



PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

New Town High School – Redevelopment of Outdated General Learning Areas, Canteen, Specialist Learning Areas and Gymnasium

Brought up by Mr Best and ordered by the House of Assembly to be printed.

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INTRODUCTION

The Committee has the honour to report to the House of Assembly in accordance with the provisions of the *Public Works Committee Act 1914* on the -

New Town High School – Redevelopment of Outdated General Learning Areas, Canteen, Specialist Learning Areas and Gymnasium

BACKGROUND

The Hobart Junior Technical School was opened in 1919 in Bathurst Street, Hobart. It started with five staff and an enrolment of 50 boys. The School offered a course of only two years of study. However 1925 saw it expand to a three year Intermediate Certificate. In 1947 the school leaving age was raised to 16 and so the four year Schools Board Course was offered.

Matriculation classes were started when the School moved to its present site in 1952. The move also saw the School change its name to the Hobart Technical High School.

With the formation of separate matriculation colleges, the last matriculation classes at Hobart Technical High School were held in 1961. This was also the last year in which selective entry was used for enrolment. With these changes, the School became a regional comprehensive high school and in 1962 adopted its current name, New Town High School.

When the School moved to the New Town site its numbers steadily increased, rising to its maximum of over 1200 students in 1970. In the 1980s, however, numbers declined and in 1989, with total enrolments fewer than 300, it was announced that the School would close. After a campaign led by past and present students, New Town High School was retained as a single-sex school for boys. During the past 15 years the numbers have returned and the School currently enjoys the enrolment of a viable number of students with more requests for places than the School is able to offer. This reflects the demand within the community for a single-sex school for boys. In 2005, with a student population of 825, it is the second-largest Government secondary school in the State.

Over the years that the School has occupied its current site, the curriculum has changed dramatically and has brought with it a diversified pedagogy. However, the facilities have received little refurbishment in that time, with the exception of the Technology and Foods and Catering areas. In general, the facilities do not present a suitable environment for the effective delivery of the Essential Learnings (ELs) Curriculum, the major curriculum reform currently being implemented by all Tasmanian Government schools.

Development and Redevelopment since 1952 has included the following:

- 1968 Science laboratories constructed;
- 1969 Art and Music facilities completed;

- 2000 Technology facilities (Materials, Design and Technology and Foods and Catering) redeveloped; and
- 2003 Library refurbished.

With the exception of the major redevelopment of the Technology area in 2000, the facilities are substantially unchanged since they were built in 1952. Basic modifications have been made possible through careful budgeting of resources allocated to the School as well as through one Minor Works grant. Despite the limitations of the facilities, the School has achieved improved educational outcomes through a variety of innovative programs. However, the capacity to improve further will be hampered by an outdated environment. If the state of the physical environment is not addressed, it will impede the provision of the range of educational opportunities necessary to equip students with the knowledge and skills they require in an increasingly complex world.

The vast majority of the School's facilities are old, contributing to an uninviting environment. Finishes, fittings and services throughout the campus are now well beyond the end of their life and there is a clear need for refurbishment. It is against this background that New Town High School applied for assistance under the Capital Investment Program.

The redevelopment program proposed for New Town High School focuses on Health and Well-Being and the Related Arts. The aim is the integration of these areas under the Essential Learnings Framework which has at its heart curriculum reform. The Framework is currently being implemented throughout the State. This reform agenda will enable the School to build on its current reputation for excellent educational outcomes for boys and to ensure an educational program that meets the needs of its students in the 21st century.

Consistent with this program is the need for physical facilities that reflect the emphasis of engaging students in an environment requiring enhanced thinking and communication skills. Such an environment would promote the development of students as people who are flexible, adaptable and able to problem-solve.

The School Partnership Agreement details the data gathered in the School Improvement Review process and identifies key targets for improvement. These targets include:

- Emphasis on literacy and numeracy skills;
- Information and communication technology (ICT) freely available to enhance learning, especially through an increase in quality on-line learning across the curriculum;
- A shared understanding about what comprises high quality teaching; and
- Structural reform and pedagogical changes in line with the implementation of the Essential Learnings Framework.

The New Town High School Statement of School Purposes, Beliefs and Values and the Key Findings and Outcome Targets as outlined in our Partnership Agreement and the Essential Learnings Framework are the guiding principles that highlight our need for improved facilities in the redevelopment program. These have culminated in a

number of strategies being identified by the School community as pivotal in the curriculum reform process. These are:

- An innovative Health and Well-Being program focusing upon the particular needs of adolescent boys;
- A Related Arts program that awakens, nurtures and develops the creative spirit in boys;
- ICT – anywhere, anytime and particularly in association with Health and Well-Being and the Creative Arts;
- Small learning communities;
- Global connections;
- Project-based learning;
- Student participation and performance; and
- New paradigm School buildings.

To achieve these goals the curriculum focus has changed from content-driven to inquiry-based, from disconnected subject-based to trans-disciplinary and from individual learning to team sharing. There is a need for more flexible spaces to allow for a number of classes sharing facilities, for larger groups of classes sharing smaller groups of teachers and for areas which can adapt to individualised learning environments. Up-to-date technology needs to be readily available throughout the School.

