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PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

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PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

# Hazelwood School Relocation

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*Presented to His Excellency the Governor pursuant to the provisions of the Public Works Committee Act 1914.*

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MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

Legislative Council

Mr *Hall* (Acting Chairman)

House of Assembly

Mr *Best*  
Mrs *Napier*  
Mr *Sturges*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

To His Excellency the Honourable Peter George Underwood, Officer of the Order of Australia, Governor in and over the State of Tasmania and its Dependencies in the Commonwealth of Australia.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY

The Committee has investigated the following proposal: -

**The relocation of the Hazelwood School as part of the Inclusive Learning Program to the former Wentworth Special School in Clarence, including an upgrade and extension of the facilities and the provision of a hydrotherapy pool.**

and now has the honour to present the Report to Your Excellency in accordance with the *Public Works Committee Act 1914*.

## **BACKGROUND**

Hazelwood School provides education for children between the ages of five and eighteen with severe intellectual and multiple disabilities, which may include physical disabilities, sensory impairments, medical conditions or autism. The majority of students are of high school age.

The school currently operates across two campuses, one small campus on Elmsleigh Road, Glenorchy for younger students (Birralelee) and the larger campus for older students on the busy intersection at the corner of Risdon Road and the Brooker Highway at Moonah (Hazelwood).

The multi-level and ageing facilities at the Hazelwood campus have been assessed as needing urgent and substantial modification in order to accommodate the range of student need. Many learning areas and outdoor areas are not wheelchair accessible and there are only two suitable toileting areas. These issues have a significant impact on age appropriate class groupings and curriculum options for these students.

This reference proposed the relocation of the educational services provided through the Hazelwood and Birralelee campuses from their current locations to the building currently known as Wentworth, at 223 Clarence Street, Howrah.

The Wentworth building was originally designed as a special school, and although it has had a variety of uses over the years (with the most recent being as the offices of Learning Services South and South East), plans have been developed in consultation with the school that will provide an exciting and innovative new facility for Hazelwood School into the future.

## **SPECIAL SCHOOL SERVICES**

Educational practices and services for students with disabilities have changed since the Hazelwood facility was established in the early 1950s. While most children with severe disabilities now attend their local school, some parents prefer the alternative special school setting, value the specialised environment and identify with the school

community. As a consequence, and consistent with departmental policy, the Department of Education submitted that it is committed to ‘providing educational services for students with disabilities that reflect the diverse needs and varying preferences of these students, utilising a variety of models’ (Inclusion Policy 1995) including a quality special school environment.

In Tasmanian Government schools, students with disabilities are encouraged to attend regular schools with the necessary support and the curriculum to meet their needs so they are being taught with their own age group at their school. Students with significant disabilities are eligible to attend a special school where attendance at a regular school is not a suitable option. Special schools can also play a role in assisting students in maintaining enrolments in a regular school. Special schools provide the type of specialist facilities, curriculum and support that a child with a particular disability might require, tailored as much as possible to individual needs.

Students, teachers, parents and school communities are supported by teams of professionals that include teacher learning support leaders, support teachers, guidance officers, speech and language pathologists and social workers.

Students can be considered for enrolment in special schools on parental request, and where there is significant, identifiable disability which includes a moderate to profound intellectual disability. The student’s intellectual disability may or may not be accompanied by severe physical disability, severe health impairment, or moderate to severe autism.

Consideration is also given to ensure it is educationally appropriate (appropriate age groups and curriculum options), with hours of attendance being age appropriate and consistent with enrolment in regular schools, and recognising the opportunity for a range of flexible enrolment options including full/part-time enrolment, dual enrolment and access to the services provided by the special school while maintaining enrolment in the regular school.

Access can also be provided to a special school service on a temporary basis, either full or part-time, while maintaining their enrolment in their neighbourhood school. This can be particularly valuable in providing respite and short-term intervention, and overcoming difficult periods while maximising the prospect of long term community integration.

The process of placing a student with the special school, and shaping the services provided, is highly consultative, and necessarily individualistic. The process is overseen by a Placement Committee which includes the General Manager Learning Services or nominee, the special school principal and the carer or parents, with other specialist invitees as appropriate.

Students have access to a rich curriculum consistent with other regular schools of a similar size and designed to meet the needs of all students. The curriculum provision in special schools can take advantage of and include opportunities in neighbouring schools and the community and will be consistent with the department’s educational goals and values.

Hazelwood also offers a special program for students in other schools in community learning, physical fitness, swimming, arts/crafts, enterprise and sensory programs.

These factors, along with the vision for the school which is currently being developed by the school community, have been thoroughly and comprehensively considered in the planning and design stage of the proposal.

## **ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXT**

The Department of Education supports the 139 primary, 31 secondary, 27 combined and 9 special schools through Learning Services located in the north, north-west, south and south-east areas of the state. Support includes professional learning across teaching, curriculum and assessment as well as human resource, finance and facilities support. Learning Services have a key role in facilitating the sharing of resources, knowledge, innovation and learning between schools and across the state, and responding to schools on the basis of their improvement needs.

