

**THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS MET IN
COMMITTEE ROOM 2 AT PARLIAMENT HOUSE, HOBART ON MONDAY, 21
DECEMBER 2009**

**THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BRIDGEWATER AND SOUTHERN MIDLANDS
LEARNING FEDERATION**

SIMON DUNNE AND **ELVIO BRIANESE**, FORWARD BRIANESE ARCHITECTS;
ANDREW BENNETT, MANAGER, BRIDGEWATER AND SOUTHERN MIDLANDS
LEARNING FEDERATION; **ANDREW FINCH**, DIRECTOR, FINANCE FACILITIES
AND BUSINESS SUPPORT; AND **MATT BILLSBOROUGH**, SENIOR PROJECT
OFFICER, CAPITAL PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT, WERE CALLED, MADE THE
STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

CHAIR (Mr Harriss) - The message from His Excellency indicated a project to the value of \$40 million and the document we have in front of us suggests \$45 560 000. Would someone address that please, either now or some time during the process today.

Mr FINCH - Basically, we have just put the range of funding sources available and they have come from a number of State sources as well as Commonwealth sources. In terms of the building program, it will not be to the value of \$45 million, given that some of the Commonwealth indigenous funding is actually recurrent funding, hence it has the asterisk on it. It is probably more in the order of \$5 million - we are still working through that. Essentially the building works are probably going to be in the order of \$42.5 million.

CHAIR - Okay, but further down on page 17 the next chart still indicates \$45 560 000 -

Mr FINCH - Yes.

CHAIR - as the total spend on the project.

Mr FINCH - But again, there is some recurrent cost included within the child and family centre - \$8.090 million - and that is something we are working through at the present time. It would be in our interests to seek approval for up to this level of funding, although it will not be quite as high as that, given the recurrent element.

CHAIR - The challenge for us is that we can only approve in accordance with the message from His Excellency. You would be aware that if projects go over then they go over; there is no control that this committee has over those matters. They are matters for other committees of the Parliament to investigate if they choose, but we certainly do not have any jurisdiction over that. We are constrained by the message in front of us from His Excellency.

Mr FINCH - Yes, okay.

CHAIR - I just wanted an explanation of that.

Mr FINCH - It is a similar issue to one when we did the new schools process recently. When we put the minute together for the Governor-in-Council it was based on an estimate. Since that estimate we have sat down and worked this through and the figures are higher than at that time, with all the funding sources included.

Mr BEST - If this is a federally-funded program, is it State administered?

Mr FINCH - Yes. We enter into a national partnership -

Mr BEST - That's fine; I just thought it might be separate.

Mr GREEN - So a proportion of the Commonwealth's indigenous early years national partnership funding is for capital expenditure, and then there is a proportion beyond that on a recurrent basis - a couple of million a year?

Mr FINCH - Five years worth of funding is provided there. The recurrent side of it is for the power, cleaning and staffing of the centre. We have been going through a fairly detailed consultation process with the community. It includes the local enabling group, so we have not really been able to shape up what the capital spend needs to be. We are looking at a hub-and-spoke model: one in Gagebrook, one where we were today at Bridgewater on the civic centre site, and something at Geeveston as well. So we have three sites we need to look at building on but we have not really shaped the designs, given the importance of the consultation. That is when we will shape it and work out just what the recurrent and capital mix is.

Mrs NAPIER - Is the Geeveston one in this money?

Mr FINCH - It is, yes. It was funded as part of the agreement with the Commonwealth, part of the child and family centre for indigenous early years - the national partnership.

Mrs NAPIER - So the Commonwealth doesn't differentiate between recurrent and buildings?

Mr FINCH - The split we end up with will need to be signed off again with the Australian Government, because when we put in for the money, which was probably over a year ago, I would say it was part of that national partnership process. We used some broad estimates, but again it was before we looked at any of that State infrastructure planning from DIER around where the population lives in the broader Gagebrook/Bridgewater area, and do we need a big centre and then a smaller outreach centre and so on. So it is just part of the normal planning and consultation that we will need to go back and talk to them about.

Mrs NAPIER - How long do we have recurrent funding for?

Mr FINCH - Five years, I believe - to the 2014-15 financial year.

Mrs NAPIER - But we don't know how much is recurrent and how much is allocated?

Mr FINCH - When we signed the original agreement with them there was a notional split for recurrent and capital, but it was done without any detailed understanding of the circumstances and how we could cater in terms of service delivery for the population.

Mrs NAPIER - What was the rough split between recurrent and building?

Mr BENNETT - We started with a figure of \$2.55 million for building. Since then there has been negotiation with the Commonwealth. We think that won't be enough, given the information we've gathered through our consultation, and also a recognition that it now looks as though the Geeveston component of the project will need to be a new-build rather than a refurbishment of an old site, given the consultation we've had with the local community, and also to enable us to capture some of the funding that was coming in through the Huon council. In all of this there has been some serendipity or there have been other funding sources that have come along and we have been alert to try to capture those and take best advantage of them as we move through the process. We will be building three facilities and my best guess is that there will be some new-builds in that but also a refurbishing component, particularly in the Gagebrook area.

Mr FINCH - The Gagebrook school has some spare facility.

Mr GREEN - Is this under the banner of the federation?

Mr BENNETT - Yes. The Geeveston component is a funny component for us but we share a funding source and I, for example, sit on a support group for that, the Geeveston Children and Family Centre Project which includes the Geeveston and Bridgewater component, although clearly we don't see - and nor do the Geeveston people want to see - that they're part of the Bridgewater and Southern Midlands Learning Federation; it's just an anomaly, if you like, in how the funding has come to us.

Mrs NAPIER - Is it anticipated that you'd draw down on the funding for this one first and then decide what's left for Geeveston?

Mr BENNETT - No, we'll have to do it all at the same time. We have to deliver good-quality facilities in the Geeveston project and that's why we're working with the council down there who have also secured some money from the Commonwealth to invest in childcare facilities so it would be silly for those two things to happen independent of each other. We will work closely with the council to make sure we get best value.

Mrs NAPIER - So these aren't cost estimates, are they, these are potential sources of funds?

Mr FINCH - In that first table on page 17 they are the sources of funds and then the cost estimates are in the second table. One is the source of funds and one is the cost estimates.

Mr HALL - Through you, Mr Chairman - Brenton, I thought you said that most of it is being funded federally but -

Mr BEST - No, just that line item.

Mr HALL - Yes, only that one line item, and the BER as well. So the State's contribution is roughly about \$30 million plus the \$3.5 million there. I just wanted to clarify that.

Mrs NAPIER - The allocation to the child and family centre is something like \$76 million in the Budget overall, isn't it?

Mr FINCH - Yes, this isn't part of that.

Mrs NAPIER - That's different, isn't it?

Mr FINCH - Yes. The \$76 million was the State funded for up to 30 -

Mrs NAPIER - Yes, so that's not one of these?

Mr FINCH - No, that's right. This is something separately funded through one of those national partnerships with the Australian Government - the Early Years national partnership.

Mrs NAPIER - So this is really coming out of that \$30 million insurance?

Mr FINCH - What is?

Mr BEST - There's no insurance.

Mrs NAPIER - The amount of money that was allocated by the State Government after the fire.

Mr FINCH - Yes, that's the first line, and that doesn't include the CFC, the child and family centre. That's a separate source. We've got \$30 million from the State Government to redo all the schools in the federation and then we have BER money, which essentially is for a science centre - that was \$1.97 million - and \$2 million for the gymnasium. So that is that \$3.97 million and that has come directly through the BER process. Then we have the State-funded capital investment, \$3.5 million for the link and then we have the \$8 million, some of which is, as we've said, recurrent, from the national partnership with the Australian Government. That all adds up to the \$45 million and then the \$76 million for up to 30 CFCs is a completely separate allocation and Bridgewater is not included within that initiative at the present time, given that it has its own source of funding for a child and family centre.