Of some significance is the progress already made in the above areas of curriculum reform. In particular, there has been a 30 to 50 percentage point increase in the number of boys opting to study in the Related Arts area from 2004 to 2005.

Using these curriculum reforms as a basis, the School reassessed its expected future accommodation requirements. Below is a revisited summary of existing accommodation and facilities identified as requiring attention.

Health and Well-Being

The current Gymnasium is 19m x 10m – little bigger than a general purpose room. Its size is an impediment to the effective delivery of a Health and Well-Being Program. It is over-utilised, as up to five classes are timetabled to Health and Physical Education at any one time. It has minimal insulation and heating and the acoustics are an issue for Occupational Health and Safety. There are no spaces dedicated to specific health and fitness programs such as yoga, aerobics, fitness machines or weights. In addition, no space is available within the School that provides for the School to assemble as a whole. There are no showers or change rooms anywhere within the School and access to General Learning Areas (GLAs) for Health and Physical Education classes is problematic at best.

Related Arts

Art, Craft and Design and Music are housed in buildings dating back to 1969. No work has been carried out on these facilities since then. The available space is

inadequate for the number of students utilising it and the facilities are in obvious need of maintenance. Both areas need to be redesigned so that the building becomes a centre incorporating all creative arts, including Drama and Health and Well-Being. The integration of these learning areas, supported by a collaborative teaching approach and new facilities, will assist the School meet the reform agenda it has set and fully prepare our students for a changing world.

The Canteen, Student Amenities, Foods, Catering and Enterprise

The canteen is small and totally inadequate for a student population of over 800 boys. It would allow comfortable access to at most 50 students at a time. Long queues are frequently evident with some students at times unable to access the canteen facility in the 20 minutes available for recess.

The amenities are old and do not include appropriate cooking facilities. There are Occupational Health and Safety issues that need to be dealt with, such as food storage.

The canteen needs to be relocated and redesigned in order to adequately cater for the needs of the students.

The aim is to combine the canteen with the Foods and Catering area and operate both under a learning enterprise banner. The Canteen Manager will join the Foods and Catering staff and together develop a School-based enterprise program.

There is no dedicated area for students to sit while they eat. Associated with the canteen there need to be common rooms that provide this facility as well as operating as extra space as required for Foods and Catering and Materials, Design and Technology (MDT).

General Learning Areas

The current GLA accommodation is a major limiting factor to the successful implementation of the new curriculum. The facilities are aged, generally small and inflexible and allow little scope for inexpensive modification to attempt to meet minimum requirements for facilities to support the Essential Learnings.

Information, Communication Technology

ICT is not in itself a pressure on current accommodation. It must be emphasised, however, that the School is stretched to maintain a network equipped to carry the current technologies. Any redeveloped spaces must allow for the installation of high quality current technology with infrastructure geared to coping with future advances in this industry. A great deal of emphasis has been placed on the strategic direction for ICT in the School. In considering the development of a new Gymnasium to satisfy the objective of the Health and Well-Being curriculum, Crawford Shurman Architects with the support of the Principal and School community, felt it was necessary to establish a master plan for the whole School as a context for current as well as any

future works. It was felt that a clear future direction for all development was necessary in order to support predicted changes in educational delivery.

It was important to therefore consider the School as a whole in terms of space usage and the circulation of students and staff, and to prioritise works into major and minor components, recognising budget limitations for larger-scale works.

Fundamental to New Town High School's vision for its future are the following concepts:

- Flexible space usage;
- Technological advancement and integration of learning;
- Democracy of space usage;
- Interlinking spaces;
- Bright and colourful, yet functional and robust spaces and finishes;
- A well planned circulation system for students and staff; and
- Expression of the School's new vision in an architecture which sits well with the existing heritage listed buildings.

A master plan for the School has therefore been devised to permit a clear entry to the School, the opening up of some existing spaces and the consolidation of single, small classrooms into larger, more modern General Learning Areas, a new Gymnasium linked to external spaces, performances spaces and an enterprise-based cafeteria area.

This new development will complement the already upgraded areas in MDT and other General and Specific Learning Areas within the School.

The location of the new Gymnasium was determined best positioned linked to the School with approach roadways, which could have potentially divided the Gym from the rest of the School, being redirected around the Gymnasium.

DETAILED DESIGN CONCEPT

As a result of the acceptance of the overall Master Plan, Crawford Shurman Architects have prepared concept designs for the new Gymnasium which links with the existing Performing Arts and Art areas at the western end of the School.

This direction supports the integration and flexible use of shared GLAs with Art and Performing Arts. When not in use for the purely sporting elements of the curriculum, the Gymnasium can be used for Performing Arts, Assemblies and general School shelter in winter.

Upgrades are also being undertaken on the existing Main Hall Entry, Arts, Music and Performing Arts and the existing Administration area. GLAs at the upper level of the existing northern and eastern wing are also being planned (for future upgrading). A new enterprise centre cafeteria is planned in this stage of development and is located adjacent to existing teaching Catering areas.