Each Learning Service carries a statewide program area responsibility, and the special schools such as Hazelwood are supported under the personalised learning service program administered by the Learning Service (South). The physical location of the proposed building in Howrah is within the physical area of Learning Services (South East), but on a site that is readily accessible to the whole of the broader southern area.

## **HAZELWOOD SCHOOL**

Hazelwood School provides an education for children between the ages of five and eighteen with severe intellectual and multiple disabilities, which may include physical disabilities, sensory impairments, medical conditions or autism. The majority of students enrolled are of high school age.

The School enrolls students from all areas in southern Tasmania and this brings a rich diversity among families, in relation to culture, education and employment that is highly valued in the school setting.

There are thirty-five students currently enrolled at Hazelwood School. Two students attend part time at Hazelwood and part time at local primary schools. Twelve students access educational programs at Hazelwood throughout the week, but remain enrolled fulltime at their local school. Many students with disabilities access a swimming program through facilities at Calvary Hospital. The swimming pool located at Hazelwood School was closed in 2007 due to safety concerns.

## **Historical Planning Context**

An amount of \$3.1 million was provided by the State Government in the 2005-06 Budget to establish a single campus support school within the Southern Branch to replace the existing Hazelwood and Biralee campuses.

Various options for either relocating the school to a new site or redeveloping the school on its current site at Risdon Road were explored. This included a proposal to build a new school on a 'greenfield' site at Elmsleigh Road (in the grounds of the

Goodwood Primary School). This had the appeal of a new purpose-built facility and had the consensus of the school community, the Southern Branch Office and Central Administration, but was not able to proceed due to the cost of building the school with all its specialist requirements within the available budget. The costs were found to be more than twice the available funding, and the proposal raised significant urban planning problems on that location.

Planning for the project was subsequently placed on hold pending consideration of broader accommodation needs associated with the announcement of organisational changes within the Department of Education and the need to relocate staff and reassign buildings as a result of these announcements.

#### Options considered

With the option of building a new school at Elmsleigh Road no longer considered feasible due to cost, two further options were then considered by the Hazelwood School community.

These included:

- Construction of additional classroom spaces and redevelopment of some existing classrooms including the school's swimming pool at the current site at Risdon Road; and
- Relocation to premises occupied by the Department's Learning Services office at Clarence Street, Howrah.

Plans for both options were prepared by the consulting architects, Gilby Vollus. The school worked with the architects to consider the design possibilities for both sites and the advantages and disadvantages of both options.

Teachers and parents representing the school community were given the opportunity to visit the Clarence Street site, which was previously the location of the Wentworth Special School. This building was purpose-built as an educational facility for students with special needs, but it was recognised that it would need to be substantially upgraded and expanded to meet current educational standards and the particular needs of students. It was agreed that a new hydrotherapy swimming pool would be a requirement at the site.

Refurbishment of the current Hazelwood School could have provided four new classrooms and an upgrading of current spaces within the budget, but it was recognised that one of the basic issues with the building is that it was not specifically designed for students in wheelchairs. The Hazelwood site is also bounded on three sides by three heavy traffic routes, being the Brooker Highway, Risdon Road and Albert Road, and is intercepted by a high voltage power line, all of which significantly limit the potential for redevelopment on the site for a service where level access is essential.

As an alternative, the Wentworth site was originally designed as a special school, and although the existing building lacks some contemporary facilities (particularly appropriate toileting arrangements), it was seen to have the advantage of being on a

relatively flat site, with potential for upgrading and expanding to provide full wheelchair access and a new swimming pool.

### School & Community Consultation

A steering committee was established in February 2006 to facilitate liaison with the school staff and community, and to consider the options as outlined above.

The Steering Committee comprises the following members:

- Dr Irene Gray, Manager Curriculum (State Programs)
- Sherry Edwards, Principal Hazelwood School
- Peter Stirling, School Association parent member
- Phillip White, School Association parent member
- Di Fulsang, ACT TAS, School Association community member
- Terry Martin MLC, Community Member
- Cath Parker, Manager Capital Planning and Development Services
- Margie Nolan, Disability Services
- Penny Laming, Hazelwood School

A meeting of the Steering Committee was held on 2 November 2006 to consider the two options. Input was received on the draft design proposals and the architects were given the brief to incorporate a swimming pool of similar size to that on the current Hazelwood site; to design two new classrooms with withdrawal areas and toilets; significantly reconfigure the current classroom spaces to allow better utilisation, and to examine the size and positioning of the toilets/change rooms.

Since that time there have been many meetings with school staff and parents to further refine the design and to provide continuous opportunity for input into the proposal. This resulted in the original budget being revised as outlined below.

Some issues which were external to the building project arose at this time which required extensive consultation with the school community. Access to therapy services and student transport arrangements became the subject of further negotiations between the School Association, Learning Services, the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources. These negotiations resulted in further substantial delays to the project.

