



---

PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

---

PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

# Construction of Dunalley Primary School

---

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

---

## MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

Legislative Council

Mr Harriss (Chairman)  
Mr Hall

House of Assembly

Mr Booth  
Mr Brooks  
Ms White

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION .....	2
2. BACKGROUND .....	2
3. PROJECT COSTS.....	3
4. EVIDENCE .....	3
5. DOCUMENTS TAKEN INTO EVIDENCE.....	9
6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION .....	10

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

To His Excellency the Honourable Peter Underwood, AC, 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: -

### **Construction of the Dunalley Primary School**

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

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 This reference recommended that the Committee approve the construction of a new primary school at Dunalley.
- 2.2 Dunalley Primary School provides primary education from Kindergarten to Grade six and draws students from the rural communities of Dunalley; Nugent; Kellevie; Bream Creek; Boomer Bay; Copping; Connellys Marsh; Sommers Bay; and Murdunna.
- 2.3 The Dunalley Primary School was destroyed by fire on 4 January 2013. In the days following the fire, the school site was cleared and underground services capped. Demountable buildings were erected as temporary school accommodation for the 2013 school year.
- 2.4 The new school is proposed to be spacious and flexible in design to cater for a range of learning styles and incorporates current trends and innovation in the design and construction of educational facilities nationally and internationally.
- 2.5 The full submission of the Department of Education in support of this reference is published on the website of the Committee at:-

<http://www.parliament.tas.gov.au/ctee/Joint/works.htm>

### 3. PROJECT COSTS

3.1 The following table sets out the funding components of the project:

Description	Budget Component (\$)
Construction	4,520,000
Furniture & Equipment	350,000
Upfront expenses including consultants fees	450,000
Art in Public Buildings	80,000
Contingency including design and construction contingency, post-occupancy works	476,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,876,000</b>

### 4. EVIDENCE

4.1 The Committee commenced its inquiry on Thursday, 12 December last. The Committee conducted a public hearing in Committee Room 2, Parliament House where the following witnesses appeared, made the Statutory Declaration and were examined by the Committee in public:-

- Andrew Finch, Deputy Secretary, Corporate Services, Department of Education;
- Matthew Kenny, Principal, Dunalley Primary School;
- Elizabeth Knox, Chairperson, Dunalley Primary School Association; and
- Mark Dunbabin, Director, Dunbabin Architects.

#### **Overview**

4.2 Mr Finch provided the following overview of the proposed works:-

*We seek approval from the committee to construct a new primary school at Dunalley. This represents another important step in the community recovery process. This represents another important step in the community recovery process from the devastating fires in January this year.*

*The department, through the school, provides primary school education at Dunalley for students from kindergarten to grade 6. We service the needs of rural communities of Dunalley, Nugent, Kellevie, Bream Creek, Boomer Bay, Copping, Connelly's Marsh, Summers Bay and Murdunna, and we currently have enrolment of around 130 students, which includes the kindergarten.*

As you are all aware, the school was destroyed by fire on 4 January 2013 and in the days after that the school site was cleared and we established a temporary school within some 42 days of the fires, which we recognise as an amazing achievement for the local community and, at the time, it provided a significant morale boost for the local community following the devastation of those fires.

As we saw today, the gymnasium was not destroyed in the fires. That had been refurbished in about 2010 and it is in really good condition. It is currently being extended as a kitchen for school and community use, which was funded by generous donations from a range of sources. That is scheduled to be completed in March 2014.

The government has provided funding for this of \$5.876 million and obviously the school has an important role in the regional community. The new school will recognise this community role, generate enterprise and encourage community participation.

The community celebrates the natural environment of the region, including the beautiful coastline and forests, as well as enterprising people working across a range of industries. There is strong encouragement that we will hear more about that around community involvement with the school to benefit the learning and education of our students.

The school's philosophy is to extend into the community, as well as inviting the community in. The school will continue to maximise the school use of the community facilities, including replacing the memorial hall, the church, sporting and youth facilities.

The school will be a spacious, modern, rural primary school; it will allow learners of all ages to learn by doing, exploring and investigating with the support of modern technology. As we will probably hear from Mark, the school will be flexible in design and will cater for a range of learning styles that will allow all learners to flourish.

Provision for the school incorporates current trends and innovation in the design and construction of educational facilities as well as the latest information and communications technology infrastructure. The design also captures the natural beauty of the site that we saw this morning to ensure the best is achieved from the aspect and outlook whilst taking into account the micro-climate and sustainability features.