Mrs NAPIER - I must admit it seems strange to have the cost estimates in there. I accept what you're saying about the source of funds but it just seems strange to have that as a cost estimate for the project. It obviously includes money that is going to be spent on other projects not this project.

Mr FINCH - If you think about the process that Andy explained and that we have been going through, you will realise that it has been quite sensitive with the community around where it should be located, because in the community they have their own factions over where things should be. It is quite sensitive and we did not really want to show any dissection until we had been through it and agreed that process with the community.

Mr BENNETT - Yes, pre-empt an outcome. We went to the community quite recently and they said, 'You've already made your decision, so why are you consulting when you're already telling us what's going to happen?'.

Mr FINCH - It was probably only last week.

Mr BENNETT - Yes. The other complication - I suppose 'complication' is the right word - is that this an indigenous money, so consulting with indigenous community has been really core to us. The money comes from that broader Closing the Gap strategy from a Commonwealth level. We have to be very sensitive to be true to that. So it has been a long, complex but rich process.

Mr GREEN - I think it is a bit unusual to have it laid out in this way; now that all the questions have been asked, people will understand why.

Mrs NAPIER - Basically an application for a concert approval.

CHAIR - We will get to that. At the moment we are dealing with the reality of the \$40 million message covering off the \$45 million identified in the documentation, and I think we have an adequate explanation about that. We will now proceed to the overview of the project.

Mr BENNETT - Ladies and gentlemen, this project aims to provide the public infrastructure that will support a major transformation of how education and training, and related services, are delivered to learners of all ages in the Bridgewater and Southern Midlands communities.

At its heart is an intention to lead urban and community renewal through the provision of first-class contemporary education and training facilities and programs. Our aim is to provide a model where there is a place and a pathway for every learner to succeed.

This project had its genesis in the fire that destroyed Bridgewater High School in October 2007. However it is important to remember that, prior to the fire, there were widely held concerns about the effectiveness of the education and training provided to the Bridgewater and Southern and Midland communities. Despite the population of Brighton municipality being the fastest growing of all municipalities in Tasmania, enrolments at the high school were in decline. Community confidence in the school had decreased and increasing numbers of students and families were choosing to bypass the school in favour of public and private schools located in Rosetta, Glenorchy, New Town and beyond. For example, in 2006 just 42 per cent of students from the high school's home area were enrolled at Bridgewater High School - years 7 to 10 - and those figures have been pretty stable or have declined.

Further, long-term outcomes for the community revealed in ABS data painted a worrying picture of a severely undereducated, undertrained and underemployed community - all indicators where disadvantage was heightened relative to the vast majority of other Tasmanian and national communities. For example, university qualifications in the Australian work force ran at just under 30 per cent - 29.6 per cent - in 2006. In the Gagebrook community it is 0.8 per cent and in the Bridgewater community just 2.5 per cent. If we go to greater than year-10 training, post-compulsory qualifications - what we

now call Certificates II, III, IV and diplomas - 52.5 per cent of the Australian work force have that level of qualification or beyond, but for Gagebrook it is 15.5 per cent and for Bridgewater it is 22.6 per cent. You may be aware that there are good estimates now that 40 to 45 per cent of jobs need minimum qualifications at that level.

Unemployment in 2006 across the Australian work force was 5 per cent; it was 28 per cent at Gagebrook and 14 per cent in Bridgewater. Youth unemployment ran at 10 per cent nationally; in Gagebrook, 31 per cent and for Bridgewater, 26 per cent. I have a whole list of other statistics that would support that.

Mr BEST - I think you gave the figure that 42 per cent of adults going elsewhere. Why is that?

Mr BENNETT - Community confidence in the school itself. Outcomes at the school were seen as not meeting what people needed. There is a level of stigmatisation of the Bridgewater community and groups of people who see themselves as more aspirational than others in the local area were sending their students elsewhere. Also, we have to be honest, the outcomes weren't as we would want. I can give you some figures. Attendance figures in 2006 - at the high school in particular - were running at around 20 per cent absenteeism. That has now climbed to around 30 per cent. I would not say that since the fire there have been some fairly compelling reasons for our not being able to stay at the 20 per cent level, but the 20 per cent itself is worrying.

Mr BEST - I did read in your report about the mean age of people - something about the highest numbers of people up to 19 years of age.

Mr BENNETT - Yes, we have the highest number of youths and the highest number of single parents in Tasmania. As an aside - and this is something that has influenced my thinking during the research and during the SIPS, the State infrastructure planning system; we are interested in the demographics, particularly where people live and where they are moving to - there is a figure called SIEFA, an amalgam of a number of indicators of socioeconomic disadvantage and during that process and talking to people from DIER, they identified that there are some collector districts within our Bridgewater and Gagebrook community that rate at the same level as remote indigenous communities in Western Australia and the Northern Territory. That is a little graphic understander of the situation - I have a concept of what life might be like in some of those communities, and you don't usually think that that sort of thing is on your doorstep.

One of the challenges we have in those areas is that it compounds upon itself - where education hasn't been a huge part of that family and generationally hasn't been part of that community for a long time, why would it be so for the next child that comes along? That is one of the challenges that we are dealing with upfront - the model we are trying to develop here is a more family-friendly one that accounts for those sorts of things. The attitude is 'Why would I be involved in education? No-one has in my family; no-one has ever got anything out of it. All I have ever done is get into trouble at school, so why would I go?' It gets down to that level.

Following the fire, the Bridgewater and Southern Midlands Educational Renewal Taskforce, called BASMERT, was convened and given the task of making recommendations about the future education and training needs of the Brighton-Southern

Midlands areas. I would like to divert slightly there. At that stage, after the fire, there was a relatively simple range of choices: we don't do anything about it, so we don't have a school here anymore; we replace the school as it is; or we do something very different - and if you think about it, that is what is on the table in front of you. I think a fairly smart and brave decision was made to look at it more broadly, given that the fire wasn't just the issue. Those figures I talked about before had been in place there for a long time.

Mr BEST - When you are looking at something very different, I guess that presents challenges in itself as to who wants to be involved in looking at different things.

Mr BENNETT - Yes, it does, and I will talk briefly around that, if you like. Our aim is to make this such a compelling model, both in terms of the infrastructure we provide but also the model of education and how we relate to our community and families. We are very strong on that - that this is a place you want to go. 'I would rather be there than be at home. I would rather be there than be on the streets, mucking around with mates and getting into trouble.' That is a huge challenge, but we had to take it on; otherwise we will just keep recreating this downward spiral that we already have.

The taskforce consisted of community, Education department, business, industry and local government representatives and was chaired by the Mayor of Brighton, Tony Foster. Over a period of six months it consulted extensively with the local community and leading educationalists and gathered research into worldwide best practice in collecting information about demographics, including future population trends and education needs for the area. The taskforce subsequently provided a report to the Minister for Education in April of 2008. After due consideration, the minister made an announcement in August 2008, where he outlined a model for future education and training in the Brighton and Southern Midlands municipalities based on the taskforce recommendations.

The model included provision for all ages, from birth to adult - we now talk about 0-99 - and identified the need for an integrated approach from education and health and other key services in order to better meet the needs of the community. I divert there to add that we weren't just simply talking about recreating a school; we recognise that to engage families there needs to be far more to it than 'I'm just sending my kid to school from nine to three during the day.' That hasn't worked.