After extensive analysis of all alternatives, and in consultation with the school community, Department of Health and Human Services and other stakeholders, the preferred option is to refurbish the Wentworth site on Clarence Street, Clarence. The parents have endorsed the proposed relocation, and through the consultation process, gained approval for additional children's therapy services, an air conditioned bus, and a spa bath associated with the hydrotherapy pool.

### Current Needs and Educational Priorities

The school has been operating within its charter and experiencing steady demand for its services as indicated by the enrolment table below:

Year	Full Time Equivalent	Actual Number
1998	49	46.8
1999	47	45.3
2000	47	45.4
2001	46	45.2
2002	50	47.8
2003	44	43.4
2004	45	44.6
2005	40	38.2
2006	36	34.7
2007	34	32.7
2008	34.9	37
2009	32	32.6
2010	32	32.6
2011	32	32.6
2012	32	32.6

There are currently 37 students attending the school with class groups split as follows:

- 3 Kindergarten
- 8 Primary
- 18 Secondary
- 8 Senior Secondary

The expectation is that demand for specialist needs services will continue into the future as it plays an important role in enabling high needs students to maintain a link with their local schools where they seek to, and provide choice for parents and students with high needs where that is appropriate for their circumstance.

### **BUILDING PROPOSAL**

The redevelopment will provide a single campus support school within the south of the state to deliver the following facilities:

- 7 general learning areas (learning studios)
- student amenities
- hydrotherapy and swimming pool
- multi purpose area including canteen
- therapy rooms
- resource centre/meeting room
- sensory room
- offices and staff room
- administration area
- reception/general office, storerooms
- laundry
- equitable access
- car parking and bus access
- external storage including bus depot
- external shade area and covered ways
- playgrounds and activity areas



In general, the physical environment will provide flat terrain and wheelchair accessibility; classroom/teaching areas of generous size to accommodate specialised programs and equipment; a hall/communal area; sufficient storage areas for equipment; appropriate playground and outside equipment etc.

Other specialist facilities including a heated swimming pool with provision for hydrotherapy; specialist therapy areas; a library/resource centre; meeting/professional learning space; and office space for other non-school positions.

Access to these facilities by the wider community will also be encouraged as it plays an important role in presenting the Hazelwood services as accessible as possible.

The building proposal involves upgrading the existing building, the addition of two new general learning areas, and the building of a new swimming and hydrotherapy pool. The intention is that the pool proceed as a separate contract prior to the main building contract. As noted above, the existing pool at the current Hazelwood site has been closed due to safety concerns so this is an urgently needed service.

The new pool will be a physically separate building enabling it to be accessed while the upgrade and construction of the main building is underway. This will in itself provide an exciting and educational way of introducing the new site to the students and community.

#### New General Learning Areas

Two new classrooms will be provided to the south west corner of the existing complex. These rooms are purpose designed for handling the special needs of this client group. They include a fully fitted out bathroom facility shared between the two spaces, with each general learning area having its own withdrawal area and wet activity area. Adequate storage is also provided.

The new classrooms are linked back to the existing school by a fully enclosed covered way which also serves to create an enclosed court yard which has the potential to provide a valuable teaching and socialising space for staff and students.

The new general learning areas will include:

- concrete floor
- brick veneer and colorbond external walls
- steel frame structure with timber infill walls
- colorbond clad skillion roof
- opening doors to north elevation opening onto secure play spaces
- medium density fibre board lining to walls to 1m high with plasterboard above; paint finish to all surfaces above the dado and the ceilings
- carpet on the floor with vinyl in wet areas and amenities, and
- joinery of post formed laminate bench top and splash back.

Each ablution facility in the new and existing building will contain:

- a WC cubicle for privacy for ambulant children with a disability

- wheelchair friendly shower and WC
- hand basin and wash trough
- generous space for a change table accessible from both sides, and
- non slip vinyl flooring.

### Existing Building Modifications

The existing classroom spaces are being recycled to form five general learning areas with the relationship between the internal and external spaces being improved with new doorways and extended canopy, and toilet and shower facilities being established close to each classroom in varying configurations to suit the students involved in each teaching area.

The window-sill heights in the classrooms are being lowered to recognise the predominance of wheelchair students, and to facilitate an enjoyable relationship between the internal and external areas. Doors will also be fitted for access to external teaching spaces and outside play areas, and the roof line over will be extended to protect the area.

Each teaching space will have its own withdrawal area and wet activity area with suitable store in close proximity, so that the amenity is equal to any contemporary teaching space and there is flexibility in how the classrooms can be used.

Special purpose rooms will be developed to aid with the teaching of family skills, art, music and sensory stimulation.

Administrative services will be provided from the already existing facilities, with minimal upgrade required, and a new staff room will be provided by conversion of an existing office and adjacent existing toilet area.

Much of the existing building is already in good condition and will not be significantly altered, excepting the teaching and amenities areas which will be given similar treatment to the new general learning areas and amenities.

