

PUBLIC

THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS MET AT HENTY HOUSE, LAUNCESTON, ON THURSDAY, 14 AUGUST 2014.

RE: REDEVELOPMENT OF BROOKS HIGH SCHOOL IN ROCHERLEA

Mr ANDREW FINCH, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, DEPUTY SECRETARY, CORPORATE SERVICES; **Ms SHIREEN THOMAS**, PRINCIPAL, BROOKS HIGH SCHOOL; AND **Mr HEATH CLAYTON**, ARTAS ARCHITECTS, WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

CHAIR (Mr Brooks) - Welcome, everyone. This is a public hearing. The committee has the authority to recommend or not recommend that a project proceed. It is a requirement under law that any project over \$5 million has to go through the Public Works Committee. Those presenting evidence today will be protected by parliamentary privilege. If you repeat those comments outside this committee hearing, you won't be protected.

Mr FINCH - Redeveloping Brooks High School to a level sufficient for twenty-first century education service delivery is considered a very high priority for the department. We were all extremely excited when \$7.3 million was made available for the project as part of the 2013-14 Budget, given it has been a high priority for some time.

The school was established in 1990 and is one of five high schools that are servicing the Launceston city and suburban area. Importantly, it is the only high school servicing the large area of the northern suburbs of Launceston. This year it has an enrolment of 512 full-time equivalents from grades 7 to 10, and supported by 85 full-time equivalent staff.

The high school is supported by primary schools located at Mayfield, Mowbray and Invermay. Rocherlea students, who were located on the Brooks High School site that we saw this morning, have now moved to the former Mayfield school, which is now known as East Tamar Primary School. That happened at the commencement of the current school year. Brooks High School, as Shireen informed us this morning, is now using that ex-primary school site as a junior/secondary campus for years 7 and 8, and that is working extremely well. Part of that relocation provided us with an opportunity to relocate the Tasmanian eSchool northern campus to the site.

The high school building facilities, as we saw, are mostly in original condition, about 25 years old, very well maintained, but significant areas are no longer conducive to contemporary teaching practices or the current needs of the school. Brooks is like many of our secondary facilities. They are in need of redevelopment to suit modern learning practice. At Brooks, the current learning areas are very small, outmoded, outdated, unsuitable to support contemporary education practice around flexible and different styles of teaching, and they lack general amenity. We need to provide learning environments which meet contemporary standards and suit current teaching practice.

This project arose from a process that we initiated in 2007-08 - the Better Schools policy process - so we could identify high-priority projects to put into the government's budget process. Building Better Schools, and most people interface with it, is our strategic

PUBLIC

direction. It helps us prioritise the highest areas of need for important capital investment around our department's learners - what we call the Learners First Strategy - which is our centrepiece strategy. This strategy has a vision to develop successful, skilled and innovative Tasmanians. It is based around key values of learning, excellence, equity, respect and relationships, but importantly having modern facilities to provide these services is essential.

This project also supports the department's strategic asset management plan, which we have in place. That plan has the main aim to optimise the use of our built resources to support the provision of educational programs and ensure appropriate standards of accommodation to support best practice in service delivery. That is in schools and in information delivery services for LINC.

DoE has redeveloped significant numbers of schools in recent years and we are experienced in revitalising existing infrastructure to provide contemporary education facilities. We aim to get the best value for money that we are given. The resources are scarce and we endeavour to put them to the best use possible. That is what we are proposing to do with the \$7.3 million we are proposing to invest at Brooks High School. This project is recommended for the committee's approval.

Ms THOMAS - Just building on what Andrew said about the department's strategic direction based around those core values of learning excellence, equity and relationships, our school's strategic plan is driven by a collaboratively developed vision for our school. It is a vision that is owned by students, by staff and by family and community members - that is, inspired learners connected to positive futures. Everything that we do at our place is about connecting with great lives for our young people.

I will go over some important background detail about our school. The majority of our students experience social disadvantage in the extreme. Our current economic needs index at Brooks High School is 79 and it has increased each year for the past five years. We are currently one of the highest needs communities in the state. The lives that our students return home to once they leave our boom gate, for many of them, are quite beyond belief. Our school provides the only constant and only aspirational focus in their lives.

One in 8.5 of our students currently are humanitarian entries to this country, so they are refugees. Young people who were born in camps in Nepal and Bhutan primarily at the moment, but also in Horn of Africa countries. Sometimes they arrive on our doorstep a week after arriving in Australia, and come to our school. It is such a richness that they bring to us. It also builds a really rich cultural demographic for our school.

Some of our students have been child warriors in Horn of Africa countries. I have several boys who are not currently at our school but are in regular contact with me who saw both their mother and father having their heads cut off in Africa. They came to us, so our place needs to wrap around our students and make sure that every minute they are there is a learning opportunity for them. It is not just a place of cognition and academic learning. It is a place of social learning and building constructs about what the contemporary world means for them living in Launceston. Despite all of those layers of trauma that some of our young people experience, they are magnificent young people.

PUBLIC

I have had the privilege of coming back to Brooks. I was actually a student at Brooks High School. My father taught at Brooks High School for 25 years, so I feel incredibly privileged to be back in a community that raised me and grew me to be the person that I am. The shift has come from being very much a blue collar community where many of the families gained their income and livelihood from light industry. We have tried to capture that because in this redevelopment we want to be able to capture the history of Brooks, but also look to the future.

Despite all of those layers of difficulty and trauma that our young people experience, once they come through that boom gate every morning, we don't allow that to become an excuse for poor behaviour or lack of aspiration - indeed, for a grand life.

Over the last four years we have been able to turn our school around and our young people now will meet and speak to you. When I first arrived at Brooks the children wouldn't look you in the eye. I received an email last night from a colleague who was overwhelmed by our students. There has been a cultural shift as well. I will never forget after my first nine months there, the boys who had been elected to be prefects for the year said to me, 'Mrs Thomas, can we start wearing those things, I think you call them slacks', because they had been a hoodie, trackie and big basketball boot school. We want to provide them with what every other student and young adult gets, because that is what they get from being in a home environment that is able to provide that.

Despite that we have been able to build a teaching team that is second to none and have become a showcase school. Last year a team of us were invited - the only school in Australia - to speak in New York City at a huge international literacy consortium. We are regularly asked to present the work we do in teaching and learning practices across the country and also across the state. We have a teaching team that is full of passion and moral purpose and I can only imagine what we will be able to do when we have a physical environment that allows us to really capitalise and exploit the pedagogy we base our work on.

You would have seen this morning the current physical facilities. They are substandard. They are not large enough to house our classes of 25 students as well as desks and tables. There are no wet areas and no running water to support integrated learning in this twenty-first century, particularly in the areas of humanities where English, history and geography complement each other beautifully from the Australian curriculum. I spoke to you about the issue of being able to hear the boys going to the loo and hearing the urinal flush when I was working in one of the areas the other day.

You also saw this morning how the walls have been knocked out in attempts to open those spaces up. We can't do anything more; we've done all we can in trying to modernise those buildings. They are in good nick because I won't allow them to fall into any disrepair. There is almost a smokescreen there because you arrive in our stunning environment that once used to look a bit like an Indian rubbish dump and it smokescreens that substandard physical facility that we have.

The new build will bring us a twenty-first century learning environment for young adults. General learning areas that have flexibility allow our young people to collaborate, to be independent or to be involved in team-based learning and project spaces. They will have storage spaces for their lockers built in and we will have space, we will have individual

PUBLIC

bathrooms. Students won't need to leave their learning spaces to go to the bathroom and that in itself is a great risk management focus because there are vulnerabilities our young people have.

I am working with a group of students at the moment who are addicted to ice and meth, and they are only in grade 9. We have young people who are very vulnerable in that their parents are addicts. I will digress for a minute to give you a little insight. We had a boy arrive at school half an hour late not so long enough - we are really big on attendance, we want to have kids at school - and one of our office ladies said, 'Gee you're late', and I had to say to her, 'I just need to let you know that he's just taken his three siblings down to East Tamar Primary School because mum's a heroin addict. She's at home, she would have had a hit this morning when she got up, she's gone back to bed and he's fed and dressed those kids, taken them to school and now he has actually come to school. He wants to be here'. So our catchcry is, 'Thank you for being here'.

Our vulnerable kids might want to go and get a hit of a drug, and we work pretty closely with the police and health care providers around those sorts of issues, but the fact that they won't have to leave the block to go to the toilet and maybe scarper off and go down the street and have a bong or something will be so important. In the eyes of the general public that might seem so insignificant but for us it's really major.

I was speaking to Adriana about the fact there will be no staff rooms. There will be staff studies that are visible for our student learners, but our staff are learners as well. We are a learning community and our students and staff, particularly our senior students, will be able to gather in that social hub and engage in a coffee conversation. I can meet Caleb, a grade 10 boy, who tutors me on some of the ICT work we're doing. He's a whiz; he has so much skill and expertise. Rather than him coming to my office, I can say, 'Let's meet for a coffee over at the lounge', and other students will see that transparency of learning. 'Mrs Thomas may be the principal but she's a learner just like us'. That is really exciting. For me, having that social space at the heart of our school will enable our students to participate in our pathways to hospitality programs, for example, in the commercial kitchen space and do some catering and hold functions and, again, keep feeding into that aspirational focus for them. I really believe our young people deserve this and it will provide a jewel in the crown for education in the north of the state.

Mr CLAYTON - As you would have just gathered, Shireen is very passionate about her school. I must admit, the whole committee that has been involved in this design process shares Shireen's passion and it has been a wonderful experience going through this. As you would have seen this morning, Brooks High School is in a picturesque parkland setting. Unfortunately, a lot of the buildings are very formal in their set-up and tend to be isolated. As part of our process, when we were awarded this consultancy we met with the school and the committee and started to explore some masterplan options. The school had a few things in their mindset of what wanted to do. Right from the start the old primary school was going to be a grade 9 campus and they even started moving them over there as soon as we got in.