The design of the Gymnasium incorporates a 30m long x 18m wide main space which can accommodate a full-size basketball court. This space opens into the existing courtyards to the east, which will be redeveloped as a pleasant outdoor learning area. To the north there is a flexible use space which may be used as a classroom, or as a support space to the Gymnasium. It also houses an office for two members of staff and a Disability Access Toilet. The roof to this area forms a deck which can be used by Art students for outdoor activities.

Materials will be selected to satisfy a number of criteria. At the ground level, pre-cast concrete panels will be employed to provide a robust base to the building and to act as a backdrop for incorporated art works. At the upper level, a light-weight structure will be clad in a combination of natural terracotta and treated pine slats. Glazing will be provided at strategic locations to improve lighting and spatial qualities. Environmentally sustainable design issues have been a major factor in the selection of materials, along with aesthetics, cost and low maintenance.

A simple structural system will further ensure that the construction of the Gymnasium will require only the appropriate amount of the project budget.

COST ESTIMATE

A detailed cost plan is being maintained for the development to ensure that the building works costs at completion are contained within the capital development allocation.

The budget cost allocations are-

• Gymnasium, Toilets and GLAs Extension to Arts Area	\$1,510,000
• Canteen Enterprise Centre	\$210,000
• Related Arts Entry, Music Refurbishment, Drama Refurbishment	\$635,000
• Landscaping	\$40,000
• IT Infrastructure	\$50,000
• External works, sheds and drainage	\$370,000
• Contingencies	\$290,000
• Furniture and Equipment	\$291,000
• Professional Fees	\$244,000
• Post Contract Minor Works	\$80,000
• Art in Public Places	\$40,000

TOTAL PROJECT COST ESTIMATE **\$3,760,000**

EVIDENCE

The Committee commenced its inquiry on Monday, 21 March last with an inspection of the site of the proposed works. The Committee then returned to Parliament House

whereupon the following witnesses appeared, made the Statutory Declaration and were examined by the Committee in public:-

- Andrew Shurman; Partner, Crawford Shurman Architects
- John Padis; Crawford Shurman Architects
- Tim Gourlay; Manager, Facilities Services, Department of Education
- Chris Barnes; Senior Project Officer, Facilities Services
- Ian Morgan; Principal, New Town High School
- Frank McCann; Past President, New Town High School Parents and Friends Association
- Alan Waugh; Chairman, New Town High School Association
- Nicholas Clifford; Head Prefect, New Town High School

Background

Mr Barnes provided the Committee with the following background to the project:-

...The brief was to provide the School and community with a full-size Gymnasium and associated facilities, including toilets, classrooms et cetera, and to refurbish outdated classrooms.

Intensive consultation began in December and continued over the school holidays under the leadership of Ian Morgan. Consequently, sketch plans were available to share with the School community at the beginning of the school year. Ian has effectively communicated his knowledge of boys' education to the project team to develop an appropriate design. There was immediate broad agreement within the School community about the priorities and concept of the plans, allowing Crawford Shurman to proceed to detailed planning.

This redevelopment will provide New Town High School with an excellent Gymnasium facility available to the broader community and a contemporary, integrated, Related Arts area, allowing the delivery of the Essential Learnings curriculum in a much more flexible and collaborative fashion. It will also replace a dysfunctional canteen with an enterprise-focused cafeteria, integrating the Food Studies and Canteen functions of the School. When complete, this redevelopment will move New Town towards being a contemporary educational facility catering for around 800 boys.

The Principal, Mr Morgan, made the following submission in respect to the context of New Town High School and boys' education:-

...The first thing I would say is that New Town High School really has an important place in our community. It is the oldest Government secondary school, I believe, at the moment. It is the second-largest secondary school in the State ... I believe it has a

community role. ... There is a heritage and there is a background and it has a significant role in our community.

The second thing I want to say is that I think it has a responsibility for the education of boys, not just for those who are there but, I believe, for boys within the State. Because it is the only secondary school for boys, I think it is incumbent upon us to be having best practice, and that best practice will be able to be shared elsewhere. I think we all know from the media that there is, if we would believe it, a crisis in boys' education - boys in trouble, boys in crisis, it just screams out at us so often - and the reason for that is that boys are over-represented in certain statistics - in exclusion statistics, in suspension statistics, in youth suicide, in learning outcomes, as unskilled employees - and they are things that I believe are significant as far as our community is concerned.

But, given that, I can speak very highly about what New Town High School has done over the past five to six years. For instance, there have been no exclusions from New Town High School in the past six years. Our suspension rate is currently running at eight point five per cent when the rate for the State for secondary boys - seven, eight, nine and ten - is running at 30 per cent. The figure for girls is running at 17.5 per cent. So I can talk about those things quite clearly. We have had a 35 per cent reduction in suspension rates in the last three years.

If we talk about learning outcomes - and I think that has been a highly topical matter over the last number of years - New Town High School once again is doing particularly well. The year seven and year nine state-wide testing in literacy and numeracy tells us that New Town High School boys are doing better than the State average in both of those factors. They are doing better than boys state-wide. They are doing better than boys in similar socio-economic schools and, for the first time last year, they are doing better than boys and girls in similar socio-economic schools. We would put that down to the programs that are in place and our ability to tailor the curriculum for boys in our institution.