### New Hydrotherapy Swimming Pool

A new hydrotherapy swimming pool, change rooms and a spa bath will be located to the south of the existing general purpose hall. Access to the pool will be from outside for the community and visitors, or internally through the existing hall. The internal access is consistent with the hall taking a different role as a large activity space rather than a sports and assembly area that would be the case in most schools, thus the cross access is not expected to pose any problem.

The pool itself will be a 13.5 x 5 metre recessed pool approximately 1m deep and heated to 34 degrees centigrade, fully enclosed in an air conditioned environment.

Considerable care has been taken to design the male and female change facilities including an ambulant disability friendly toilet and shower cubicle, a fully wheelchair friendly shower, and generous space for a change table and bench seating. The above

ground spa pool has also been located to enable clients to be assisted between the pool, the spa, and the two change areas using overhead gantry rails and lifting frames.

The pool will include:

- concrete pool structure
- overflow channel to all sides of pool
- non slip tile to floor of pool and pool surround
- motorised pool cover to assist insulation of pool after hours
- pool access steps to change room end of pool
- stainless steel hand rails to steps and either side of pool
- lighting accessible without emptying pool
- air conditioned space to provide comfortable conditions year round
- light weight walls and roof structure
- water resistant finish to walls
- acoustic consideration for pool enclosure wall and ceiling linings.

### Other Works

The existing covered way is to be considerably extended along the front of the school to provide a sheltered bus drop off, ensuring comfortable and managed entry to the new facility for students.

An existing parking area will be upgraded for staff parking and a standard steel garage added for bus storage further to the south of the general purpose hall and new pool.

The landscaping of the generous grounds will also be undertaken as part of the project, with the design detail developed in consultation with students, staff and the community.

### **PROJECT BUDGET**

The project is jointly funded by the Australian and Tasmanian Governments as outlined in the table below.

	\$
Australian Government (2006-07)	2,197,000
Australian Government (2007-08)	400,000
State Government	761,000
Additional Asset Sales Contribution	227,000
Total Capital Investment	\$3,585,000

### Revised Budget

The initial budget of \$3.108M comprised the Commonwealth Government component of \$2.597 (\$2.197 in 2006-07 and the remainder, \$0.400 in 2007-08), and the State Government component under the Capital Investment Program of \$0.511.

The State component was increased to \$.761 in 2006/07 in recognition of both the higher costs of building functional classrooms and facilities for students with disabilities, as well as the expressed desire of the school community to maintain a swimming pool (hydrotherapy/spa) facility in the new school.

An additional contribution of \$227,000 funded through the Asset Sale Program brought the total CIP funding for the project to \$3.585M. Project funds were significantly underspent in 2006-07 and 2007-08 due to the various interventions and delays as outlined above.

The relocation of the largely administrative services currently located in the Wentworth building are underway at the time of writing, with those services expected to be out of the building well before the proposed Hazelwood construction dates.

The costs of those relocations are not treated as part of this project as the benefit is across the whole of the two Learning Services involved.

### Project Costs:

Construction estimate (18/5/07)	\$2,865,000
Furniture and equipment	\$250,000
Fees	\$230,000
Sewerage	\$50,000
Spa pool	\$30,000
Artwork	\$55,000
Contingency	\$105,000
Total Project Costs	\$3,585,000

### Cost Estimates

The project budget has been developed in consultation with Kevin Collins Quantity Surveyor as shown below:

Existing building	\$710,000
New classrooms and connecting covered way	\$875,000
New hydrotherapy pool	\$575,000

Front entry portico	\$50,000
Landscape road and garage	\$235,000
Services	\$115,000
Contingencies	\$220,000

## **EVIDENCE**

The Committee commenced its inquiry on Monday, 31 March last. Accompanied by Officers of the Education Department and the consultants, the Committee was conducted on site inspections of the Hazelwood School and the former Wentworth Special School.

Following the site inspections the Committee reconvened in Committee Room 2, Parliament House. The following witnesses were called, made the Statutory Declaration and examined by the Committee in public:-

- Cath Parker, Manager, Capital Planning and Development, Department of Education;
- Irene Gray, Manager State Programs - Curriculum, Department of Education;
- Sherry Edwards, Principal Hazelwood School;
- Paul Gilby, Gilby Vollus Architects;
- Philip White, Hazelwood School community representative.

## **Background**

The Manager State Programs - Curriculum, Department of Education, Irene Gray provided the following overview of the project to the Committee:-

*Hazelwood School provides education for children between the ages of five and 18 with severe intellectual or other disabilities, which may include physical disabilities, sensory impairment, medical conditions or autism. The majority of students are of high school age.*

*The school currently operates across two campuses - one small campus at Elmsley Road, Glenorchy, for younger students and a larger campus for older students on the busy intersection at the corner of Risdon Road and Brooker Highway at Moonah. As you are aware from your visits, the multilevel and aging facilities of Hazelwood campus have been assessed as needing urgent and substantial modification in order to accommodate the range of student needs. Many of the learning areas and outdoor areas are not wheelchair accessible and there are only two suitable toileting areas.*

*These issues have a significant impact on age-appropriate class groupings and curriculum options for these students. This submission outlines a proposal to relocate the educational services provided through the*

