



PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

Parklands High School Major Refurbishment

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

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

Legislative Council

*Mr Farrell
Mrs Taylor*

House of Assembly

*Mrs Rylah (Chair)
Ms Ogilvie
Mr Shelton*

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1 INTRODUCTION

To Her Excellency Professor the Honourable Kate Warner AM, 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:-

Major refurbishment of existing areas at Parklands High School to provide modern contemporary flexible learning environments, including the construction of a performing arts centre, canteen and student centre

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

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 This reference recommended the Committee approve works for a major refurbishment of existing learning areas at Parklands High School to provide contemporary and flexible learning environments, and including the construction of a performing arts centre, canteen and student centre.
- 2.2 The Parklands High School Major Refurbishment is part of the State Government's *Reinvigorating Tasmanian High Schools* program. This program has a funding commitment of \$68 million over four years to upgrade facilities at a number of high schools to provide flexible and contemporary learning spaces, with the aim of promoting 21st Century learning and teaching practices.
- 2.3 Parklands High School is mostly in its original configuration as constructed in the 1970s, and significant areas are showing considerable evidence of ageing and are no longer conducive to contemporary teaching practices. In view of an expected decrease in future enrolments, there is significant scope to improve and repurpose spaces in the existing buildings augmented with new purpose-built designs for specialist areas.
- 2.4 The proposed works include:
 - Refurbishing the Year 7 learning area in the old music building;
 - Refurbishing the Year 9 learning area in the old library space;
 - Construction of a new performing arts and auditorium at the front of the school;
 - New music facility in the existing administration building;
 - New art space in the existing administration building including new external art area; and
 - Demolition of the existing Year 7 building and construction of a new central information Hub (library).

- 2.5 The proposed works have the following advantages:
- Creates and identifies year-level learning precincts within the structure of the campus;
 - Reinforces the associations and provides the opportunity to establish links between year groups and the supporting functions;
 - Provides the opportunity for outside learning adjacent to indoor learning areas;
 - Provides many opportunities for the school population to occupy and interact within outdoor courtyard areas;
 - Relocates the library in a more central, accessible location;
 - Provides a purpose built communal auditorium suited for performing arts for both school and community use increasing the school's interaction with the community;
 - Cafeteria relocation creates a destination space;
 - Utilises the existing building fabric and site infrastructure wherever possible;
 - Takes into consideration prevailing winds and solar access to all learning areas and outdoor spaces whilst maintaining views and vistas;
 - Maintains existing access where possible as well as bus and vehicle drop off areas; and
 - Provides a landscaped courtyard with good visual perspective from a duty point of view.

3 PROJECT COSTS

- 3.1 Pursuant to the Message from Her Excellency the Governor-in-Council, the estimated cost of the work is \$9.145 million.

The following table details the cost estimates for the project:

Description	Budget Component (\$'000)
Construction	6,926
Furniture and equipment	500
Upfront expenses including consultant's fees	735
Art in Public Buildings	80
Contingency including design and construction contingency, post-occupancy works, and escalation allowance	904
Total	9,145

4 EVIDENCE

4.1 The Committee commenced its inquiry on Wednesday, 20 January last with an inspection of the site of the proposed works. The Committee then continued proceedings at Parklands High School, whereupon the following witnesses appeared, made the Statutory Declaration and were examined by the Committee in public:-

- Tony Luttrell, Chief Financial Officer, Department of Education;
- Mr Todd Williams, Asset Planning Manager, Department of Education;
- Suzanne Barnes, Principal, Parklands High School; and
- Heath Clayton, Principal/Architect, ARTAS Architects.

Project Overview

4.2 Ms Barnes provided the following overview of the proposed works:

As you have seen on your tour today most of our school is a very traditional look - a look from the past. While we try really hard to have modern teaching practices and think about the twenty-first century, involve technology, all the things people expect us to do for not only education now but to be looking to the future, it is hard for us to do that in what is a very traditional box-like environment.

We have developed some goals for the redevelopment and in doing that we ran some collaborative processes with staff, with the school association and with community members. We have thought not only about fixing up the things that we need fixed but we have thought to redesign our school to think more about the future. In that respect, yes, the current funding allocation will not cover everything we want to do, we understand that perfectly, but we do not want to restrict ourselves to the current set-up, the current structure, and only work to improve that. We want to think about the future and we want to design something we can work towards. We have worked towards creating ourselves a vision for what that future might look like. We have some goals - that I have given you a copy of - that fit into that vision we have of what our school might hope to be.

We would like to see faculties that support our school's mission. Our school's mission is making a difference for everybody and every day. That means the one-size-fits-all approach, that one box, that one classroom and everyone is meant to do their best within that square framework, has to go. We have to rethink that because that is not making the best for everybody every day. We are all different; we all need different spaces to work in and we need places we want to be in. We need inviting spaces, places where we can work on our own, places where we can be quiet, places where we are part of a group, part of a team, where we can perform, where we can display student achievement. That is what we are hoping to do with the design we have developed.

We are hoping to have a design that contributes to our teaching and modelling of our core values. Our core values are about building positive relationships, about having high expectations both for students and for staff, and taking ownership and responsibility for our actions. We are looking to have spaces that involve modelling of those core values.

At the moment you saw a staff room where people might go in to do their marking. They do not get seen to do that; they are in a horrible, revolting space. Students don't see what they are doing. They are doing their preparation or their marking; they are not modelling work practices. We hope to see spaces that are transparent and open where all of that can be seen, where all of that becomes unhidden and it is all open and people can see how people go about their normal work activities.

