran through with you at the beginning of this proceeding. What you have said to us here today is protected by parliamentary privilege. Once you leave the table, you need to be aware that privilege does not attach to comments you may make to anyone, including the media, even if you are just repeating what you said to us. Do you understand that?

WITNESSES - Yes.

CHAIR - Great. Thank you very much for coming in today and appreciate your time. Thank you.

The witnesses withdrew.

The committee adjourned at 3.20 p.m.