*Hazelwood and Birralea campuses from their current locations to the building currently known as Wentworth, at 223 Clarence Street, Howrah.*

*The Wentworth building was originally designed as a special school and although it has had a variety of uses over the years - the most recent being the offices of the Learning Service South and South-East - plans have been developed in consultation with the school that will provide an exciting and innovative new facility for Hazelwood school into the future. As indicated previously, the cost is estimated at \$3 585 000 and our plan is that with your approval it will be operational for the 2009 school year.*

### **School community**

The Committee invited the Hazelwood School community representative, Mr White, to advise the view of the school community to the proposed works. Mr White submitted:-

*As part of the school community, we see this as something that has been needed for quite some time. Basically we think the facilities are up to scratch for the different children we have in our school. This does not mean the moving from one school to another, but the infrastructure through the school is our major concern and through that we really wanted to make it a centre of excellence. We had an overwhelming review on that when we met about it being a one-stop-only, one-off job that we could do properly.*

*In that centre of excellence we envisaged that we would see therapy groups inside the school working hand in hand with our schoolteachers and our aides. We also envisaged having a commitment from the Government that we would continue on that as well - that it would not be a once-off thing, moving from one school to another. We also had issues in regard to the transportation of students because it was probably adding 15 minutes or so - and it has not been tested yet - to the daily transport to and from home for our students. So we would require that all the buses that access the school be air conditioned, not only for the comfort of the children but also because of the disabilities that they have.*

*We think that we have well and truly overstayed our time at our last school. We were very disappointed that we did not get a greenfield site to start with because we felt that we would not lose our identity by moving across the river. We still have our identity, and we have a good relationship with the Glenorchy City Council as well through Mary Guy and the good work that they have done with disabilities through that council. That is why when we really had no other option than to move we seized the opportunity to make sure that we had therapy services in that school and also speech therapy, OT and physio.*

## Student numbers

The Committee questioned the witnesses as to the projected decrease in the number of students as detailed in the submission of the Department. The witnesses responded as follows:-

***Ms GRAY** - The documentation does outline the fact that over a number of years we have been mainstreaming students with disabilities because parents have asked for that as an option. But our department is really keen to offer a diverse setting for students with what we call high needs. We believe that this campus will provide that.*

***Ms EDWARDS** - I think, too, the numbers do not really reflect the number of students that are accessing programs there because in addition to that there are 15 students who are enrolled in regular schools who access our programs. So the enrolment numbers do not reflect the need in many ways.*

*I think Irene is right, this has reflected the notion of what inclusion has meant for our community but I think now what we are seeing is that parents would like to have a broader choice with more flexibility rather than just being included or segregated which has been the previous model.*

***Ms GRAY** - One of the issues with Hazelwood was that we tried to open it so that children from the school could be integrated back into their community as well and so it was a two-way thing. Previous to that children from mainstream could access but not the other way so we have tried to be much more flexible. Sherry in her role as the principal has really opened that notion as well and we think it provides a broader range of options for parents, whether it be accessing the pool for a therapy service or accessing a particular curriculum that they may not be able to get into in a mainstream.*

***Mr WHITE** - To add something - and this is not a good thing, but a cold hard reality which needs to be said- we lose probably one to two of our children every year, either through illness or they pass away.*

The Committee sought clarification as to the capacity of the new facility to cater for students who were not full-time students of Hazelwood School. Ms Edwards responded:-

*(There are) thirty-seven enrolled. There are eight general learning areas (planned) with six to seven in a classroom - 56 to 60 probably.*

*... Will the new facility cater for that? Yes, I think it will and I think the programs that we provide cater for that specifically because the children access things that not all schools can offer so they are not all there at the school at the same time.*

Ms Gray added:-

*Plus I think demand offers the capacity if there was a growth to develop further.*

### **Access to occupational therapy and physiotherapy**

The Committee asked the witnesses to clarify what agreement has been made in relation to the provision of occupational and speech therapy services as part of the redevelopment and how occupational therapy and other therapy services are currently accessed. The witnesses responded:-

**Ms GRAY** - *Probably in terms of the history: we had a memorandum of understanding between Calvary therapy services and the school prior to this new one that we have developed. In that memorandum they indicated that there was a service they were providing in consultation with the school community - it was not the type of service that we thought ought to be provided and hence the negotiations around the table and with the parents. We think this ought to be one of the provisos in terms of the move. I think Sherry and Philip can probably talk more about what has happened now.*

**Ms PARKER** - *It has been one of the very positive outcomes, I think, in the overall decision to move, as it has enabled the students to have increased access to both occupational therapy and physiotherapy.*

**Ms EDWARDS** - *And under the previous memorandum a number of students were not eligible for services under Calvary's blanket, nor for targeted school programs. So they weren't eligible under any program to access therapy services.*

**Ms PARKER** - *It has meant that the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Education have had to put their heads together and come up with a solution that was going to work for everyone.*