We hope to have shared common spaces between adults and students, like the cafe, where both staff and students can interact and where you can see this is how we work, this is how we operate, and we can model that for students.

We hope to have facilities that support teaching and learning that is innovative, flexible and encourage high levels of students engagement in a variety of contexts, including digital.

We try our best to have innovative programs but we are always working within those same square spaces with those same limitations. It is really hard to be creative when the space you have to work in does not facilitate that. We are hoping to have places that will broaden the opportunities we can offer kids. We are hoping to have dynamic places, places that include outdoor spaces. Heath talked a lot as we went around about having the indoors spilling out to the outdoors. That is what we want to create, that kind of space. We want to be able to have effective technology, something we have worked at hard over the last little bit, but we are nowhere near that. In the student survey we ran at the end of last year, asking students what their likes are about our school, what their hates are about our school and what they would like to see in the new school, effective technology was one of the big things from the students. A technology that is efficient, that works when you want it work, and everyone has access to.

We want a working environment that supports collaboration, team approaches and collegiality, with coaching and feedback as key. At the moment we work in teams and we try to do team planning and staff, but that team approach is really hard when you cannot even see into the next classroom, when you cannot open the doors and walls between spaces and share teaching practice. That is the kind of work that we hope to be able to do so much better in the designs we have worked on planning with Heath.

We want to have an environment that encourages community connections and partnerships - locally, digitally, and including an opening, welcoming front of school. There are two aspects there I would like to speak about. Firstly, the opening and welcoming front of school. We have a lot of parents who have difficulty finding where the main entrance is. When they do come in the main entrance, they sometimes come into my office by mistake, because they see me there and they do not see the office. It is dark. It is dingy. We have welcoming people in those places, but the space itself does not help us. Even the frontage of the school is old world. It is drab and boring. I have heard the phrase and - you may not be listening to me at the moment, Mr Brooks, but I am sure he knows the phrase. The phrase of 'the jail' or 'the prison on the hill' is a phrase from the past. It is a phrase the outside of our building contributes to. I have not heard it more recently, but you might remember it.

The other part I wanted to talk about was the community connections and partnerships. We have recently built a partnership with the Beacon Foundation. People from the community come in to run what we call our 'high-impact programs' with students, and to take part in teaching in classrooms. We want to have spaces where the community can feel it is welcome, and can contribute. We want a place it wants to come to. We want a place where we can have concerts, drama performances, and where parents will want to come, too.

At the moment, our bigger assemblies are in the gym, which we did not go to today. To get there, you have to walk from the front entrance throughout the school. You have to cross through the grounds. Sometimes, it is recess time when parents arrive early. We have to sit them in the gym, which we have spent the day setting up. The girls were talking about it earlier. We have to roll out a mat, put out seating, and it means the gym itself closes down. PE cannot run for the day. Classes for PE have to go somewhere else while we are setting up. If we run a school production, which we run every two years, the gym closes down for a whole term, in which case, phys ed is elsewhere or it is theory in another classroom. If it is raining, they are not out doing physical activity. They are inside doing deskwork, which is not what PE should be about.

We have smaller performances in that space that we went into - which we call our multi-purpose room - which is where all the musical instruments are at the moment. Concerts and small drama performances are in there. As parents and community members

coming in there, it is not a welcoming space. It is not a place where you can celebrate your child's performance and achievements. The performances are there, but the space around it is not supporting that.

They are our key goals for the development. With the money that has been allocated, I am aware we have not achieved the redevelopment of our whole school. In setting the priorities, the vision for the future and what we are working towards was our most important thing. From there, we were able to identify the areas that we needed to focus on in terms of the current funding that has been allocated.

Year 10 Learning Areas

- 4.3 The Committee notes that one of the objectives of the Parklands High School Major Refurbishment, as stated in the referral from the Lieutenant Governor and the Department of Education's submission to the Committee, is a major refurbishment of existing learning areas of Parklands High School to provide modern contemporary flexible learning environments.
- 4.4 The Committee is concerned that refurbishment of the Year 10 learning areas has not been included in the scope of the proposed refurbishment works, and therefore Year 10 students will not be provided with a modern, contemporary and flexible learning environment. The Committee further notes that this may have adverse impacts on student outcomes and student retention.
- 4.5 Given the Committee's concerns, the Committee sought further information from the witnesses on how the scope and budget for proposed works had been determined:

Mrs TAYLOR - I have an overarching question to the department. How did you arrive at the total budget? Did the department set the total budget, or did the school and community say, 'This is what we want' and you said, 'This is how much it will cost'. Where did that happen?

Mr LUTTRELL - The process is that the school identifies a range of priorities and works, and we receive those because the school is not in a position to do the costing of those. Given those, we engage a quantity surveyor, or we do an estimate ourselves based upon the work. That would have driven the dollars.

Mrs TAYLOR - One presumes the school would have given you a big wish list?

Mr LUTTRELL - I am not sure exactly what the big list was.

Mrs TAYLOR - Was that grade 10 block on the list?

Ms BARNES - Originally, yes.

CHAIR -I have a couple of questions on the lead Adriana has set on the budget allocation and who determined that - whether that was a request from the department, or was fed down from a ministerial budget direction. There are a couple of other questions on the priorities, and whether this committee could have that list that was submitted by the school to the department for what their priorities were. As you have said, you would have costed them, so can we have the cost of that as well? You will probably need that on notice, but we may as well deal with this now.

