



---

PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

---

**PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS**

**CYGNET PRIMARY SCHOOL  
REDEVELOPMENT**

---

*Brought up by Mr Cox and Ordered by the House of Assembly to be printed.*

---

**MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE**

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

*Mr Wilson (Chairman)*  
*Mr Wing*

**HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**

*Mr Cox*  
*Mr Goodluck*  
*Mr Hidding*

By Authority: Government Printer, Tasmania

## 1. 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 proposal to redevelop the Cygnet Primary School.

Cygnet Primary School is located in Frederick Street Cygnet and was the first Area School established in Southern Tasmania. The main building was built in 1937 and has had little if any modifications made to it to reflect changing needs and educational practices. The library is housed in a relocated weather board building identified as unsafe and in need of demolition. The school's general purpose hall has proved totally unsatisfactory either as a teaching or learning area, a two classroom terrapin building is subject to constant vandalism and is in urgent need of repair. The main toilet block, built at the same time as the main block, does not conform to health and safety standards.

The school's enrolment (K-6) has steadily increased over the past 5 years and in 1997 was 225 FTE students. With major road works between Huonville and Cygnet being completed in late 1997 and the growing trend of families moving from the city to country areas, enrolments should continue to remain stable or increase over the coming years.

Over the past few years, due to age, the school has only been able to carry out urgent maintenance such as plumbing and upgrading playground equipment which was deemed unsafe by the DECCD. A new playground area to cater for the Early Childhood children has been established, funded entirely by the Parents' Association. The school was identified by the Hartz Works Committee as the number 1 priority for major works in the Hartz District.

## 2. PROPOSAL

The proposal calls for the redevelopment of the existing school including the provision of a new three classroom block and a kindergarten that meet current standards. It also calls for development of a new library and administration area in two existing buildings which were formerly classrooms. There is also a need for a new general purpose hall which will be met by the provision of a purpose-built community gymnasium to be jointly funded by the Huon Valley Council and the Department of Education, Community and Cultural Development.

When completed, the school will have 9 classrooms, a general purpose room, library and kindergarten together with access to a fully equipped gymnasium. New toilet facilities for students and staff are also included in the scope of the work together with a new administration area. These facilities will be more than adequate to accommodate the current and projected enrolments.

At present, the school consists of a collection of 9 major buildings and a number of less significant structures such as stores and sheds. There are currently 10 classrooms, one more than what will be provided in the proposed redevelopment. However, the majority of these are below acceptable standard both in terms of area and amenity.

The main buildings are structurally sound, and it is proposed that these be refurbished and upgraded to provide facilities to current standards. Other buildings on site do not lend themselves to upgrading and will therefore be demolished and removed from the site. These include a dual classroom block which was relocated from Judbury Primary School and a metal clad temporary general purpose hall.

The need for this redevelopment is supported by the need for effective delivery of core services (primary schooling) to the Cygnet community. This is consistent with the Departmental Strategic Plan 1995 (specifically a strategy to "progressively rehabilitate outmoded facilities in primary schools").

### 3. COSTING

The overall budget for the upgrading and refurbishment works is \$1603 500.00.

The following indicative costs give a breakdown of items which can be included in this budget.

	\$	\$
Block 1:—Conversion of Existing 6 Classroom Block .....		185 000.00
Block 2:—Conversion of Existing Block to Library .....		60 000.00
Block 3:—Conversion of Existing Block to Administration .....		75 000.00
Blocks 5 & 11:—Conversion of Existing to GP Room/New Gymnasium .....		675 000.00
Block 9:—New 3 Classroom Block and Toilets .....		280 000.00
Block 10:—New Kindergarten Block .....		120 000.00
Siteworks & Site Services including:—		
Demolition of existing buildings (Blocks 4, 6, 7, 8) .....	10 000.00	
New paving and reinstate existing .....	18 000.00	
Covered Ways & Undercover Play Area .....	70 000.00	
Fencing & Soft Landscaping .....	20 000.00	
External Hydraulic Services .....	<u>39 500.00</u>	157 500.00
Contract Contingency Sum .....		40 000.00
Artworks Allowance .....		11 000.00
TOTAL ESTIMATED INDICATIVE COST .....		1 603 500.00

#### Exclusions:

- Professional Fees
- Loose Furniture and Equipment
- Curtains and Blinds
- Computer Cabling for “Directions in Education” Computers.

