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## THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS MET AT THE CRADLE COAST AUTHORITY, BURNIE ON TUESDAY 3 FEBRUARY 2026.

### BURNIE COURT COMPLEX RELOCATION PROJECT

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**The Committee met at 2.08 p.m.**

**CHAIR** (Ms Butler) - Welcome everyone. Before we commence the hearing, I will introduce the members of the Committee. Today we have Tania Rattray, Mark Shelton, myself, Jen Butler, Dean Harriss to my left, we have Helen Burnet next to Dean. We also have Scott Hennessy and Georgia Gray, who are our Secretaries today, and Karen on Hansard. There are no apologies 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 Lieutenant Governor refers the undermentioned proposed public works to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works to consider and report thereon:

The Burnie Court Complex Relocation Project.

Pursuant to section 16(3) of the Act, the estimated cost of such work being completed is \$86.5 million.

**CHAIR** - The Committee is in receipt of one submission from the Department of Justice. Could I ask a member to move that the submission be received, taken into evidence and published? Moved by -

**Ms BURNET** - So moved.

**CHAIR** - Helen Burnet.

**Motion agreed to.**

**CHAIR** - The witnesses appearing before the Committee today are representing the proponent, the Department of Justice. Could I ask each of you to state your name, your position and organisation and then make the statutory declaration.

**Ms PAULINE van ADRICHEM**, DEPUTY SECRETARY, JUSTICE AND REFORM; **Ms AMBER SMITH**, DIRECTOR, STRATEGIC INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS, DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE; AND **Mr ALEX NEWMAN**, DIRECTOR, XSQUARED 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

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you of some important aspects of committee proceedings. A committee hearing is a proceeding in parliament. This 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.

**CHAIR** - Ms van Adrichem, would you or one of your colleagues like to make an opening statement?

**Ms van ADRICHEM** - I would like to make an opening statement. Thank you, Chair.

Chair and members, we thank you for the opportunity to appear today.

The Burnie Court Complex Relocation Project is a critical piece of justice infrastructure for Tasmania's North West Coast. The project responds to longstanding and well-documented limitations of the existing Burnie Courthouse on Alexander Street, which no longer meets contemporary requirements for safety, security, accessibility or operational efficiency. The current facility also constrains the ability of the courts to respond to increasing demand, contributes to court delays, and presents work, health and safety risks for staff, judiciary, court users and vulnerable members of our community. These issues cannot be adequately resolved through refurbishments of the existing building and doing so would require decanting court services with no suitable alternatives within Burnie.

Following a comprehensive options assessment and extensive due diligence, a new purpose-built court complex at 106 Wilson Street, Burnie, to permanently accommodate both the Magistrates Court and the Supreme Court, as well as provide for a flexible multi-jurisdictional fourth court, is proposed. This option was identified as the most sustainable, strategic and cost-effective long-term solution.

Importantly, the project aims to improve access to justice, reduce court backlogs, strengthen community safety, and ensures that justice services are delivered in facilities that are safe, inclusive and fit for purpose. By retaining court services within the Burnie CBD, the project maintains the court's connection to local legal, government and support services. In simple terms, the project is about ensuring access to justice in the North West of Tasmania now and into the future. The Department looks forward to assisting the Committee with its consideration of this important piece of public infrastructure today.

**CHAIR** - Thank you. I suppose before we delve into this submission that you've provided - and thank you very much as well for providing the Committee with the opportunity to walk through the current courthouse as well as the proposed site. We appreciated the time and hope we weren't too much of a disruption to the court.

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I'd like to open with - seeking some clarification around our process as a committee - as the Public Works Committee - in relation to this project. I understand that there are many projects that are put in front of us. Maybe we can seek some further clarification of how often this has happened, where there has been enabling construction to make a site ready for construction. We do understand that that does happen from time to time.

What I've seen today, as the Chair of the Committee, is that the tender process is open for this project already; the enabling construction work is just about complete for the site; and there's advertising on the front of the site that looks like it's already been ticked off. It's my understanding that the tender process is completed - well, will be completed very soon. I want to find out what our part in that process is because I'm also of the understanding that Mooreville Road, with the failed previous site, is also being - the cost of that, which I believe is \$3.2 million, is also being included in today's remit for us, as a committee, to look at. I'm seeking some clarification around where we fit in as a Public Works Committee because, at the moment, it feels like we're a bit of a 'tick and flick' process. I just thought I'd better rip the band-aid off and ask the question because it really looks like everything's just about complete and ready to go without our sign-off.

**Ms van ADRICHEM** -Yes. It's not in any way intended to be a 'tick and flick' process. Obviously, the Burnie Court, there's a long history to it, with the original commitment around refurbishment; then Mooreville Road, which was considered by this Committee; and now, the new 106 Wilson Street site. One of the difficulties that we've tried to manage over the last - I suppose, since the point in time that 106 Wilson Street was announced as the preferred site, was the cost escalation across infrastructure projects. Some cost escalation was incorporated in the costings originally, but probably not to the extent that the industry has actually experienced over the last number of years.

The other concerns we were trying to manage were the risks associated with the site. We knew, I think prior to enabling works it was at least one tank, but once all of the enabling works were underway, we identified a number of other tanks and we also knew the risk around contaminated soil. We were concerned that if we didn't proceed with enabling works early and if we were looking to commence enabling works, say, later this year, subject, of course, to your consideration and approval, if there were significant contamination issues, it would delay the actual construction piece. The steps we've taken have been designed to try to manage the public funds required to build this new complex, noting that the budget is \$86.5 million committed by the Tasmanian Government, and up to \$1 million from the Federal Government for purposes of the fourth court fit-out.

That is the reason why the project - the underlying activities that are required like enabling works, obviously the RFT - it's running side by side to try to reduce the overall cost of the project and remain within the budget that's been allocated by government. There was no intent to undermine or in any way impact the role of the Committee at all. It's still your discretion as to whether you believe it's a good expenditure of public funds for the purposes of building this new facility.

**CHAIR** - I understand that enabling work for a project - we have looked as a committee at other projects where enabling work was conducted prior to us assessing. I understand that, but in my understanding the costs of those enabling works were not part of the actual overall project cost; they were costs that were not tasked to the project that we are assessing. As you know, our role is to assess whether or not a project is good value for money or taxpayer dollars

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by the information that's put in front of us at that time. That's what we make the decision on, according to the Act.

In this instance, we're not able to make a decision on whether or not that's a good use of public funds, and we're also not able to make a decision on whether or not Mooreville Road is a good use of public funds because that \$3.2 million, I believe, is also part of this overall project cost. I think it's very unusual for us as a committee to be having to incorporate those costs and make a decision on costs that have already been spent as part of the project.

What we will do is run through page by page. It's a really well put together document and I congratulate your team on it. It's very thorough and there's a lot to go through. I have one question on page five, and then I will hand it over to the rest of the Committee to ask questions. I know everyone's got quite a few.

Under 1.2 'Objectives', in the third paragraph, it states:

providing room for expected growth and expansion to meet demand in coming years.

Do you have any data on what that expected growth over the coming years will be?

**Ms van ADRICHEM** - I do not have that to hand. I do have data on the growth that has occurred over the last five years. In the context of the Magistrates Court, in 2021 there were 15,713 listings in total, and in 2025 that's now 23,068 listings, both across criminal and civil matters.

**CHAIR** - Just to clarify, can you explain 'listings' for the record?

**Ms van ADRICHEM** - They are court appearances, so where a matter has been called on to be listed again. As to whether people attend that listing is obviously a secondary question, and it may be that it could be adjourned by consent, but they're basically court events that require a matter to return on a particular date at a particular time for a particular event.

I think from a work throughput that's obviously a very significant increase over the last five years in particular. From the Supreme Court perspective in Burnie, overall the number of lodgements in 2021 was 162, and in 2024-25 was 203. Bail applications have grown quite significantly from 333 in 2020-21 to 438. Civil matters have grown in lodgements from 434 in 2020-21 to 681 lodgements in 2024-25, and jurors' summoned - so we had the benefit today of the empanelment that was about to happen as we were leaving - but jurors summoned in 2020-21 was 2605, now it's 5862. Of those that attended, in 2020-21 it was 472, and in 2024-25 it was 1160 individual jurors attended during that that year.