The first question I had was: Ms Barnes gave evidence that this is not a redevelopment of the whole school - current priorities. Your evidence on behalf of the department was that you were given the 'wish list' for the school, and you allocated a budget for that and determined what you could resource out of the budget allocation or funds. This committee would like to put on notice that we would like that list of priorities and the costings the Education department has done on them. The other thing we would like to know is how that request

for funding was made. Was the department given a bucket of money, say \$40 million or \$60 million, or whatever the high school upgrade project is worth on the north-west coast, and they determined which schools got what? Or was it a direction from the ministerial or government office to have some specific allocation for the budget, and that was identified in last year's Budget?

Mr WILLIAMS - To give you a bit of background, the Parklands submission has been in development for a number of years. I need to explain the process by which the submissions have made their way through the department and to government for funding approval. The last time we opened up to schools to get their capital submissions was late last year in October and we gave every school an opportunity to put forward their capital submissions.

CHAIR - That was October 2015.

Mr WILLIAMS - That is correct. The time before that was 2008-09, so schools had not had an opportunity to submit through a formal process for seven years.

CHAIR - Just to confirm, schools have made direct approaches for funding allocations outside of that time?

Mr WILLIAMS - Schools make regular approaches to the department and to politicians.

CHAIR - It might not be a formal process. Latrobe High would be an example. They have been working on that project for a long time and I don't think they worried whether there was a formal process or not. They just continued to push it hard.

Mr WILLIAMS - I will just explain the process. The department each year puts a submission up through Government for capital funding requirements and that is based on the submissions we have received through that capital process - one in 2008, one in 2015 - and also the information that becomes available through schools and what the department knows to form its submission to government as part of budget considerations.

In recent years a priority for the department has been high schools because of the reasons we have seen today. Over the last two years the department developed a priority list of high schools based on all the information available and through that process cost estimates were provided at a higher level, not at a detailed level. The reason for that -

CHAIR - When were those provided?

Mr WILLIAMS - They would have been done in 2014, I think, as part of the 2014-15 budget considerations.

Mrs TAYLOR - Who would have done those?

Mr WILLIAMS - They would have been done by the department based on the knowledge available and the expertise the department has. Obviously we do a lot of buildings around the state and, as I said, they are based at a higher level. Then those submissions make their way through the department in a priority list which goes through to Treasury and government for consideration. When funding is then secured we then get into the detail. We engage consulting architects to work with the schools and then get into the detail and from that point we then understand the detailed costs. In some cases we find that we cannot do everything we originally planned. It comes down to the priority list that Sue talked about. In other cases we can. I suppose it is difficult to do all that detailed planning for all the submissions that you have because of time, cost and also managing expectations, because when you engage in detailed planning in schools there is an expectation that will automatically follow through and that is dependent upon the state budget and the funding availability there.

Mrs TAYLOR - How do you decide whether to give a school everything it asks for or to only give it 80 per cent or 50 per cent of what it asks for? Why do some schools get everything and others not?

Mr WILLIAMS - We don't decide on that. As I explained, we make some high-level cost estimates we put forward to government and then work within the funding that is allocated to the school.

Mrs TAYLOR - That was the question, though - who decides what funding goes to what school?

Mr LUTTRELL - If we were to provide each school with everything they wanted there is a cost to that and the Government does not have unlimited funds and as a consequence -

Mrs TAYLOR - But in fairness, wouldn't you give them all the same percentage?

Mr LUTTRELL - There are different standards of schools across the state. We have some parameters we use. In terms of looking at the submissions, we look at safety as a key one, those with major safety issues. The next priority is around the general learning areas, the specific classrooms. We also look at amenity such as the drama, science and other general teachings areas, plus the sustainability of the school, and we touched on some of that yesterday. They are some of the criteria we use.

Mrs TAYLOR - In that order?

Mr LUTTRELL - Generally, but that is a priority list. It is a judgment around what the school's priorities are as well. We try to take that into consideration. Coming back to the question about why we can't give a school everything it wants, we would love to.

Mrs TAYLOR - No, that is not the point. I understand we can't give everybody everything they want, there is not enough money to do that. You or Todd said that you all put in a list of what you want and some schools get everything they want and some schools don't. I am asking how you make that decision.

Ms OGILVIE - What the criteria are?

Mrs TAYLOR - Yes.

Mr LUTTRELL - Sometimes it is the level of quantum to satisfy what every school wants. It could be that one school wants a range of things that might only be \$1 million or something like that, whereas a school such as you have seen today with a lot infrastructure requirements - and we have \$9 million here - to do that is going to be more. We know there are other schools that are crying out for works.

Mrs TAYLOR - I just don't understand why it might be \$9 million rather than \$10 million, when you have \$10 million worth of work here to be done.

Mr LUTTRELL - There is no precise science to allocating amounts per school, it depends on a whole lot of variables such as those I have described.

CHAIR - Who determined that ultimately?

Mr LUTTRELL - The \$9 million?

CHAIR - Yes.

Mr LUTTRELL - At the time of submission in 2008, I would have thought, there would have been a scope of works there and an estimate done.

Mrs TAYLOR - On this work, in 2008? It has to have gone up since then.