## **School Community**

### **4.3 Mr Kenny made the following presentation on behalf of the school community:-**

The opportunity is one we are relishing, obviously, because in the temporary accommodation we have enough floor space to house classrooms only. A gymnasium that was used once a week for a PE program and then once every other Thursday for assemblies in the old guise is now used every day of the week for every minute of the day, for a range of programs.

We are moving out of the constraints of our current situation into something that we see as a real opportunity for re-envisaging learning at Dunalley. We have had that conversation often with staff, the school association and the community about looking not at teaching in the new Dunalley school but in terms of learning and how we enable kids to find their niche and find and understand the way that they learn best.

We have had wonderful work with Mark and the design team in about looking at how we can provide classroom space to enable that to happen. I suppose the other point that Andrew alluded to is we are now - and I spoke a little bit about this this morning - not seeing the school as an institution within the town that does its own thing and is purely based in education provision for school-aged children. We are hoping to encourage adult learners in and the kitchen is one way we can see that being the case, but we also will encourage the pedagogy that will enable us to get out there in that community outside the school buildings, within the school property, but also outside the school property and connect with all of those other industries and enterprises that we might be able to do so, and our boat building project is an example of that. We open our kids' eyes up to not only how to construct a boat in terms of working with wood and tools, but what boat tourism in the area looks like, what the aquaculture industry looks like so we weave that in to a program for the older kids. That encapsulates very briefly what we are hoping to achieve.

### **Design stage**

- 4.4 The Committee questioned the witnesses as to whether any building elevations had been prepared as there were only concept plans contained in the submission of the Department. Mr Dunbabin responded:-

*Things have moved on quite significantly since the documentation for the submission was prepared. We have resolved general floor plans, which I have with me. Elevations are pretty hot off the press. We presented them yesterday to a committee meeting, so we are having that dialogue with the school at the moment on that side of things. I am not sure whether it would be best to submit those some time immediately following the hearing?*

- 4.5 The Committee further questioned Mr Dunbabin as to how, given that the design was in some respects still at concept stage, the calculation of the project budget could be relied upon. Mr Dunbabin responded:-

*The budget was based on square metre rates for the buildings. The quantity survey team prepared the estimate. They were pretty informed square metre rates. We also had the landscape plan and a briefing from the services engineers, which gave us a pretty accurate take on site works and site infrastructure. The estimates were based on informed square metre rates and we know the floor area that we are working to.*

- 4.6 The following exchange ensued:-

**Mr BOOTH** - *I have noticed, and that might be why you have some things noted in here, for example, energy recovery ventilators will be considered, so there are things in there that are not actually part of the plan. Why would they be considered, because of cost or was it whether they work?*

**Mr DUNBABIN** - *That is all part of the strategies toward reduction in energy consumption and one of the main energy consumption items is heating. That is one of the strategies that the services engineers are considering, given that we are still early in the development phase of the design.*

**Mr BOOTH** - *The problem for me, and I presume for the committee generally, is that we are being asked to approve a project that to some degree does not exist in terms of its final format and there are things in there like these recovery ventilators which, personally, I would be very happy to see in there but it is only a consideration, not part of the actual approved plan at this stage. I am wondering*

why it would not be forming part of the approved plan. Is it because you are not sure whether they will work in that circumstance or is it a budgetary thing?

**Mr DUNBABIN** - We need to refer to the services consultants on the specifics of that part of the works.

**Mr BOOTH** - You do not know whether it is functionality or whether it is finance?

**Mr DUNBABIN** - Probably functionality. I probably will need get some further background on that from the services consultants.

**Mr BOOTH** - How confident are you, given that something like that would be reasonably expensive depending on how far you went, I suppose, about the estimated expenditure on the thing, or the total construction including everything else, like \$4.52 million here, construction budget, external works and the locality allowance?

**Mr DUNBABIN** - The locality allowance is substantial. The [inaudible 1:07:19] indicated that if the current tender market remains as it is now, then that locality allowance could be substantially reduced. When the tender market is busy, projects this far out of the centre tend to attract a bit of a premium in terms of where they are. But if the tender market is competitive, then that becomes less of a factor.

**Mr BOOTH** - How confident are you in the estimated costs, given that you do not have the design worked out? You said that you have standards, square pricing into the thing. This building does appear to be somewhat different in its design in some of the concepts and different forms of material that you are using that it may be difficult to predict the pricing of these?

**Mr DUNBABIN** - Yes. But I suppose the benefit is that this far out from the tender documentation you have that much more scope to target savings as and when you need to.