On that basis, demand has grown, but obviously the backlog of cases is another issue across the court system and the criminal and civil justice system that we're working through. With the increase in lodgements, some matters are unfortunately delayed because - well, there are multiple reasons for a backlog, but it's around core capacity disclosure, availability of defence lawyers, prosecution availability, witnesses, a whole range of factors. It means that if matters don't resolve early, they're obviously relisted and then it just takes more time before they're finally resolved.

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**CHAIR** - Is there an opportunity to put a question about what that projected data may look like? I know it's generalising, but would that be possible to provide that to us?

**Ms van ADRICHEM** - Yes, that's possible. We have a data team within the Department of Justice, so we can look at those projections, but they are obviously projections.

**CHAIR** - Also, whether evidence or data on how large that backlog is for this area that may help enable a decision on the need for that extra courtroom in this proposed project.

**Ms van ADRICHEM** - Yes, very happy to take that on notice. I suppose the other element of the fourth court is accommodations for the Federal Circuit and Family Court as well. It's not just the Magistrates and Supreme Court; it's also about enabling a facility for that court to use when they require from time to time.

**CHAIR** - Thank you. Great. I will sign over to the Committee, Ms Burnet.

**Ms BURNET** - Thank you for all of that information. I'm interested to know how much you think the current set-up of the current courts contribute to that backlog.

**Ms van ADRICHEM** - Obviously there's a benefit of the walk-through earlier today as well. It's very evident as soon as you walk through into that court building. It's quite a narrow entry, a relatively small waiting area for the number of people that need to attend court; limited availability of mediation rooms to be able to resolve matters on an earlier occasion; vulnerable witnesses needing to access through the same pathway and have limited protected witness room facilities, which means that if there's a hearing in the Supreme Court and there's a hearing in the Magistrates Court, they may not be able to hear the evidence of a vulnerable witness because a protected witness room is occupied; so then delays or a hearing might be stood down.

I think the benefit of the new design is that it incorporates additional facilities for not just court staff, but also to support services, the legal professionals that work in court on a day-to-day basis to try to negotiate and lead to outcomes. The additional fourth court will make a huge difference to the flexibility that both the Supreme Court and Magistrates Court will have to be able to list matters and hear matters. The criminal case management listing process, which commenced in September last year, is undertaken by the associate judge with the example given earlier today that he undertakes that listing for the North West on Friday mornings. It takes about an hour, an hour and a half, but he has to be zoomed in to the Supreme Court courtroom, which means that Justice Jago is not able to use that courtroom for running her matters. Those practical timetabling difficulties really are creating delays in the judiciary being able to work through some of those matters.

**Ms BURNET** - How long is some of that backlog for decisions?

**Ms van ADRICHEM** - If you give me one moment. This is not necessarily Burnie-specific.

**Ms BURNET** - It probably needs to be very specific for Burnie-specific.

**CHAIR** - Yes, for our remit, I think.

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**Ms van ADRICHEM** - Then I'd have to take it on notice because I have it on a statewide broken down in timeframes, but not for Burnie specifically.

**Ms BURNET** - We heard about a case this morning. Can you just talk to me?

**Ms van ADRICHEM** - Yes, the case that was mentioned this morning was a matter that the offending occurred in 2019 is my understanding, and the Supreme Court was looking at sentencing today so that's six to seven years from the point in time that the incident occurred to the Supreme Court being in a position to consider the final outcome and sentencing in that matter.

**Ms BURNET** - What sort of impact does that have on community and people who are either appearing or even who are charged?

**Ms van ADRICHEM** - In that example, from a legal process perspective, first and foremost is the quality of the evidence. If witnesses are required many years post-incident, their ability to recollect the events in great detail can be more difficult. Their willingness to participate in a court process if it's offending with a victim or violent offending - their lives might have moved on and to come back into a court adversarial setting and give evidence of events that were highly traumatic is re-traumatising in and of itself. Ideally, those matters are dealt with in a more expedient way, in which the courts can consider the evidence and make a finding of guilty or not guilty, or a defendant may choose to plead one or the other and have those matters resolved, so all parties can move towards healing. Delays of six years or more is simply not providing access to justice. It's delaying justice and it's unfortunately potentially also impacting the quality of the evidence that the court can hear to make final decisions.

**Ms BURNET** - My final question on this first page - hopefully it won't be this long for each page - but I see with the 'drivers for change' you've listed three things, but I don't see that there has been any list for - I guess it's no longer fit for purpose - but what is the impact on the current set-up for staff within that - working from day-to-day within that system and that facility?

**Ms van ADRICHEM** - There are a number of impacts on staff in that facility. From a safety and security perspective, obviously the registry, particularly in the Magistrates Court, is separate from their management and support and their staff areas. The staff area that they do use is accessed by the public because the protected witness room is in there, so their ability to have a safe and secure space even for their lunchbreak or other breaks is impacted because it's not necessarily safe and secure.

The workload is obviously significant, because with a growing backlog and the filing system that's used - and you obviously saw the storage area with the many files piled up in the lunch room - it has a real impact on the day-to-day requirements of the role. I think the benefit of new facilities, modern facilities, where there is connection between the registry to chambers, and between the registry to other secure areas of the courts, will have a significant benefit to overall efficiency.

Even with things like the separation between chambers and registry, if both courts are sitting, having to go through a custodial hallway to access chambers is highly inefficient, and obviously brings with it risks that staff are navigating very capably and with resilience by

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putting other measures in place to ensure that they can undertake their duties appropriately, but it's creating delays and frustration, I'd expect.

**CHAIR** - Thank you. Moving on to page six, one of the dot points states, 'enable the closure of existing Burnie Courts Complex'. We probably won't return to this later on, even though I think it's mentioned again, but can you explain how that transition from the existing Burnie Court to, if successful, the proposed new court - what would the transition from one court to the other court look like? Have you gone into that detail yet with the project? I know that's quite far in the future.

**Ms van ADRICHEM** - We have appointed a business analyst to engage with the Magistrates Court, Supreme Court, Tasmanian Prison Service, Family Court, as well as the Law Society and other stakeholders around what a new site looks like and what operationally would be required. I might hand to Amber to speak more specifically about what that business analyst is looking at, because there is a real transition and commissioning process that will be required, subject to appropriate approvals, to be able to transfer to a larger facility.

**CHAIR** - Will you be having half in one while the other's finished or will it all be kicking off at the same time? I'm interested in how you will do it.

**Ms SMITH** - Thanks, Pauline. That's the reason why we've engaged the business analyst, recognising it needs to be a transition process and the best way for that to be done. In relation to the scope of the engagement of the business analyst, they will do a business analysis plan, so a structured plan that outlines methodology around that approach for us on behalf of the staff. We've got a stakeholder engagement plan where they are engaging with those key stakeholders, so hearing from them how they think it will best work and to reduce and minimise downtime on the court and the operations.

A business requirements document - so that will give us a detailed summary of the business processes and we will put forward some recommendations on improvements to those processes as well, noting that the current facility is the size that it is and they will be moving to a much larger facility so there will need to be that level of work done.

A set of specifications - so functional requirements to guide the finalisation of the commissioning period, a business readiness checklist that a project manager on behalf of the courts can pick up and just help that transition for the courts, and business readiness plans or a comprehensive plan detailing the actions required from each output, noting that there's - obviously, we've focused today on the Magistrates Court and the Supreme Court, but, as Pauline has said, there are many other services that are working within a court facility, and getting in the community as well, recognising that there's been a change of location.

Our agency executive will deliver that detailed list of documentation and then they will consider and take on board the best, so there may be several recommendations around certain elements and we will adapt.

**CHAIR** - Just on the general project scope, if you can provide for the record - it states here the new Burnie Court Complex facility scope encompasses a nominal floor area of 5785 metres squared. Can you provide a comparison of the existing nominal floor area of the existing complex, just for the record, so we get an understanding of how much bigger the new court will be?

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**Mr NEWMAN** - I don't have that figure. I'd have to try to see if we can find it.

**Ms SMITH** - It was roughly 3000 metres squared, is the current site, with an increase to the 5785 metres squared. We've also ensured through the process the efficiency of those spaces. It's one thing to provide space, but the - I think the important part is to ensure that the space you're providing is fit for purpose and it is efficient, which I think from today we were able to see the level of inefficiencies, which just creates - what can seem to be quite simple tasks just take so much longer than they need to.

**CHAIR** - Is that size of the proposed project, does that account - is that futureproofing, because I'm sure when the current court was built that was probably seen as appropriate for that time, so is this being built with the future in mind?