Mr LUTTRELL - I don't have that detail available. The Parklands allocation was an initial allocation from a previous government that then received some additional funding. There are two allocations of that. It is not as clear-cut as saying it was costed at this point, so how come it now doesn't fit? It has evolved over a period of time and there are a lot of factors that come into that. Time is one of those things and we have found with other projects that have been on the priority list for a number of years, by the time it gets to the point of doing it, over four or five years, the cost of construction goes up by 5 per cent to 10 per cent every year. The process is long and lengthy and can have a number of iterations to it. Ultimately, the department puts forward submissions to government which are then considered and

government can allocate money for those projects. In some cases the Government does not always allocate the amount of money that has been put up; it is dependent upon the state finances at the time. It is not a clear-cut process.

CHAIR - There was a clear line item in last year's Budget identifying a certain amount of funding for Parklands High School. What this committee would like to know - and under the act we are required to make sure it delivers on the stated purpose thereof - is whether that is being met or going to be met. What we want to know is how much was asked for, and then who decided who will ask for that, and then how much was allocated and who determined what that allocation was.

Mr LUTTRELL - We will take that on notice to get that detail.

CHAIR - We understand that the school had a list of priorities and that was then decided by someone in the department, I think, who cut that list down, potentially, based on certain criteria and decisions. A submission was then made to, I presume, the cabinet subcommittee under the Department of Education submission that would have included either a specific budget allocation for Parklands High School or not, or just an overarching high school investment line. I would like to know where that was determined and why, and how much was requested, and then whether that was changed as part of budget considerations or whether it was just asked for by the department with \$9 whatever million it is, and that will do Parklands. I think this committee has raised a concern around whether that is adequate to deliver what the school actually needs to deliver the stated purpose - even within the opening statement within the submission from the department - of a contemporary, flexible learning environment. I am not sure it delivers that, especially in the grade 10 block. I think that is where we want to go with this at the moment, judging by the committee's questions. I understand we will take that on notice.

Mr WILLIAMS - We can certainly get that detail. My understanding is there was an original allocation for Parklands High School, which was in the budget, and then an additional amount of money, which I think was \$5 million, was added to that original allocation to bring it up to the \$9.145 million.

Mrs TAYLOR - The original request might not have been the same as this?

Mr WILLIAMS - The additional request was around the department's focus on improving secondary facilities and I would have to look at when the original request came in. It was probably in the system for some time and then with that focus, and with the Government's support, extra funding was provided for that. In terms of addressing the scope it is important to highlight that, while some areas of the school are not going to be done - the grade 10 block, for example - the scope is absolutely being addressed in terms of providing contemporary learning environments for the remainder of the school.

Does it address the brief and scope that was requested? Absolutely I believe that is being achieved. It would be lovely to do the whole school, but that takes a considerable amount of money, so we are always mindful of working within the funding that is provided from Government.

- 4.6 Subsequent to the hearing the Committee wrote to the Department of Education seeking further information on how the budget and scope of works for Parklands High School was determined. The following excerpts are taken from the Department's response to the Committee:

- a) *How the quantum of funding for each school was determined and by whom.*

The quantum of funding included in capital submissions is estimated by the Department taking into account the specific project, industry knowledge and experience with past projects. Schools are consulted in the preparation of any funding proposals. The decision to approve funding for a project is made by the Government, most often as part of the State Budget process.

- b) *How the decision to fund the entire requested works program for some schools was made and by whom.*

Capital submissions are prepared by the Department. These can be from either a detailed plan or program; or a broad scope of works. The funding allocation for the Parklands High School redevelopment is a combination of both methods. The background to the funding allocation is provided in point 2 and assists in answering this question. Prepared funding submissions are provided to Government for consideration.

- d) *The criteria used to make the aforesaid determinations*

Decisions on funding through the annual Budget process are a matter for the Government. The following is an outline of the internal processes in the Department. The evaluation criteria used in assessing and developing capital submissions under the Capital Works Review process follows:

Assessment Criteria	Weighting Percentage
Criterion 1: Demonstrating links to improved student learning outcomes by addressing space needs and/or optimising utilisation of facilities at the school or across schools. <i>*Includes reviewing current demographic and student enrolment trends/projections and catchment areas.</i>	Up to 30%
Criterion 2: Improving building condition; addressing significant occupational health and safety issues, disability access and infrastructure issues; and/or incorporating environmental sustainability. <i>*Must demonstrate that the condition of the current facility is poor, poses an occupational health and safety risk, and/or continued maintenance is not economically viable.</i>	Up to 30%
Criterion 3: Addressing strategic priorities and initiatives. <i>*Consistent with, and be reflected in the schools strategic plan for improving education outcomes for students.</i> <i>*In line with government direction and policies.</i>	Up to 30%
Criterion 4: Demonstrating community benefits and extending use of school facilities. <i>*Capacity of the local and wider community and education facilities, including network schools, to support education provision in the community.</i>	Up to 10%

Following this assessment high priority submissions are then prioritised further using the guiding principles of:

- Major safety and compliance issues;
- Amenity and building condition; and
- Administration and sustainability.

- g) *If funding requests were made on a school by school basis, how was the funding requested for each school determined? Did the Department of Education request sufficient funding for each school to allow them to undertake their entire proposed works programs, or did the Department submit a mix of funding requests (i.e. request funding for some schools to enable them to undertake their entire proposed works program, and request funding for some schools that would only allow them to undertake part of their proposed works plans)?*

The Department lodges individual school based projects for consideration as part of the annual State Budget process.

The Department receives capital submissions from schools on works that the schools have prioritised. In the 2015-16 Budget the Department did not reduce the scope or funding for any school submission. The Government then made funding decisions based on the information provided by the Department.