I could go on and I could talk about academic prizes. For instance, last year we had the State winner of the National Geography Competition, of the State Engineering Competition, of the State Computer Competition, and to have those sorts of representatives in a school, when there are probably 12 of those competitions state-wide, I believe is significant. Given that factor, given the fact I can sit here and say that we are doing so well, the question is begged, of course, why do we need any money? If we are doing so well, why spend some money on a place? It might be better off somewhere else. I would argue quite strongly that we are starting to reach a ceiling. We have demonstrated that these programs are in place and, as a result of that, I believe that, if we

are to continue this program and to continue on in this same sort of way, we need these facilities and it is significant. I think you are aware that the current School size is 825, and over the past ten years that has increased from approximately 400. But what is more important is where do we go to from here?

I do not know whether I am allowed to give this out, but it is some statistics I think are worth having a look at. If we are going to spend this money in our School, I think it is necessary for us to be able to guarantee what is the future of the School.

Currently we have more students who want places in our School than we have places available. For instance, this year 164 people wanted a place from out of our feeder area of New Town High School and only 70 were accepted. Currently, as we sit here at the moment, the figures for next year are 151 - and I suspect that there will be fewer than 70 places available. In 2007, 123; and in 2008, 67. Obviously those numbers increase as we get closer to the time. I think what these figures are showing to you is that the numbers of the School will be sustainable from now into the foreseeable future. In other words, we are not spending money somewhere that is not going to be used and used significantly. In actual fact, the School has had to put a cap on the numbers. I guess that is the context. I emphasise it is heritage, it is performance, and also our responsibility as far as boys' education is concerned for the system state-wide.

Current facilities

Mr Morgan continued his submission to the Committee by detailing the current facilities at New Town High School:-

...I think you have all seen the facilities and we have talked about how poor they are. I do not want to go on at great lengths now. You have seen the size of the Gymnasium. We are, I believe, the only Government secondary school without a full-size gymnasium, yet we are the second-largest school. One point that I would mention is our room-use figures at the moment. For instance, our Science Laboratories are used 100 per cent of the time, our Gymnasium 100 per cent of the time and our General Learning Areas 96 per cent of the time. I could go on. If I look particularly at Health PE, I would say to you that there are six occasions in the week where there are three classes on; there are seven occasions when there are four classes on; eight occasions when there are five classes on; three occasions when there are six classes; and one where there are seven. If you take a class of approximately 26 students, it will give you some idea of the sort of usage that we are talking about. The student population involved in the arts has increased by 25 per cent over the last two years. I use those

figures to highlight what we mean by the importance of these figures for the future.

...I guess the informal planning for this redevelopment started four or five years ago. That is when we first put in a submission about the need for this facility. Time has been of the essence really because this was announced, as you are aware, in December and here we are in March with plans in place. However, the informal planning process, plus the availability of people to have worked with me through January and February to make sure that this has been truly collaborative, has been really significant. Even though there has been a tight time frame, I am very happy to say that I believe that it is reflective of a broad range of views and opinions. The implementation phase will be our next major hurdle.

The other thing in the planning process that needs mentioning is that we have a master plan. This isn't just about tacking something once; this is a plan that we had for the School, thinking and knowing where we hoped the School to be taken over the next five, ten or 15 years. That is the planning process. I know it has been very brief and we can certainly come back to that later if you would like further information on it.

...I see this project as much more than facilities being upgraded. It is the basis of a major shift in how the curriculum is presented and on the emphasis that is placed upon key areas. It has at its core a movement towards personalised learning. That was identified as the key thrust behind the implementation of the Essential Learnings Framework. The example of this of course is the link that we talked earlier about - the Foods Catering enterprise. That is an example; that is a way and means, if you like, of how we see it being implemented in realistic ways. Also, in essence, the question is: why have we designed the things we are asking for in this way from the curriculum viewpoint? The Health and Well-Being centre will promote a healthy lifestyle now, but will also focus upon health for life. The other important aspect that comes from Essential Learnings is that it is really important for people to work together. In the past, teachers have worked in isolation. The focus within the specialist areas that we are suggesting and promoting is upon large areas that promote such an approach. We intend to link these. We talk about cross-curricula and about teachers in collaboration so that we focus upon personalised learning for students.

The last point I would like to bring up is what we call our 'double vision'. I think that these facilities really have this dual purpose. On the one hand we would like these to be part of where we are taking students and preparing them for a world where very often we do not know what it is going to be like. Many of our students will end up in jobs that probably have not yet been invented, and in

a world where technology is changing so rapidly. We are providing these facilities and approaching it in that way, but we would also want this to be a community centre. The planning behind this has been based very much on the idea of not just the School using it, but also the community using it. That is what we mean, I suppose, by our double vision. Already the School is working extensively to establish partnerships with community groups so that that can be the case.