**Ms SMITH** - Yes, definitely. Part of the process as well was for us to do that jurisdictional scan of what other jurisdictions are doing and ensuring that we're meeting best practice. We were able to send Xsquared and representatives of the project team as well to the mainland to visit some recently completed facilities over there for that like-to-like comparison. You can futureproof to the best that you can - unfortunately - a crystal ball would be wonderful. We're also obviously very aware of our budget and ensuring that the design, whilst it meets fit for purpose requirements, we still have the constraint of the budget requirements that we need to work within.

**Mr NEWMAN** - We've taken great care to benchmark against other courthouses - we went to Bendigo and Shepparton law courts and looked at the sizes of those new courts, both built within the last 10 years or so, and made sure that what we were proposing was on a similar level.

**Ms van ADRICHEM** - The other element in the design is that multipurpose use of various meeting rooms or mediation rooms to be able to be designed, that they can be used for different purposes as required. I think the discussions with the Federal Circuit and Family Court - obviously, their needs have been taken into account for the purposes of some of the breakout spaces that they might require for those types of hearings, and being able to leverage the space that's on that floor for that purpose as required. We've looked at it in a way that it's going to be effective space with appropriate technology as well and the separation of individuals if required.

**Ms RATTRAY** - We heard from the site visit this morning, which I very much appreciated a second look, from my perspective that there were some elements of - particularly around the safety of those people who are being held at the court facility and currently it doesn't meet standards and there was some input through the process of that. Can we have some indication of how much input there was from those people on the ground that are delivering the services and actually undertaking the work? My second question: what isn't in this proposed building that you managed to find in some of those other jurisdictions or other buildings that, due to a budget constraint or a size constraint or whatever it might look like, that it's not being able to be addressed at this point in time? Is there anything? There may not be.

**Mr NEWMAN** - If I could jump to that one. First of all, we saw Bendigo Law Court done by John Wardle Architects, beautiful building and the level of finishes. I think it was all clad in copper. It's an amazing building, beautiful, but we've had to be sensible about the

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finishes that we proposed here. It's been a very pragmatic approach to all the selections of the materials. We've tried to look at materials which will be robust over time, so you won't need to go and paint elements.

**Ms RATTRAY** - A copper look but not with the copper price.

**Mr NEWMAN** - Yes. It's just sensible selection of materials and that clearly wasn't required in Bendigo. If you see that court building, it's absolutely stunning, but yes.

**Ms RATTRAY** - And my first question?

**Mr NEWMAN** - That was in relation to the TPS prison areas.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Yes, those safety aspects and the functionality of housing people.

**Mr NEWMAN** - A lot of discussion happened early on about the functionality and one of the specific requests was actually an opportunity to separate juveniles and females away from male people in custody coming into the centre. That's what has evolved through the plan and that was discussed in quite detail because, as far as I'm aware, it's not been done in this way before. We've discussed that in detail with TPS in early meetings.

**Ms van ADRICHEM** - If I may, Amber, would you like to add - because I think that your question was a consultation with those that actually work on a regular basis within the court complex. Did you have anything you wish to add around that conversation?

**Ms SMITH** - Absolutely. Through the consultation process we have a series of governance arrangements that we undertake. We have a steering committee that has representatives from the Tasmanian Prison Service and then we have down to the level of stakeholder reference groups where individuals can provide feedback and have been provided that opportunity. Unfortunately, we can't engage with every individual, so when we go to the Magistrates Court or the Supreme Court or the Tasmanian Prison Service, we've asked them to provide a list of representatives in which we can engage with and then the idea is that equally they can engage further with their staff.

We've also made regular newsletters where we're regularly updating staff and more broadly the community on the progress of the design, and Xsquared has been great in preparing fly-throughs.

We also had a VR session where people could wear virtual reality goggles and were able to walk through the facility. Every step of the way there has been engagement, whether that's done by us directly or by the key staff that we're engaging with from that particular area and they're engaging with their staff. There's a myriad of ways in which we're able to manage that and we feel that we have done extensive consultation with the stakeholders to date.

**Mr SHELTON** - One question, and thank you for the walk through today. It's obvious when you go through the old courts that the last four or five years of political conversation around where the court should be and that sort of thing has all been about need. Thank you for that. The ability to do the forward works has happened, and I know from a committee's aspect, not the absolute purest way, but I congratulate you on taking the initiative and getting it to this

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point because otherwise the need to get out of that court would be delayed months if you come across those problems, so I congratulate you on that initiative.

Who were the architects for the other court, and has there been in that process of going through community consultations and so forth for one, that not getting over the line and going back, I would imagine that that knowledge and education has made this job, or this what we have in front of us, even better than what it may have been if it was a one-off and that was the first one. So, any instances that you can actually tell the Committee where it has benefited and where you've got better outcomes?

**Ms SMITH** - Just on the appointment of the architect: in relation to the Mooreville Road site, that was ARTAS Architects that was engaged to undertake that design.

In relation to the Treasurer's instructions and given the change, and quite significant change, in terms of location and what that would mean in terms of a new building versus what we would call a brownfield, which is we had a current site, and we were leveraging off that building and then adding to, we felt that it changed the scope of the project.

We also had three courts at Mooreville Road and we were able to include four courts within this facility. Therefore, we went out for a competitive request for tender process with the new site and Xsquared Architects were successful in being selected. We had a very competitive field and a lot of scrutiny from our tender assessment panel, then through to our procurement review committee, then ultimately through to our secretary, ensuring that probity was adhered to - we had a probity adviser involved in the process as well.

We definitely feel we're able to do lessons learned from that process. I think the most important one was a like-for-like replacement in terms of three courts, and three courts was not going to futureproof us. The ability to have this new build include that fourth flexible jurisdictional court has really enabled us to strategically think to the future on how we fix not just obviously a range of issues around disability access and vulnerable witness access, but also futureproofing for court backlog and reduction in that.

I definitely feel this is the right outcome and placing the facility in the CBD enables greater access. I appreciate that Mooreville is five kilometres out of the Burnie CBD, but I think here, on the North West Coast, that's a lot. There was a lot of duplication in that design in terms of having to allow for additional office space for staff because they were five kilometres out of the CBD. The site is on a bus route, with a bus stop right outside, and we've been able to take advantage of ensuring that the access - there are six or seven different accesses into the building for all the myriad of people that will be using it. I definitely think this has been the better outcome.

**Ms van ADRICHEM** - I think the other element, and it might be two ways of looking at it, but having a second process around the functional brief and the requirements of the new court complex, stakeholders have previously turned their mind to what they needed to be able to undertake their roles and responsibilities. It refined their feedback even more for this purpose as well. Notwithstanding that, we have to go back a second time around that, but it gave us greater flexibility to tailor the design to best meet the needs of court users.

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**CHAIR** - As a subsequent question to your question, Mr Shelton. Is there evidence that having the court in the CBD is beneficial to surrounding businesses or better for the local economy? Is there evidence to suggest that that will assist?

**Ms SMITH** - Evidence definitely through the process in which we ran community consultation formally that the business community of Burnie were very keen to have -

**CHAIR** - They were very vocal, I remember it.

**Ms SMITH** - Very vocal. Obviously, I think absolutely it has that benefit on the economy here in the CBD and the benefits just to the local coffeeshop or whatever that might be as well.

**CHAIR** - Buying a sandwich or –

**Ms SMITH** - Yes. So, definitely keeping it within -

**Mr SHELTON** - Would you like to move the motion?

**CHAIR** - Does anyone have any more questions on page seven? Page eight, does anyone have any questions?

**Ms RATTRAY** - Following on from your last answer that you provided to me around materials, Alex; it talks about 'local materials'. Tasmania is not necessarily known for a lot of local materials and timber is not an option, and you're doing something that looks like copper, but it's not. Can you give us some indication of what 'local materials' might look like?

**Mr NEWMAN** - The plinth of this building, the ground floor, is brick, and we're looking to source that from Longford, so brickworks from Longford. It's local brickwork. We're hoping that there's a lot of timber inside the courtrooms themselves, so we're hoping to get Tasmanian timber in there. Whilst we weren't able to use the timber on the outside for fire reasons, inside it's very much a part of the theme.

**Ms RATTRAY** - So they're really the local connection to material.

**Mr NEWMAN** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - Any questions on page nine? I was wondering if you could talk us through the new site and the environmental site assessment on 106 Wilson Street, and what you found in those enabling works, and the efforts already undertaken and what will also need to be put into place to be able to get that site ready to build on, because I believe it's been quite significant?