Part of our role is that we come in as an external party. I have done a lot of work in Education department areas so we started to test them on the best way of creating the school environment. We started looking at the things that were wrong, the things that weren't working and then we looked at the things that worked really well. Rightly or

PUBLIC

wrongly, there has been a lot of development around creating grade 9 campuses separate from the rest of the main campuses, with the view that they are the vulnerable students. I said to Shireen, 'If the grade 9 students are so vulnerable, why do you put them by themselves over to the side?' We started to ask the question, 'Why don't we bring them back into the heart and make them the most important part of the campus?' It is this idea of bringing them in. I remember the day they said, 'That's not a bad idea', so then the process started about creating a junior campus and a senior campus.

We touched on the schools that feed into Brooks and I believe every single one of those has been redeveloped through either the BER or other capital investment programs that are run through the department. When you go from a primary school that is fairly well developed and in very good condition and then into grade 7, you are going back about five or six steps, and in discussions with the committee there was that transition issue we were having. We starting talking about having an old primary school we could convert and then start to transition the students out of primary school in through the old primary school into a junior campus, and then we start to make them. As we progress through the process we get more grown up until we get to the end and start setting up these kids as young adults to allow them to move into grades 11 and 12 and then hopefully university.

We looked at numerous options. We looked at options of developing the buildings on the lower tier. We looked at options about putting one building down there, one building up and all that. When we started to look at where we wanted to go, it was very clear that we wanted to try to create this heart of the school, an area where everyone had real ownership. More importantly, one of the things that Shireen was very clear on was that the school is not just about learning, about numbers and reading. It is also about social learning and we needed to make sure that we were setting these students up ready for the bigger world.

On site, what we look to do is the existing library, which sits fairly central in the school plan at the moment. The idea is that we create that as a central social hub. That building will house a cafe, the canteen, and it will be a social learning area. There will be what is an old fashioned term - the library. The days of rows and rows of books are disappearing but there will be that opportunity to expand out and it becomes like the internet cafe type of thing. There is an opportunity to engage; there are spaces for meetings, informal and formal.

Flanked either side of that social hub, that social building, is the redevelopment of the learning plazas. The learning plazas are the key to this proposal in that these are our new learning plazas for the grades 9 and 10 students. These will give contemporary learning spaces that will allow the school to offer all the things that Shireen touched on, all the programs that they want to run, and the flexibility to move as it grows. Within those spaces we are looking at creating five general learning areas, which is a contemporary term for a classroom. It is not just a classroom; these are flexible rooms, they come and go.

We had a student who is now in grade 11 and so has moved on, who was on the design committee.

Ms THOMAS - She is also the chairperson of our school association now.

PUBLIC

Mr CLAYTON - Yes, she was part of it. We said, 'What do we want to put in these classrooms?'. Funnily enough, she turned around and said, 'When you are in that classroom you should be there to learn.'

CHAIR - Who was that?

Ms THOMAS - Tiffany Skeggs.

Mr CLAYTON - She said, 'I want to be there to learn.' We started talking through that. We wanted those general learning areas to be quite simple in what they were because there was a purpose. But for the social areas and the break-out spaces, that is where we wanted to play around with furniture and colours and different types of seating options to create this project room and this project delivery and these smaller type of things. The design that we have offers that flexibility to the school.

We also have a project room, which is basically a dedicated wet area. We can do science-based, cooking-based and other messy learning - probably an easy way to explain it. That is a fully vinylled area. We have stainless steel. You can get in there and we can lock it down and they can look after their own stuff in there, but it is outside of that classroom. There are lots of flexible areas.

The staff rooms are essential in these areas. They are all glassed; the staff are not hidden away. The staff are always integrated in what we are doing. Also we are incorporating toilet blocks, individual toilets, as part of each of these learning hubs that are accessible both from inside and outside. When they go out for breaks, they can access them without having to come back in through the building.

By locating the two buildings on that upper level, it does mean as part of this proposal to demolish the buildings on the lower level. As you would have noticed from the site inspection this morning, there are real access issues on that site. As part of this we have a sweeping path that links the junior campus to the senior campus, but also we have more direct routes. We think it is important that we create this central area.

Another factor is that it is a beautiful parkland setting, but half of it is behind buildings and half the areas in behind those existing buildings are all no-go zones. They are not accessible by the students because they cannot be supervised. As I said, when the bell goes, if you want to kick the footy or have a hit of cricket you nearly have to walk all the way up to the main road where the oval is. It means from a schooling point of view that teachers are scattered everywhere, so everyone goes in all directions.

The purpose of this plan is to try turn where those buildings are demolished into a new public park space where you can go and kick a football. It is not competition, but you can kick a football, kick a soccer ball, throw a ball, but it is close to a social hub. As we come out of the buildings for learning, they move into a social outdoor area and then more into an active area. Then you move down further into the old primary school ovals, which is really for active things. We have that graduation of areas, but they are all linked. The whole school community is still tied together.

Mrs THOMAS - That also presents us with better security for our site. A lot of our community like to access our site, which is fabulous, and we do not have very much vandalism at all.

PUBLIC

However, where those grey blocks are at the moment they provide a real barrier for community supervision, so that line of sight would be fantastic for our neighbours, who are very supportive.

Mr CLAYTON - It allows the school to connect to the greater landscape. At the moment they act as a barrier to the adjacent properties. They will come down and you will open up to the road, the houses and then the greater Launceston area.

As part of this project we are looking at how we tie this together. You would have seen from my submission the symbolism of the ribbon tying the buildings together, a bit of a play on the school gum leaf scene, so we have morphed that through. We have that symbolism about what we are doing, about bringing the school together, so once again we are reinforcing the ideas the school is already doing. We picked that up even further in the path. We are proposing a new avenue into the school to help people find their way. At the moment we are all guilty of it because we all did it today. We left and walked through the middle of the car park, so we are establishing a new avenue along the edge of the car park with tree lines. It will pick up down where the new primary school is. One of the concerns we had was that when you come into that site you naturally, if you are walking in, head towards the primary school, so we are looking at creating a new focal point at the start and then drag people using way-finding. We are using the different textures on the ground to help you get to the front entry. I had been to Brooks a couple of times and had taken two staff members and some other consultants out there and every single one of them did not make it to the front door of the admin building. They ended up in the library.

Mrs THOMAS - That is picking up on some history as well in terms of the old Brooks High School site, which is now down where the university is, because as a student at that site the arrival through the avenue was something very special. We are trying to keep that connect with the long history of Brooks High School and not just that relocated site.

Mr CLAYTON - As to the look and feel of the buildings, we were told what we do has to be completely different than what's there. There is a very domestic feel, it is harsh, it is all painted blockwork, although the school has done a good job with what it has. We've talked about where the students come from and keeping a light industrial feel. We're looking at bringing colours and materials in that reflect on that, but also bringing in some timber through ceiling panels inside to bring warmth and a feeling they don't have at the moment. Everything is harsh.

I went to Brooks before Shireen was principal and, to be honest, it was treated a bit like a prison. Everything had to be hard because it only got destroyed, so nothing was ever softened up. The grounds are now maintained very well, as is the building. We think by bringing respect to the buildings you get that both ways.

Mrs TAYLOR - I would like to start with the teaching-learning aspect. Shireen, thank you for your passionate and well thought-out presentation. Congratulations to you and the rest of the team you have gathered around you. It is heart-warming and very positive for me, and I am sure the rest of us, to see what your team is trying to do. In a way it's not surprising because I see so often in lower socioeconomic areas that people have a real heart for community and want their students to aspire to greater things, but it takes dedicated teaching and learning teams and terrific leadership at the top, so congratulations on that and the difference you've already made. You're to be encouraged.

PUBLIC

I have a question about population predictions. At the moment you have 520-odd students.

Mrs THOMAS - We have 512 students.

Mrs TAYLOR - Could you tell us about how that population has shifted over the last few years and what the ABS predictions are for the area? There is no point in building something that is not going to serve the area.

Mrs THOMAS - Currently we will lose a large grade 10 cohort this year, with a grade 6 cohort coming into grade 7 that is approximately 20 students less. I am very confident we are going to stay sitting up around the 500s for quite some years to come. The traditional drift that was happening, particularly from Mowbray Heights Primary School - which probably has more of a middle-class demographic; a lot of their students were heading to St Patrick's College - has turned and those students are now coming to us. In fact I have an appointment with a mum next Friday whose daughter is in grade 4 and she said, 'I've made up my mind, but I'm bringing my husband this time'. Her daughter is a very talented dancer and the private schools are wanting to offer her scholarships but she said, 'I want my kids to go to Brooks'. That drift has turned and the 20 or 30 who would head off to non-government schools are back in our court.

Mrs TAYLOR - That is very important for your student mix as well, and your parent mix, to have those students stay.

Mrs THOMAS - Yes, it is, because traditionally the cream has been skimmed off the top. That is having a great impact on those kids also leveraging up the middle performing students in their literacy and numeracy.

Mr FINCH - We've looked at the ABS statistics and, as we heard at the site visit, there is strong growth coming through in that birth-4 group, the preschool age group. We expect that will flow into our schools in the next five to 10 years and into the high schools particularly. We are confident the school will return to the mid to high 500 or 600 plus. Importantly, the school currently caters for approximately 700 students and we won't be adding to the footprint as part of this project.

Mrs TAYLOR - But you won't be taking footprint away either? There will still be capacity for that many students?

Mr FINCH - Yes, that's right, there will still be capacity for around that sort of number. As I said in the intro, this school is the only one on that side of town in the northern suburbs servicing a large cohort, so we're confident with what we're proposing here.

Mrs TAYLOR - Five hundred is a nice sized school. It's not too big and not too small.

Mrs THOMAS - I know just about every child's story, which is important.

CHAIR - I have had some experience with out of zoning or home area or whatever we call it. I know some schools would prefer not to have the existing government policy, but that won't be changing any time soon that I'm aware of. Having high standard facilities helps

PUBLIC

retain leakage out of low socioeconomic areas and schools into the other areas, including the private school system. Do you think that will help?

Mrs THOMAS - We don't tend to get the leakage to, say, Scotch Oakburn or Grammar, but we work really closely with schools like Lilydale District High School. There is an ebb and flow between our two schools. For example, I have just had a number of families come in whose children are in grade 6 at Lilydale District High School. They had heard great things about our school and I have shown them around but sent them back to talk to Greg Morgan at Lilydale. One of the reasons they are saying they would like their children to come to us is because Lilydale is a single-stream school where the kids start with their friends in kinder and stay with them all the way through to grade 10. They are looking at broadening their children's social experiences as well.