Perspective of parents, community and Old Scholars

Mr McCann provided the perspective of parents, community and Old Scholars in relation to the project:-

So the first of those perspectives is the parents and friends perspective. On arrival in 2001 ... I and my son found it daunting. The thing I noticed was that it was well maintained but very tired. The School had a complete absence of graffiti, which to me is an indication that there is a lot of pride taken in the School. It was well maintained, and had a generally clean appearance. That was important. As my son's time went on, it was not so much the School as the community, which is the binding spirit of New Town High. That is the great spirit of the place.

When I was president in 2002, the first priority of the Parents and Friends was for the Gym and Related Arts area redevelopment. You have all seen it; Ian has spoken about it; you know why it was a priority. Parents' comments were consistent, especially from former students who are now parents, about the same classrooms, the small Gym. They were shocked at the temporary classrooms near the Canteen. New parents were rather taken aback by some of the conditions, especially in the Hall and the Gym.

We raised money for the grounds redevelopment, which has taken place over the last two years - 2002 and 2003. That was supplemented by a State grant on a dollar-for-dollar basis in 2003 for the oval resurfacing and the irrigation system. We received that grant from the then Deputy Premier, Paul Lennon. From 2002 to 2004, we had continual correspondence with the Education Minister and people within the Education Department regarding the Gym and Related Arts area. We received the support of the Minister for Education for the redevelopment but it wasn't until last year that we received the final word on that. In 2003-04, the Parents and Friends extended the issue to include Graeme Sturges and in 2004, David Bartlett, in our process of lobbying and bringing the matter to attention. Both gave unqualified support to the parent group for the redevelopment priority, and that was important to us. Last year we made a formal approach to Premier Lennon. He came out and was shocked at

what he saw because, I believe, the outward appearance of the School belies the true nature of the problems, which really do not stand up to close scrutiny. Premier Lennon announced the funding in November 2004, which is what we are here for today.

The Parents and Friends Association is also under pressure from the parents to expand the intake of the School. There is a high demand for places because it is a good school, because it is a single-gender school. Ian has touched on numbers. We consulted with the parents and friends in 2003-04 and with staff and we endorsed a policy to cap the numbers in 2004 because there were inadequate facilities to cater for any additional students. Class sizes were at the upper limit already and we had the OH&S issues with the facilities, including showers, the Gym et cetera. We require modern facilities to meet the requirements of the new curriculum which is considerably changed since the 1940s, which was when the School was designed. The mix of technical subjects has gone down in the intervening 50 years. There is a real change of subject mix and the advent of IT has seen new subjects coming on-line but, as Ian just pointed out, there was a 25 per cent increase in the number of students undertaking arts-related subjects. The mix of subjects has changed so the facility needs at the School have also changed.

The Parents and Friends Association has also had input from teachers concerned at the inadequate general facilities in particular subjects, such as Arts, Music, Health and PE. I presume you would have seen the practice areas at the School this morning, which were closets, cupboards, storerooms. The aim from this perspective is to make it quite clear that it has been a parent priority for quite some time. The redevelopment has the full support of the parents, the staff and the student body. When Premier Lennon announced the funding at presentation night in November, the relief and excitement in the audience was palpable. It is obvious that the redevelopment has the full support of the entire School community.

I am not an Old Scholar but I became involved, through my presence in the Parents and Friends Association, with the Old Scholars. In 2001, as I said, we had the 50-year celebration for the move to New Town and the comments from old students at that meeting were, 'Nothing's changed'. 'Everything's the same'. 'Remember this, remember that'. They were shocked and surprised. From 2002-04, as president, Ian and I encouraged and facilitated the Old Scholars Committee to build on the level of support that was demonstrated at the 2001 function. So we capitalised on that, and we ran the two functions that I have previously talked about. Again the comments were consistent about the state of the School. The Old Scholars, interestingly, did not want a formal association - in other words they did not want to

incorporate - but they do have an ongoing committee that is holding these 25- and 50-year anniversary meetings or dinners at the School. They want to be a viable part of the School and sponsoring awards, and they are proposing a Guidici Scholarship in memory of Sergio Guidici, who was the first Rhodes Scholar from New Town High. So they are becoming more actively involved, and they are behind the redevelopment as well. That feedback has been consistent ever since the 2001 event.

From the community perspective, Mt Stuart Primary holds functions, dances et cetera at the Hall. They have been doing so while I have been involved with them since 1994. We have had full use of the Hall and the Canteen. It has been great, but the facilities are tired. The reason we go there is because it is convenient in the district. It is open and accessible, and a lot of the previous students of Mt Stuart go to either New Town or Ogilvie, so it is good to have that continuity. Again, the feedback has been consistent about the poor condition, and they are looking forward to being part of the redevelopment.

The other community involvement, New Town Eagles, used the Gym for training for under-age sides last year. Their feedback was that the Gym was small but dry, because we had a very wet season, so that was good. They are supporting the redevelopment and they are entering into a partnership agreement with the School at present for future use of the facilities, initially by junior sides, boys and girls, at New Town Eagles. The TCA entered into a partnership arrangement for under-age and third-grade matches as a result of our 2003 upgrade of the ground. They are supporting the further upgrade of the Dressing Shed facilities, which is all part of the redevelopment plan.