**Ms SMITH** - There might be a bit of a dual answer. Yes, we were well aware that the site came with some risks. By undertaking an enabling works package, it also meant that we could de-risk the unknowns. Many of our records were very old. We were able to do some underground radar penetrations that showed us that there were suspected underground petroleum tanks, but we were not too sure whether they were empty or whether they actually contained contaminants. Depending on the outcome, contaminants, if spread into the soil, may actually require a site to be open-aired for six to 12 months.

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We were really uncertain, so we moved forward with the enabling works. Prior to that, there was a level of asbestos in the building as well, so we were able to safely remove that ahead of time.

**CHAIR** - There's a number of buildings, so all of the buildings?

**Ms SMITH** - I don't believe it was in all the buildings. Once we had engaged a contractor, we were able to undertake more detailed investigations. They found seven underground petroleum tanks and three old hoists, so there was a level of contamination to the soil. We went through a process with the EPA [Environmental Protection Authority] in which they provided us with permits, and the soil was tested. We had an environmental consultant involved in that process, who was there to witness the removal, ensuring that the contaminants were contained as much as possible.

That went off for testing and we were able to dispose of that. It came back as a level 2 contaminant and we were able to dispose of that locally here in the North West. If it had gone into a level 3 contaminant, we would have had to have carted that to Copping in the south of the state, so thankfully we were able to contain it here.

There was definitely a level of unknowns. We certainly didn't think that there was going to be seven underground petroleum tanks. We did not have any records of those. Unfortunately, back in the '60s, records are only as good as - the Land Titles Office had actually showed records that they were removed.

**CHAIR** - Do you know what was there prior?

**Ms SMITH** - There were some old garage-type works; working on cars and things such as that, which absolutely goes to old underground tanks holding a range of chemicals. Thankfully they were filled with water. It was the hoist that caused us more of the issues in terms of that contaminant around the soil. That definitely was a risk element for us that we were seeing in our early cost indications as well from our quantity surveyor, who was putting some rather large prices on that. If we had engaged a main works contractor and then had that part of their package, potentially we may have found something not so - it wasn't positive, but it was a much easier solution and we could have had the site then sitting there for six, 12 months while we dealt with the contaminants, but that open air until you can actually start main works construction. It certainly was a risk element for us.

**Mr SHELTON** - Just a quick question - I apologise to the Committee because it's gone sideways a little bit, but as an old mechanic, the hoist created an issue, and the old air hoists were basically a big air cylinder rather than hydraulic cylinder that you pumped air into and they were down in the ground two metres and they pushed the - cut the frame that was under the car up and when new electric hoist came around all they did was pull the top frame off and concreted up to the flat, so it was all flat and level. How did the hoist create an environmental issue? Except for the fact that they'd been used as a hoist for maybe 30 years?

**Ms SMITH** - It was the oil lines as well associated with those hoists. What was found during those early works - sorry, I'm taking advice from my colleague, the project manager, who's well across this. Unfortunately, that's what we found buried. There had been a level of contaminants leaked from those hoists, so I suspect they weren't potentially installed as maybe they were meant to be.

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**A witness** - They weren't air ones were they?

**Ms SMITH** - No. No, they definitely weren't.

**Mr SHELTON** - They'd find that strange, but anyway.

**CHAIR** - Page 10. Do any Committee members have any questions? I think that covers a fair bit of the information we've just received on those enabling works. Should we move on to design approval?

I was wondering if you could run us through, briefly, the consultation process - who the main stakeholders are or were and also the community consultation. I believe that we will be going on to that in a later part of this, so I don't want to jump too much, but maybe we cover it now.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Page 30's got a large list, Chair.

**CHAIR** - If you could just give us a quick brief on that.

**Ms van ADRICHEM** - For the purposes of, I suppose, detailed design, the key stakeholders were the Supreme Court and Magistrates Court, both staff and judiciary as well as the Tasmanian Prison Service. We also engaged with the Law Society and legal profession - the pages refer to, earlier, community corrections, justice support services, the victim support services, eligible persons register, and a range of other - I suppose, regular Legal Aid is another example that, obviously with our duty lawyer service and other services, provide their input on a daily basis. But having that breadth of a stakeholder input was incredibly helpful to understand the needs of individual court users, whether they were represented or not represented coming into that court environment. The needs of police prosecution or DPP were really helpful in shaping the various support rooms, for lack of a better term, that are in the design and are critical to finalising it. I think that's separation between the staff secure areas, but also between the Supreme Court and Magistrates Court because we're obviously at two different courts and an individual may appeal a Magistrates Court decision to the Supreme Court, so we needed to incorporate appropriate circulation in design that yes, there are some points of crossover, but there is clear separation between the Supreme Court and Magistrates Court as well to ensure that that confidence in the justice system is maintained through design as well as obviously the actual operations of the court.

Amber may have some - you had workshops with staff and those types of things as well, if you wanted that level of data on how we sort the granular detail.

**Mr NEWMAN** - From my perspective, the consultation on this project has been probably one of the most successful I've been involved with. We did it early before anything was put to paper and then we went back to them with designs, concept ideas and got the feedback and 90 per cent of the time it was positive. Like this; like this; oh, that's great. Normally there were 10 different parties on this list. There will be one person, one party that didn't quite like this element and we had the opportunity to tweak it, and I have to say I think the final building is actually through the process and we've had a good amount of time to do that consultation. It has really been successful.

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**CHAIR** - The community consultation, I've noticed you had some workshops and there was a website and newsletters and so forth. Was that successful overall?

**Ms SMITH** - Yes, there was a formal community consultation process run in relation to feedback sought for options for what site was chosen as well, which we definitely took on board. But equally the project team have done an enormous amount of work with the near neighbours in terms of the engagement and ensuring that they're aware of every step of the way. We also have a public-facing website that we draw the community's attention to keep them up to date as to the progress of the project as well.

Since the design has really kicked off and been developed, as Alex pointed out, the community consultation has definitely centred on those particular near neighbours who would be most affected, with drawing the general community to our website in the first instance for facts and questions-type answer sheet.

**CHAIR** - Was there extensive consultation with Aboriginal legal services? Just that there is often an over representation of people who identify as Tasmanian Aboriginal or Aboriginal people. Was there consultation done with those communities as well? I couldn't see it noted.

**Ms SMITH** - Not specifically.

**CHAIR** - Is that a gap in the consultation because of that over representation of people who identify as Tasmanian Aboriginal or Aboriginal and their access to the judicial system insofar as design?

**Ms SMITH** - We don't feel it's a gap as such, but it wasn't a group specifically that we, as in the legal service, but there's definitely been elements in terms of engagement in general.

**CHAIR** - The community has been consulted.

**Ms SMITH** - Yes, to give the opportunity to provide feedback, but not specific Aboriginal community groups in particular.

**CHAIR** - So Aboriginal legal services haven't had any kind of input into the design?

**Ms SMITH** - Not that I'm aware, but I can take it on notice to ensure because I don't want to give you an incorrect answer by not having personally sat in in every format of the consultation processes.

**CHAIR** - Because of that over representation within the judicial system.

**Mr NEWMAN** - I believe it was discussed in the consultation we had with Legal Aid. It's been discussed but not specifically with that.

**Ms SMITH** - Yes, there definitely was Legal Aid, the Law Society and the Bar Association. We dealt with them directly, but equally a bit similar to our staff in general, there's the engagement and then there's equally they're representing a range of different views on behalf of, but I'll take the specifics of that.

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**Ms BURNET** - I'd like to follow on with that please. Would that not be like a standard thing with any consultation the Department does? Maybe it's a question for you, Pauline.

**Ms van ADRICHEM** - Consultations are usually designed, depending on the nature of the subject matter and what it is that we're, I suppose, consulting on. For the purposes of, say, legislative projects, there's correspondence that will always be sent to the Tasmanian Aboriginal Legal Service for the purposes of feedback on any legislative reforms. In the context of infrastructure projects, it's been a wide-ranging approach to seeking feedback and consultation or input but, as Amber said, we will do some further due diligence.

However, we haven't necessarily specifically approached the Tasmanian Aboriginal Legal Service for input. Through the National Access to Justice Partnership agreement there are regular meetings with community legal centres, Tasmanian Legal Aid, as well as the Tasmanian Aboriginal Legal Service, and now also the Refugee Legal Service as well. The Burnie Court normally provides an update in that context as to where the project is at. Obviously open to any particular questions, but specific or direct engagement for this particular project, we would have to check if there was anything done.