To be really honest we don't get leakage to other state schools unless we are negotiating a fresh start. That works across the city. For example, Kathy Davis from Queechy rang me a couple of weeks ago and said, 'Look, Shireen, we have come to the end of the road with this student, would you be prepared to take her on?' She's a great kid, it's just that she's not attending school and needs a fresh start. She has come to us and hasn't missed a beat but, lo and behold, one of our children moved into the Queechy catchment and has transferred to Queechy. So it's very much swings and roundabouts.

Our big growth in the past has been with our refugee population. The Hazara families that are coming from Afghanistan are being settled in the southern Launceston area, but there is talk of them moving into our area because of cheaper rent and that sort of thing. I would be really confident that we will maintain steady numbers. We work really hard and I have visited all of our feeder primary schools and conducted assemblies already this year and all the grade 5s and 6s come up regularly for whole days to visit our site and be mentored by a grade 9 student. Our grade 9 peer support leaders go to all of the schools. We are very big on our school being in the public arena so our prefects are always in their dress uniforms, collar and tie and blazers; they look schmick, they are schmick and the public take note of that. Our students will conduct polling booths and things in a local supermarket, so they are out there about issues that are of concern to them and our community values that and can see that investment. I am very confident that we will keep those numbers.

CHAIR - Your occupancy is around 64 per cent. I know we don't believe that completely because you cannot put kids in the toilet to learn, but it includes the footprint. This design does not enlarge the footprint. In the 2010-11 data on page 6 you have included years 11 and 12.

Mr FINCH - That's where we had some students.

CHAIR - You had 14 and 11. With the reintroduction of phased development of high schools offerings years 11 and 12, admittedly in regional areas first - and this is a longer-term policy - what impact will that have if Brooks were to go to that in the next, say, decade potentially, given the currently policy setting and that this is a fairly long-term renewal of the school? Has that been taken into account?

Mr FINCH - We have some capacity. We will have a school that will cater for close to 700 students. It is likely we'll have probably in the high 500s. It's like all these projects;

PUBLIC

it's about landing it right. You have to have an eye on the future but we don't want to build something too big or too small.

CHAIR - Admittedly there is provision in that for schools that want to trial that. There is capital works funding available.

Ms THOMAS - If you look at some example from Scottsdale High School, these students are not going to necessarily engage full time in grade 11 and 12 subjects all day every day. Already at Brooks High School we deliver a very flexible provision for some of our marginalised and disengaged young people so that there is an ebb and flow. We have some students who come in, once other students have gone home, to work in MDT under very close supervision - a teacher assistant and a teacher. It may be that some of the grades 11 and 12 subjects would be offered at different times during the day or in the evening. It is important for this facility to be the heart of the community, so I see this as a learning place for everybody in our community. We want people to be there during the evenings. We have a lot of community groups that use it now. I believe there is a lot of flexibility of provision that you can investigate and explore when the time comes for that sort of thing to take place.

Mrs TAYLOR - If it were to progress to grades 11 and 12, you would probably want a separate hub somewhere; where would you locate that? It's not that you need to put it on the plan now or build it now, but you need to look to the future. If that were to happen, where is this going to go?

Mr CLAYTON - At the moment there are lots of spaces on the site. We walked around the learning areas and there are 18 so-called teaching spaces there. If you multiply that by 25, there are 450 kids just in that area. The reality is those spaces are too small. That room we went into that had six people in it, when I first went to the site that had 26 in it, and a teacher. Once we do our new development we will still have the same amount of spaces but in our learning plaza we have a project room, which could be another teaching space. There are also the other specialty areas that are not being redeveloped as part of this. There is a drama building and the gym that have other spaces that can become teaching spaces. Science has four or five different areas. I don't think it's necessarily a learning hub as such that would be needed. They would be coming to do the more specialist-type things that could be fitted in amongst the existing buildings.

Mrs TAYLOR - Why? If we're talking about grades 11 and 12 - and I'm not saying necessarily I will support this or that it's going happen - you have 7 and 8, a junior section, and now you're doing 9 and 10 and they will be a cohort. If you want them to go to grades 11 and 12, they also will need some dedicated space. I am not talking here about the odd subject or after-hours - you can do that anyway and you will probably will do - but if there were to be a policy that every high school had a year 11 and 12 in the end, I imagine they would need a dedicated space separate to grades 9 and 10. They are a different learning cohort. Have you considered where you might do that if you had to build, because we do not want to wreck this wonderful plan that you have now?

Mr CLAYTON - There is lots of flexibility on this campus because of its size. There is area around the existing gym that could be redeveloped. There are areas down around the back of the e-classroom area that could be redeveloped, depending on where that program ends

PUBLIC

up. If we were having this conversation tomorrow or in five years, how that integrates is probably a little bit different. There is enough flexibility.

Mrs TAYLOR - My question is not necessarily where would you put it now. It is more that if you have this wonderful layout and plan, you need to think about it.

Mr FINCH - We have to assess it based on what was occurring. It is a bit like what we are doing now with schools. We are still not certain exactly what the student preference will be. There will some who do want to stay in the local areas to study but there will be some who still want to go to the college for accessing that broader range of subjects. It is hard to know, but we can be flexible enough to cater.

Mr CLAYTON - That is exactly right, because everything we are doing is to be flexible with the design. Whilst we have created a junior and senior campus, the whole conversation was that any of the grade groups have to be able to move around. It may change; there may be some other reasoning. We have the ability to move things around.

Ms THOMAS - For example, in the junior campus currently, a space that used to be used by Rocherlea Primary School as their multipurpose hall, like a gym, has become a reading zone for our junior campus, but it can also be divided into three for discrete general learning areas. We could almost make that for the small number of grades 11 and 12 that we could potentially have. That could become the grades 11 and 12 learning space. The key is the flexible capacity of the build, because within each of the new GLAs there will be the five classroom spaces, but also outside of those more spaces that probably could be developed and modified in the future to be further GLA areas.

Mrs TAYLOR - I was not asking for them to be on the plan now. I was thinking have you thought that the future might not be the same as the present.

Mr FARRELL - We had a look at the existing buildings that are to be demolished. It was obvious some of the rooms there were very small and would be extremely crowded with 25 to 27 students in them. What other difficulties do you have with those buildings, apart from the small size of the rooms? Are there other issues in regard to workable space, safety and those things?

Ms THOMAS - You smelled the smell when we went in. Because we have had to use what was once a coming together space as a general learning area, it is that thoroughfare and there are only two exit doors. Students have to come from those back spaces, through other learning areas and out. That is a concern.

Mr CLAYTON - From an architectural point of view, there is also a lack of natural light. All the new buildings will be very transparent, in and out. Every room will have a view to a landscape, which is important to help in wellbeing, eye strain and things like that to help with the learning. It is the hard nature of them and the inflexibility that they offer.

Mr FINCH - You are in the classroom or you are not. We cannot create any areas where you can work as a group or a small team or collaborate. You are in the room and it is a very traditional style of teaching that it provides for.

PUBLIC

Mrs TAYLOR - If we are talking about those buildings, Andrew, will this resolve this issue in the reasonably long term? I ask this because this is a 1990s building. We have lots of high schools, and primary schools for that matter, in the state that are much older than that and much less suitable than this one. Was it just that it was poorly designed and built in the 1990s? Why does the building smell?

Mr FINCH - Again, just walking there you can see that it is on the southwest side of the school, so it doesn't get a lot of sunlight. There may be an issue with a bit of dampness there but I don't know exactly.

Mrs TAYLOR - The question was whether these buildings were appropriately built in the first place? I don't care whether they were or not, but I do care that the new buildings are appropriately built and we don't have the same issues or similar issues.

Mr CLAYTON - I'm not sure what the process was when they were built but from working with the school and the school community I think we are reasonably comfortable that with the flexibility we have in our design the school will be able to do what it needs to do to deliver all those things Shireen talked about earlier today.

Mrs TAYLOR - Double-glazing?

CHAIR - We might kick off on a bit more of the building design if you want to go into that now. I had some questions around the project priority, the community engagement and also the make-up of the working group. We could kick off a little bit on that first or we can do the design.

Mrs TAYLOR - I am happy.

CHAIR - The first question, Mr Finch, is around the priority. You said in your overview that it came from the Better Schools project in around 2008 when schools submitted their wish list and then part of that was funded. This committee can only recommend or not recommend. We can't change the project. We can certainly suggest some things could be looked at further, but we don't have that luxury under the act. What we look at is the stated purpose, so will this project deliver what the purpose is designed for, is it needed and what is the advisability of that need - and we will get to that later on towards the end where you will have to go on the record and say that - and then the present prospective value of the work. They are the three criteria this committee is required to look at and assess under the act.

I would like to clarify the priority of this project over others and the need and advisability of this project over others, given that it was sent to the department from schools all around. Based on that need, is it the highest priority from the department's point of view?

Mr FINCH - Yes, I can assure you it is. The project came from the school community. It was initiated from the school community back in 2009-10. It came in as part of a large number of projects from schools, in excess of 100 submissions, but we immediately formed regional committees consisting of principals of schools and facilities project officers and so on who could sit and break down and look at each submission and visit sites. We came up with some regional priorities and then we had another group that had to put a statewide overview against those priorities. We essentially formed what we saw as about the 20

PUBLIC

highest priorities. Obviously we couldn't go to government for 100 projects so we had to narrow it down and we had a very rigorous process to get to that list of 20. Having been personally involved in that, Brooks was at the highest end of the priorities.

CHAIR - Is that based on regions or statewide?

Mr FINCH - Initially it was regions to give us that scope of awareness.

CHAIR - So a few schools in each region, I suppose, or was it a statewide list - it doesn't matter where they are, that's where the priority is.

Mr FINCH - From all the schools that submitted we then had the challenge of prioritising those. We had the criteria that is outlined in Building Better Schools to enable us to shortlist those. We shortlisted and prioritised them on a regional basis, but then we had the challenge to cross-prioritise those on a statewide basis. We had regional works committees and a central asset strategy steering committee, and representatives of each of the regional ones participate in the central committee. We consider we have a very good prioritisation process to identify the highest priorities. We are then able to put those to government as part of the annual budget process.