Soccer Tasmania, as Ian said, are currently negotiating partnership arrangements for indoor soccer. Adult Education - I spoke with Julie Pogmore and Greg Peart. They expressed the need for new spaces and are interested in New Town High as possible venue for such things as cooking, food preparation, the Gym, IT, language programs, music and arts. Their particular need is in catering and cooking, and they are interested in furthering those discussions with New Town, particularly along the lines of having some input into the reconstruction of the Catering area. As an aside, Greg is also looking for somewhere for the Canterbury women's team to practise on wet nights, and he took that opportunity to say, 'Let's talk about a partnership agreement there as well'. I have created a lot of work for you, Ian. I am sorry about that, but that is the way it is.

The conclusion that I can draw from this for the Committee is that there has been a long history of demonstrated concern and demand by parents and community over a long period. The redevelopment

has the full parent and community support. The opportunity is now here to provide first-class facilities for students and the community. We have high support for formal community partnership arrangements, giving maximum benefit on return of the project costs. The main thing, of course, is that we have better facilities for the boys.

Student body

The Head Prefect, Nick Clifford made the following submission on behalf of the student body:-

My name is Nick Clifford, and I am the head prefect at New Town High School, an all-boys school which is steeped in tradition, and a school where most students have come following their brothers, their uncles and their fathers. After my first day at New Town I was asked by my relatives, 'Are the Arts Block, the Music Block and the Gymnasium all the same?' They were having a joke, and they wanted to share their memories of the old Gym that they remembered. Their reactions quickly changed when I told them that actually that old Gym is the same Gym that I use. My family members have all enjoyed success at New Town, and a lot of the facilities have not in fact changed in the 35 years my family have been involved with the School. We have been very fortunate to have been taught by passionate and dedicated teachers but I am still using the same Arts room my father sat in. I suspect, if I look closely enough, under one those desks his initials will lie.

I have been particularly successful in my chosen sport of hockey, and I have represented the State on two occasions. This year I have been involved in a development squad. I am currently the School champion in athletics and a club runner. I mention this because at New Town the facilities that we currently have do not support you as an athlete to maximise your full potential by engaging in a serious and supported training program. We have the coaching staff at New Town but we don't have the facilities to support them. New Town is the largest competing State school in hockey yet when it rains, as it often does with a winter sport; we are unable to train because our Gym facilities cannot cope with the number of boys who need to train. This puts us at an immediate disadvantage and during a wet year, such as the one we had last year, we go for weeks without training. Despite all this, we still had more success than any other school in terms of premierships won. It makes me wonder what we could achieve with facilities comparable to those of our competitors.

New Town High School has a very structured Health and Physical Education program during school days. On wet days teachers are unable to let their students outside. In a school where space is so

limited on the inside, it makes such lessons extremely difficult to enjoy. On these occasions often teachers resort to having up to four classes in our tiny Gymnasium. This causes two problems: firstly, the students have less involvement in the activities because there is not enough area to move; and secondly, when there are more than 60 boys in one room things become a little overheated. Boys become sweaty boys. But it gets worse. New Town High School doesn't have any change room or shower facilities so when we sweat, as all boys do, we have to stick with it for the whole day and it makes learning very uncomfortable for both us and the person sitting next to us. Boys need physical activity and a space in which to perform such activities. New Town High School at the moment does not have the space demanded by its boys and, as a result, the boys here have been very disadvantaged.

My younger brother starts his time at New Town next year and I am hopeful that he will enjoy facilities far superior to those I have used and flowing from the teaching programs that will embrace the new Essential Learnings outcomes and not have to sit in the same room as our father and uncles.

Master planning

Mr Shurman addressed the planning aspects of the project:-

...We are very lucky and fortunate to be working in a school that was constructed very solidly, I think, in the first instance and therefore revisiting it is of interest to us as architects because it is a seminal piece of architecture, but it is getting tired. Believe it or not, it is a sister-school to Ogilvie and therefore how we tackle it is fairly important as well. The master planning side of things is something, as part of our commission, we took on board, that the School not only wanted to solve its initial problems but have a view to the future. Obviously we will take them as far as we can within the budget parameters that we have set and which will achieve the major portion of the work that the School has. It is also good to have a future vision. I think Ian Morgan, the boys, the staff and the parents are all future-focused and I think it is a very good climate in which to be designing. I can say that we are designing and replanning the School in a way that gives us flexible space usage. I think that is a fundamental difference to the past. Every space that we have produced, we have to justify on capability of being used for a multitude of functions and being adaptable for future use. That is an important aspect.

Technological advancement and integration of learning, the new curriculum development is happening and no doubt will get reviewed in ten years' time and we will see further changes and outcomes that will, through our design - we hope - be supported.

We realise we are not the be all and end all; we are the supporters of the educational fraternity. We are not here to create problems; we are here to support that whole design basis, the democracy of space usage. Again the interlinking spaces are what we plan for in the new development. But it is largely focused on bringing the Gymnasium in close proximity to the School so it can be used in a multi-functional way, rather than being disassociated with the planning of the existing School. Tacked onto that are the Drama and Music areas and the existing Gymnasium that will be refurbished and used for Drama, so that the General Learning Areas - the GLAs, as we refer to them - also get an upgrade in this development, and we are trying to manage the process of the budget, which I can get onto in a minute.