**Ms BURNET** - Are there any other groups that might be over represented? I'm thinking about people with low literacy or conditions. I note that there's significant information about wayfinding and accessibility. So, people with autism or people with low literacy - is that being considered in the design?

**Ms van ADRICHEM** - It's being considered in a context of engagement with Legal Aid, victim support services and justice support services, which assist people who may have various vulnerabilities accessing the court system. With the wayfinding and that design, I think Alex may be able to contribute to what's been considered to ensure that it is accessible from a vulnerability perspective.

**Mr NEWMAN** - Yes, we have considered that. We have a full wayfinding proposal as part of the design which is fully compliant. From justice support, we definitely consulted with them in relation about that there's a support dog that can be - and actually have a room in the court where it can be looked after. There are also facilities for the staff coming in; at the moment they don't have anywhere in the existing court. They can base themselves under the shared hot-desking area. So, that's been factored in.

**Ms RATTRAY** - My favourite topic, Madam Chair: the Tasmanian Government Art Site Scheme. I note in the information that the project team has worked closely with Arts Tasmania and developed a brief, and the expression of interest process has been conducted and there were some submissions shortlisted. So, it almost seems like it's done and dusted.

**Mr NEWMAN** - I don't believe that's the case. The site that has been put forward is the forecourt area.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Right. I've gone to the picture on page 39 - so, is it going to be something in - I know Hansard can't pick up my paperwork - but is it going to be something in that courtyard?

**Mr NEWMAN** - That is the area, the forecourt area, is the location that's been proposed. I believe there's been two or three artists shortlisted.

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**Ms SMITH** - There have been three artists shortlisted.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Is it going to be one feature, or is it possibly something more -

**CHAIR** - Practical?

**Ms RATTRAY** - than one feature?

**Ms SMITH** - Yes. My understanding is there are two.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I mean, this is obviously only an artist's impression. A couple of significant trees and I even think there might be some man ferns, which probably come from down the road from my office, in the background.

**A witness** - Much of the landscaping is different to the -

**Ms RATTRAY** - I'm just really interested in what sort of feature -

**Mr NEWMAN** - There are different proposals. I believe, from what I've seen of the artist proposals, there are three different ideas of how it could be done, and that process is still underway. If that makes sense.

**Ms RATTRAY** - What sort of feature would you put that? That's what I'm interested in.

**Mr NEWMAN** - I'm not on the panel. I could find out, or Chris might be able to -

**Ms SMITH** - I can answer with more information. Thank you to Chris, the project manager, who is actually one of the members assessing the artist brief. We have wanted to keep it quite open in terms of leaving it to the artist's discretion and artistic flair, I guess. But what we have said is that we would like a sculpture or something functional within the forecourt space.

**Ms RATTRAY** - So, explain to me what a 'functional sculpture' looks like.

**Ms SMITH** - That may be a -

**Ms RATTRAY** - Can you sit on it?

**Mr NEWMAN** - A seat.

**Ms SMITH** - Yes, that may be a seat.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Is that the idea? That's all I needed to understand, whether it was some seating, because it doesn't look like there's any there.

**Ms SMITH** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - A fountain.

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**Mr NEWMAN** - The image on page 39 is an architectural rendition. I think there are some updated visuals on the table that show more what it actually will look like. There is a landscape architect involved, Playstreet, which has done the design for this space -

**Ms RATTRAY** - So it will definitely be a functional piece of artwork, for \$80,000?

**Ms SMITH** - \$72,800. Yes. That's the discretion of the artist and part of the selection panel. When options are put forward through this selection process, it's up to the panel. That includes a member from the courts, Chris from our project team, and somebody from Xsquared to assess what is provided through that artist process, so there absolutely may be function. What we also have to consider is ongoing maintenance and vandalism - because it will be in that prominent space - and that it's conducive, and works with the design.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Is there any thought to putting that component of the art scheme inside the building? Was it always an outside option?

**Mr NEWMAN** - It was all discussed with Arts Tasmania through the process. As a normal process, you show them what the project is, and we discussed areas, but that was the area that was selected.

**Ms BURNET** - Chair, just a follow-up question, because I know that art is really important, particularly in community spaces and with healing: was there any thought provided for former participants in the justice service - people who might have gone through arts programs whilst in jail or within the justice system?

**Ms SMITH** - It is something that we do look at, but I would have to check whether we've specifically named up - we are part of the process; it is very much driven from Arts Tasmania as well around those parameters. What I will say is that it is definitely open and it would be considered from the committee that are assessing, to work with people who may have been in the justice system previously, and that would be certainly looked at as advantageous if that was put forward.

**Ms BURNET** - Thank you.

**CHAIR** - Does anyone have a question on page 12? On page 13, I just have one question on the planning permit, for the record, that has been granted by the Burnie City Council. Can you give us some information around that process and working with the Burnie City Council in order to have that planning permit ticked off?

**Mr NEWMAN** - We've worked closely with the council through the process and I have to say it's been fantastic, a very smooth process.

**CHAIR** - Did it take long?

**Mr NEWMAN** - No. I believe I'm right in saying it was actually discretion - it didn't even have to go to committee. There were no objections or representations.

**Ms SMITH** - There are certain statutory periods in which we have to wait, but yes, there was no representation against.

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**CHAIR** - Fantastic. Heading on to page 14, any questions on page 14, Committee? Any questions on page 15, page 16? I have some questions which I think are important for the record, just because of the sheer scope of this project, about the current arrangements at the Magistrates Court and how this project or the proposed project will improve the functions of the Magistrates Court as opposed to what we have at the moment; just a few sentences on that.

**Ms van ADRICHEM** - Obviously in the existing Magistrates Court, the staff areas, chambers areas and even management of staff areas are all disconnected, with public access to areas that ideally shouldn't have public access, like to get to the protected witness room. The new facility will address all those issues by ensuring appropriate circulation, appropriate workplace health and safety measures, still having appropriate public access. For court users who need to access the Magistrates Court, there's a separate counter for those discussions to occur. They can access chambers, they can access courts, they can access staff areas. There's a separate entry point for staff which currently isn't available unless, I suppose, they go through the kind of back car park area. From a staff security, staff amenity perspective the new complex will be a vast improvement to the existing facility, which I think will have implications on staff wellbeing and welfare as well in a positive way.

**CHAIR** - Can you provide us with a comparison between the current security arrangements in the Magistrates Court and the current design in the Magistrates Court with security arrangements as opposed to the new design and how that will improve security for staff, for people attending court and the community?

**Ms van ADRICHEM** - The existing court security arrangements are quite interesting within the Burnie Court Complex because -

**CHAIR** - The current one?

**Ms van ADRICHEM** - The current one in the context of - it's obviously a contracted security for the Magistrates Court and its in-house security for the Supreme Court, and then there's, obviously, the Tasmanian Prison Service that look after the holding cells upstairs. The current building where security screening occurs is very much a bottleneck which creates risks in and of itself, but along - if you pass security, there is no, I suppose, separate room for security to be able to monitor all the security cameras. They're actually visible for the general public.

There's a slight area, I suppose, near the stairs where the public can see what's happening in other parts of the court building, which is of significant concern from a risk and safety perspective. Court security is highly professional and they do what they can within the design restrictions of the current facility, but moving into the new building, appropriate CCTV and other security measures are incorporated into the design. The business analyst who we spoke about earlier is also looking at the security arrangements for the new building because it's moving to, obviously, a four-court model across multiple levels.

Consideration will need to be given to what does security look like in this new facility. There's obviously greater capacity within the custodial holding cell area as well. That is a business readiness issue that we need to work through, but the security model is contractor security, in-house security and Tasmanian Prison Service as well in the custodial area.

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Amber, I'm not sure if you wanted to add something about the security consultant who we have engaged to advise us on the security requirements of the new building and how we've then informed our design.

**CHAIR** - And how it's affected the design of the proposed project, that would be handy.

**Ms SMITH** - We have engaged directly - the Department has engaged the security consulting group, specialist security specialists to undertake risk assessment and an appropriate design for the facility. That includes dynamic and static security, noting the ability for technology to come into play in terms of that security. We have a statewide security strategy for corrective services. We've been able to leverage on that and the security consultants have provided us with a strategy that encompasses the courts as well. They've drawn on ensuring that the design meets the required standards in terms of, not only just in terms of CCTV, but the security of rooms and access to those rooms through door controls and ensuring that the public aren't able to go into, obviously, what is secure space, particularly when you've got court files and things such as that.