**Ms EDWARDS** - *The agreement (in relation to the buses) was that the number of buses that are currently operating, five out of the eight would have air-conditioning either installed or accommodated for, and that new buses when they were purchased would have air-conditioning as standard. I think that's how it went.*

**Ms GRAY** - *All of the buses except one, which is a very old bus, have now had air-conditioning installed. One of the cerebral palsy buses had air-conditioning and it broke down, so the department paid for that to be serviced. Only one of the buses doesn't have air-conditioning, and we have an agreement with DIER in such terms that as soon as any Hazelwood bus comes up for renewal of its contract, we want it to have air-conditioning. So that's a negotiation memorandum that we have signed.*



Mr White added:-

*We obviously wanted to get good outcomes for our children, as I explained off the record, about setting goals and making sure the goals were achieved and getting best value for our dollar, so we made the decision that therapy would become an issue for the school and the school only. Therefore it didn't have to have any people who were category A or someone with Down syndrome. It wasn't going to discriminate with either.*

*That would undo the whole school which we as parents feel is a better situation because it goes under one roof, so we can use it and do it properly and all kids can access it, which has never happened before. So that is one of the reasons we stipulated that it went to the school and not to the person. We found that was the only way we could do it, and by doing that we also felt very strongly about the learning outcomes for our children because if you take some of the health problems away and their physical needs away, you will get the best out of them. That's what we are all about.*

*No matter what the building was or anything else, it is the outcomes for our children's lives and their learning prospects going forward that matter. Some of them will leave school and they could still get a job somewhere along the line, but if they haven't got their learning outcomes they just fall away.*

The Committee accordingly questioned the witnesses from the Department as to what provision had been made in the forward estimates for such services. Ms Parker responded:-

*I can give some information on costings. The Department of Education will pay Calvary Health Care \$46.27 per hour for an additional 920 hours of therapy during school term times, as noted within the memorandum of understanding, totaling \$42 568.40. Payment will be made quarterly at \$10 642.10 per quarter in advance on receipt of an appropriate tax invoice made to the attention of Greg Glass at the department.*

*In addition, a payment will be made to Hazelwood School's school resource package to purchase equipment to be housed at Hazelwood for use in a therapy program. Sherry is the principal who will manage that budget.*

### **Travel by students**

The Committee questioned the witnesses as to the implications, if any, of the relocation of the school to the Eastern Shore. The witnesses responded:-

**Ms EDWARDS** - *I guess at this stage it is still hard to say what that travel time is going to be because we haven't done it. The ultimate outcome would probably be that those children who live in the northern suburbs will travel a little bit further. The amount of time is still unknown. Right now, children on the Eastern Shore travel a little bit further to get to where we currently are situated.*

**Mr WHITE** - *The point the parent body put across was that they were okay about travelling a little longer but the buses et cetera had to be comfortable for the children and for their needs. If you were going in sweltering heat then an extra 15 minutes could be a problem.*

The Committee sought a breakdown of residential origin of the student population, Ms Gray responded:-

*It was a third and a third and a third - a third down from Kingston, a third out in the northern suburbs and a third over the river. Now we are saying that the proportion of children over the river has probably grown. I think that's the nature of the enrolment. The areas where families with children with disabilities move to in order to access education are sometimes different. Parents will actually uproot and go closer, as we found with the deaf unit at Claremont, where they come from the mainland and all over the place because they saw that it was a centre of excellence.*

### **Centre of excellence**

The Committee questioned the witnesses as to what the expectation was for the development of the Hazelwood School as a 'Centre of Excellence'. Ms Edwards responded:-

*We would hope that we would capitalise on the expertise that is there and be able to utilise that a lot more out in mainstream schools, and for people to come in to us as well. With support units in mainstream schools, I do not think there is probably quite the same level of expertise that might have been there before. This would be a really good opportunity to share some of the knowledge that we already have. We can bring in under that umbrella many of the students that we also share. It also allows us to continue doing some of the things that we are already doing, such as training of university students. We have prac students, TAFE students and college students with us, all doing courses. So it is part of that process that we are already doing anyway. There is probably some scope to involve some people who are experts out in the field, like our autism consultant, the physical impairment co-ordinator, vision impairment co-ordinator and other people to have maybe a base to work from where we have a captive audience in terms of student population.*

Mr White added:-

*Coming from a parent's point of view, we believe that the centre of excellence also allows my daughter to access both streams of school. We know that as parents we tend to put pressure on our children to go into a regular classroom, which puts pressure on the schoolteacher et cetera. Mine is category A and she does not cause too many problems, which is pretty good, but they can be disruptive in the school environment as well. The centre of excellence is somewhere for someone to go back to find out how to deal with the problem; it is almost like the centre of excellence can be used as a library. It is almost a library for teachers around the area. If they have a problem they can come back in and find out how they can address the problem, or different ways of meeting the same result but in a better way. I think that is important. The physical needs would also be met. We have the wheelchair clinic. A lot of our students are in wheelchairs and it takes some burden off some parents to a certain degree if those little issues happening with wheelchairs can be adapted straightaway - which is a win/win situation for everyone.*