The minister also described maximising opportunities for shared use of facilities by students, staff and the community at large. The model announced by the minister responded to five key needs identified by BASMERT during the course of its work. Those five needs are: quality early childhood development and care for all children; integrated quality pre-schooling and early years education; high-quality and integrated middle years education; individualised learning programs for secondary students and managed transitions from learning into training and employment; and improved adult learning opportunities.

I would now like to briefly outline how this project responds to each of those needs and enacts the minister's announcement. The first of those need - quality early childhood development and care for all children: a children and family centre will be built in the area, and funding for this component comes from the Commonwealth indigenous early years national partnership. Services provided through the centre will be complemented

by early childhood and parenting programs provided at the three primary schools. That extends the excellent work of current Launching into Learning, birth to age 4 programs. That is a real opportunity for us - those programs have been highly successful and set a good model because they are very family-friendly, they get out into homes and they make schools and similar institutions very welcoming to families. They are not just in schools - we have them at the library, we run some out of the Civic Centre and we run them at our local nursery. Whatever it takes, wherever we need to go, this program will be provided.

Mrs NAPIER - Are you going to run those programs now at the CFC, or will you continue to run them at various places?

Mr BENNETT - The answer is we need to do both. The child and family centre is more than just early years education, which is what the current Launching into Learning programs are, with a little bit of other care services. For example, we would invite in child nurses, perhaps a GP, in some schools we have brought in people from Housing because this has an impact on a child's health and capacity to access education. The services we provide through the CFC need to - and are required to because of the funding source - meet the parameters and the implications of the key targets made very clear in the national partnership.

Mrs NAPIER - Are those people going to be drawn from their existing locations in the local community health centre, or neighbourhood house or whatever, or are they just going to visit? I am interested in how they are going to be staffed.

Mr BENNETT - We will need more staff and a different range of staff. We think there is some opportunity for some co-location and integration of services. One good way to think of the CFC is a range of services that will attract families - for example, we might have someone come along who needs to access some support in housing. We would have a facility for them to do that. While they were doing that we would be providing child care and good quality early years education programs for the children.

Mrs NAPIER - It's very like an expanded Neighbourhood House, isn't it?

Mr BENNETT - That is a fair point - and an interesting one because it is a discussion we have had with Community Houses. They asked whether we were coming to take over what they were doing, but I think we have moved on from that because they can see that there is far more specialisation of the spaces themselves, which have to be made very children-friendly - height of benches, stairs, high-quality exterior learning spaces, indoor-outdoor relationship safe, places for families to receive counselling, spaces where parents can access parenting programs while their child is looked after. Without changing what is available at Community Houses, we have in the Herdsmans Cove Community House an excellent space for what it does, but it is not purpose-built for a child and family centre. It needs to be significantly different.

Mrs NAPIER - Is the agreement already there for the staff, your child health nurses and other people?

Mr BENNETT - No. We have engaged with the community health centre out there, the Child Health and Parenting Service - CHAPS. They are all involved in our consultation

around that, a group called Good Beginnings; they have a really strong presence out in the community. Now we have engaged them and they are part of the local enabling group that Andrew talked about. That is a small group of residents and local providers.

We have another group of people whom we keep informed and work with and who we think will have a stake in this. For example, we want to talk with GPs. We think there could be capacity to deliver some of that sort of service. The community is very interested in a paediatrician being available there; that is really clear in their list of wants.

Mrs NAPIER - When we were looking at the new community health centre in Bellerive, the people there who have all of those related services, including children and parent services, didn't see themselves as moving into a CFC locally but were aware that there were some discussions about it. So I am interested about what is going to move where. We have a building but what is going to be in it?

Mr BENNETT - The trick to success is high quality children and family services; they are centres that have been going for a long time. England has a big history of work in this. There is the example of the Pen Green centres and a woman called Marg Walley; they are held as experts in that area. The aim is to provide a service platform where the people who work in there sense that they belong to that service - not, 'I work for Health' or 'I work for Housing' or 'I work for the local GP'. You need to build a common platform of service delivery. However, you also provide some spaces for people to come to because, for example, they obviously don't want a GP on site. We couldn't afford to have them on site every day and every week, so you might have a range of spaces where they would come and use those as consulting rooms.

That is how it would work. There would be a core group of people who run that facility and another group of people who come in and use that facility. The third layer is a referral point. So if someone comes in and is confident to talk to Bryan Green about their problems then Bryan is able to say to them, 'I know how I can help you. You can go to the community health centre or perhaps you need to go and refer to the police', or whatever that need is. There needs to be a high level of integration. We are not talking about everyone coming and moving in, but there would be a core group, particularly around high-quality child care and early years education.

Mr FINCH - The target group is still the nought- to four-year olds with the child planning centres, so the community health centres are still there.

Mrs NAPIER - So is that in that recurrent budget?

Mr FINCH - Yes, the funding for staff.

Mrs NAPIER - The people who are going to be your core are being funded through the recurrent budget?

Mr BENNETT - Yes.

Mrs NAPIER - Do you have a guarantee that they are going to keep funding?

Mr BENNETT - That is why we have to get it up and going. I don't know whether I have answered your question.

Mrs NAPIER - Yes, thank you.

Mr BENNETT - I am talking here around the children and family centres and the interplay they all have with Launching into Learning in our primary school sites. Together these provisions will respond to a growing body of research that emphasises the importance of early years education and care in ensuring our youngest children are school-ready and positioned to maximise their potential development. In terms of sheer economics, for a dollar invested in the early years - zero, one, two or three years - the return is up here. When you start investing at age 10, 12, 13, 14 or 15 years, the return is down here. There is a very strong correlation so for whatever level we put this at there is a good reason to be investing heavily in that area.

Integrated quality pre-schooling and early years education: the three kindergarten to grade 6 primary schools - Gagebrook, Herdsmans Cove and East Derwent, remembering that East Derwent is an amalgamation of Green Point and Bridgewater primary schools. That was set up this year and has operated as a single school. They will become birth-to-grade-4 schools - a radical change from the current provision - and will be refurbished to provide improved facilities for early years. Predicted enrolments for Gagebrook are 160; Herdsmans Cove, 180; East Derwent, 300 - and that does not include our birth-to-grade-4 centres.

In terms of funding, serendipitously or by good luck the BER money that came along enabled us to expend more money into redeveloping those schools as birth-to-grade-4 centres. Without that it would have been a lot more difficult, and that work is well underway.

Mrs NAPIER - Why do you need a birth-to-grade-4 centre as well as a child and family centre?

Mr BENNETT - For a couple of reasons. In that community, access and moving around from place to place is difficult. There are low levels of transport, and we want to localise provision as much as we can. Gagebrook community is four or five kilometres from the community hub, the civic hub, and that is a significant impediment to access for a large number of people. When you drive around that community, the most common sight you will see is mums - usually mums - pushing prams with kids. They have no cars, or they drive cars without licences and get themselves into real trouble. So we are conscious of that. Also, we want to make kids school-ready and the best place to make kids school-ready is to have an entree into schooling. I had a wonderful example of it. I was meeting with our development officer in the children and family centre at Herdsmans Cove Primary School earlier this year. A mum came in who you could see was doing it tough. She had had a relationship with this school for a couple of years and she had a three-year-old. She said, 'I just came in because I thought I could help' and she was moving things around. She felt completely at home, knew where things were and went out and made herself a cup of coffee. She read some books and put some kids work up. Just as importantly, the three-year-old kid, a tough-looking little boy, came in, knew where to play and spoke to the people I was speaking to. He felt right at home.