There was an extensive risk assessment process undertaken where those consultants sat down with key stakeholders to understand how the current court works now and where the deficiencies are, and to overlap that with the current design and make a range of recommendations that ultimately led to the security systems being specced and door controls and just the movement in general through the facility to ensure safety of staff, safety of the public. It was all taken into consideration.

**CHAIR** - Thank you. With the Supreme Court, can you quickly run through the main difference between the current Supreme Court and the proposed Supreme Court project - what we've got at the moment and what we are going to have, for the record, and how that will improve security as well for the Supreme Court and maybe some quick information on how that will improve security for the judicial work as well, because apparently that is also not up to what the public expectation of protecting our jurors would be.

**Ms van ADRICHEM** - The current building doesn't have a dedicated jury entry or secure jury pathways to access the Supreme Court. In the current building they have to access or go through the front entry like everybody else and head upstairs to the Supreme Court area. When a jury has been empanelled, court security will ensure that their leaving court at the end of the day is done in a way that limits crossover with potential parties or other people who may be involved in the proceedings.

What this means in practice is they basically clear the floor, clear the upstairs and downstairs area to accommodate and facilitate the exit of the jury. However, in the mornings, because everybody attends at the same time, it's a little trickier to ensure that that access - or to mitigate that crossover between jurors and parties to proceedings. The new facility will have a separate, dedicated jury access which takes them to a secure jury area which has appropriate amenities as well, and then access to the court. So, entry and exit from the court in the new facility can be accommodated by dedicated secure pathways, which means that that crossover risk is, at least within the court building, very minimal, which is a huge improvement on current arrangements.

The difficulty as well with the current court building is the delays that it creates by having to undertake these additional security measures to be able to escort juries in and back out again

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and avoiding potential mistrials, for example, if there is a perception of communication between an empanelled juror and a party to the proceeding or a witness, and it's about ensuring that there's confidence in the administration of justice, and that's what this new design is tailored towards ensuring.

**CHAIR** - This new design of the proposed project could potentially minimise that risk of mistrial.

**Ms van ADRICHEM** - Yes, by virtue of design rather than relying on people: it's design.

**Mr NEWMAN** - I will give you a specific example of something we've managed to achieve in the plan, which is occasionally you have cases where there's more than one person in the dock, and there might be a person in custody as a witness, and bringing that person into the courtroom can be quite problematic. If you're taking somebody up from Risdon Prison for the day to be a witness, how do you securely get them in? It has involved, as I understand, quite a lot of extra manpower for staff to get that process done, and we've managed to resolve it in the plan of the Supreme Court layout for that to be achieved. That's far safer for the staff running that process.

**CHAIR** - It's safer for staff. It minimises that risk. It's very expensive to have mistrials, but it also contributes to that backlog, doesn't it?

**Ms van ADRICHEM** - Yes, because the matter would need to be relisted, or decisions made about empanelling the new jury, potentially.

**Mr NEWMAN** - And the docks that we've designed for both the Magistrates and the Supreme Courts are current best practice. They are two to three metres high. They're much more secure than the ones you probably saw in the existing court building earlier today.

**Ms BURNET** - Chair, could I ask a question to follow up on work health and safety, and you touched on it before: but how often are there attacks on the staff because of the current situation, because of the current layout of the courts? Have you got work health and safety figures?

**Ms van ADRICHEM** - For the last financial year, for the Supreme Court there were two injuries reported and one property damage, and Magistrates Court were two hazards reported from a security incident perspective.

This is in the 2025 calendar year: there was one code black, which is violent threat to personal safety - multiple officer response; there were three code greys, which is single officer response; and there were three code browns, which is external threat.

I think that also speaks to the efforts of security, because they have had to think really critically about how to bring people into the courts and how to exit them back out again to be able to undertake that due diligence.

**Ms BURNET** - These are physical injuries. What about psychological injuries associated with working at the current Burnie Courts?

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**Ms van ADRICHEM** - I don't have any data broken down as to whether the two injuries were physical injuries or psychological injuries. I could take that on notice.

**Ms BURNET** - Yes, and from a work health and safety perspective, not just injury onsite. Thank you.

**CHAIR** - Any more questions on page 17?

**Mr SHELTON** - This is probably just a statement. Certainly with the courts - the design can be problematic; it's a 1970s design, and anything we can do to advance the safety of the officers involved has to be a good thing. The design, as far as I can see, does that, and as to the issues that were raised this morning, the design sorts those out as well. Well done.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Well, there's not even a functioning lift on one side, it's not repairable. It's not fit for purpose.

**CHAIR** - When it comes to TPS and the design, can you quickly discuss in the design of the proposed project the difference in holding cells, because they're just day cells, I believe - the difference between the cells that would hold vulnerable people, or women and younger people, as opposed to the other cells, if you can talk us through that for the record; and how that also enhances the safety for the people who are in those cells as well as the TPS staff?

**Mr NEWMAN** - As I mentioned earlier, I think there are six cells, and two are located to one side and there are different alternate accesses to get to those, so those are for the juveniles and the females. We've designed those to be less austere than just a concrete room, if that makes sense; we've got a basic carpet on the floor and epoxy finishes and we've got some robust furniture in there, but it still feels more - if you've seen the Southern Remand Centre that was a project that we were involved with a few years ago, we've based it on that level of finish. As best we can, we've made it less austere than a police lock up. There are blinds that are built into the glazing system on these, so that if you want to provide some privacy so they can't see somebody else that's being walked past, you can do that as well.

**CHAIR** - Have the acoustics been considered? If you had, say, a younger person in one side of the cells, and then an aggressive person on the other side of the cell area, they're not able to hear each other?

**Mr NEWMAN** - Acoustics have been considered. I will be completely honest and say that it's very hard in these things, so I don't think I can honestly say that if someone's shouting in one room that you won't be able to hear it in the other space, because we have to consider all the damage that can be created to these, and if you put seals on everything, then it becomes ligature risks or they damage things. It's very difficult to do, but it should be a lot better than what they currently have.

**CHAIR** - One of the judges mentioned today, in our walk through, that if there's a loud person in one of the holding cells, that can sometimes be heard in the actual court room, which is quite concerning. It kind of reverberates through the whole complex apparently.

**Mr NEWMAN** - One of our consultants, and I think we had a team of about 15 different members, is an acoustic engineer; so we've actually gone through every single door, every wall

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makeup on this building is designed to the highest standard. In some locations we have double doors. I'm very confident that we would address those concerns.

**Ms van ADRICHEM** - I think the other aspect of the custodial area is that separation in the design between obviously the youth or the vulnerable cells as opposed to the other cells. I wasn't sure if there's anything further you wish to add around that design.

**Mr NEWMAN** - There's the ability to bring them in two separate ways. Hopefully if there were multiple people attending, the juveniles don't have to be paraded in front of the male cells.

**CHAIR** - So, they might not even see each other or come across each other at the different entry and exit points?

**Ms SMITH** - If I could just add that the current court facility has three holding cells. We've increased that to six cells in this new facility and we've also been able to bring some natural light into the cells using some light wells - still allowing the privacy and ensuring that nobody can see in, but enabling those who are being held in those cells, noting it can be for some time until they're ready, the courts are ready, that there is still that natural light.

**CHAIR** - The cells, for the record, are DDA-compliant and at Australian standards for holding cells, is that right?

**Ms SMITH** - Yes.

**Mr NEWMAN** - We have one of the cells, I think, is DDA compliant from accessible pathway perspective, but they're all designed in relation to the Victorian cell guidelines with some allowance for moving to some of the furniture, which is robust plastic, which we've worked through from our perspective.

**CHAIR** - Page 18. Any questions? Page 19, questions? Mr Shelton, I believe you had some questions on page 20 about the technological advancements.

**Mr SHELTON** - As was indicated in our tour, the old system works on headphones for people with hearing disabilities, modern technology's heading towards Bluetooth and so on. I'm just wondering what facilities might be in the new court for people with hearing aids or needing hearing assistance.

**Ms SMITH** - We have sought some advice in relation to that modern technology. My understanding is that there are multiple options. That is through that Bluetooth ability to the hearing aid. I'm not sure of the technical terminology for that, but also the ability to have the headset as well if there was preference for that. We've engaged the - we have a contract through our IT department and we've engaged through that contract whose contacted electrical so they will be installing all the video conferencing equipment, ICT equipment and audio-visual equipment requirements.