CHAIR - And that was in the 2013-14 Budget? There was a list of 10 other schools in there. I suppose there have been some community discussions around whether they were the correct priorities or not. This committee won't enter into that debate at all but as the representative for the department, are you satisfied this is the highest priority spending of public funds on a school in the state?

Mr FINCH - Yes, I am very satisfied; I have been through the process. I was heavily involved in the BER program in 2009 and that enabled us to get a good overview of schools but importantly it also provided for significant redevelopment of primary schools. We are fairly open in saying that a significant number of our secondary schools and colleges are in need of significant redevelopment. We could almost do with another stimulus program for secondary schools and colleges. The nature of our priorities now in submissions to government for funding see secondary schools and colleges at the highest level of priority, given we have many outdated facilities that do not suit modern teaching pedagogy, as Shireen has outlined. I am very confident this is at the forefront of our priorities. It is much-needed expenditure.

CHAIR - With that additional investment in capital works around the dozen or so schools in last year's budget, does that mean the department reduces its capital works program into the future?

Mr FINCH - No. Importantly, we're working on the next set. We're almost shovel-ready, so if by chance there was some form of program that came along we're ready to go.

CHAIR - A bucket of money - there isn't one I know of.

Mr FINCH - It is a competition for funding across the various government portfolios and we need to be ready so we can get the best outcomes for our learners and clients as part of that process.

PUBLIC

CHAIR - I want to talk about the project working group. The progress was identified, you submitted the ideas and then formulated it. Is Tiffany Skeggs the student representative and chair of the school association?

Mrs THOMAS - Tiffany is a student. In terms of the committee, expressions of interest were called for through a school bulletin to our community, through our staff memo for staff representatives, and also through face-to-face staff PL sessions. Expressions of interest were placed by staff who were interested and also through our school association. The people who formed the committee were those who expressed interest. I have to be honest, there were not a lot of people jumping up and down wanting to be part of it, I think because they know it's a demanding role. It has been an excellent committee. We made sure that before we even met with the architects, as a committee, we went to look at the most recent builds the Department of Education had been involved in. We visited the wonderful Port Sorell Primary School; Sam Abblitt is the principal there. We then went to Burnie High School where Judy Fay is the principal and we had some consultative sessions with our teaching staff. Other staff were invited to be part of that if they wanted to, but because this is focused on teaching and learning we wanted to get some clear guiding principles from our teaching staff about what they saw needed to be part of the build.

As well, every member of our teaching and non-teaching staff were invited to be part of it. They visited the most recent secondary school builds in northern Tasmania, St Patricks College and Scotch Oakburn. We had a bit of a bus tour and were welcomed very generously on both those sites and again came back and workshopped it so we were able to go to Heath with three very clear guiding principles that the staff had endorsed. As we moved through each phase we put draft designs up in the conference room, Heath and the team developed a fly-through that was shared at a school association meeting, advertised on the newsletters and shared at a whole-of-school assembly.

We're not yet at the micro level in terms of going even deeper consultation because it's not appropriate yet, but we will certainly do that. Any staff who have had an impact on their teaching space we have met with one on one or as a small group to talk about the process with them.

CHAIR - While we're on that track, part of the consultation and the process I am aware of that would be fired subsequent from this committee, would be that if the committee did recommend the project it would then go to tender and it would then be - we have a time line in here somewhere. It does limit the opportunity to amend it to a point. One thing I would be considering, as I am sure other members are considering, is whether it fits within the stated purpose and is value for money. I am concerned about representations that there may be a better opportunity to include other areas if that has not gone to the detailed consultation yet, but once this committee approves it, it limits the ability to amend or to change it, so how can that we worked out? It might be a better question for Mr Finch because he might have more understanding of that.

Mr FINCH- We have to get the consultation right for the situation so that we have a group we can work with and have the right levels of input. Importantly, there will still be room for further consultation around, for example, fit-out, because we are at the fairly high level of making sure we get the designs right. When we get into fit-out, as you can see in the budget, we have \$500 000 for furniture and equipment, so we'll want to consult with school staff around the types of furniture and equipment we put in. Similarly, there is a

PUBLIC

requirement to spend money on public art, with a budget of about \$80 000, but there'll be provision to work out what type of artwork and what artist we use.

Ms THOMAS - For example, last night I met with a digital media specialist and our visual art specialist to start a deeper conversation around the storage they will need in the digital media room. We are not at any place to make any hard and fast decisions but we'd had conversations at the end of last term and they had send me some emails about their thinking. I will take that back to the next committee meeting and let them know that's what I've done.

CHAIR - I understand you have the freedom to move equipment and things such as that but it is very hard to change the plans once they have gone through the committee. There is some limited scope but it is quite challenging.

Mr CLAYTON - The plans we are presenting here today, Mr Brooks, have been shared in the wider Brooks community and tested through the school. The school has expanded it through the newsletters, it has been on display and there have been opportunities to make comments on it and we have made changes from the feedback we received from staff. They didn't necessarily want to be part of the physical design committee but were happy to have their five cents' worth once they realised they might be working in that room and how their world would change. We have been accommodating those sorts of changes all the way through the process. From our perspective, it's never locked in stone until we start putting bricks and mortar on site. It is a flexible entity to a degree.

CHAIR - And there's still a bit of movement in variations anyway during construction.

Mr CLAYTON - There always is. Even from our perspective, as we start to resolve and get a bit more detail in the design things have to change when you start adding steel column and bits and pieces. The school has been part of this journey right from the start.

Mrs THOMAS - Having been part of these sorts of projects in other schools, you also have to have a very healthy dose of reality in leading this sort of project. You can get to a place where every single member of staff wants to have their space done the way they want it, for the here and now. My focus is about creating a facility that is available to future generations and communities of the northern suburbs. One staff member said, 'I'd really like to have those flags that hang across the walls. That's what I want in my space', but this isn't 'her' space we're talking about. It's 'our' space; it's our community's space.

I have met with the mayor on a number of occasions and briefed Albert on where we are going because he is such a passionate supporter of our northern suburbs. That consultation has gone wide. I was briefing the Smith Family yesterday, who are quite extraordinary supporters and stakeholders in our community, of where we are at.

It's the 'our', not the 'my'. That is the caution I always have when I approach the leadership or facilitation of one of these projects - this is longitudinal stuff, not just for the here and now. That is something we have to be very cautious of.

CHAIR - We will move on to design.

PUBLIC

Ms OGILVIE - Congratulations on what looks like a fantastic project. I am a big fan of public education. I come from an industry background in communications technology so I am particularly interested in that. One of the things I am particularly interested in is making sure you have the opportunity to re-vision a school and a project, and that we are thinking very much ahead on the communications technology side of things, not just for those subjects but how that creates a platform across which the rest of your curriculum can sit.

NBN is the project everyone is most interested in at the moment but cabling the school and making sure it is accessible, supports your media course and supports your other courses, particularly vocational courses - have you thought that through? Are you satisfied that is integrated and future-proofed as much as it can be?

Mr CLAYTON - It is something we have to consider. The Department of Education has an IT policy we are required to facilitate through. That is their cabling requirements and all that sort of stuff. We will work with the DoE IT department in developing those requirements. As part of this project we do need to link the two campuses, which are fundamentally sitting isolated, so there will be a fibre link between the two. There are a number of technical things that need to occur between that.

Ms OGILVIE - Wi-fi?

Mr CLAYTON - We will be putting wi-fi through. The idea of creating this social hub is to create this wi-fi environment; even in the social spaces of each of the learning plazas there will be wi-fi. Every one will have wi-fi. There will be plug-in ports if you are doing heavier data usage stuff. I was told in no uncertain terms by Tiffany to make sure there are plenty of power points to plug in to recharge your phones, your tablets and things like that. The school has a laptop policy they are developing now.

Ms THOMAS - Every grade 7 student has their own personal laptop.

Ms OGILVIE - Is that provided by the department or the parents?

Mrs THOMAS - We provide that. We purchase those within our IT infrastructure. The students are responsible for those. They use them through to grade 9 and at the end of grade 9 there is the option to purchase. As well we have a whole lot of iPads and tablets, et cetera. In the primary schools iPads seem to be the thing they start with and then move on. The iPads came in a blaze of glory, but they probably don't have the capacity to do some of the jobs we need them to do.

Mr FINCH - We equip each teacher. We are just in the final stages of equipping every teacher in a government school with a device. It is generally a laptop, but some have chosen tablets and it was their choice within each school to determine that. We have teachers well equipped, and as Shireen said the students have been well equipped. We are almost getting towards one for one, one student to one device, but we are also setting ourselves up for bringing their own devices as well. Having a wireless network and functionality so people can bring in what they are used to using. Most people have a phone now and functionality on it so they can tap into the network and use their own device as well. We have to be flexible for all.

PUBLIC

Mr CLAYTON - We are looking at smart boards and screens for presentations. We are looking at reusing some of the monitors as messaging boards in the social areas, so the administration can communicate with students through that. The school is developing a fantastic app. They are embracing technology. Shireen gave us some evidence earlier about one of the grade 10 students who is actually tutoring Shireen in the use of IT and things like that, so it is fairly prevalent.

Ms OGILVIE - You mentioned the furniture, so that obviously needs to integrate with this use of technology and all the things that you have spoken about. Have you given some thought to how that will work together?

Mr CLAYTON - As part of my team we have interior designer, so we have been incorporating that type of furniture in the rooms. As part of the design committee there was a student representative, so Tiffany was on that. We spoke about the general learning area, which is the traditional classroom. She said that should be a fairly plain blank room because we are there to learn. We want the board and we want things fairly rigid, but when we get into these break-out spaces and the smaller areas it should be fun, bright and should give us a range of options to sit on the floor, sit in a bean bag to use an ottoman item or use a bench seat, so we have incorporated all those ideas. It is not just putting 25 people in a room. That might happen for 15 minutes and then there will be a group of five there, three there and someone might be working by themselves, but they can bring the whole group back together and have a hundred people in a shared area and you might just have a chat. We have those sorts of flexibilities. The ICT is intertwined in all of that. It is not something that sits separate; it is the whole thing.