For example Parklands High School submitted a bid under the Building Better Schools process in 2008-09 with \$4.145 million allocated in 2013-14. A further \$5 million above the original school submission was allocated by the Government in 2015-16.

2. *The Committee also notes that there was an original allocation of approximately \$4 million for the Parklands High School refurbishment, to which an additional \$5 million was made available, to bring total funding to \$9.145 million. The Committee would like the Department of Education to provide a timeline relating to the request for and determination of the original funding provided and the additional funding made available for the Parklands High School refurbishment.*

Total funding of \$9.145 million has been made available to undertake a major redevelopment at Parklands High School.

Funding of \$4.145 million was approved in the 2013-14 Budget. This funding was provided for the construction of a performing arts centre, canteen and student centre. The project was initiated by Parklands High School through a capital submission under the Building Better Schools Program in 2008-09.

The additional \$5 million was allocated in the 2015-16 Budget taking the total funding to \$9.145. The amount was based on a broad scope of works to provide modern contemporary flexible learning environments. It was not a specific work program to refurbish the entire school. The broad scope also included the modernisation of site and building services where possible and the removal of asbestos in construction areas.

The capital submission lodged by Parklands High School under the Building Better Schools process in 2008-09 was for the construction of a performing arts centre, canteen and student centre. The works were estimated by the Department at \$4.145 million and funding was allocated by Government as part of the 2013-14 Budget process.

As stated under point 2 the Department developed and submitted a broad scope of works for Parklands High School during 2014 as a result of focussing on the need to upgrade secondary facilities around the State. This was not based on a submission from Parklands High School. Additional funding of \$5 million was allocated by the Government in the 2015-16 Budget. Following confirmation of funding a scope of detailed works was developed with the school and within the funding allocation. Detailed assessments to refurbish the remaining areas of Parklands High School have not been undertaken.

It should be noted that in October 2015 all public State schools were given the opportunity to submit under the Capital Works Review Process. These submissions will form the basis for proposing funding requests to Government in future budgets. Parklands High School made a submission as part of this process including the:

- 1) redevelopment of Grade 10 learning areas;
- 2) refurbishment of Home Economic Kitchens;
- 3) construction of a new Gymnasium; and
- 4) redevelopment/resurfacing of outdoor sports surfaces.

The cost estimate by the Department for these items totals \$4.25 million.

New Canteen and Adjacent Hardcourt Area

4.7 The Committee recognises that the new canteen is a significant improvement on the current facilities. However, the Committee noted that the serving and queueing area for the new canteen backs onto the hardcourt area currently used for ball games. The Committee is of the view that such an arrangement may represent a safety risk, and linked to this, may lead to an increase in antisocial behaviour and bullying.

4.8 The Committee questioned the witnesses on the new canteen arrangements and the Committee's concerns:

Mrs TAYLOR - I also wanted to talk about the canteen area and the redevelopment there. I am quite concerned because I think Tony said the number one criterion we use was safety. I am quite concerned about the potential lack of safety in that area. I understand the entrance to the canteen, the serving area, is set back inside, but you have a hardcourt area outside of that for ballgames. While we were doing the tour I think you said you will be looking for a grant to resurface that. You have a tennis court further down which is unusable, but again that is another hard stand area which would be much the same size. I am quite concerned about the potential for ballgames, bullying or whatever. If you were to have a student who might want to deliberately disrupt a canteen line by throwing a ball in there, I don't see you could avoid that if you have ballgames happening straight outside the canteen area. It concerns me. The redevelopment plans are fantastic but I am a bit concerned there hasn't been enough money in this project. I understand it's a matter of money, that your preference would be to have a lovely sitting area or gardens out there that the students could flow in and out of. That is a question I would raise: why isn't the money there to do that when safety is a concern there?

Mr LUTTRELL - Currently the students sit along the wall now, so there are some seats there, but they also sit on the ground with their backs against the walls and watch the game. Not everybody is playing the ball sports, they are watching, so we are allowing that area to be a bit more formalised in the ability to sit and watch further away from where the action is. Regarding your comments about someone throwing a ball into a line-up, regardless if there is a ball sport or not there, they could still do something like that. In an ideal world we'd

develop the existing tennis courts into a hardball sport area and that area would be developed as a passive social space. At the moment we have what we have -

Mrs TAYLOR - That sounds good to me and sounds like a safety feature, but at the moment that doesn't look safe to me.

Mr LUTTRELL - The cafeteria has some folding doors, so that should mitigate those risks.

Mrs TAYLOR - Now you're going to have a cafeteria that is open to the outside but you're going to shut the folding doors.

Mr LUTTRELL - No, but there is the option there if that's the case. As to where it is recessed, it is a relatively small space. If you look at the angles, I suppose the issue you are raising is where it is straight on. That is a relatively small area.

Mrs TAYLOR - And obviously it could be done accidentally but there is the capacity for that to happen.

Mr LUTTRELL - Like Heath said, there are existing arrangements where kids are sitting around tables anyway.

Mrs TAYLOR - They are not sitting around tables at the moment; they are sitting along the wall. They are facing the game. That is a different issue from having your back to it when standing in a canteen line.

Mr LUTTRELL - I'm trying to remember the seating configuration. I think some are actually on the side - so sideways. If you look at the tables -

Mrs TAYLOR - Where they are now?

Mr LUTTRELL - Yes, there are wooden tables down there.

Mrs TAYLOR - Outside?

Mr LUTTRELL - Yes. Certainly they're on the side and some are facing.