**CHAIR** - Quick question - if you can provide us information about the improved ability to provide digital technology within the new design. For witness statements - I believe at the moment it's quite clunky and it's been hard to update to current, I suppose, digital standards or some of the advancements. Can you talk us through that?

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**Ms SMITH** - Yes. Through the engagement of the contact group, through that contract through our ICT department, what we are leveraging on is statewide consistency in terms of our infrastructure and our audio-visual installations through all our court facilities so that it doesn't matter where any of the staff are located, all the systems are the same. I think that's really important as well. This is the most up-to-date technology that we will be utilising. We've also created the space to equip that equipment, noting that at the moment, I think, we've talked through the inability - well, the lack of ability to appropriately have vulnerable witnesses provide evidence at times. We have a dedicated suite that includes three rooms within this facility that enables that evidence to be provided from vulnerable witnesses into the court.

**Ms van ADRICHEM** - I think - obviously the existing site, some audio or IT equipment has been installed, but because of the asbestos in the walls and the rewiring that might be required because it just wasn't necessarily designed when it was built back in the late 1960s or 1970s, it wasn't necessarily done in contemplation of the advancements in IT technologies. Even though they've made it work in the existing site, it has been very challenging to be able to uplift IT capability. Obviously, the staff lunchroom that's also used as a meeting room does not have any IT capability at all. If there was a statewide meeting, for example, with members from the Devonport, Launceston or Hobart registries, that becomes far more challenging to accommodate in that way, which with the new design and the staff amenities around meeting rooms or using other rooms that are not in use for mediations or other purposes enable greater connection to the rest of the state.

**CHAIR** - In the new proposed project, having access to that enhanced ICT capacity or IT capacity, will that assist in minimising or helping to minimise that waiting list that we're currently experiencing, do you believe?

**Ms van ADRICHEM** - Yes, the perfect example would be the protected witness rooms moving from one that's shared between three courts to three dedicated rooms for four courts, but because of the IT capability that will be built into other rooms, and connection to external sites if the courts were minded to go down that path. I know in the Hobart registry there is an external site in a different building that's used for protected witness evidence from time to time, so that very vulnerable person then doesn't even have to attend a court building to be able to give their evidence, but you need to have the IT capacity to receive that evidence and know that that's reliable. Even though having four courtrooms and three dedicated protected witness rooms, because of the IT uplift associated with the new complex or proposed new complex, it builds greater flexibility to be able to hear evidence from protected witnesses.

**Ms SMITH** - Could I add that we did a lot of work with the judges and magistrates around the placement of the cameras, particularly when vulnerable witnesses are providing that evidence. As Pauline touched on, there's one thing to provide the evidence, but it has to mirror that ability that it would in a live courtroom so that there's no misinterpretation. We did a lot of work with the magistrates and justices to ensure the placement of those cameras and that everything that needs to be captured in that picture and the quality is adhered to.

**CHAIR** - And you're going to have enough staff, I suppose, to be able to ensure that the ICT can be rolled out in the courtroom because it will be enhanced, but there will probably be more staff required, I imagine, as well?

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**Ms van ADRICHEM** - That's part of the business analyst's work around what - for a larger site and what will the consequences be from a staffing profile perspective to be able to manage that site. That's something we're still working through.

**Ms SMITH** - Noting the efficiencies that the design creates as well. At the moment there's a lot of downtime for those staff having to work through workarounds. They do their very best. They do a wonderful job but by creating a design that is more efficient for them, so it doesn't necessarily mean if it was double the size, that it's double the staffing cohort. It's about allowing the business analyst to undertake that work in mind of the design that we have.

**Ms BURNET** - I have a question in relation to digitising records. Is the Department moving to digitising a lot of these records anyway?

**Ms van ADRICHEM** - Some records are scanned in and digital from that perspective, but a lot is still run with the hard-copy file as the true file. The Justice Connect project and Astria is the IT project that's looking at trying to move to a digitised model of undertaking.

**Ms BURNET** - Does this court upgrade give you the opportunity to jump to that?

**Ms van ADRICHEM** - Yes, so Justice Connect is still under development, but yes, so the IT capability that's built into the proposed new complex will enable the adoption of new software.

**Ms BURNET** - In relation to that, we saw this morning there's a library. Will there be a library in the new proposal?

**Mr NEWMAN** - Yes, there is.

**CHAIR** - Any questions on 22 and 23? I will move on to page 24.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Thank you. Electrical, and I note in the submission that there's going to be a requirement for a new external substation. I'm interested in the negotiations with TasNetworks because these things don't just appear in a timely manner.

**Mr NEWMAN** - That process had started very early on, because one of the critical decisions we had to make was whether it was a substation that was going to be inside the building or actually outside. From a cost perspective, it made more sense for it to be outside and that's why it's in kind of the back of the car park area. That process is ongoing and I'd have to check with the project management team, but I believe that's well on track.

**Ms RATTRAY** - So, you don't foresee any holdups there?

**Mr NEWMAN** - No, they've been consulted all the way through, so they were aware of the design.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Well, we hear that a lot. That doesn't necessarily mean that the obligation ends up being in a timely manner and it doesn't put some delays on a project, but if you have that guarantee from TasNetworks, I'd get it in writing, and the price.

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**Ms SMITH** - Yes. For the record, we've been able to procure the substation ahead of time due to significant price increases that were indicated from TasNetworks. I appreciate absolutely that the requirement is for TasNetworks to do a level of those enabling works in connection to that substation, but yes, we -

**Ms RATTRAY** - So, you're quite confident that that's all in place?

**Ms SMITH** - Yes.

**Ms RATTRAY** - And have you got it in writing on your timeframe?

**Ms SMITH** - Yes. We are engaging and liaising with them in relation to our timeframes and have kept them well in the loop in relation to that. We have in writing with them those timeframes, those agreements and we have a contract that we have signed and - contract, for want of a better term - but an engagement between the parties of the Department and TasNetworks on this work.

**Ms BURNET** - In relation to 4.2.4, which is the environmentally sustainable design: this morning I noticed that, just because of the cramped spaces, the air quality was somewhat - apart from being fairly claustrophobic in some of those offices, there didn't seem to be a great deal of airflow and air conditioning. I'm just wondering if I could hear from the architect as to what sort of features of air quality there might be with circulation and environmentally sensitive design?

**Mr NEWMAN** - The mechanical design for the project has been done by JMG Engineers as our subcontractor. It is a fully enclosed building so that we don't have windows that can be opened, per se. A lot of care has had to be taken in terms of the acoustic implications of decisions because you have all these separated spaces, but there should be good circulation of air. As you said, the existing courtroom was stuffy and quite uncomfortable today and that should not be the case in the new building. I think in the court rooms we're looking at linear diffusers, but in the office areas it's swirl diffusers, which are specifically designed to get the air circulated.

**Ms BURNET** - That's good. I'm just curious - it looks like you're referring to the Tasmanian Wood Encouragement Policy as far as the locally sourced timber; could you just describe what that is looking like?

**Mr NEWMAN** - We have a strong use of wood within the court rooms themselves and the office areas. I couldn't tell you a specific one-off example of where it's being -

**Ms BURNET** - If you're accessing timbers, is it likely the certified timber?

**Mr NEWMAN** - It would be, yes.

**CHAIR** - Any more questions on page 24 or 25? I do note under your hydraulics, it states that the system is designed to manage the one-in-100-year storm event - that's in relation to the underground car park in the sallyport driveway; is that correct?

**Mr NEWMAN** - Yes.

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**CHAIR** - Is that something that was required by the Burnie City Council in the planning, or is it -

**Mr NEWMAN** - I believe so. We have a tank there which will hold the water for a certain amount of time, instead of just flooding through, if that makes sense.

**CHAIR** - With the fire services, everything is compliant? Just noting that in the evidence we were provided this morning, that evacuating, especially down where the cells are at the moment, is quite problematic. I think the sooner that we can have somewhere else to hold people when they're giving evidence would probably be safer. Are you happy with the new project, or the proposed project and the fire safety design?

**Mr NEWMAN** - Yes, that's gone through a lot of consultation and there is a fire-engineered solution for trying to get sprinklers out of the actual holding cells themselves. That's been presented to TasFire who have endorsed it. We're all good from that perspective.