Ms OGILVIE - When it comes to vocational courses and the interoperability question, I am thinking about the boys who like to program cars and those sorts of things. Can you explain a little bit about how you have thought that through?

Ms THOMAS - We lost our world championship title for formula 1 in schools. We were the world champions in KL a couple of years ago. We do some really exciting work around that design and engineering and we have some terrific partnerships with UTAS. I am very fortunate to be on the UTAS advisory board. I often exploit that a little bit in terms of building partnerships.

We also have a number of partnerships with community providers that ensure our students are getting some really good opportunities around vocational pathways. We employ, out of our school resource package, a 0.6 position which is exclusively based on positive futures for our young people. Matt's role is to work with our pathway planner, who works full-time in our school, with our grades 9 and 10 particularly.

We also run an academy program in grade 9, which is focused on vocational futures where students work with an adult mentor to design a course that will enable them to access experience in something they think they would like to be part of. We have students out on work placements for that at the moment.

Another partnership that I have grown has been with the National Joblink with Lisa Americanos. We host the Sparks and Spanners program in our automotive section. From that we bring young people from other parts of the north to be part of that. We have been so lucky to get students into apprenticeships, which has been fantastic. We have an

PUBLIC

amazing partnership with Greg Crick Motors. Tanya Cavanagh, who is the CEO there, also happens to facilitate a mentoring program at our school.

Our vocational work is really focused on community partnerships, on our being the first positive futures, formerly no dole school, in the state. We celebrated 20 years of that this year. Our belief is that every student at Brooks deserves a grand life, despite some of the absolutely awful difficulties that they experience. We have a remarkable educator in our MDT woods and metals area and some great industry contacts.

Ms OGILVIE - Are you integrating what the school does with industry at that level so that the kids can go on these vocational courses and then come back to the school which you are designing and have the capacity already there to apply the skills and technologies they have learnt separately? That is a bit of an infrastructure question.

Ms THOMAS - That is part of our teaching and learning naturally. It is also sometimes a challenge to be able to match, in our teachers, the vocational technology. For example, in architecture and design it is CAD programs and those things. However, our MDT teacher, Dave, is being tutored by the same student who is tutoring me on CAD, and that is part of David's professional development plan.

Mr FARRELL - I noticed a couple of the existing building that were very dark. I was surprised they did not get a lot of natural light, even on such a beautiful day like today. Also I was surprised to see that, even though the buildings were built in 1990, they were still heated by those brown fan heaters that sit on the wall and make a noise. It must be uncomfortable for any students who have breathing difficulties. What is the planning in the new building for light and heating?

Mr CLAYTON - The changes to the building code mean that we have energy efficiency requirements, and energy efficiencies for Tasmania have tightened up unbelievably - very difficult. We have, as part of our team, a sustainability consultant that will model and advise on this as whole rather than individual elements, which the Building Code looks at. We're looking at the use of double-glazing, highly-insulated walls and ceilings and concrete slabs for thermal mass. We're looking at setting up our windows and openings to get good cross-ventilation so we're not having to rely on mechanical systems to heat and cool the facilities. We don't find it is conducive to good learning spaces if you are relying on an air-conditioner to blow hot air all the time. Any of our heating and cooling systems we have are controlled by the security system, so when the cleaner leaves at the end of the day and arms the security everything shuts down. We won't have the ability to leave things on, so those running costs are managed. We are looking at reusing water back to flush toilets and things like that. The school already has solar panels so we will incorporate those back into what we are doing. The light fittings we use are always LEDs and T5 fluorescents.

We do the best we can within the budget we have. You can always take these things another steps but we believe we've found a good balance between what is a good economic return. Sustainability needs to be practical as well. We can do these things and spend lots of money for not a lot of benefit but we like to know we're getting something back for the things we do. If we're going to invest in these things, there needs to be a real-world saving for the school. The running costs of the facilities are important and that's why we shut things down so things can't be left on - if you push a button, it goes for two hours and shuts

PUBLIC

off. There's a tendency to let things run just because they do or if it gets a bit hot open a window rather than turn the heater on, so it automatically shuts off. Rather than motion detectors where the lights come on as soon as you walk in front of it, you still have to physically turn it on but if there is no movement in that room for a period of time the lights turn off. So absent tech rather than motion tech - it's the little things like that that we're looking at incorporating into what we do to help get that real-world sustainability.

Mrs TAYLOR - I was impressed with the detail in the submission you'd gone into for both technology and sustainability. I want to ask about teacher and student movement, particularly between your junior secondary and senior secondary campus. I am imagining that a fair amount of movement will still need to take place from your junior campus across to your specialist areas. It is a fair distance so how are you going to manage teacher and/or student movement?

Mrs THOMAS - In terms of the junior campus, we operate very much on a middle-school model where the teachers of our grades 7 and 8 students teach the students English, history, geography, maths and sometimes science, so there is limited movement required by the students. We are looking at having more of a focus on the teachers coming to the students. They will still need to move to the gymnasium for phys ed. When they get to a more sophisticated level of science and laboratory work they will have to move over to the science area and down to the MDT zone as well. Heath and the team have heard us. We didn't want to spend \$1 million on undercover walkways so we're having dash points. You would have heard the music play when you were there today, and the students know that that's the signal. There are two minutes of music and you need to be moving and at class by the time the bell goes. That doesn't always work because of adolescents - the nature of the beast, et cetera - and we're not perfect. With their timetables they know where they have to be and what we find currently is that if some of our students have a specialist session at the gym, they usually go to the gym and do table tennis, indoor soccer or whatever we are offering in the gym, so they are there ready for the start. They will still have to move.

Mrs TAYLOR - You are fortunate in having such a large site that you can landscape. That is fantastic from one point of view, but it also means that you can spread buildings out more than you can in a tighter site, I suppose.

Mrs THOMAS - Yes, and historically that has always been part of the Brooks way of being. When it was the old site there was movement then because each of the learning areas were housed in almost house-like little buildings. You always had to move.

CHAIR - It seems you have gone to some extravagance around a roof design at the taxpayer's expense. Why do we need so many angles and a cantilever there given that will add to the construction costs? What benefit does it give to the students?

Mr CLAYTON - Those angles you refer to is a facade and this is the symbiotic ribbon I was talking about earlier that ties the buildings together. Yes, there is a little bit of intricacy in putting that together but it is a facade that sits external to the main buildings. The buildings themselves with that element stripped off are very simple. What we are looking at is simple steel portal frames, which is how we do our large-scale sheds and things like that, picking up on that light industrial feel that we wanted to incorporate with the school. Then we are putting layers of timber ceilings under that to mask some of those areas. We then

PUBLIC

have this ribbon that wraps around which we think is an important symbol for the school of tying these things as a landmark.

Yes, it does look intricate. It is triangulated. It is interesting. It actually adds interest to the architecture of what we are trying to do and it sits forward of the main building structure. In saying that, it is a simple steel structure. It is a series of triangulation trusses that are supported by steel columns and then we are just putting single-sided aluminium cladding over that. We are not trying to waterproof that so the cost of that ribbon, as we call it, I don't believe is extravagant in the scheme of what it does as far as tying the buildings together.

As far as the cantilever goes, it becomes a bit a victim of the functionality of what we are trying to create. As you would have seen there today, we have the bank that falls down onto that lower level and as we create those learning plazas they naturally fall out. Where those cantilevers occur they are becoming under-crofts for storage. We are looking at putting plant and equipment under them now so they are not just going to be so-called expensive cantilevers, they will be usable spaces underneath. There are definitely cantilevers but we are stopping our structure at the natural line we are looking at.

CHAIR - I suppose on the perspectives on the drawing reference A23004/82 it looks like perspective 3 and 4.

Mr CLAYTON - Yes.

CHAIR - Is it cheaper to do it that way or cheaper to block the wall off and then create more storage space underneath?

Mr CLAYTON - The only bit that is cantilevered over is the little balcony that extends forward. That dark line underneath sits back at about the window line. To cantilever a 1 500 to 1 600 mm slab out over that distance is not that much more than if the wall was sitting hard out on the end. What it does is create a sense of depth and shadow and interest in the building. By putting that in it means we are reducing the landscaping and it just becomes a flat, blank facade, which is not what we are looking to create. We wanted to create something that had a bit of interest, depth and some contextual elements about what we are doing.

CHAIR - Is it more expensive to do it that way?

Mr CLAYTON - It would be marginally more expensive.

Mr FARRELL - I suppose you have to balance that up when you look at the school now and the buildings around the bottom area that just look like a large series of brick toilet blocks.

Mr CLAYTON - To be honest, I was told in no uncertain terms that what we had to do could not look anything like what was out there. If you want to make an architectural statement it comes at some form of cost. I believe we have come up with a good, responsible resolution to what we are trying to achieve. We haven't splashed out in every single area we could have possibly done, we have identified some key elements we wanted to address, which is the ribbon. We believe those cantilevers are an important aspect because there is that natural bank. The design would start to lose its impact if we just had blank walls

PUBLIC

coming off the bottom of the toes of banks where, if we set them back in, they become usable areas. The cost is not considerable above and beyond what would be just a standard flat wall.

CHAIR - When we are looking at the design and specs, on page 24 you have identified some materials and elements that are required. Are they locally available or are they required to be brought in? I have been given an example where a certain building project, not a school, in the northwest required the import of a certain wood stain because it didn't meet the architect's specifications. It couldn't be sourced locally so they had to fly it in to finish the job.

Mr CLAYTON - I don't know of any wood stain that is manufactured in Tasmania. Even a standard Dulux product is flown in at some stage. The products we have used are used commonly. None of these standard building products are manufactured here and we have to bring in most of what we need from the mainland.

CHAIR - I will rephrase that, 'available locally'? Do you consider that at all?