Mrs TAYLOR - You don't have to be there, Tony; it's your choice to go and sit there. If you want to go to the canteen you have no choice.

Mr CLAYTON - The canteen has two accesses. You can access it from outside or you can access it from inside the cafe area. We have two doors. If the school has some issues then they close down that outdoor area and you can access from the inside. There are options available and it becomes a little bit of a management thing. One of the things we've spoken to the school about around this design is how we minimise the amount of supervision that the teachers need to do during break time. We have been very careful to consider where we are encouraging students to meet. That is a key area up there. That has been deemed the key social space. We also said we have the grade 7 area.

Mrs TAYLOR - That's fantastic; I won't argue with you about that.

Mr CLAYTON - You don't tend to get those antisocial behaviours as much when it is being supervised. At the moment the teachers get spread around the site much more than they will under the redevelopment. There will be three key areas being redeveloped. The area outside the new performing arts will be a dedicated grade 7 area. There is the area around the library space, which will be a dedicated safe zone. Then there are the more social and active spaces around the cafe. Students now have choice about where they go, depending on where they feel they fit in the social realm, I suppose.

By moving that wall down we've tried to mitigate those concerns you have. It is probably not perfect, but as we said this is the start and the school has the ability to build off this. For example, if they were given some funding to redevelop the bottom courts then they could do that. Then they could turn that other hard stand area into some other thing. Whenever we do a master plan it is always something that can be built on. It is not something that has locked the school into doing any one particular thing.

The Committee's Concerns with the Proposed Works

- 4.9 The Chair of the Committee subsequently wrote to the Minister of Education on 17 March 2016 detailing the Committee's concerns with the scope and budget for the proposed works; specifically the decision to not upgrade the Year 10 learning areas and the safety issues with locating the canteen adjacent to the hardcourt area.
- 4.10 The Minister responded to the Committee Chair's letter on 17 March 2016 outlining how the scope of the works was determined and noting that the location of the cafeteria was not expected to impact on student safety. The following excerpt is taken from the Minister's letter:

Year 10 Learning Areas

I am responding to the Committee's concerns from a number of perspectives. Firstly the Government has acknowledged the need to undertake a major refurbishment for Parklands High School evidenced by the appropriation of an additional \$5 million in the 2015-16 Budget taking the total allocation for refurbishment to \$9.145 million. Both of these measures were passed by both Houses of the Parliament as part of the State Budget processes in consecutive years.

This allocation is a significant investment in Tasmania's Education system at a time when the Government is managing competing priorities across agencies. The investment is around 10 per cent of all capital investment funding provided to the Department of Education in the 2015-16 Budget and forward estimates up to 2018-19.

There are nearly 200 government schools, many of which were constructed over 50 years ago, presenting an ongoing need for major investment. The Government has clearly shown its commitment to make these investments. To refurbish all schools over a short period of time would require funds that are beyond the Government's existing capacity, and is simply not possible. Governments make difficult decisions about priorities in forming budgets, and this Government has upheld a commitment to the Tasmanian Community and to the Parkland's School community, to invest wisely in education.

By prioritising funding across schools the Government is also supporting student equity across schools in terms of the condition of their learning environments. Focusing all available resources in a few schools will result in students in other schools having relatively lower quality learning areas and general amenity hence be disadvantaged.

The need for the Government to prioritise brings me to the second perspective. That is the Government empowers schools and their communities by providing them a key role in scoping and prioritising work. Parklands High School was no different with the school and community having significant input into which areas they considered priorities. I note the scope presented to the Committee is broad and represents the school and its community's priorities including improving years 7 and 9 learning areas, a new performing arts centre, music, library and cafeteria amenities.

The Government respects the expertise of the school and community leaders in their prioritisation and considers the work will be a significant school improvement that will be enjoyed by students, their parents, staff and the community generally.

Whilst significant funding has already been provided to Parklands High School this does not mean it cannot make additional submissions for the Government to consider in future budgets. The Department of Education has a capital works portal allowing schools to make these submissions. I understand Parklands High School made a submission late in 2015 to improve Year 10 classrooms, refurbish the home economic kitchens, resurfacing outdoor areas and a new gym. The costs associated with undertaking all the work in the recent submission would exceed an additional \$4 million. The Government will consider this submission in conjunction with those from all schools.

Cafeteria

The Government, like the Committee, considers student safety to be very important.

Before addressing the cafeteria specifically I note that the area proposed for the cafeteria already represents a natural congregation point for students and is used for ball games with existing seating in proximity to the ball games area. I understand this area is supervised by school staff and that the Principal considers this situation not to represent a safety issue.

Positioning the cafeteria in an area where students congregate means students will have easy access to cafeteria services. The cafeteria itself will have internal seating and cannot be affected by activity on the hardcourt. In terms of the queueing area there is the ability to close partitioning doors that have been included in the scope to protect against inclement weather. All glass at impact heights will be Grade A safety standard.

Given this area is already heavily used and that the school already effectively supervises the area, and will continue to do so, it is not anticipated that there will be a change in student behaviour leading to increased antisocial or bullying even if usage of the area increases. It is not anticipated that there will be an impact on the queueing area. The Principal considers the Cafeteria area and court interaction will be manageable with staff supervision.

In the event that there is an impact, the partitioning can be used to segregate those students queueing from the hardcourt activity. I also note an extended overhang roof along the cafeteria is in scope and will also act to protect students should there be issues with hardcourt activity.