**CHAIR** - Moving on to page 26. Do we have any questions from page 26? I think we've already run through quite a bit of the security information. Page 27: any questions? Moving on to page 28. We've run through the development application already. The infrastructure delivery committee and project assurance framework, anyone have any questions on that? Just noting that it's good to see that this has another level of oversight.

**Ms SMITH** - Yes, that subcommittee of Cabinet has been newly established and we were able to present our first project summary report through to that committee for consideration in January.

**CHAIR** - What happens if the project isn't compliant? That was the question I noted to myself. If the project isn't compliant at some stage, what's the process there of going back to that committee?

**Ms RATTRAY** - Panic.

**Ms SMITH** - Uncompliant in terms of -

**CHAIR** - If, say, today is not ticked off, or you come across developments as you're building where it's not meeting the strategy, is there a plan B, or what happens in that situation?

**Ms SMITH** - In the first instance, we would utilise our internal governance processes. We have a steering committee and we have the major projects oversight committee (MPOC) that oversees with representation from all deputy secretaries and the secretary as the chair. The subcommittee of Cabinet is an escalation ability for us, for them to monitor infrastructure expenditure, risks on scope creep, budget and all other risk elements. That is certainly another avenue. I mean, in the first instance we would look to engage with our internal governance processes to work through whatever that challenge that arises might be.

**CHAIR** - That's going to be regularly evaluated, is it not? The project will be regularly evaluated with that oversight, so if there does seem to be, say, a cost escalation, that will be picked up quickly, right?

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**Ms van ADRICHEM** - Yes. The steering committee meets monthly in any event with financial reporting associated for each of those reports. I think MPOC meets quarterly, but because I chair the steering committee, if any issues were to arise the team would let me know before it gets to the steering committee anyway. I think strategic infrastructure projects have done an incredible job in navigating this project and design requirements, but because we've had the really regular contact and because of the trajectory of this project from back in the early days, we have strong communication to be able to identify risks early and come up with strategies to try to mitigate, which is already enabling works packages. One example of that where it's like, okay, what's the risk, how do we deal with it, how do we -

**CHAIR** - Sort it out before it gets -

**Ms van ADRICHEM** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - Any questions on page 30? We already ran through the consultation file. Around governance, any further questions?

**Ms RATTRAY** - Appears to be a lot of governance, Madam Chair.

**CHAIR** - Certainly does. Page 32, page 33? I think we've ran through the bulk of this already.

**Ms BURNET** - In relation to 33, I'm just curious to know - were there vacancies during the project or for the project oversight? Or were they filled? I note that there's a program manager, programming and delivery, so were there enough people involved?

**Ms SMITH** - We feel there was. That position within our team is just going through an approval process at the moment to request for advertising. There was a subsequent process that held up the vacancy of that position. However, we manage within the team and, whilst that's a dedicated team for the Burnie Courts project, in general we have an amazing team of very qualified and dedicated project managers, and they have jumped in and out as required, so yes, absolutely.

**CHAIR** - Any questions on pages 34, 35? Page 36? Can I ask when that RFT opened? We've got here when the tender closes, but when did that RFT open?

**Ms SMITH** - For the main works construction?

**CHAIR** - Yes.

**Ms SMITH** - 22 November.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Can I ask how many tenders you've received?

**Ms SMITH** - It hasn't -

**Ms RATTRAY** - Or is it not until the end of February?

**Ms SMITH** - Yes. However, we did make the ability to come to site for the contractors as a mandatory requirement, and we've also got a digital online access to the plans and the

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structural detail, noting that we do have those privacy and confidentiality requirements in relation to particularly the TPS custody space. People have to register and undertake confidentiality forms to obtain access to that digital space. We believe that there are two interested parties who will be submitting tenders.

**CHAIR** - Any further questions on 36? Any questions on page 37?

**Ms RATTRAY** - We've got an updated expenditure or costs page to supplement to page 37, and I note that it's gone from \$72,966,000 to now \$87,456,259; can we have some indication of what has led to that increase or is it just the sheer matter of time?

**Ms SMITH** - No. In relation to the information contained on page 37, the current available project budget is \$72,966,794 because that takes into account the expenditure to date on all three sites. That's what we have left and available to us, so when we're talking holistically about the \$87.5 million, that includes an up-to-\$1 million contribution from the Federal Government for the fit-out of the flexible court -

**Ms RATTRAY** - That's the Family Court.

**Ms SMITH** - Yes, and the \$86.5 million is the state government contribution of funding.

**CHAIR** - To clarify, the expenditure to June 2023 on Mooreville Road was \$3,000,200; can you give us an understanding of what that money was spent on, because none of the actual works was enabled, I understand. Can you give us a breakdown, seeing as it is part of this?

**Ms SMITH** - That was expenditure up to the Mooreville Road site, noting that we actually did start the project with the current site as the refurbishment of that. We had to engage consultants to undertake detailed analysis as to whether it was viable to refurbish the current site, which is when we found out the extensive asbestos through the building, and then we looked at opportunities as to where we might be able to relocate the court and, unfortunately, that wasn't a viable option, which is what led us then to the process of looking at alternative sites, and led us to Mooreville Road. There was the engagement of a range of consultants through that period as well: engineering specialists, as I mentioned before, ARTAS Architects to take the design to schematic design. There's project management expenditure through those several years as well.

**CHAIR** - What has happened to that site now, because it was a UTAS site, is that correct?

**Ms SMITH** - Yes. My understanding is that it is a DECYP-owned - so a Department for Education, Children and Young People site, and that there's a range of leased arrangements in place, but it's going to be the Burnie Health Precinct. That's currently underway. I think they are looking to commence construction?

**Ms van ADRICHEM** - So construction's on the way, including a 24-hour pathology lab that opened in mid-2025.

**CHAIR** - There's a beautiful open space. I remember the grounds of it, but too far away.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Plenty of parking space.

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**CHAIR** - Any more questions on the financials? Questions on page 37? Questions on page 38?

**Ms BURNET** - In relation to those cost-cutting things that you've considered, are they still sitting there or have you ruled those out?

**Ms SMITH** - They've been removed.

**Ms BURNET** - They've been removed, so you have a savings of \$3 million.

**Ms van ADRICHEM** - In that value management exercise for us, it was important to ensure that the usability of the court wasn't affected for all the court users, including legal professionals or people appearing or giving evidence. It was around being pragmatic about where we could find savings that still ensured that the court could function and operate as required.

**CHAIR** - Subsequent to your question here, it says removal of balconies, and I believe today there was a discussion about there being some balcony space around where the jury area will be, is that correct? So, there will be some balconies but not as many?

**Ms van ADRICHEM** - The other balconies were linked to the broad waiting areas. It was one of the design features that when the team went interstate were utilised in some of the court buildings, so it provided rather than a court user needing to go back out the front door outside if they needed some fresh air, there's the ability to have a balcony in that broader waiting area. That was one of the areas that we made that adjustment but for the protected witness room, and I believe there's another one as well in the design.

**Ms SMITH** - Yes, we have on the roof space like a terraced area as well for staff to access. There was some rationalisation done around the size of that as well. Whilst it's still there, it's not as large as what it was.

**CHAIR** - Any other questions on pages 38 or 39? We ran through previously some more detail around the actual design. At the moment, most of that information is not for public consumption, I understand, but thank you for that. The designs, I believe, are publicly available?

**Witnesses** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - And it will give the public quite a good understanding of what the project will look like. Are there any more questions around building materials or - we understand that they're not flammable composite panels, so they're going to be used on the -

**Ms SMITH** - Definitely not.

**CHAIR** - Any other questions?

Thank you for coming in today and before we move on to discuss with our Committee the information that you provided to us, there are some questions which I need to ask you. Does the proposed works meet an identified need or needs or solve a recognised problem?

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**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.**

**CHAIR -** Are the proposed works fit for purpose?

**Witnesses - Yes.**

**CHAIR -** Do the proposed works provide value for money?

**Witnesses -Yes.**

**CHAIR -** And are the proposed works a good use of public funds?

**Witnesses - Yes.**

**CHAIR -** As I advised you at the commencement of your evidence, what you have said to us here today is protected by parliamentary privilege. Once you leave the table, you need to be aware that that privilege does not attach to comments you may make to anyone, including the media, even if you are just repeating what you have said to us. Do you understand that?

**Witnesses - Yes.**

**CHAIR -** Alright, thank you very much for coming in.

**The witnesses withdrew.**

**The Committee suspended at 3.59 p.m.**