Mr CLAYTON - We consider it with everything we do; we have to. What we're finding in industry at the moment is that companies aren't stocking what they used to stock locally. Even a company such as Laminex that would have probably 70-80 per cent of their market, unless you want white, it's not stocked in Tasmania. It's stocked in Melbourne and they bring it over every three days. We would love to support buying locally. We try to support local manufacturers where we can such as Island Block and Pavers and those sorts of companies that supply locally, make locally and stock locally, but the reality is there aren't that many. The Vitrabond wall panelling is stocked out of Hobart. Some of the floor vinyls are stocked locally but only in small quantities. When we're talking about these bigger projects, it is all shipped in from the mainland on order. They don't even manufacture carpet tiles until you order them. We do our best to buy locally where we can, but it's getting harder and harder even to buy timber made locally. It's all coming from the mainland or New Zealand.

CHAIR - I have been given two specific examples that I have continued to pursue this year. One was around the staining of the door frames. My understanding is that it was available locally - not necessarily in that town or suburb but readily more available - but it didn't meet the specifications or requirements of the designers, therefore they had to fly an additional part of it in from interstate. I believe it cost around \$1 600 in freight.

I have been given another example of a government building where the flooring was specified beyond what is available in Australia, at an additional cost of \$40 000 to the taxpayer, based on architectural requirements within the drawings. I have spoken to those in the tendering process from government procurement and we would be better placed if we can get it domestically, locally or more easily available.

We should consider that whilst we design these buildings and put them in place. If we can support local jobs, that is an even better outcome. That then frees up more money for things that can deliver a better result rather than having a wood stain 7 compared to a wood stain 8, depending on what is available.

PUBLIC

Mr CLAYTON - I agree with everything you said. It is our responsibility as designers to be responsible for that. I can't think of anything that would fit into the criteria you have said here. There are things that are only stocked in on the mainland; I am not going to deny that. That is the reality of what we have here. With any of the works that we do, if we know there are long lead times or anything like that we clearly identify that in our tender documents so we don't get those thing if they do.

Some of the vinyls take 12 weeks to get because they're not used as readily; the high-slip-resistant ones are sometimes not as readily available as your general-purpose vinyls. For example, the cafe and canteen area will need a high-slip-resistant vinyl that's not sitting in stock because it's not used every day, whereas the R10 is used and rolled out every day. We believe the products we are using here are readily available to any contractor.

CHAIR - We have a member of the public wishing to make a contribution and he has been patiently waiting for a little while.

THE WITNESS WITHDREW.

PUBLIC

Mr NICHOLAS MOORE, WOODWORK, PART-TIME, AT BROOKS HIGH SCHOOL, WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

CHAIR - Thank you, Mr Moore. Anything over \$5 million of government spending requires the committee to recommend or not recommend the project. We cannot amend the planning; we cannot amend the project. It either goes ahead or not depending on what this committee recommends. If we do not recommend it, the only way the project can go forward is if the Government were to legislate directly to approve that in a money bill. That is fairly unprecedented.

I thank you for making yourself available and giving a contribution. You are protected under parliamentary privilege during this hearing. What you say whilst you are at the table gives you full protection, immunity from civil and private liability but also from any administrative outcomes you are fully covered. As a member of the public you have as much right as anyone else to be here today and make your comments known. This is the forum for it. Anything you say outside of this committee is not protected by privilege, therefore you could be liable should you say something defamatory or the like.

I thank you for coming along. We welcome everyone and would like to hear what you have to say. The committee has your submission and we accepted that this morning. I will hand over to you if you want to make some general comments.

Mr MOORE - You have probably read my submission. I have come straight from work. I am one of the people who works in the MDT technology workshop. I am in the building that has the old, ratty brown fans rattling away which are just behind my office. I've worked in Brooks High School for 15 years and within my building the only redevelopment in 15 years has been a coat of paint, which is a bit disappointing, but that is the way the world works.

Having worked at Brooks High School part-time for 15 hours a week for 15-plus years and working at other high schools as a technical teacher aide in the workshop, one of my issues has been the very bad standards of workshop equipment throughout schools in the past. I have seen some equipment that had to be condemned. For example, I worked at Kings Meadows part-time as a relief teacher aide and, unfortunately, in reality I got it condemned because it was so bad. It was from the 1960s and the workshop was so bad it was an embarrassment to anyone involved. One of my comments about developments is that right next door was the Kings Meadows office area, which was a beautiful recently refurbished office with all the best of everything - which I have no dispute with. You walk through a door and there was a building that needed to be condemned. It was completely rewired - no correct wiring safety - and being a tradesman of many years it was a disgrace to the system.

A few comments from the basic description. It is about \$7.3 million for the main structures of the building redevelopment, and \$500 000 broadly allocated to furniture and equipment. As I stated in my description, we have equipment that came from the old Brooks High School that is over 50 years old. It is held together with fencing wire, baked bean cans and bodgie covers. In reality I have tried for many years to get it sorted at a global level but

PUBLIC

apparently it is all done in school and each school is its own little world. That is my basic bush description of it.

I haven't seen anything about what is going to happen in our section, so I don't know. My point is that I would like to put the case forward so that it is registered. There is no use having a \$7 million school with the future of vocational training, with equipment that is knackered and should go to the tip. You could say it is serviceable. A lot of it wouldn't meet any of the current Australian Standards. For example, a sanding machine has a sander on one side, a sander on the other side, so in theory you can have a student on both sides. Those are banned on the mainland because you can have two operators and all the dangers of that. The equipment is old. Basically it is passed its use-by date.

I haven't seen any money allocation to this procedure. I believe they just did up Kings Meadows High School, and I think it was about \$70 000 roughly to do the job. With the machinery we have there are probably only three machines that you would sign off as current reasonable standard machinery. Possibly it is going to happen in the job, I don't know, but it would be rather ironic if they sent a million-dollar project in and then you walk into the building and it is full of junk. There could be a plan to replace it, and I hope there is. In reality it pretty much needs a full replacement. Most of the machines are 25 years old; some of them are over 50 years old. Basically every machine has had to be modified to make it safe; there are funny covers. There are no brakes on some of the lathes. Some machines have a certain standard now.

You are looking at the future. At the moment I am trying to help train a second/third year MDT teacher, and he is the future of the school, not me. I am an older person, only part-time and not a teacher. He should be seeing machinery now that is five years old. He's working on a machine today, as I left his workshop, that is 50 years old. If he is in that school in 20 years time he will be working on a 70-year-old machine. It is one thing for a private operator to battle on with money to replace machines, but it would be a reasonable expectation that in a major redevelopment it is all done. Maybe it is going to happen.

One of the comments has been that not all building products are available in Tasmania. With some of these machines we are pretty much limited to one supplier in Tasmania, which is at Kings Meadows.

My comment for the whole of the education since I started is that there's no global policy. If the policy of one school is dropped, it doesn't happen, and once it's lost you won't get it back. If you had been to my school today, our building has been split in half. On the plans you will see it is half art and half MDT. We have lost, in the process of the redevelopment, four storerooms and one classroom. That is the reality. We have lost one room's worth of machines worth approximately \$20 000 in current replacement value. If it was going to cost \$70 000 a year ago, now \$20 000 has been knocked off the top so there is less to spend to replace what we have.

I don't know if there is any plan in the structure for a dust-free room because dust is a major problem in schools. In Brooks High School there is a small 10 by 12 spray booth. That was basically condemned by workplace safety about 10 years ago because it was an explosive hazard and had not been built right in the first place, so has not been able to be used for 10 years. There is an example of a place where something that could be replaced in that position.

PUBLIC

I hear about the wiring. For example, within schools there are switches to turn things on and off, like in an emergency, and you reset them. What has happened is that our school is about 25 years old and half the switches are broken, so in our school to save money half the switches are one key and half are another key, and these are the emergency resets. Logic would be that we already have half new ones, so replace them all with fully new ones and then they are all the same. Every school workshop I go to has different equipment. There is no global standard for anything.

I do not work at other schools anymore because the risk to me of entering another workshop is too great. The same risk occurs to student teachers and part-time teachers. I do not know if there is any allowance, in this refurbishment, of the workshops for any of this sort of thing. I built a mock disabled bench that had adjustments so you could move it for a wheelchair boy up to a high kid; that was 10 years ago for the Education department on a grant. That was never pursued by anyone. As far as I can see there is a need for one of those in every school workshop. This school workshop redevelopment should have two or three of those for disabled people.

The basic comment I have had is that it is going to be in the future six months. I thought I would get in and make some comments and maybe it is logged in. If it is not done and there are still 50-year old machines, I would like to see them put the plaque for the reopening of the school over the 50-year old machine when the minister opens it. Hopefully something is going to happen. I am a bit cynical, but you guys all work for the government and you are not driving to work in 1954 Holdens. It is a fair point. The main thing is that I have concerns for the future of trainee people. It is their future.

One of the other comments is double-glazing. They are splitting art and the MDT and if they do not get the soundproofing right it is going to be a real menace. One way to improve it out of sight is to replace the old machines, which are basically a V8 Holden, with a Suzuki Swift - in comparison to noise. It would be a way of maybe saving money on the other part of it by thinking about these things as they progress.

Ms OGILVIE - You say you have worked through a number of schools, so you have a bit of a global view on this equipment issue. There must be some form of asset management, audit and OH&S checking that goes on?

Mr MOORE - There is. For example, there is an old ancient lathe; the school may have got that for \$1 500. To replace that if it is written off, the equivalent is \$15 000. Every machine of any substance that you have to put into a school workshop costs roughly \$2 000 to \$3 000. My department has never had a new desktop computer in it for 15 years. This is the technology department. There is an audit done every year of equipment, but who knows? Workplace safety only recently came in and said most of the stuff is okay. Their basic attitude was that if you are happy to sign it off and say it's safe, go with it. I'm an expert in industrial design, ergonomics, et cetera, so if you come into the building and you're the person to sign, you sign it and it's safe - Workplace Safety has an interest in schools but I would say they come in when there is a crisis. That's the reality, that's how it operates.

It would be lovely to at least see schools with a common standard in workshop. A young teacher in a workshop who often doesn't get much training at university in workshop duties

PUBLIC

could have been a cooking teacher yesterday. They walk into the workshop and the reality is if someone says they can use it they are using a full-blown industrial machine. It happens. Whether people say it does or doesn't, it does happen at times; I've seen it happen in other schools. I've seen people let students use the machines. I'm just explaining the reality of how it works. It would be good to get all the old junk out.