Some of the additional works you referred to such as resurfacing tennis courts also relate to minor works. Schools have a range of resources to meet some of these costs such as their school resourcing package and bank accounts. Where schools do not have sufficient resources they can make a submission for funding through the minor works portal. Any submissions received will be considered in conjunction with those from other schools.

Summary

The Government considers improving the built environment of Parklands High School a priority, and has made the significant investment of \$9.145 million. This investment and the choices the school community has made in terms of priorities, will significantly enhance the student learning environment.

The Government stands by its decision to prioritise its Budget in the manner in which it has done, and the Parliament has passed it, including scrutinising it through the Budget Estimates hearings.

I hope I have provided you with the information you require in order for the Committee to approve what will be significant improvements for students at Parklands High School their parents and community.

New Performing Arts Facility

- 4.11 The Committee noted that the new performing arts centre is expected to assist in retaining and attracting new students to Parklands High School. The Committee

questioned the witnesses on how the current facilities effect the capacity to attract and retain students and the expected impact of the new performing arts facility:

CHAIR - I'm sure the committee will look at that. The committee doesn't have the power to amend the plans or the proposal. It can only approve or not approve. It can seek or require further information by a request or summons, and it can also give feedback to the Government on where it needs to be, but ultimately we have the ability to reject a project if it doesn't meet the requirements under the act.

We mentioned a couple of things on our walk. One was the leakage of students around the performing arts facility, the aesthetics around that and the inability to utilise that area adequately. Can I get some context around that where students look at other schools in the area and probably prefer them because of facilities such as that.

Ms BARNES - Probably the best example I could give is when the zoning was very much in place. There were lots of parents who were angry that they couldn't take their children to the school they wanted to because of the zoning. The reason they were citing was the difference between the two schools in Burnie in art and music and drama, particularly the performing arts. The two schools don't not even compare, so it was impossible. We talk it up and say we have the best teacher, a great program et cetera, and we do. We probably do have the best teacher in music - he is a wonderful teacher - but you can't show that to parents. You cannot do the whiz-bang thing. They are looking for the spaces and they see that as comparing opportunities. To them, facilities equal opportunities for their children, and you can't argue with that.

Mr FARRELL - Is drama an elective subject?

Ms BARNES - All subjects are covered in grade 7, so all grade 7s have a little taste of every subject, but after that subjects such as drama and music are electives.

Mr FARRELL - What would the average percentage be of students after grade 7 going into the arts-based subjects?

Ms BARNES - It goes up and down, particularly in production years. We have a school production every two years. In production years the numbers of kids who go into drama and music go up because they want to take part in that. In the off year it is not so popular. Art is the more popular of the arts. We would have two grade 9-10 classes and two grade 8 classes. Music and drama we are more likely to have. Music is a fairly popular subject as well. We have a pre-college music class for the more academic music kids and leads more into years 11 and 12. We have a general music class as well in years 9 and 10 and we would have specialist ones like rock band. We have a concert band. We have a strings program which also runs after school. As I said, all kids in grade 7 do music and we would have either two or sometimes three grade 8 classes doing music as well. Drama should be more popular this year because it is a production year. We tend to have only the one grade 9-10 drama class and we would have either one or two grade 8 classes as well as the grade 7 classes.

Mr FARRELL - So there is no doubt in your mind that if you had decent facilities the numbers of student electing to study the arts would increase?

Ms BARNES - We can only build on what we've got - yes, definitely.

Technology Integration

- 4.12 The Committee notes from the Department's submission that "the use of IT and collaborative teaching in these facilities is high which requires significant adjustment from the technology teaching practices and facilities of the past". The Committee sought further information from the witnesses on how the proposed works would facilitate the integration of technology within the school:

Ms OGILVIE - I am interested in the technology base to both your academic program and how the infrastructure and whether you are connected to the NBN and all those elements support that. I see on the plans here you have a central information hub and I am looking at your art in buildings component - there is \$80 000 there. Then you have this magnificent arts centre. All of those things can be digitally integrated and with your art program, which you say is very attractive, it seems to me that a lot of thinking gone into how that would all fit together and perhaps your community use of these things might also grow that space. Could you talk me through your thinking to get to this point?

Ms BARNES - We had a lot of conversations, especially with David from music, about how he wanted to be able to integrate.

Mr CLAYTON - ... There is a number of components to that question. The first one is the technology on this side is a little limited at the moment so as part of this redevelopment we will be bringing this up to the current department standards. That will include wireless access points throughout. Currently there are a lot of dead spaces in this school that currently aren't accessed so that will be brought up across the board so that the whole school is digitally connected, as you stated.

As far as those art programs you have alluded to are concerned, that is exactly why the buildings and those functions have been located where they are, because each of them have a very strong tie to the community. In the submission you will see that the original concept is about community, learning and activity. That community connection with the performing arts centre, the music area and the art centre, and the community to be able to easily connect with those, was fundamental around that.

As Sue was starting to say, we did a lot of work with the music and drama people and also the community around how that might start to all tie together. I think there was a level of excitement, Sue, when we started talking and they were thinking about the future already, saying, 'We could be doing this, we could be doing that'. You could see the creative juices starting to flow about how, once they get this space, what they can be doing as a school and as an extension of the community.

We have also expanded the art area to include a digital art program, so there is a dedicated computer area in there. We understand now that students don't just want to do sculpture, painting and things like that, and it allows us to engage with those students who potentially may have been disruptive not wanting to do art, but they can now start to engage with digital art.

Mrs TAYLOR - And are you connected to the NBN?