### **Health issues**

The Committee questioned the witnesses as to whether an occupational health and safety study had been undertaken at the school in light of three cancer cases amongst staff over the last two years and whether such incidence was identified as a reason for the relocation of the school. The following exchange occurred:-

**Ms PARKER** - *It is definitely not one of the reasons behind the decision to relocate, but obviously any issues like that would be of concern to the department. We had a scientific investigation done, more than an occupational health and safety assessment, because it is a serious issue. The Department of Health and Human Services has advised the Department of Education that there are no grounds for concern regarding the health and safety of students and staff at Hazelwood School. The Department of Education's deputy secretary of Corporate Services, Greg Glass, has said that the department has asked Public Health to investigate the site following claims from a former employee. The site has been thoroughly tested and the claims were found to be unfounded. The Health department did not find any grounds for further investigation.*

**Ms NAPIER** - *So the Office of Public Health had it investigated?*

**Ms PARKER** - *Yes, as of 27 March.*

**Ms NAPIER** - *When was the investigation done?*

**Ms PARKER** - *In the last couple of weeks.*

**Mrs NAPIER** - *It seemed to me that an instance of three staff over the last two years is a fairly high proportion. How many staff altogether are there?*

**Ms EDWARDS** - Close to 30, and not all full-time. There are some part-time people.

**Mrs NAPIER** - Did the Office of Public Health have any comment to make in terms of whether it was an unusual proportion of staff?

**Ms PARKER** - I haven't seen the report, Sue, so I cannot comment.

**Mrs NAPIER** - Would it be appropriate if we could ask to see the report? Given the location of the Hydro power lines above, and there is actually a substation in the middle of the school, if there is an instance of a cancer cluster then it would tend to suggest that we might have a health problem.

**Ms PARKER** - I don't think there is any talk of a cancer cluster but certainly the department has undertaken an investigation with the Department of Health.

**Mrs NAPIER** - Was there any previous pattern of health problems among staff that suggests there might be a problem associated with the incidence of cancer and the impact of the Hydro substation or the overhead power lines?

**Ms PARKER** - I am not aware of that, Sue.

**CHAIR** - Sue, you have alluded to the fact that you would like that report.

**Mrs NAPIER** - To assure ourselves that that issue has been appropriately addressed. I was interested whether that was part of the reason for saying, 'Look, we really do need to relocate because there are some logistical problems here'.

**Ms GRAY** - I think we would probably agree that maybe a substation in the middle of the school is probably not something -

**Mrs NAPIER** - You wouldn't do it now, would you?

**Ms GRAY** - No, and hence the reason we think that this is a better site in terms of its location.

**CHAIR** - So if there is no impediment to providing that then that will be issued to the committee.

**Mrs NAPIER** - That would be appreciated, thanks. I take it there has been no indication that there are health problems in the children as a consequence?

**Ms PARKER** - No, nothing has been raised.

**Mrs NAPIER** - Did Public Health look at that issue?

**Ms EDWARDS** - No.

The Committee subsequently ordered that the report of Dr Roscoe Taylor, Director of Public Health be provided. Such report, dated 3 April 2008, was received and taken into evidence. The report concluded as follows:-

*“Hence I have concluded that there is no need for further investigation of cancer related to electromagnetic radiation or other environmental exposures to students and staff.*

*There are no grounds for concern regarding the health and safety of students and staff at the Hazelwood School in the previously mentioned claim.”*

### **New sensory room**

The Committee sought an explanation as to the purpose of the proposed ‘sensory room’. Ms Edwards responded:-

*The sensory room was designed for a couple of good reasons. It can be used as a calming opportunity for some kids who might be overexcited. More importantly, we use the sensory room to help students to develop some skills, particularly those who need to develop some switching skills, working on one tiny movement at a time. The sensory room can be closed off from light and different items can be activated, depending on which switches you might use or what you might have at a particular time. It is a really high-tech area. The equipment in it is ordered from somewhere in Melbourne which in turn orders it from somewhere in the US. It really is quite fantastic in terms of what you can do in a space. We hope to make it reasonably versatile so that we can have a dark sensory space as well as a white sensory space which creates a different atmosphere.*

*... There is a complete music area to be developed as well which will be wonderful because currently we do not have a music room, we are sharing it with the library which does not work.*

### **Hydrotherapy pool**

The Committee questioned the witnesses as to whether the hydrotherapy pool would be available for public use. The following exchange occurred:-

**Mr GILBY** - *We have it located in such a way that it is accessible by the public for after-hours use and that is controlled through the school. I will let Sherry answer that.*

**Ms EDWARDS** - Yes. Our pool has always been available for public use and this will really depend on whether the Clarence City Council will continue to allow us to do something similar. I assume they will.

**Mr HALL** - I take it there will be a fee for use. How will you control that?

**Mr EDWARDS** - We have always used a lease agreement so people lease the facility on an hourly basis.

**Mrs NAPIER** - I cannot see where the spa is? There it is, in the pool area.

**Mr GILBY** - It is within the same area as the pool but can be fenced off and we have an overhead hoist system that connects the spa and all of the change facilities. That is important.