As an observer at the back, I hear it would be good to have great facades, et cetera, but if I had \$70 000 to spend on that or new equipment to save the next generation of teachers, I know where I would be spending my money as a taxpayer. If it is a \$7 million development and this costs \$70 000, it is 1 per cent of the budget. It's not much in the scheme of the world, is it? I just wanted to put that out there. What concerns me is there are not more people here because it's a huge community of people and I'm the only mug here, but I can carry that. My concerns affect people such as the young teacher I was teaching this morning.

Mrs TAYLOR - I hear what you're saying about the equipment being out of date, and it is absolutely valid that we should be teaching students for the equipment they are likely to be using in modern workplaces, but do you consider some of this equipment unsafe?

Mr MOORE - My background is as a toolmaker and fitter and machinist for the last 35 years. Some of the equipment is more akin to what you would see in someone's backyard. It doesn't meet the current standards, it doesn't have safety switches, and there are a lot of things that need to be done to improve them. It's like having an old car and putting ultra-modern parts on it. It's not valid to pump money into something that's already worn out. A lot of the equipment is old machinery that the kids can use but it's very user-unfriendly. Modern equipment has come along that frustrates the kids a lot less. If anyone here looked at some of this equipment, blind Freddy could see it needs to go. It is not like it might be a bit wobbly, it is very wobbly. Some of it is banned in other states. I do not know if it is going to be kept; it's an unknown factor.

I'm not an expert in industrial machinery. If you had a genuine person who had the interest of a neutral viewer coming to look at it, I am sure he could find many reasons why it all should go. If it's 50 years old now, for the next teacher it'll be 70 years old. This is supposed to be twenty-first century development. I don't know if they will spend the money on it but it would be pretty sad if they don't replace the lot. They did Prospect High School but they ran out of budget - I know people who work there - so they got beautiful machinery on one side of the room and some of it is still the old junk from 1960. It's not a good look.

That is my commentary and hopefully it's on record and someone might take some notice of it. I'm not an expert who can sit on panel even with the school to decide this. I can say what I think but you need independent people who don't have an agenda of saving money. They just say, 'What do you need to bring this up to the current standards?'. Some of our equipment comes from South Australia, the lathes, et cetera. I occasionally have contact with the suppliers there and have a general talk with them and they say, 'The stuff you've got was banned in our state years ago. It's not even allowed to be screwed to the wall anymore.' That is my commentary and I'll leave it at that.

Ms OGILVIE - Thank you very much.

PUBLIC

Mr MOORE - I hope I got my point across.

CHAIR - We appreciate you taking the time out to make a contribution and giving evidence.
Part of this is public opportunity and we welcome it. Thank you.

Mr MOORE - Thank you.

THE WITNESS WITHDREW.

PUBLIC

**Mr ANDREW FINCH, DOE, DEPUTY SECRETARY CORPORATE SERVICES,
Ms SHIREEN THOMAS, PRINCIPAL BROOKS HIGH SCHOOL, DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION, AND Mr HEATH CLAYTON, ARTAS, ARCHITECTS, WERE
RECALLED.**

CHAIR - We might now look at costs on page 26. I drew the ire of some community members when I objected to \$80 000 being spent on a car park for art but it is current legislation and is not going to change this week, so I will retract that.

I'm not aware of any pending change. I note that you have said it is about attracting local art students and opportunities to make the aesthetics of it more pleasing and that could be one way we don't need to put it all in a ribbon in a roof, but we could make a nice mural or something on a straight wall. We could get some art students to design a three-dimensional mural out of the existing budget.

Mrs THOMAS - I really am hopeful that we are able to use that as part of the arrival to Brooks High School to capture that sense of avenue and arrival, and still bring in that history focus about community, so that it is both a piece of public artwork but is also utilitarian; it has a purpose as well.

CHAIR - I have had some debates with architectural representatives, not around the existing legislation because it is current law that it has to be in there, but on how we could use it better with our tendering and involve more local opportunities for young people or aspiring artists who can use part of that money to help fund that. I would be interested to see whether that can be taken into account as part of this tendering process. The stereotypical thing is that you would have someone pick some overpriced artwork from somewhere to hang on the wall. That is to me a lost opportunity and we can use that funding required under legislation to help some local artists develop their skills and have their work displayed. Whether that is in a bench setting or some more furniture-based artwork, the entrance or mural painting.

Mr CLAYTON - We have already commenced a discussion with Arts Tasmania on this project and they have met with Shireen and part of our role as part of this commission is to form a committee to look at the art component and ensure it gets incorporated as part of the building. I must admit I can't remember the last time in the recent past where paintings have just been hung on the walls. There have been some issues with that art program in the past but it has got better and there are more artists participating in it now than in the past who are more accommodating to meeting the understandings of working in a school and these other environments. It was a challenging thing for artists to get their heads around and now we're getting more and more artists understanding what is needed. It needs to be usable and something people can engage with, not just something that sits there and everybody looks at. I know a key factor that Shireen has been talking to Arts Tasmania about is that this thing has to serve a purpose.

CHAIR - It follows in the direction of the local benefits test, including local contractors where possible and more oncosts - we may as well include that in there. No doubt you are aware of the Treasurer's Instructions to include a local benefits test on government contracts. Is there anything the department is doing to engage more local businesses and local

PUBLIC

contractors to be on the approved tender list and to help make sure they are informed that they can tender for the work?

Mr FINCH- We don't directly influence the market because we are not the department. Our focus is on the education of students and the community more broadly. It is not in our department's scope to look directly at enhancing the opportunities for local business. That is done in other departments. I predominantly provide the Department of State Growth and Treasury looks after the pre-qualification arrangements.

CHAIR - To clarify that, the Department of Education does not have a say in who is on the approved tender list and who is not, it comes through State Growth?

Mr FINCH- No. As you would appreciate, there is a whole-of-government arrangement and it is good to work on a whole-of-government basis. There is a clear process for that and it is managed within the Department of Treasury and Finance predominantly and State Growth have their involvement and responsibilities around enhancement of local business.

Having said that, we have a big component of the state budget and we follow rigorously the Treasurer's Instructions for procurement purposes. That will be the case with this project. You only have to look at the track record for the department in the appointment of local contractors and the way this will go to the market. We would expect that a local contractor will be appointed. We will work with the Government's procurement board. This will be over the limit so it has to go to that procurement board as well which is constituted with industry representatives. They will prepare a submission to that and will look at tender strategy and sign that off, and that includes building and construction representatives. That is what we will be looking to do. We would be optimistic that we would get a good, competitive outcome given the current situation in this end of the state, particularly regarding construction work at the moment.

CHAIR - I believe the department can apply for an exemption from the commitment for desegregation of government contracts.

Mr FINCH- No, we do not exempt. We work with Treasury and the Government's procurement board to assess each one on a case-by-case basis. I had a meeting with Treasury this week in respect of some tenders we have coming to the market for our statutory maintenance because we have a suite of those, a bit related to what we were talking about a minute ago with design and technology. We assist schools with roofing maintenance, lift maintenance, heating and ventilation maintenance. We have a suite of tenders and we funds those across all our slots. We look at the best outcome for each of those tenders, whether it should be a regional tender or a statewide tender, for example. We look at the best way to put each one of those to the market. We are trying to make sure local contractors aren't squeezed by a head contractor in the situation.

There are different arrangements for each thing. There are probably several roofing people but there are not many fire system contractors, for example, so it is a case-by-case approach. We are looking to get the best outcome with each tender we put to the market.

Having said that, the department is not in the business of subcontracting. We have to get the right mix because we can't employ people, for example, to do property development where we sell excess land to the school. We can't employ numerous people in the facilities

PUBLIC

area. We have to get the right level of input and for a job like this we rely on our key superintendent architect and a key building contractor. As part of our selection criteria when we put it to the market, we will be looking to appoint a local building contractor who then engages local subcontractors.

CHAIR - We all know there are some larger organisations that more or less buy the contract and then put backward pressure on the local suppliers and businesses to say, 'We got the tender. We know your price was \$40 000, but do it for \$30 000 or lose the job', which then means they don't make any money and it puts significant pressure on the small business. What they did was put fudged figures in the tender document in the first place. Part of the attitude I have is bringing that to light so that those who are in the position to manage those contracts and are responsible for it - and ultimately I would consider the Department of Education to be responsible for it - at least you are aware of it and ask the questions. We will be keen to continue to look at how we can make sure it is a more level playing field for all businesses, without showing favourable protection.

Ultimately we need to make it as level as we can. To have local businesses, local artists and whoever working on a local school is a great outcome for everyone, as opposed to a multinational that is going to bring in someone who doesn't care about the heritage or the aesthetics you're trying to achieve through your ribbon.

Ms OGILVIE - I should disclose that I was a member of the Arts Advisory Board for a number of years, so I come from that perspective. I completely agree with Adam that it is a very good opportunity for your students to work in an integrated way, both on the selection of the art but also a program of work around that selection. We heard from the wonderful Nicholas Moore who told us about his great tools. You obviously have capacity on site for people such as sculptors to come in and work. That is why you have Art and MDT next to each other.

Mrs THOMAS - We have a really strong, vibrant performing arts department. One of my briefs when I went to Brooks was that I wanted to resurrect our reputation as a school for the arts but also for sport and physical education. I have been able to attract some amazing educators in the area of performing arts as well as visual arts and technologies, and they work as a team. We have an amazing showcase of our students' work coming up called 'The Love Cafe' which is focused on peace and wellbeing. Our school won the Tasmanian Human Rights Award last year. We were very excited to be nominated by the Anti-Discrimination Commission for that. Inherent in that was our work in the arts. Our students express a lot of what they feel and believe through our performing arts program. The Love Cafe is a very integrated presentation for 35 people at a time, so you have community members who are coming in. That showcases visual arts, dance, drama, music and all our sculpture work and our pottery.

Ms OGILVIE - I was talking about the digital technology capacity underlining all of this. Content development, performance and projection and those sorts of things as public art would be within your purview?

Mrs THOMAS - Yes, absolutely.

Mr FARRELL - Demolition of the four buildings is listed at \$162 000. I imagine the process is to strip them of any useable assets?