In addition to that, we are looking at a bright, colourful, cheerful, functional space. I think the essence of what the boys have seen is essentially a fairly tired, rather solidly-built building, so it gives us a good basis to give them something new. Although the boys who are here today probably will not be the ones who benefit, as has been pointed out, their brothers and beyond will. Another thing: the well-planned circulation system, this use of space for wet weather, is particularly noticeable with boys who have, I suppose, an exclusion zone of about a metre around them, and obviously the School gets a fair bit of punishment, but it is still well maintained.

Finally, I suppose, the thing that we bring as architects is trying to match the forward vision of the School with an appropriate architecture that responds to the site and in this case the heritage of the site. We have had intensive discussions with the Tasmanian Heritage Council before submitting it to planning, and we are pretty confident that they are very happy with what they have seen. We do not see any problems during planning.

Heritage values

The Committee questioned the witnesses as to whether the whole precinct or the main building was heritage listed. Mr Shurman responded:-

(The building) is heritage listed ... mainly the front façade, the building facing the oval. It obviously still comes under scrutiny for what we propose and how that is to be arranged. I can say that that has been well received by the Tasmanian Heritage Council to this date. As you are probably aware, it gets a formal hearing through the planning process, but we wanted to make sure that there were no hiccups in this process, so we consulted with them on the way through.

Toilet and change room facilities

The Committee questioned the witnesses regarding the adequacy of the toilets provided. Mr Gourlay responded:-

The number of toilets required in educational institutions is covered by the Building Code of Australia, the uniform code, for that type of building. I would be surprised - but I might be corrected - if the number of pans on that site are insufficient for the number of students.

Mr Shurman added:-

Certainly part of the toilet area that you probably saw, part of that has been temporarily decommissioned. It can be used but it has been left in a gated position. We are going to look at the refurbishment of that area and give it a very light touch. In terms of the Building Code of Australia, it probably still complies. It is becoming more apparent that a proper Gymnasium of an increased size of the sort we are providing, with showers and the like, will be a much better arrangement. Because there was no gymnasium recognised under the Building Code, that was left as it was in the current condition.

As to the provision of Change Rooms in the proposed Gymnasium, Mr Padis submitted:-

We look at the BCA once again in seeing what sorts of areas were required for facilities such as this one. For the sort of numbers that you would have using a Gym at one time, perhaps for sports such as basketball and so on, the numbers in areas certainly comply. If you were going to put perhaps six classes into the Gym at one time, it might be that we would perhaps have a close look at that area again, and it could be adjusted. But certainly for the sorts of sports that we are talking about for the Gymnasium the figures do comply.

Flexibility of the Gymnasium design

Mr Shurman provided the Committee with the following detail of the Gymnasium design:-

The proximity of the Gym was a crucial issue in terms of planning. What we are gaining out of this is that if either side of the Gymnasium there were the GLAs, these GLAs could also be used flexibly for a range of other internal School programmed teaching events as well as the Gymnasium. So, for example, we could have five or six groups in the Gym but also open up the GLAs. The GLA at the end of the Gymnasium has a sliding door that then connects

into the Gym, so what we are trying to do is get that flexible use and, as you say, ensure that you can fit in groups of people. Obviously there is a limit to what we can do within our budget, given the nature of that, but, yes, there are two ways in which a gym in today's world can be used. One is in the traditional sporting mode in which we shut down all the walls and it becomes a basketball centre or whatever. The other is to open it up to allow it to be developed in a small group arrangement. But because we have the advantage of having the old Gymnasium, the smaller space, that now becomes another teaching space as well as a performing space. We are going to hang lighting bars in that for Performance and Dance, and further beyond that courtyard - and the reason why the courtyard is oriented the way it is - everything focuses on that external courtyard, which then connects eventually to the Formal Hall. So we are very lucky to have a Formal Hall in that sense as well, because we have almost a complete use through that whole quadrangle into the space. I think it is a judicious use of space and planning without going overboard within our budget.

Music practice areas

The Committee questioned the witnesses as to what provision was proposed to be made for sound-proofing and acoustics. Mr Padis responded:-

...We briefed the engineers on that issue, and they are coming up with a system that will adequately insulate those rooms for noise.

(Acoustics) is going to be re-addressed during the design development and documentation phase. The teachers have currently indicated that because of the budget they may wish to play that side of it down a bit and put some money into a different aspect, such as coming up with a booth for control of light and sound, rather than putting money into acoustics, but it has not yet been finalised.

Air-conditioning

The Committee questioned the witnesses as to what provision will be made for air-conditioning. Mr Padis responded:-

The rooms that are the worst are the ones in the Art wing, which is the north-western corner of the building. They face north and there is a considerable amount of glass in that direction, so we are looking at ways of increasing the ventilation in those rooms by means of ducts in the roof spaces, and also increasing the flow through. Once the walls are removed you will be able to get some cross-ventilation, whereas currently you have walls that obstruct this.