That is in stark contrast to what can happen at some schools where it is hands-off and the parents don't get involved. We want to engender that from an early age. If you do it only at a children and family centre, which offers another range of services, then it is less likely we will do that. However, remember that we will provide Launching into Learning services, birth to 4, in a range of sites, whatever it takes and wherever it takes the school nursery - the nursery school farm - and wherever people go. Our aim is to provide a range. We know that one size won't fit all, however we will need something really excellent that will really stand out - like a children and family centre - to provide those services.

Mr BEST - I think it is so important. I know, for example, with the community house in East Devonport, for young mothers it is not always a great experience. There are stereotypical comments about young mothers, single mothers. Part of it is the transport from, say, Latrobe and Port Sorell. If you are a young mother and you are not getting supported by parents, at least if you are going there then you are in a group with other mothers; they can share and help each other, and you are getting transported. I think it is very important.

Mr BENNETT - Yes, building that social capital is vital. We see those two provisions complementing each other. A child comes into the children and family centre because he needs to get a health check up. There are a lot of transients in this community, a lot of people moving in and out, so we can introduce them to the people at the local school. There are lots of really good connections made between families in that way. There is a lot of isolation, unfortunately, for families. That is why we are so keen, for example, on Good Beginnings, who are terrific at knocking on the door and saying, 'I heard you're new to the area'. They can extend out and bring those people back into our community.

Mr GREEN - Is that 42 per cent figure replicated in the earlier years, the primary schools?

Mr BENNETT - No, we do better than that. I wish I could pull out a figure but we do better than that. The drop-off is very much at grade 6 level. From grade 6 to grade 7 in 2007, 47 per cent of grade 6 kids went to the high school. So 53 per cent of those kids who are enrolled went elsewhere.

Mrs NAPIER - Where are they going?

Mr BENNETT - Rosetta, New Town, Ogilvie, some private, Geilston Bay which is for Gagebrook a home-base school anyway. Rosetta takes around 25 per cent; Ogilvie, New Town I think something less than 10 per cent each; and the other 70 per cent is various - Geilston Bay probably takes a number.

Mr FINCH - Some would have gone to Claremont as well.

Mr BENNETT - Claremont, sorry, and also Cosgrove. Less so Cosgrove. Rosetta was the biggest slice.

Mrs NAPIER - Your projections are to attract some of that group back from Geilston Bay so what is the future of Geilston Bay? That is very low.

Mr BENNETT - It is only about 8 per cent. It's a relatively small number of kids. We've worked with Rosetta High School - I went to see Graham Speight early on - and with the provisions they're making there, even though they're amalgamating with Claremont High School, as you would be aware, they will have a reduced capacity compared to what they had with an independent capacity. I think they will go to 820 or something around that, and that includes their big-picture component, whereas combined they are over 900. We think there are about 140 kids in years 7-10 that came from the Bridgewater area. Our challenge is to make it so attractive and such a fantastic place that why would you want to go to Rosetta anymore? That will be full, and it has been designed that way. There is an increased capacity at Cosgrove but their numbers have also stabilised, I think.

Mr HALL - I have seen situations where perhaps it is not the school environment, the built, physical aspect of it, but it has sometimes been leadership and other matters as well.

Mr BENNETT - Absolutely. I don't pretend that if we knock up a few buildings this is going to change but again, there is good research that says particularly in low socioeconomic areas where you can really demonstrate that you are valuing the community providing something fantastic, at least you have two or three years to make a bit of difference or you have a lead-in period.

Mr HALL - While we are on statistics, Andy, on page 6 you have the grouping at the end - 9 to 12 to adult. What is the separation? I presume they are adults who are coming back to -

Mr BENNETT - No.

Mr HALL - How does that work?

Mr BENNETT - We have really looked at if kids go to 9, 10 and then continue that pathway into 11 and then in to 12 - I reckon that figure would be more around the 250 mark; they are those students who follow through. In 2011 we will start with a grade 11 and we will keep going. If you turn over the page, one of our challenges - and I worked with Centrelink here - is to try to identify those adult learners or teenage learners, if you like, 16, 17 and 18, who we want to draw back into education.

Mr HALL - That's where I've been a bit confused, I think, with those numbers. So they are not included in that other line?

Mr BENNETT - No. I can give you some estimates on that but it is very difficult when I have worked with Centrelink. They can give us some broad figures for the 7030 postcode area but then it is transient and so that's why we've included those numbers. But if you go down page 7, for example, youth allowance, job seekers, these are kids of 16 to 20 years, which should be a target group for us. It is an area we really want to get after. When I worked with Centrelink and tried to get a sense of where they lived, we hit on - and I have to say it's notional - that even if 50 per cent of those learners come back to us, 95 learners would potentially come back to us. However, we need to think about what their learning provision will be. We envisage that if we are successful - and we will be; we are wholeheartedly committed to it - if we build our big-picture model and kids are used to that model and they go 9, 10, 11 and 12, there will be another group of learners for whom that provision may not be the right provision and one of our

challenges in this is to provide a range of programs and then the facilities - and we have been talking around this one - that will enable us to provide for all those learners. That includes, for example, the LINC that we talked about but also flexible spaces on site - like the trade training centre. We are trying to have as many levels of provision and sites that will attract those people back here, and that is potentially a huge number. If we simply said, 'We are going to build facilities for all those', then there are another thousand people there and clearly that is impractical for us in the budget constraints we have. That is why we need to think very flexibly.

We are not trying to take over the world here. You heard me say out at Bridgewater that one of the things we don't want to do is close people's world in around them where Bridgewater is the only place people go to learn and train and then work and live. We already do this with Claremont College, for example. We have some students who enrol and do courses from our school farm and we envisage that some students attending our years 9-12 and adult learning centre will also go and do some of their work at Claremont or over at the Clarence Skills Institute, because we will not be able to provide everything for everyone, as much as we want to have a range. When you get into Certificate IV, there is a component where we have to go off-site to do it.

I freely admit that the adult figures are relatively murky and I do not know how they can be any other way. The Commonwealth Government has an intention to drive as many of those people back towards education and training, and their benefits will be dependent on that. So we have to see that coming at us.

Integrated quality preschooling and early years education: education at this level will focus on increasing school readiness through preliteracy, pnumeracy and social development, and learning programs for birth to age four learners. Building strong, positive and lasting relationships for families will be emphasised. When students reach the kindergarten and the grade 4 sector, emphasis will be on developing strong foundation skills in literacy and numeracy, and developing health and wellbeing in fostering an ongoing love of learning.

High quality and integrated middle years education: I see this as really vital to our project because this is the biggest ask we have of the community. This is a very different model of education that we are throwing at those ages and we need this to work. The current Bridgewater High School buildings, previously Bridgewater Primary School, will be refurbished in order to provide high quality and appropriate facilities for middle school education - for grade 5 to 8 students. Predicted enrolment is 400. That is fairly reasonable. I worked at Bridgewater High School in the late 1980s and early 1990s and we had that number of students then.

Teaching and learning at this stage will focus on providing programs that match the specific needs of pre-adolescent and adolescent learnings, and address the growing trend for cognitive and physical disengagement for education at this level. That is not just within our community. Research around the world says we need to rethink the models we have had previously - this primary school model - because kids of 10, 11, 12 or 13 years of age are fundamentally different beings than we thought they were. Society has changed and their brains are working differently.

Individualised learning programs for secondary students and managed transitions into training and employment: a new grades 9-12 and adult learning centre will be built on a site approximating the location of the current high school. I showed you that today. Learning programs will be complemented by courses provided through the trade training centre. We are talking of about 250 students; that is that 9-12 component.

Mr BEST - It is quite exciting out there in the context because it is not a dead end. Lots of investment and business are happening. In some ways there is going to be more opportunity for those linkages with your education facility and all of those businesses. You could get some really interesting partnerships there.