### **Cost estimates**

The Committee, in reference to the submission, sought an explanation as to why under 'cost estimates' the contingencies totalled \$220 000 and yet the overall project contingency in the table above was only \$105 000. The following exchange occurred:-

**Ms PARKER** - There are various contingencies. There is the project contingency, which we all understand in terms of cost overruns or things you might find in the building process. You might find, for example - and we do know of an existing sewer line that runs across the site - that the plumbing infrastructure may not be up to current building standards so we have that sum built in as a contingency.

In this case it is also designed to cover some provisional things such as additional fencing. We have not yet done costings on the playground and the landscaping so that will come as the next stage of design. Even though some of that comes under 'exteriors' there is also a contingency built in there.

Also we incorporate a post-occupancy contingency to cover those things that are not quite right. Regardless of the best planning or best design, once a place is finished there is always something that you want to change. It might be a power point or you might want to install another sink or you might need a new shower in another place or something. So there is a post-occupancy contingency to cover those sorts of things that arise after occupation.

**Mr GILBY** - If you go to the top figures some of the construction estimate actually has contingency in there and so when we break it down that part of the contingency increases the \$105 000.

**CHAIR** - So the actual contingency for the project is \$325 000 because in the construction contingency it is \$220 000. That is factored into the top table at 2.865 and then you have got a further \$105 000 in the project costs so really the contingency for the job needs to aggregate the two, does it not?

**Mr GILBY** - No, it is not quite like that. The \$105 000 goes up to \$220 000. That \$220 000 is the \$105 000 plus the contingency that is built into the first figure.

**CHAIR** - With respect, that does not because if I go to that top figure of 2.865 I transfer that from the bottom table up.

**Mr GILBY** - Ah yes.

**CHAIR** - And that 2.865 already has built into it \$220 000.

**Mr GILBY** - Sorry, you are correct. I take that back.

**Mr HALL** - You also have cost escalation there of \$85 000.

**Mr GILBY** - Yes.

**Mr HALL** - Wouldn't that normally be part of the contingency? I would've thought the two of those would be rolled together into one.

**Ms PARKER** - I could probably answer that, Paul. The way building costs are going we are working on 6 percent increases each year and the way the project has developed slowly we need to allow for increased building costs.

**Mr HALL** - My point is wouldn't you normally just roll that into the contingency figure?

**Ms PARKER** - You could, yes, the project escalation, or you could have it rolled up, yes.

## **Furniture and playground equipment**

The Committee questioned the witnesses as to what was planned for new furnishings and playground equipment. Ms Parker responded:-

*We usually allocate approximately 10 or 12 per cent of the total project costs towards furniture and equipment. It depends on the state of the school as to how much they can reuse. There is nothing worse than having a newly refurbished school and having decrepit desks and chairs. It is to cover things like window furnishings, light fittings, new whiteboards, new computers. It is really up to the school what they want to spend that on. It is not part of the building fabric. It is the additional things that might be needed. They might decide, 'Okay, we don't want*

*that torn, broken change table in there. We might invest in a new change table'. That school holds that money and they can allocate that as they see fit.*

*... They will bring a lot (of of specialist equipment) over - things like the wedges, the chairs and the change tables. We will recycle what we can.*

### **DOCUMENTS TAKEN INTO EVIDENCE**

The following documents were taken into evidence and considered by the Committee:

- Hazelwood School – Proposed New Facilities at Clarence Street, Howrah – Submission to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works;
- Report of the Director of Public Health entitled “Electromagnetic Radiation and Cancer: Hazelwood School”, dated 3 April 2008, covered by correspondence dated 10 April 2008 from the Minister for Health and Human Services to the Minister for Education; and
- Memorandum of Understanding between Calvary Health Care and Department of Education Tasmania dated 30 November 2007

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

The multi-level and ageing facilities at the Hazelwood campus are clearly in need of urgent and substantial modification in order to accommodate the range of student needs. Many learning areas and outdoor areas are not wheelchair accessible and there are only two suitable toileting areas. These issues have a significant impact on age appropriate class groupings and curriculum options for these students.

The physical environment of the proposed new facility at Howrah will provide flat terrain and wheelchair accessibility. The proposed new facility will provide classroom/teaching areas of generous size to accommodate specialised programs and equipment; a hall/communal area; sufficient storage areas for equipment; appropriate playground and outside equipment. Other specialist facilities will include a heated swimming pool with provision for hydrotherapy; specialist therapy areas; a library/resource centre; meeting/professional learning space; and office space for other non-school positions. The need for the new facility was clearly established.

Accordingly the Committee recommends the project, in accordance with the documentation submitted, at an estimated total cost of \$3,585,000.

**Parliament House  
HOBART  
7 May 2008**

**Hon. G. R. Hall M.L.C.  
ACTING CHAIRMAN**



## **APPENDIX ONE**

Memorandum of Understanding between Calvary Health Care and Department of Education