...In the Computer Lab, which is on the upper level of the Art wing in the top right-hand corner of your plan, will get very hot and stuffy due to the nature of what goes on inside it, so the engineer is proposing to put an air-conditioning system in that room only.

Mr Shurman added:-

...We are looking at which is the best method. We have these sustainability issues to be look at as well for Government buildings. We are looking at western rotors, which are a ventilating system which we used on the Freycinet Visitor Centre, which relies on an infra-red damper with a natural ventilation system so that we can either shut down on a cold day or open up. It tends to act like a natural chimney effect rather than putting in mechanical systems. These days they need advanced electronics to manage them, so it is something we are still resolving.

Deck

The Committee questioned the witnesses as to the feasibility of enclosing the space under the Deck Extension of the Art Room. Mr Shurman responded:-

Perhaps I could comment in terms of the relative use of the space and on the cost. You are quite right, the Deck was envisaged as an outdoor teaching area for the Art area and, in a sense, it still needs wash-down and those sorts of solid surfaces. It cannot be a timber deck, for example. From that point, you then have one portion of the building that it is there. For example, we are talking about something like \$1 700 or \$1 800 a square metre to build a comparable totally enclosed room. Despite the fact that we have a deck there, we are only talking about probably \$300 or \$400 off that \$1 700 or \$1 800 to provide the room underneath. There was no justification for an additional teaching space or room that was beyond the brief that we had ... if we were to build proportionately underneath it, it would probably be of the order of \$60 000 on the total cost of \$120 000, whether or not you decided to do it.

Mr Padis added:-

I guess we do not see it as an unusable space. We see that as a shaded space with a nice aspect and good light that can be protected even from the rain if you are sitting outdoors - the idea of the outdoor GLA, rather than one that is always inside. But we will take your comments on board and we will look at that further.

Contingency allowance

The Committee questioned the witnesses as to what contingencies were envisaged. Mr Shurman responded:-

Generally contingencies at this stage of the job are really to do with the contract tendering process and leading up to final documentation in that the quantity surveyor is working with the documents that he has before him, which are 1:200 scale and obviously there is a bit of fleshing out of that detail as we go forward. I am thinking in recent times we have been pretty much on the record for other projects with the University of Tasmania and others where we have been very much spot-on with our costing. At this stage we hold that as a reserve rather than being in a situation of having to make cost changes if there is anything that comes out in the tender process.

As we are all aware, the Tasmanian construction market is fairly heated and it still remains so for major buildings, so there is that allowance. For the first time in a number of years a rise and fall is beginning to apply to projects, where previously we had ten years of projects pretty much without that issue. Quantity surveyors are being cautious at this point in time. If we were to be so frugal as to make sure that we were below target, then obviously the School has the capacity to think about other options. I think that is why we have determined with them a series of lineal priorities that go from priority one, two - and hopefully we would be able to do it all, but I know realistically that in the current circumstance that hasn't been the case.

Learning opportunities during project

The Committee questioned Mr Morgan as to whether the construction phase of the project would present an opportunity for students of the School. Mr Morgan responded:-

We take those opportunities every time they are available to us, so the answer to you is yes. I guess what has happened so far is that the time frame of this has been particularly short. But, as you are probably aware, we take every opportunity we can to have the boys involved, even down to showing you around today, you could hear their voices all the time. I think they are the best voices as far as our School is concerned.

In terms of where this goes to now, certainly we will be talking to appropriate people. There are of course some constraints placed upon us in terms of what students can do and what others will allow them to do. We have a fairly extensive work-related learning program at School now. That is not the traditional work

experience. Our work-related learning program is one where we have some students who go out and spend a day a week in the work force. It is meant to be for these students to see that there is a link between the world of work and the world of school. Traditionally I think sometimes we have considered that school really isn't related to anything that comes thereafter. Sometimes some students have found it difficult to make that connection. We are already talking at school about the possibility of how we might make that program into the development programs that go on inside the School. It is a bit of a long-winded answer, but the answer is yes. There is already some preliminary planning about the possibility.

DOCUMENTS TAKEN INTO EVIDENCE

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

- Department of Education – Submission to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The Committee was satisfied that the need for the proposed works at New Town High School was clearly established. Such work will redevelop and extend the existing School buildings where required to provide contemporary general and specialised learning spaces that are suited to the School's curriculum and meet current and envisaged future educational and accommodation requirements.

The redeveloped areas will include a new Health and Well-Being teaching facility, significant Related Arts specialist areas (Music, Drama and Visual Arts) and Canteen and Common Areas. Other areas to be included, if the budget allows, are four GLAs. Refurbished and new areas will incorporate the curriculum reforms currently being introduced by the School as well as incorporate current developments in educational facilities design.

The Committee notes that discussion is on-going regarding the expansion of toilet and change room facilities as currently provided for in the plans.

Accordingly, the Committee recommends the project, in accordance with the documentation submitted, at an estimated total cost of \$3,760,000.

**Parliament House
HOBART
7 April 2005**

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