Mr BENNETT - Yes, you are right. Rosanne McDade, who is the acting principal at Bridgewater High School, has already started to go around with a woman called Cluny Addis, who has been helping guiding our big picture, to knock on those doors and listen. We have had one little forum. The big picture takes a lot of partnering.

Mr BEST - Yes, sponsorship of things happening at the school, awards and then the learning and so forth. You could really develop something.

Mr BENNETT - Yes, it can fly, with a lot of work.

Mr BEST - Yes.

Mr BENNETT - The big picture education model that emphasises one student at a time will be put in place. This approach focuses on student interests and learning goals as the cornerstone of developing individual learning plans. The emphasis is placed on building relationships in an environment where schools and organised structures will be small by design - I talked about that out at the high school, so I will not repeat myself.

Improved adult learning: I will summarise that. You know about the 9-12 and adult learning centre; you know we'll have a trade training centre and a learning and information network centre - I am not sure how familiar you are with those, but I am happy to talk to that if you want.

Mr BEST - I don't know about anyone else, but I am familiar with those.

Mr BENNETT - We already have high-level partnering and integration with other adult learning providers, especially the Community Houses. The emphasis on adult learning will provide a wide range of entry points and learning pathways in recognition that adults come with diverse education and training needs. Those vary from soft re-entry - people who just need to get back to learn how to use a computer and so on - to someone who wants to upgrade their trade qualifications or is interested in going to university. We need to find a way to engage them.

We intentionally designed this project to have high levels of shared use with the community. You saw this morning those plans and spaces where we will build a performing arts centre, a gymnasium, which we see as a 24/7 sort of provision, the trade training centre itself, the sports field where we intend to build in a multimedia centre, which will be attractive to people who are interested in music and putting CDs together.

We have intentionally built in a range of facilities that will be attractive to the community outside of school hours.

In conclusion, this project is comprehensive and ambitious; it is based on a strong foundation of contemporary educational research and is a highly strategic response to the education and training needs of the whole community, and there has been extensive community consultation from the very early years of the taskforce. There are now high levels of expectation that the project will deliver significantly improved buildings programs and outcomes for the community.

Mrs NAPIER - With the LINC, it says here that you have not determined the site yet. As I understand it, there is already a library and online access centre as part of the community hub. Is it more likely to be a redevelopment of a facility there or is it to do with the high school? Or will you try to tackle Gagebrook?

Mr BENNETT - No, it is most likely to go to that site we pointed out where the Civic Centre is - the spaces at the back. While we say we have not finalised it, when we put this together we were waiting for a decision or a good indication from our community consultation groups around the location of the CFC - because there are real synergies with those two working together. We think now that there is the potential for both of those facilities to be not co-located, because they are different facilities, but located close to one another - probably at the back of the Civic Centre. Then the online access centre and the library would be part of the LINC.

CHAIR - There has been a range of questions along the way while Andy made that presentation. Are there any further questions at this stage regarding that component of the project? If there are not, are there any architectural matters that you, Andy, particularly want to draw our attention to, given that we don't have architectural documentation as such - this is a concept?

Mr BRIANESE - I wish to add a couple of things. While we were on site we looked at it holistically and the buildings that are eventually rolled out will be buildings that are sustainable; buildings that reflect this developing pedagogy that Andy was talking about. More importantly, we want to ensure that the buildings are accessible to the rest of the community. In the building rollout it is also important that the buildings are used as tools for educating children. There is that sustainable component where we have buildings that can be monitored and students can be part of that monitoring system. So buildings become tools of education as opposed to just spaces that are inhabited.

Mrs NAPIER - That's a pleasant sound to my ears.

Mr GREEN - So the red arrows indicate access points?

Mr BRIANESE - We are looking at the site to be porous. It is important that buildings are articulated to address Green Point Road. It is critical that the common space, that internal street which is on the master plan, is a link to the rest of the community. It links the sports field, the education precinct and the community. We see that that common space has a 24/7 access, with passive security.

Mr GREEN - The polytechnic is going to be situated right at the top?

Mr BRIANESE - The polytechnic straddles the sports precinct and the education precinct. The reason is that it can have its own access off Green Point Road. It can have large trucks - that sort of equipment - with its own access. What we have learned in the early years of designing schools is that cars and people don't mix. As soon as you allow cars in the middle of a site, it is dangerous. It is not something you would recommend because there is conflict between the two, so ensuring accesses are kept on the perimeter enables the heart of the school to be safe.

Mr GREEN - With respect to the site itself, obviously it is very decentralised as a result of the design, so how are you going to ensure that this whole school community can effectively work together? We have had situations in the past where you have had something over here and the kids are over there, so they have to make their way there and then make their way back. It all sounds really good but at the end of the day, from the point of view of organisation on the site and being under cover and all those other things, it becomes a bit of a headache. Explain to me how you are going to make it work, given it is so decentralised?

Mr BRIANESE - That is a good question. The buildings will only do so much. What we have at the moment is a building on site that turns into itself; it is not a welcoming building.

Mr GREEN - I would absolutely agree with that - the worst I've ever seen, without a doubt.

Mr BRIANESE - If you are driving by, and you didn't pick up on the play equipment, it could be anything. It could be a warehouse, a prison or whatever and it does not really address Green Point Road. It almost turns its back to Green Point Road.

Mr GREEN - I want to talk specifically about the logistics on site, though?

Mr BENNETT - We need to think, and this is the challenge, that the organisational model for student learning - how we organise timetables - will be significantly different. So you will not have a bell and then suddenly hundreds of kids have to move from one place to another. If we take the 9-12 component, for example, in that model of education the learners, when they are well schooled or well trained and when this model is working well, will spend three days on site and two days potentially off in an internship or a workplace. So they are down to three days and during that three days they have their home base and they work from there. The notion is that is where they spend most of their time. Then when they need to access the trade training centre, they go out. It is not as if they would be regulated and then the bell goes so off you go.

Similarly, in the middle school, our program there will change, though it will have to be done gradually because we have some learning to do around this. Our model there will be around four parts of learning. One is what we call our focused learning - literacy, maths, English - the core stuff that we know all kids need to do. They will spend a large part of their day on that - 25 per cent or a little bit more because we really want to push that. So even up to 12 noon they would be on one site and not have to race around.

The second component is an integrated curriculum component where they use the learnings from science and maths to work on a project with another group of kids,

because we know that one of the great skills we need to learn now is how to work with other people. The best way to learn that is around a very focused intent, around a purpose to build something, put on a play together or write something together. The third component of that is a personalised learning component - the specific interest that you research. Neither of these requires great movement around a site.

The fourth component is community-based learning, where they might be down at the Civic Centre doing maintenance or they might be going to a local childcare or an aged cared facility, whatever it may be. Recently Gagebrook Primary School won a national award in a program called 'Are You MAD?'. MAD stands for 'making a difference'. You get kids to choose subjects that are really of interest to them. They were really interested, for example, in the spotted quoll, so they worked out all the things that could happen. They wrote letters about how feral cats were causing a problem. They wrote to Peter Garrett because someone was apparently going to import this specific cat from South America that was a killer of the quoll, and they got letters back from him. They put signs around the community about keeping your cats in.

So my best answer is that it is a different model and there is not a lot of movement at any one time. It will take us a while to do that and to improve, but it is very much that model of a home base and then going out to learn, rather than shooting around. There will be a timetabling challenge for something like the gymnasium - which is popular; kids love it and so does the community - so we are going to have to work out how we use that together. We are talking about a radically different way. Some schools are heading down this pathway anyway. We are not just pulling it out of mid-air.