### 4. EVIDENCE

The Committee commenced its inquiry on Wednesday, 25 February 1998. The Committee inspected the areas where the proposed work is to be carried out, and held a public hearing at Cygnet Primary School.

The following witnesses gave evidence at the hearing:

- Tim GOURLAY, Project Manager, Facility Services, DECCD;
- Steve BINGLEY, Project Officer, Facility Services, DECCD;
- Paul GILBY, Consultant Architect, Gilby Roussos, Architects;
- Noel VOLLERS, Consultant Architect, Gilby Roussos, Architects;
- Michael SEYMOUR, Principal, Cygnet Primary School;
- John DANCE, Deputy Mayor, Huon Valley Council;
- Geoff COCKERILL, General Manager, Huon Valley Council; and
- Glen DOYLE, Manager Community Services, Huon Valley Council.

#### Assessment Process

The Committee questioned the witnesses in relation to the assessment process undertaken in relation to this process, and particularly the option of a rationalisation of primary schools in the Cygnet area. Mr Gourlay submitted:

“... The need for this project speaks for itself, I believe, and the proposal addresses all aspects of the requirements of the school. Once the project is complete the school will have been refurbished from one end to the other. There is this identified sustained demand for a primary school in this precinct. The value-management study—the PIP process—endorsed the project as proposed...”

“The accommodation in the nearby primary schools is ... pretty well fully occupied. There is a refurbishment going on currently at Huonville Primary School. That will provide accommodation to current standards for the projected enrolments there but no service capacity. Similarly at Woodbridge there is some capacity there but again the identified need in this locality justifies the work that is being undertaken. The long-term enrolment projections show a slight decrease in the number of enrolments over a sustained period. But nonetheless forecast enrolments continue pretty close to their current levels in the foreseeable future.”

### Recycling of pool and GP Hall

The Committee questioned the witnesses regarding the possible 'recycling' of both the existing above-ground swimming pool, currently located in the old manual arts block, and the 'General Purpose Hall'.

Mr Seymour submitted:

"The swimming pool at the moment is used for probably two months in term one and probably about the same amount of time in term three. It is not utilised at all in the middle term and is used by Adult Education one night a week for a set amount of time per year.

We were resigned to the fact that we were going to lose it in the proposed plans. I agree it is an asset. I would have some reservations about relocating into the existing shed at the moment. One of the reasons we were really happy to get rid of that as a learning and teaching area is that you cannot hear during the winter when it rains. It would need to be very, very well soundproofed, particularly for learn to swim with early child-hood children."

When questioned as to the 'lifespan' and the feasibility of relocating the pool Mr Gourlay submitted:

"... if it were to be re-established a number of components, particularly the steel sheeting, would need to be replaced; probably the liner, the steel supports would have to be regalvanised... So there would be some work. It is not a hugely expensive type of pool, these above-ground pools. They are fairly economical to provide in the first place. Yes, I think we can undertake to have another look at the possibility of re-establishing that somewhere on either site."

The Committee questioned the witnesses as to whether it may be more feasible to replace the pool. Mr Gourlay submitted:

"Yes, that is possible. I do not have the retail value of a replacement facility in my mind, and so it would have to be subject to a little bit of research, I think, and an exercise be undertaken."

Mr Vollus added:

"I think that probably the structure of the pool itself, as I say, is pretty much up to its use-by date. The facilities around it are substantial and of course you have to think what we have to add into that then, such as change areas. Obviously it has had a little bit of a problem—the structure around the pool—and the environment of the pool has affected the structure. You would have the same problem over there so we would have to take some allowance of that, even though that is a galvanised portal. But there would be major condensation problems with the underside of the roofing et cetera.

It certainly can be moved; it is obviously going to have an impact on the budget. We are right up to budget so that is a concern. At the end of the day that is the bottom line and that is what the school have had to consider all the way through this project—getting the best facilities for the dollars available. I guess it is an educational decision. But certainly it can be done. What you are saying is totally right. We could relocate the classroom block, I am sure; adjust its position to allow building 6 to remain ... In principle, to relocate the pool to that building it is entirely possible, but it would certainly knock our budget around a little bit."

### Library Facilities & Services

The Committee questioned the witnesses regarding the provision of library services, in the Cygnet area, in particular, the floor area requirements of the State Library and any scope for future expansion should the need arise.