PUBLIC

Mr CLAYTON - What we are looking at doing is to salvage what we can. There are existing air-conditioners, ICT technology, furniture, lockers and any of that sort of stuff. By the time we take that stuff out the value of the building that is left is fairly minimal. You are talking about concrete block, timber trusses and roofing iron. That will be the building contractor's decision. We do have a waste management policy that we implement in the tender as well about how they get rid of that through recycling and things like that, but it will be largely up to the contractor as to how that is removed.

Mr FARRELL - They give you a cost for demolition and they have to take into account any profits they may make from the sale of second-hand material?

Mr CLAYTON - Correct.

CHAIR - Furniture and equipment: we heard from Mr Moore, who raised concern around how that is going to adequately satisfy the perceived requirements of not only his area but also the school. It is an important issue when we look at a lot of these public work projects. Yes, the buildings are important, but I go back to other school public works where we look at smart boards and other equipment. Can you take the committee through what that includes, what you scoped around that? Is it just a rough guess or is there some science to it?

Ms THOMAS - I will never forget the day that a senior member of the Department of Education said to me, 'Shireen, don't think you are going to rebuild that performing arts centre', because that is what I would like to have done. That is well and truly past its use-by date. She stressed to me that this focus was on general learning areas and not on specialist learning spaces. 'Don't go thinking you are going to have a new performing arts centre or a new MDT area or anything like that.' What this project is all about is getting those top quality general learning areas for the majority of our learning programs.

In order to get that senior learning plaza on the eastern end that we looked at this morning, the art building needs to be relocated. It is a very common occurrence in our secondary schools now because of the nature of some of the arts projects that we do.

For our MDT teacher and our art teacher there was a tyranny of distance between them on our site. They were talking about a big sculpture work they are doing for part of the Love Cafe, 'Why don't I just come down. I might as well move into MDT with you, Dave'. Our focus in terms of pedagogy and practices is on learning teams so that teachers do not work in isolation. It doesn't matter if you work in MDT or science or performing arts. What we focus on is rigorous, collaborative planning and implementation of high-quality learning programs. The art teacher has been living on his own at our school. Dave Chell, the MDT teacher, has been living on his own. I need to stress that Mr Moore has no role whatsoever in supporting the education of undergraduate teachers or the teaching of students. He is an MDT aide and his role is to prepare materials for the teacher and students to use.

There is a very natural relationship that happens between MDT and art. We spoke to Dave Chell and Warwick Campbell, the art teacher, and they said, 'Yes, put us together. That is where we would like to be'. That makes absolute sense. What is going to happen is not that loss of space that was described but an enhancement of the use of that space. Currently in our MDT block we have a metals area and one woods area that are not used; they are

PUBLIC

left vacant all the time. We are going to be capitalising on and exploiting the use of that space.

Mr CLAYTON - One of the key things we look at whenever we are doing something is to create flexible areas. If one area has one use then it is not being used correctly. The idea of co-locating art and MDT was a by-product of the master plan, but once we started the conversation we realised there was a classroom that is never used, a workshop that is hardly used, and one that is. The art building was very large and most of it was just used as storage because they had room to store things. We put it all together. You saw where the MDT and the art buildings were when you were on site. They are not just doing pictures, paintings and things like that. We are talking about hands-on, full-blown sculptures and things that these students are getting into. They needed the specialised equipment down there, so it is a nice synergy that they come together.

CHAIR - From Mr Moore's submission - and it will be publicly available - he has not raised concern about space. The main concern is around upgrading of the school and whether the opportunity to upgrade the equipment is within that budget.

Ms THOMAS - As the principal I would say no, not at this stage. It is a succession plan, but in terms of our school resource package our school business manager and I work very closely together in looking at how we very strategically upgrade each area. We squirrel away funds for big pieces of equipment such as that. That is a challenge most secondary schools are facing. I want to stress that the equipment is not unsafe because we have it checked regularly by Workplace Safety. Leonie Johnston, our business manager, is absolutely on the ball and watertight on that, so there is absolutely no risk whatsoever. In fact a couple of pieces of equipment that have been stored in our MDT area we have donated to the railway restoration - old lathes and equipment such as that. We would never ever place any piece of equipment into any of our learning spaces that we knew was unsafe. We have very strict OH&S requirements around all of that.

CHAIR - I believe Mr Moore clarified that when asked by the committee. He did not deem it to be unsafe or outside of spec. Mr Moore's concern was more around the opportunity that could be lost in replacing some of this equipment. When asked by the committee, he did say that he was not an OH&S expert and he did not cross that line. We welcome his contribution and it does not hurt to get on the public record that there is concern around how we manage ongoing assets and replace them appropriately and affordably.

Ms OGILVIE - I had a lot of sympathy for what he said because he is obviously passionate about what he does. I can imagine the situation across all of the schools. Everybody is grappling with budgets and having to make these competing choices. I am always very aware that, like this new technology area, there is old-school technology as well which needs to keep up, and to provide those vocational opportunities right across the spectrum is very important. It is all very well for me to want to see performance art and content development, but to be able use a lathe and be on the tools and get a job in the manufacturing sector is very important. I have a lot of sympathy for what he was saying, but I understand the budgetary constraints.

That may be something Mr Brooks takes back to his Education minister, that we need a one-off injection across the MDT rooms of the state education system to upgrade to get things going.

PUBLIC

Mr FARRELL - Is this an issue across schools, that there could be more funding for equipment?

Mr FINCH - Yes. We do not have unlimited resources, so we have to focus on the highest priority use of those resources. Recently we did appoint a workplace health and safety specialist within our human resources area and that person is doing some great work. We have an intranet site for schools to access. We have policies and procedures. We have recently put every principal and school business manager through a four-hour training session on workplace health and safety, which covers some of this. We have a close relationship with Workplace Standards. We respond to issues and there are inspections.

We are about to launch a design and technology safety training project. We are investing about \$300 000 over the next three years to train, each year, one teacher and one design and technology support staff member. That would be someone like Michael. It is a day session and it is looking at the legislation, the requirements and responsibilities and understanding the equipment and the safety aspects. It lists table saws, drill presses, industrial sanders and so on. We are looking at training our staff. That will go on over three years so we can as many people through it as possible.

We are also focusing on replacement of equipment, but we have to do that fairly strategically because we cannot consider replacing every piece of machinery in every school, because of the cost of it now. We need to look at opportunities where we might be able to share things across some schools. In some cases it is a limited access and need. We need to maximise use across a number of sites. We have it in our thinking and are looking at the best way we can deal with it. We are conscious of workplace health and safety requirements. If there were a piece of equipment that was not safe, we would not be using it.

Mr FARRELL - That is the thing you have to balance up. I think sometimes some of the old machinery was built to last and still performs what it was meant to do. It may not be as bright and shiny, but as long as it has all the safety features. I think Mr Moore did mention that some had been modified with cut-out switches and that type of thing. That is the most important aspect. I know everyone likes to have new shiny machinery but it does cost a lot of money for those sorts of items.

Shireen, you obviously looked at the utilisation of these areas and the movement in what students are studying to better utilise the space anyway. Has there been a general trend at Brooks away from the trades-type things?

Ms THOMAS - Yes, there has.

Mr FARRELL - As there has been generally in the area, I suppose, with the closures of several industries.

Ms THOMAS - Yes. Ten years ago we had three full-time MDT teachers, and we have one now. Some of the class sizes can be down as low as 10 or 12 students. The process that we go through is that grade 7 students actually have a taste of every option that is available. It is really beautiful because our options staff are now starting to work in an integrated team-focused way so that students can see where the arts might dovetail with, say, wood

PUBLIC

technologies. It opens up a few more possibilities for them around decision-making and informed choices that they can engage in in the future. In grades 8, 9 and 10 they start to select, based on that grade 7 experience, areas that they are interested in.

Mr FARRELL - It is an interesting thing relating to that where technology and the arts interrelate. I think back to one of the original Brooks High School students who went into the timber industry and is now a chainsaw artist. There is a precedent for that type of activity.

Ms THOMAS - If there was a vocational area that really stands out at our school it is pathways to hospitality. Whether chef, front-of-house, or management of desks in hotels, our students are making big connections with that in their capacity to engage as global citizens in that area. They see that it will take them around the world. Hopefully we can get some connect with the possibilities that might exist through the Antarctic Centre and that sort of thing for a trade or a vocation. We also run a great program for our students called the CAP program. Every Friday for 20 weeks our students are based at TAFE, doing those prerequisite programs for then engaging in TAFE as full-time students the following year. There is a very rich tapestry of pathways that we build for our young people. To answer your question, there has been a real decline in the trades.

CHAIR - Mr Moore raised a genuine concern, but I think this committee has heard that it does not currently exist within the scope or the budget constraints of the project to include updating specialised classrooms like art and MDT; it is more for common areas. Have I interpreted that in the right way?

Ms THOMAS - Yes. It is an upgrade of general learning areas.

CHAIR - We are reasonably happy with costs. Contingency is in there. Shireen, do you think it is an appropriate spend of taxpayers' money to proceed with this project, and does it deliver what the purpose is for?

Ms THOMAS - I believe it is an excellent spend of our taxpayers' money. It is a real investment in the northern suburbs of Launceston, where there is obviously significant population growth. If we can deliver what I am hoping to get out of this project I believe we get what we were looking for and more. It is an exciting possibility for education in this state to have a model such as this that will truly capture the essence of high-quality, rigorous teaching and learning programs that are already running but will now have the physical environment to take those even further and make them even richer for our students. We would welcome the continuing flow of people coming to have a look at the work we are doing.

CHAIR - Does it meet the long-term requirements of the school?

Mrs THOMAS - I believe it goes beyond the long-term requirements of the school.

CHAIR - Is the department satisfied it is highest priority for spending and provides value for the taxpayers and delivers the outcome required?

Mr FINCH - Yes, definitely. This is the highest priority project for us and we are very excited about it. It is an important part of the Launceston community, for all those reasons Shireen

PUBLIC

outlined, and we are looking forward to bringing these important improvements to the school.

CHAIR - Do you believe the design gives value for money for the taxpayer?

Mr CLAYTON - I believe the design we have ended up with is a responsible solution to meet the department's and the school's requirements.

THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.