Ms BARNES - Probably not yet; I don't think it's here yet.

Mr CLAYTON - We have had a review of the whole thing. We will be incorporating a system that is NBN-ready when it comes in but we will be meeting the department's standards on connectivity.

Ms OGILVIE - Sue, if I could just give you words of encouragement around that aspect. I think it is going to be a key part of not just the students' ability to access knowledge going forward - the landscape has shifted dramatically - but the creativity, and that side of things, for all students now really is all able to be digitised and the jobs of the future will also come from that channel. I could see how you put it together in the plans, and what you have done, and I am very encouraging of that.

Mrs RYLAH - In regard to digital connectivity and the year 10 area that is not being redeveloped, are there black spots there where there is no digital connection and will they be rectified?

Mr CLAYTON - I am not sure if that area is a black spot or not; I don't believe it is. There are already computer hubs in that area, which we saw today, and they will be connected.

Mrs RYLAH - Wireless?

Mr CLAYTON - Yes. As part of the criteria about the new e-technology, it is the department's requirement to make the site wirelessly accessible.

Mrs RYLAH - And plug-in points for USBs for charging, et cetera?

Mr CLAYTON - Yes.

Mrs TAYLOR - Are they there now, or are you going to put them in?

Mr CLAYTON - We will be putting them through the areas we are doing our work in.

Mrs RYLAH - But what about the area that is not being redeveloped?

Mr CLAYTON - We won't be putting USB points in but we will be putting wireless access points through that area because it is a reasonably easy area to provide, if it is not already there.

Consultation

- 4.13 The Committee noted Ms Barnes' evidence that the school undertook a collaborative process with staff, the school association and community members in planning the scope of the proposed works. Under questioning from the Committee the witnesses expanded on the level of school community and wider community engagement in the planning process:

Mr CLAYTON - This process was one of the most consultative I have been involved in. The working group the school put together was wide and vast. Not only did we have a school working group, we also brought in the school grade leavers in areas that were affected, so we have spoken with them. We have had learning services, the school association, and we have also brought in community groups in areas that were going to be affected.

When we established our priorities, and when we have been working through this, this has not been just one or two people sitting together and coming up with an idea. This has been shared amongst 20 or 30 people who have been actively involved in this, and that have shared further. It has been well and widely shared.

Ms BARNES -Going back to what Heath was saying in relation to the consultation process we have been involved in, it is an area that we invited a number of groups from the community to come and take part in. There are a number of community groups who are interested in the space we have designed and we have deliberately gone that way to make it as flexible as possible.

5 DOCUMENTS TAKEN INTO EVIDENCE

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

- Parklands High School - Major Redevelopment - Submission to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, Department of Education, 20 January 2016;
- Letter from Mr Todd Williams, Asset Planning Manager, Department of Education, dated 19 February 2016, regarding the determination of funding for the Parklands High School Refurbishment and general information on FECA;
- Letter from the Chair of the Public Works Committee to the Minister for Education, dated 17 March 2016, detailing the Committee's concerns with the proposed works at Parklands High School; and
- Letter from the Minister for Education to the Chair of the Committee, dated 16 March 2016, responding to the Committee's concerns with the proposed works at Parklands High School.

6 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

6.1 The Committee holds some concerns with the scope of works and funding allocated for this project. The Committee notes that one of the key objectives of the Parklands High School Major Refurbishment is a major refurbishment of existing learning areas to provide modern contemporary flexible learning environments.

6.2 The Committee is concerned that refurbishment of the Year 10 learning areas has not been included in the scope of the proposed refurbishment works, and therefore Year 10 students will not be provided with a modern, contemporary and flexible learning environment, which may adversely impact on student outcomes and student retention.

6.3 The Committee also notes evidence provided to the Committee that safety is the key criteria in determining priorities for proposed school upgrades. The Committee has concerns about student safety in relation to the new cafeteria arrangements, whereby the serving and queueing area for the canteen backs onto the hardcourt area used for ball games.

6.4 The Committee is of the view that such an arrangement represents a safety risk, and linked to this, may lead to an increase in antisocial behaviour and bullying. The Committee notes that the school's tennis court is currently unusable and suggests that it could be refurbished to provide an alternative hardcourt area for ball games, with the current hardcourt area redeveloped as a passive social space.

6.5 Nevertheless, the Committee recognises the need for the Government to prioritise funding to support student equity across schools. The Committee also recognises that the Parklands High School community played a key role in determining the scope of the proposed works and that this reflects the school community's priorities.

- 6.6 While recognising these important points, the Committee is of the opinion that further works are required. The Committee suggests that consideration should be given to refurbishing the Year 10 general learning areas in the near future. The Committee also suggests that refurbishment of the tennis courts as a hardcourt area and redevelopment of the current hardcourt area near the new cafeteria as a passive social space should be considered as a high priority for funding through the Department of Education's minor works program.
- 6.7 However, notwithstanding these concerns, the Committee is satisfied that the need for the proposed works has been established. Once completed, Years 7 and 9 will be housed in modern, contemporary and flexible learning facilities that will promote 21st Century teaching and learning practices. Students will also have access to new music, library and cafeteria facilities. The new communal auditorium for performing arts for both school and community use will increase the school's interaction with the community and also help to attract and retain students.
- 6.8 Accordingly, the Committee recommends the project, in accordance with the documentation submitted, at an estimated total cost of \$9.145 million.

**Parliament House
Hobart
30 March 2016**

**Joan Rylah MP
Chair**