Mr Bingley submitted:

"We did actually talk with the library people. They are considering the possibility of relocating the Cygnet library to this facility. It is a fairly new facility—well, not new; it is not aged—in Cygnet and it is more than adequate in size, but location-wise it is not ideal. They feel that the location of the school library would be better from the town's point of view. At the time of the meeting we had not had an answer back from the Library Services as to whether they wanted to close the other library and relocate. But certainly the size of this facility will be sufficient to incorporate the local library into it, if needs be, in the future.

...I actually discussed the actual layout of the school library with Library Services and on the outlined plan they felt that there was enough room there. It is not a huge library in Cygnet and the actual stock of books could be combined so that you are not doubling up on the actual amount of shelf space. They have not had a chance to have a good look at access and that, from the public's point of view. But being in a school there will be disabled access and other access which should not present a problem."

Mr Gourlay added:

"There are a number of recent developments and precedents that have been set in relation to that. Tasman District has a combined council and school State Library. Beaconsfield Primary have recently combined on the one site and Swansea has a similar facility. Certainly there is a great deal of collaboration I think going on between the State Library personnel and education and project planning facilities for people to try and further the number of joint ventures in this regard. The benefits certainly flow to the community in terms of increased opening hours, better access to technology and a better range of collection and increased book collection. So it certainly provides the possibility for a win-win situation for both in the end."

### **Huon Valley Council**

The General Manager of the Huon Valley Council, Mr Cockerill submitted that:

"... the Huon Valley Council has undertaken a sport and recreation study which adopted a whole-of-valley approach, I suppose, to look at all the facilities in the valley. It was done by Hepper Marriott and Associates in 1996 and its findings were adopted by council. It identified a need for sports centres in the valley; it identified a need for a sport centre at Cygnet, and it also adopted a philosophy that sporting facilities should be decentralised rather than centralised.

...Can I indicate that this project has the full support of the council and it has the full support of the community... I must say that there was unanimous support from all the organisations within the community to relocate it here to be a partnership arrangement between the three tiers of government and the community."

The Committee questioned the witnesses regarding the management arrangements to be adopted in respect of the facility. Mr Doyle submitted:

"... your understanding with regard to the stratum titling of the project is correct. It is proposed that council would have ownership of the area under the multi-court or gymnasium; that the State would retain ownership of the general purpose hall, the building that currently accommodates the swimming pool; and there would be joint ownership of the shed facilities. So that is how ownership comes around.

With regard to your question of future management, council does at the moment divest responsibility for management of a number of community facilities to community committees where they have responsibility for management issues, budgets and so forth with council administrative support."

Mr Cockerill outlined the other works to be performed by the Council in conjunction with the project:

"As part of the negotiations to it council is, as part of its commitment, going to undertake substantial works outside the school boundary. You did notice where the existing parking is utilised and for two reasons we would want to tidy that up, tidy the footpaths, actual car-parking arrangements which incorporated bus deliveries of students to and from the school. Also the roading arrangement for the gravel road that runs off on an angle there. So council has, as part of its commitment—and will do—undertake works outside which will incorporate parking for this project.

The other thing that encourages us to do it is that we need to have sealed areas, particularly asphalted areas, external to our gymnasium or sports centre because the worst thing for it is to be tracking in grit and blue metal and stuff on the soles of shoes which has major maintenance costs on the flooring."

## **5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

The evidence presented to the Committee demonstrated the need for the proposed work to go ahead. The proposal will achieve the upgrading to modern standards of the existing classroom and administration accommodation and the provision of a new three classroom block and the development of a new library. The proposal will also provide a purpose-built gymnasium, a valuable facility for the benefit of the wider Huon community.

Concerns were expressed by the Committee regarding the loss of two assets on the site of the proposed works, the above ground pool, located in the former manual arts block, and the metal General Purpose Hall. The Committee notes the undertakings made in respect of such concerns.

The Committee commends the forward planning relating to the future scope for the integration of library and educational facilities. The size of the library offers scope for Community Integrated Network Initiatives. The Committee views the ultimate integration of these related facilities as the optimum utilisation of this asset.

Accordingly, the Committee recommends the project, in accordance with the plans and specifications submitted, at an estimated total cost of \$1 603 500.

Parliament House, Hobart  
March 1998

S. J. WILSON M.L.C., *Chairman.*