Mr BRIANESE - The buildings support that pedagogy in that the spaces we are creating will be workshop spaces which will have stoves and sinks in them, so they are not stereotypical classrooms. At the end of the day this is a community project and we want the building to be inviting, so it needs to address Green Point Road and it needs to address the community. The buildings have to be able to breathe. If you are a student in a classroom and the classroom is too hot, too cold or too stuffy, then you don't want to be there.

We are talking about specialised activities like design centres and food areas. If the site has access more than from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. - we were on site today and the place was deserted - and if you can encourage facilities to be constantly accessible, then the people will come. Through that process there is ownership and respect and it is also a passive form of security.

Mr BEST - With the major road upgrade going through, a lot of the roads that are now major roads will become secondary, so it is going to be much quieter in terms of getting to the school from other areas and how that may link. Obviously the Brighton Council is supporting the whole concept?

Mr BENNETT - I do not know whether you came in on the top end of East Derwent Highway from the roundabout -

Mr BEST - Yes.

Mr BENNETT - The State Government agreed to, I think, a million dollars some time ago. They have secured that and we are working with council money to beautify that whole access. The idea is to make that from the roundabout off the Midland Highway where it meets the East Derwent Highway. At the moment it's not an attractive place. Why would you come in there? There are fantastic facilities and they are going to be a whole lot better. We are conscious of that so with the Brighton Council we want to beautify that, open it up and change the access point to do that, to draw people in. There is a lot happening. A whole lot of it is other work that is happening with housing and that is focused on what is going to happen in that area as well to try to make it a more community focus.

Mr BEST - From my experience of driving there, it is busy, there are a lot of cars and all the rest of it. I can see it changing once a lot of that traffic goes onto the main highway and then it creates linkages. In relation to the master plan itself, obviously there is also a fair deal of endorsement. I think you talked about the education access at the top there and then how that links with the community precinct and the sports and so on. You have obviously gone into a fair bit of detail in identifying the footprint of where things will go. In the overall planning process how much of that represents where you are at?

Mr BRIANESE - The drawing that you see in front of you is a master plan. At the moment we are going through a consultative process with community, students and staff and working on that level of detail. For example, if you look at the following diagram you can start to see how we are developing the years 5-8 and we are looking at breaking up the two year groups so there is a 6-7 component and there's a 5-8 component. What we are also doing is looking at the whole master plan and looking at specialised facilities like a design centre, like a food centre, performing arts centre and ensuring that they're located centrally so the 5-8s and 9-12s have access. The process that we are going through at the moment is ensuring that the building model will reflect this developing curve.

Mr BEST - As far as the layout is concerned, that's pretty much done, apart from perhaps small bits here and there, so it's well on the way.

Mr BRIANESE - It's well on the way and the next drawing shows the kit-of-parts for the 9-12s so we are recognising there's a heart to the school, there's a middle school access, there's a community access. We have these two 150 components. Andy was talking about small by design, so the largest component is 150 students. That talks about two hubs. If the school is as successful as we believe it's going to be, there might be a third. That would need to be looked at. The drawings that you see in front of you talk about the kit-of-parts and what we are doing now is making that into a series of buildings which may alter the configuration, particularly for the 9-12s. You see them as two L's. They might not end up being L's, they might be something else, because when we did the master plan we hadn't gone through that communicative, consultative process of the kit-of-parts.

Mrs NAPIER - Coming back to the links, that effectively combines libraries, online access centres and Adult Education but on the site master plan it clearly indicates that we haven't just got a 9 to 12 here, we have a 9 to adult flexible learning centre and you talked about building some of the buildings on the eastern side of the football oval so that it is at least on the same level as the footpath. Presumably, too, we will need a fairly

well developed library system in this building, as well as a well-developed library system in the LINC. Why do we need both? Why wouldn't we combine them?

Mr BENNETT - LINC'S are often around what we call 'second chance learners' - learners who have been disengaged from learning for a long time, who we want to attract back into education and employment through an easy start. Often those learners are turned off by the thought of going back to school because they have a bad history with school; they only ever got into trouble and they don't want to go there. LINC'S provide a good access point and a restart to education. The sorts of learning facilities that you provide in a LINC would not have the level of specialisation that you need to provide in a 9-12 setting. That is not to say that some courses will not be run out of the LINC and some students who are enrolled in the 9-12 level would go down there and vice versa. In the best of all possible worlds we would want to attract an adult who had been out of education for a long time - maybe they were having kids or had been unemployed for a time. They come to the LINC, get confident, get a certificate and then they feel confident about accessing higher, more challenging levels of education. We won't be able to provide all of that on one site - we need to provide it across a couple of sites.

Mrs NAPIER - So you don't think your big picture school will be as attractive as a non-traditional high school - you don't think it will be seen that way? Who are the adults who will want to go to this 9-12 site?

Mr BENNETT - People who want to access the courses we provide there - the higher levels of specialisation. If they are doing a science course they need to access some sort of science facilities. We are not going to build science facilities in a LINC. If they want to access a trade training centre, we will have a design centre down in the 5-8 centre, and a good way to get into some trade training centre would be to work from there. It would be too costly to replicate those sorts of facilities on both sites.

In the polytechnic world there are 355 certificates that you can achieve. You cannot provide all of those in a LINC, nor could we provide them all in a 9-12 centre. We will need both to provide as many of those as we can, but also we would have adult learners going off elsewhere.

The other sorts of adult learners we would have coming back here are those who have, say, certificate III, and now they are getting improved employment prospects they need to get a certificate IV or a diploma. You won't be able to provide any flexible space that would be part of a LINC, which are really just general learning areas. You need higher levels of specialisation with access to machinery or equipment or environments. If they are doing hair and beauty, for example, you cannot build a hairdressing facility in the LINC, but you can provide it elsewhere.

Mrs NAPIER- So is the library and online access centre in the community centre out of date or -

Mr BENNETT - Yes, it's very small and certainly needs to be upgraded. We have started some discussions with the library on what we actually need here. Maybe we need to move away from the notion of the school library as we know it and what essential learning resources do we need to provide for students in that 9-12 centre without necessarily duplicating what we have in the bigger library in the LINC. We will also

have a resource centre-cum-library in the middle school. It is not helpful dollarwise to think of a library in each of those three centres - we would just be duplicating. We certainly need some good-quality resource and there is a lot of opportunity with technology for us to meet that challenge. School libraries will change enormously.

Mrs NAPIER - You also need skilled people to run them.

Mr BENNETT - Yes.

Mrs NAPIER - Not that people are being appointed with qualifications at the moment. That's three libraries within a kilometre.

Mr BENNETT - That is what I am saying, we do not want to recreate that. How do you get those three libraries to work together? How do you provide the best opportunities for your clientele, your students?

Mrs NAPIER - Except your library is your hub for learning.

Mr BENNETT - It is one hub. Do you know what a hub for learning is now? It is something that lots of kids carry around in their pocket or in a little compartment - that is where they access. Where do kids go first for information? To library books? No, to YouTube, Twitter - those places. I am a lover of libraries because you have to develop a passion for books and I think that is a rich part of our world, but we have to recognise that kids are learning in very, very different ways than we did. Their tools are hand-held and very small, and it will just keep going like that.

Mrs NAPIER - But that is a library, isn't it?

Mr BENNETT - Yes.

Mrs NAPIER - Libraries aren't books. That is an old concept.

Mr BENNETT - No, but it doesn't mean you need a huge physical space where you have books sitting there.

Mr BRIANESE - Also what is important is that traditionally a library was the place you went into and you were told not to speak, to keep quiet. These hubs are active spaces where talking is part of learning and that is something we encourage. So it is a series of resource versus -

Mrs NAPIER - But modern libraries are like that, aren't they? So we are going to have three of those.