**Mr BOOTH** - But in the submission you are seeking this total funding of \$5.876 million; how confident are you that the construction can be completed in a satisfactory form for that money? We have had situations before, as Andrew is aware, where there were considerable blow-outs in proposals that came before the committee and subsequently I think it may have been a \$3 million blow-out, roughly. That is why I am asking the questions here in terms of us doing our job. No doubt it is a fabulous, worthy project; I am just trying to find out why we do not have much detail. Is it because there is great urgency in getting this construction started?

**Mr FINCH** - Yes, that is one of the reasons. We wanted to get to the committee as soon as possible so that we do not hold up any of the work that is outlined in that schedule. We are working to a budget as well that was given to us through the process. It is a process of making things fit to the budget we have. That is generally the case with all of these projects. There was a significant scope increase around that one you are talking about. There were some specific reasons for that.

But with this project, the government has given us a budget that was really broadly based on the value of the previous facility and because it was funded through some insurance arrangements -

**Mr BOOTH** - Yes, self-insurance through the Risk Management Fund.

**Mr FINCH** - Yes, through the RMF. We were given a budget and now Mark's challenge with his design team is to design a school that sits within the budget and that is why we are working closely with the quantity surveyors and others to make sure we do that but it is always a fine balance between getting the functionality

that we need and sometimes the sustainability features add significantly, too - up to probably 15 per cent extra cost. That is a finely balanced process but I think the estimates that we have so far indicate that we are on track.

**Mr DUNBABIN** - Yes. The quantity surveyor was confident that we could be within that \$5.8 million figure. As I say, there was a significant locality allowance; the square metre rates used, based on recent projects that he has been involved in, were comfortable. He said there was scope there, as he put it, to target those square metre rates if we needed to target them down. As you work into the process, as you refine the floor plans and planning arrangements you quite often hone down the areas as you get further into the briefing and so forth. The 476 figure - a substantial component of that is design contingency, not money that is spent now; it is just there as a figure. In saying that, we can refine planning and get the areas down but on the flip side there are things that, as you work into the finer detail, are pluses as well as minuses and that is why we have a substantial design contingency in the estimate that is being prepared.

## Design

### 4.7 Mr Dunbabin described the design process as follows:-

*In working with the school at the start of the design and commissioning processes we were looking at relatively traditional classrooms with associated spaces. Part way into the process the school and ourselves started to look more fundamentally at the way that the school wishes to set up its learning spaces in the new scenario. Out of that, instead of four traditional classrooms, we are looking at two larger areas which are broken into zones without necessarily being split into one, two, three or four general learning areas. We have broken the two major learning areas into two spaces, but within those spaces there are zones which are suited to particular learning styles.*

*We have the larger space there in the orange colour that is probably the closest thing in that scenario to a traditional classroom. That is a directed learning space, a large space which can accommodate a larger class group in a directed learning activity, but it also has that capacity to provide a learning environment for smaller groups. The central pinkish space, that is for smaller groups for more self-directed learning and so forth. Then we have the blue space that more takes the role of what has traditionally been known as the wet area - a project space. That is the concept that we have arrived at. I think the school has been encouraged by that and is happy with the way that is heading and how it aligns with how they see the learning activities to be supported in the new school...*

### 4.8 Mr Kenny added:-

*Even in terms of budget mitigation, I can talk to that a little bit across the GLAs. That floor space that you see there as originally designed, conceived and spoken about was, if you like, effectively four separate classrooms where each had a wet area, a potential mini-kitchen and storage spaces for up to 30 children. What we are envisaging now, and the way in which we will work, is that it is much more integrated. The collaborative processes between teachers happen across a GLA. The floor space would enable up to 60 students in either side of that. At Dunalley that is probably very rare. It is more likely to be somewhere between 44 and 50 students across a double-aged grade area. Learning, as I alluded to before, will take place in many different forms in many different spaces within each of those GLAs.*

*The old rows of desks and chairs model of a classroom does not fit this new way of thinking in terms of pedagogy. There are also direct links to outside and perhaps it*



does not show well without the landscaping plan, but outdoor learning spaces are just as important to the new pedagogy as the indoor spaces - the covered zones where students can be outside, but also under direct supervision of their teacher, interacting with each other but also interacting with the other students from the other GLAs. It is much more a concept of a community of learners rather than one teacher owning a group of students and instructing them only. It is more about collective responsibility across the entire school, given that the early learning building is separate to these buildings fragments that a little bit.