Mr BENNETT - No.

Mrs NAPIER - I think you need to because if you have your learning occurring around that setting, then you need to think about the concept that you are developing in your new primary school, for example, around the hubs. You have your library in the classrooms, basically, because of the nature of integrated learning and contextual learning, but now

you are telling us that if you want to go to a library with books, you might have to go down the road.

Mr BRIANESE - But in the model that we are looking at every one of these buildings has a hub. The hub is active - IT active and it has all the equipment for you to do things. We talked about ovens, stoves, sinks and lounges and all those sorts of things, so these become hearts. Every building has a heart. Throughout these buildings there are also resource areas. So if you have a hub that has resource stores and activity-type spaces then you can pull things out and activate the hubs. So we have resource areas throughout every building and on top of that there is a media centre, which is another resource-type space. We are breaking down the formal library but providing resource spaces throughout every building. They are not double-ups; they are just doing different things.

Mr BENNETT - Will we have three big libraries? No, but we might have one central library. We certainly have resource centres in each of the buildings but we can now, with technology, have a resource centre that is sitting on your desk or in a bank over here.

Mr BRIANESE - What is important is that these are active spaces.

Mr BENNETT - I recently saw a picture of a library and a whole wall was interactive. There were pictures of a whole lot of kids and adults interacting with what was happening on that wall. Someone was checking news out here, someone was playing a game down here. That is the world we have to somehow embrace. It is a real challenge in this community. By the way, if you go through that list of disadvantages; one of the huge disadvantages is Internet access and computer ownership. Somehow we have to promulgate that through what we provide.

Mr HALL - With regard to the gymnasium, it is located closer to the commercial zone and everything else, even though when I was up on site this morning it seemed a long distance from that 9-12 adult learning area. Did you say it was going to be open for public use as well?

Mr BENNETT - Yes.

Mr HALL - Are there any other commercial fitness centres in the area and how would you envisage that working?

Mr BENNETT - There is an indoor cricket centre and the PCYC and we have strong partnership already with the PCYC. Some of our learning is actually delivered through the PCYC, particularly for disengaged kids. They also run some programs with our primary school kids around team work and obstacle courses. They do some terrific work.

One of our dreams, because we have to keep looking at what will happen in the next generation in the development of this, is to bring the PCYC on site and provide a facility next to where we build the gymnasium. There is a lot of work to go there and there is simply not the money for us to do that at the moment, but they are very interested in being the operator out of hours.

Mr HALL - Of the actual gymnasium?

Mr BENNETT - Yes, working with us. There are some things they do for us that need a separate space but there are some things they do with us where we should be sharing that space, and those talks are well developed.

Mr HALL - So you would envisage it being a fitness centre as well as a gymnasium?

Mr BENNETT - Yes. We will have a weights room, for example. There will be a bit of an interface between the performing arts centre and the gymnasium itself. It would be a dance and aerobics studio as well. If we had \$100 million it would be different so we have to look at how we integrate those things, but that is the key of the intention.

Mr HALL - Yes, that answers the question as to who might eventually run that because it becomes a very important aspect.

Mr BENNETT - It does, yes.

Mrs NAPIER - I must say I find this a fairly unusual way for the committee to have to deal with the concept. How do you share your vision of what you want to happen and where you want it to be? We have talked about various aspects of where the amphitheatre is and so on for the five- to eight-year olds. How do you share that with potential contractors in order to assess what might be the better solution to the social context that you want to have replicated in buildings

Mr FINCH - Are you referring to building contractors?

Mrs NAPIER - Yes, for designers.

Mr FINCH - I guess it is a little unique, but given that it is around a \$40 million project with buildings coming on line at different times, and given the break in Parliament and so on, we really wanted to bring something to the table, given the time frame we have outlined in the submission and also that we are ready to start with the gymnasium. So it is about bringing buildings on line as soon as we are able to so that this community isn't deprived of facilities for any longer than it needs to be, so we are on a fairly ambitious time frame. We have been to tender and have virtually engaged a contractor around our initial building, which is the gymnasium. Then, based on what they submitted, we will be able to build the rest of the facilities as they are designed. So it is not your traditional tender process - as in here's the floor plan and the quote on it. It is more around what they are going to charge in terms of fees and rates and so on to build things as we get the designs finalised.

We only wanted to go to tender once because we don't want to end up with three or four different contractors bumping into each other on the one site because that is not realistic.

Mrs NAPIER - Does Elvio do the design?

Mr FINCH - Elvio does the design, yes.

Mrs NAPIER - So how can you have a tender if you haven't got the designs?

Mr BRIANESE - At the completion of the master plan we were able to recognise the series of buildings that we need to build - for example, performing arts, the gym, the science building et cetera. Looking at the funding, there were designated time lines, so there are *x* amount of buildings of which some have to be finished by 30 June, some by the end of December et cetera. So what we had is a series of buildings and a designated program and there was a budget. With the quantity surveyor, who is part of our team, we were able to put square metre rates on every one of these buildings. With a performance arts building - and we've done those in the past - we know the costs associated with putting one of those together. The same with a gym and the refurbishment of a school. So what we were able to do was test out square metre rates and ensure that the size of these buildings met the budgets.

We designed the gym and the science centre; that went out to tender, so they were completed documents. As part of that component, we also asked the builder to provide us marginal premiums, which is the component the builder charges for the management and infrastructure for the rollout of the remainder of the buildings and that was a competitive process. , As we are designing the building, part of the builder's role is to get three prices from subcontractors for every trade - for example, plastering, painting, bricklaying. What we are doing is managing the risk and every component is tendered.

The advantage that this brings is that we have a builder who is part of the team but who will also assist in the designing of the buildings. For example, say there is a staircase that needs to be built. In the traditional manner we would design the staircase, the quantity surveyor would price it and off we would go. The advantage we have now is that we can use the builder and the builder can say, 'You can save money if you don't make that staircase out of concrete, you make it out of another material'. We know at the moment we can't get bricklayers, so let's use concrete panels. So what we are able to do is use the builder as part of the team to help us manage those costs and ensure that all the requirements are met and be competitive at the same time.

The fundamental problem we have at the moment is the booming market and to be able to pin a builder down to do projects such as this is almost impossible. So to be able to do that now rather than waiting - there are some major projects to be rolled out in January/February - we have the builder in place, he is already starting to speak to his subcontractors, so we are ready to go.

Mrs NAPIER - If it comes down to whether a classroom works or not, depending on what you put when and where - how much consultation is there with staff who are actually using it?

Mr BRIANESE - The staff and students are involved in the design process.

Mrs NAPIER - So they are part of the design process?

Mr BRIANESE - Yes. For example, with the gym and science centre, we met with students -

Mrs NAPIER - You are doing those buildings progressively?

Mr BRIANESE - Progressively. We are designing 5-8s while we are doing 9-adults at the same time - different groups.

Mrs NAPIER - I am interested in it because one of the purposes of the committee, quite often, is to pick up whether there has been adequate consultation with the actual users of the buildings. So you pick up whether the nurses, doctors and physios are happy with what the buildings look like and whether this door should be here or whether there should be a window there.

Mr BRIANESE - We would have to be told.

Mrs NAPIER - I don't know, I can't even see a building and I'm struggling with that a little.

Mr BRIANESE - We can't make that up either. Otherwise we could design a wonderful school, hand the keys over, and then there is no ownership. We are talking about this pedagogy and all these other sorts of things - students and teachers don't own it - and it will be an absolute disaster. So the process we are going through is working really hard with students and the teachers to ensure that the building reflects the pedagogy that Andy, the staff and students are talking about.