But the design speaks to enabling that to happen simply because there are design elements repeated through each of the buildings so that students will come to know and understand the way of learning rather than have to re-learn a new teacher every year. That is the concept of where we are going.

## **School Association**

### **4.9 Ms Knox made the following submission on behalf of the Dunalley Primary School Association:-**

*Right from the start, from the moment that the school burnt down - that is when we really realised how important the school was to the community and so the promptness with which we have decision that the school would be built made it easy for our community members to decide where they go as far as rebuilding is concerned.*

*The temporary school was such a key part of allowing the community to focus on its own recovery without having to worry about whether children were having to be sent to other schools or anything else, even if it was a temporary measure.*

*The planning process for the new school has been fantastic. It is really lovely that the school association has had so much involvement with it and it is wonderful the school that is being developed reflects the rural community we live in. This one very much does so. I think it is going to be quite unique in the way that it reflects what we have out there in terms of industry, our people, our environment. The design of the school really is lending itself to something that ensures that we get a school that serves not only our community, but very much the children in the way that they need to learn.*

*It is really exciting to see the open GLAs. The importance of outdoor learning and the outdoor learning spaces - the landscaping plan is fantastic. It will allow a lot more room for learning, both indoor and outdoor, and because of the fires - the fact that we lost our hall and other infrastructure - it was really important that this project, which is more than a \$5 million project for the community and the biggest asset in our community serves the community in a much broader sense than just being primary education. From a school association point of view, that started with the development of the community kitchen off the gym, which we finished at the end of March, and that will allow the community to again have a memorial hall until the new one is built - to have a function centre where we can all meet.*

*We want to encourage enterprise in connection with our local industry to support our local people and it very much marries in with our partnership with the Bream Creek farmers' market; it would be fantastic if we can see the library become a LINC facility as well. Again, it is very encouraging to see the long day-care centre on the master plan because we are looking at the support that we are getting from government at the moment through the Department of Economic Development for our local industry. We very much see the fires as offering us opportunities that we have not had in the past as we move on, so how the school supports the community as we redevelop and recover from the fires is important in its design.*

*As I say, it has been lovely that parents have been able to be part of the design process through the school association. We have kept the parent body in touch with what is happening through our newsletters. They have been sent a package that included not so much the floor plans but the master plan. We have encouraged feedback how ever we can. The plans have also been put out into the wider community in the DISH and the Neighbourhood House to allow people to see what is happening and I am also a member of STAARC, the local area bushfire recovery committee, and we have had that opportunity to feed into the wider recovery plan for the area.*

*We also hope that our sporting facilities will be able to be shared with the community as well. It is a very exciting plan that will support what we would like to achieve both in Dunalley and the wider community in a recovery process.*

4.10 The Committee questioned Ms Knox as to whether the school community was happy with the concept plan. Ms Knox responded:-

*We still have further work to do on community consultation so far as our schedule is concerned. We will have more involvement with the design, seeing that the GLA, the floor plans and things like that have only just been made available. Even tonight at our presentation, our whole gym is covered in plans and there will be strong encouragement for parents to get involved. Initially I think there was scepticism - the temporary school was a great school, so would the new school be built? The reassurance that that was on track has been fabulous to our broader community - and I get that feedback through the Bushfire Recovery Committee. There is absolutely no doubt of the desire for the new school to be built, but for it to be built so the facilities can be shared. Even things like being able to train our youth in collaboration maybe with the Neighbourhood House that runs a lot of fantastic programs - we have the facilities within the new school to run those programs, whether it be hospitality, training or whatever.*

*We could do trade training in the food or tourism industries within the school and that supports our up-and-coming tourism projects which are coming about as a result of the grants and loans that are supporting our major industries such as our dairies, potatoes and viticulture. The school can support those industries and foster relationships with them in order to offer our kids and older learners a deeper learning experience. That is what we hope to achieve through this process.*

## **5. DOCUMENTS TAKEN INTO EVIDENCE**

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

- Department of Education – Construction of Dunalley Primary School, Submission to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, December 2013; and
- “3D Images” – Dunbabin Architects printed 12/12/13

## **6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

- 6.1 The need for the works was clearly established. These works will provide a spacious and modern learning environment for students and will be an important component in the recovery of the community from the January 2013 fires.
- 6.2 The Committee recommends the project in accordance with the plans and specifications submitted.

**Parliament House  
Hobart  
19 December 2013**

**Hon. A. P. Harriss M.L.C.  
Chairman**