We are finding that, through this consultation, the involvement of the students has been absolutely fantastic. There are some statements that a child in grade 5 came up with about what the heart of the school should be. The ownership is amazing.

Mrs NAPIER - There seems to be some good stuff coming out of that.

Mr BRIANESE - Yes.

Mrs NAPIER - This is a matter for the committee to discuss, I suppose, about where the committee fits in terms of the change in the process by which buildings and schools are being designed. I am not totally convinced that the committee is at the right point.

Mr FINCH - As a comment, it is fair to say that the process that we are going through is more like a design and development tender process, which is quite common now in the construction industry. But doing it this way allows us to have a more detailed consultation period rather than having to get everything ready, finish it and then go to tender.

Mrs NAPIER - I think I'll accept that. I'm not being difficult, I'm just trying to understand the process.

Mr BENNETT - We were very aware of that risk.

Mr BEST - It does seem to me that it is not any different to a recent reference that we had with the hospitality facility at Launceston College. I thought we had a magnificent modern plan that had been brought to the committee and then just as we were eyeing it over with the witnesses, we found that the Heritage Commission had knocked that on the head. So in a sense we really had no plan other than the fact that there was a need for that facility. I do not necessarily have an issue with that other than to say that it seems, on page 9, that you have consulted with the council, family and youth services, health,

education, disability and police at the top end of the scale, but obviously staff and students.

Mr BENNETT - Yes.

Mr BEST - It says that you have had a number of workshops with the community and you have had Brighton Alive meetings. Is it fair for me to get a reading that you have had fairly extensive community consultation and is it accurate for me then to say that the community does seem to really be quite supportive and embrative of what we have in front of us today?

Mr BENNETT - I am confident of that. What it does come down to, though, is that the grand concept is terrific but it gets down to things like where will there be a cupboard and what level will that window be, and that is where we will have some negotiations. But in relation to how the pedagogy will run in the middle school, the small design ideas and big picture, from staff we had 100 per cent sign-off on that so I am really confident on that. But I know, as we keep designing this through, there will be someone who will say, 'Well, I didn't think it was going to look like that' because eventually we will have to provide a picture or a drawing and then there will be a little more.

Mr BEST - Can I ask you, under oath - you are under oath here - are you guaranteeing an ongoing commitment to work through the finer detail?

Mr BENNETT - Absolutely.

Mr BEST - I have just outlined from page 9 my understanding and questioned who in fact is involved in the consultation and you are telling me there are extensive ongoing consultations and to use your words, 'as to what height the cupboard might be or where it might go'. Are you prepared to put in evidence today a commitment that you will make sure that you will do whatever you can?

Mr BENNETT - That's right. We would be silly not to, we want people walking in there and feeling really good about it. At some time you have to make a decision because if we have 10 opinions on what height the cupboard should be, you have to come to some level of consensus.

Mrs NAPIER - Are you saying that you can guarantee the electors that we are getting best value for money that we are approving here on the premise that it is based on assessments of is known about constructing a science block, a performing arts centre or a middle school complex? That is one of our jobs - is this best value for money, is this excessive use of funds or is it under-budgeted?

Mr BILSBOROUGH - The processes have been competitive to get the contractor on board and they will continue to be competitive in an open-book process between us, as the client, the contractor and the architect so the competition continues.

Mr BRIANESE - It is my belief that rolling the project out in this manner will provide more value for money and meeting a program than us documenting a project and putting it out to tender. If we did that in the traditional way, we would not finish the building in time and I wouldn't guarantee a better price outcome.

Mrs NAPIER - There is a reference to a tender in September 2009. Is that as far back as you did it? So you have met your deadlines in terms of the BER?

Mr FINCH - Yes. Hence another one because the gym was the BER so we wanted to get that online first and then the science centre.

Mrs NAPIER - But you are meeting the deadlines?

Mr FINCH - Yes, we are meeting the deadlines.

Mr BILSBOROUGH - May I come back to the consultation and add that we very much want that community to say, 'This is our school', so we want stories of the people who have been involved in the workshop to continue and say, 'Yes, this is the bit that I wanted and here it is' and we also want, through the contractor, the opportunity for local people to be involved in the construction of the project as well. So there are lots of stories about ownership of the facility in the community.

Mr BENNETT - One of the little carrots we dangle is that the name of every student who comes along and everyone who participates will be somewhere in the new building or something that signifies them. We envisage at the opening of the building when they come along with their families they will find it or in 10 years when they come back they will say, 'See that AB up there', or whatever it is. They then ask me, 'What are the iconic things in this community that you want represented in the design?'. There's that level of excitement and it is a nice thing to do. You don't want to present something very sterile, you want people to say, 'Look at this, Mum!'.

Mr BRIANESE - The building has to operate at so many different levels, it is as simple as that. It could be that tile with somebody's name on it to classrooms that are flexible enough that you can use that are not so flexible that you can't use, et cetera.

Mr BEST - On page 7 you have 731 parenting payments, single customers, 832 Newstart allowance customers eligible for training and then further back, 45 per cent of population between zero and 19 years and then we talked about the consultation and the community's view. Dare I ask or say this, if it doesn't proceed - and you made the point about not doing something that borders on immoral - what does that mean for these people?

Mr BENNETT - I have two great fears about this project and I will put them up front. One is that no matter what we do we just reproduce what we have - and I have forgotten what the second one was now but it was very profound.

Laughter.

Mr BENNETT - The second one was that it is just so big and so exciting and if you add up those numbers, we have to do it all again basically; it is a glass half-full, glass half-empty view. We have virtually thousands of people who are disengaged.

Mr BEST - That's what I am worried about. What happens if nothing happens? Leave it as it is?

Mr BENNETT - If nothing happens, I guarantee it won't change. If we do something, we might create another need and wouldn't that be fantastic. I get back to my big worries here that we are not reducing the number of unemployed, we are producing the unemployable at the moment. There is that level of disengagement. We have one in three kids who don't go to school in that high school. For every 100 kids who go to that school, we have 155 suspensions at the moment. It's broke, badly. It's not going to work, it is not going to make the changes and it is unfair. It is unreasonable and it is a horrible stain on what we are doing as a society and we can't let it happen. This is brave; it will have a go. Can I put my hand on my heart and say this is going to be 100 per cent successful? No, I can't, but it's a red-hot go. It is imaginative, it is different.

Mr BRIANESE - But we are not going to get it 100 per cent right. What we want to try to do is get it 80 per cent right because with that last 20 per cent you have to allow for people to have ownership and for the school to evolve.

Mr BEST - But that's your commitment to engagement and how you want people to have ownership.

Mr BRIANESE - Yes.

CHAIR - There are no further questions. I want to firm up on an observation of Bryan's. Bryan was forthcoming when he said that the school we visited this morning is the worst he has seen in terms of an environment for learning, and clearly the challenge is with this project going forward that the existing buildings can be appropriately renovated and refurbished and that the new buildings can be a new direction. Andy, your passion for education outcomes is evident because of your evidence not only to the committee today but also on the on-site visit. I think that passion has become infectious with the whole team that is working on this project. We sense that from the architectural design but this clearly is a huge challenge because of what you are starting to work with. The existing buildings are an absolute disgrace. Bryan said it earlier and I want to reinforce that. It is not a good environment for anybody to learn, to even exist in society, so there is a huge challenge.

I suspect that members of this committee, if we are here down the track, will be interested in what happens on this site in the event that this project gets approved.

We thank you for your passion for the outcomes and the way you have communicated that to the committee. With that, thanks for your presentation and the site visit.

THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.