

## **UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT**

**THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS MET IN BARRINGTON DISTRICT OFFICE, 1 FENTON STREET, DEVONPORT, ON WEDNESDAY, 15 AUGUST 2001.**

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### **REECE HIGH SCHOOL - INFRASTRUCTURE AND ESTABLISHMENT COSTS FOR THE REBUILDING OF THE SCHOOL**

**Mr TIM GOURLAY, Mr SIMON BARNSELY, Mr LYLE CATLIN, Mr MICHAEL WILKINSON, Mr ERIC RICHARDSON, Mr PHIL McKENZIE, Mr CAREY McIVOR, AND Mrs DEBBIE RICKARDS** WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

**CHAIR** (Mr Wing) - Who would like to lead the presentation?

**Mr GOURLAY** - Mr Chairman, if I could, thank you. By way of overview and background, to the evidence submitted to this committee, I introduce the report and give some comments and then we will lead through. We will take the submission, the evidence as presented and printed as read but we will elaborate on various aspects of it.

Following the disastrous fire of 5 December, the department reacted fairly promptly and swiftly and the first imperative of course was the relocation of the displaced students from Reece High School. The initial efforts and energies and funds were directed towards the immediate site clean-up at the Reece High School site and the arrangements for relocation of the students and after considering a number of options, a decision was taken that they would be rehoused on the Devonport High site with some supplementary facilities brought into range.

A port folio of works was identified as being necessary to facilitate that co-location and those works were quickly documented and arranged and undertaken in accordance with departmental and government procurement requirements. The co-location has been in operation for the whole of this year to date and is working satisfactorily.

Once a decision and commitment was made to the rebuilding of Reece High School, the Department of Education established a committee known as the Educational Concepts Brief group which was established under the chairmanship of Tim Doe, Deputy Secretary, Schools and Colleges and the main purpose of that group was to review the latest trends in educational facilities planning and educational delivery.

The work of that committee - the committee was formed late in 2000 and met on a number of occasions in early 2001. It was a representative committee - the department, the school and the school community - and it directed its energies, as I indicated, to identifying the best practice in relation to delivery of education and looking at what was happening overseas. A lot of the work of that committee was by research, particularly research through the world wide web - the Internet - and almost an infinite resource was identified there and a lot of material was reviewed in order to bring together a series of recommendations which was fed forward into the project briefing process.

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Following the work of that committee, the Minister for Education formed a community consultative group under the chairmanship of the Mayor of Devonport, Mary Binks, and that also was a representative committee and the make-up of that group is identified in the evidence that's tabled. The purpose was to solicit public opinion and to provide opportunity for comment from the community about the proposed rebuild of Reece High School and to take account of the various views of the community about the proposal.

Information was gathered and collected from a variety of sources and through a variety of means and those means included the conduct of a public meeting, an open forum; it included accepting written submissions which were invited through public advertisement; it included a very detailed telephone survey conducted by an independent professional body. Representatives of the committee sat at the Local Government Offices and received direct representations from interested parties and I think it is fair to say that the whole of the community would have had an opportunity for input through that process.

All of the submissions and the results of the survey and the public meeting were consolidated and condensed into a report which became known as the Community Consultative Committee Report and was presented to the minister, I think, on 10 April this year. In summary, that group, at the end of the report, came up with 12 specific recommendations as to what the rebuilt Reece High School should incorporate in its planning and it also was quite clear that there was unequivocal community support for the proposal to rebuild the school.

So the work of those two antecedent committees was then fed forward into the development of the project brief and whilst we haven't condensed this project commission brief now included in the evidence, I do table a copy and there are spare copies available for anyone who would wish to review it. It is quite a solid document, it includes a lot of information pertinent to design documentation, briefing of school facilities, it also includes a detailed assessment of the Reece High School site and the fire damaged buildings - the remnants of which remain on site and some only partially damaged - it includes a lot of information about educational guideline area standards and it formed the document that went out to consultants by public advertisement and was the basis on which the consultants expressed interest in and put in their submissions for the purpose of providing the consultancy services for the rebuild of Reece High School. That document has been reviewed by independent educational facilities planners and they're claimed as a very professional and complete document.

The appointment of the consultants followed shortly thereafter and that was a thorough and open process, too, in line with again government procurement guidelines and Glenn Smith and Associates were nominated and appointed as the consultant for the project.

At about the same time as the appointment of the consultants, an opportunity - well, I should say I guess that coming through the work of the antecedent committees there were some common threads and the most common of which that there should be a thorough and consultative process underpinning the planning for the proposed rebuild that any new facility on site should represent best practice and state of the art education; there should be strong involvement of the community, both the immediate school community and the community at large in the planning and consultative process and that

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the range of facilities provided should extend beyond the traditional secondary seven to ten bracket, and in fact should consider providing life-long learning and educational services to the broader community.

As I was indicating, at about the same time coincidental opportunity arrived to access an internationally recognised expert on education. A gentleman based in New York, called Prakash Niar, and his writings and philosophies and experience came to the attention of the Department of Education through its early research on the Internet as to latest trends in educational facility design. The department invited this gentleman to Tasmania, he happened to be coming to another conference on the mainland at that time, he accepted the invitation and the work that he did in Tasmania formed the basis of a real initiative to put in place and implement the best practice internationally in terms of facility design and educational curriculum and pedagogy.

I am going to hand over now, with your concurrence, Mr Chairman, to the district superintendent, Cary McIvor, who will comment in a bit more detail on that educational planning and the work that was done with the local community at that time, again before any pencil was put to paper or any detailed plans were developed.

**CHAIR** - Thanks very much, Mr Gourlay. Mr McIvor?

**Mr McIVOR** - Thank you. Prakash and I were here on 5 and 6 June and all principals across the north west region were invited to that day and a half workshop, as indeed were members of the Community Consultative Committee, staff, students and parents of Reece High School in particular. Without going through blow by blow what occurred in that day and a half, a couple of salient messages were presented.

The first message was simply this, that before we set about designing an educational facility we need to go back and revisit what is the purpose of the facility that you are trying to create. So really the essence of the 90 per cent of the time that he was with us, was what is the educational rationale for a rebuilt Reece High School. So through a series of processes, staff, students, and in the evening, parents, were asked to engage in what it was that they wanted a new Reece High School to provide the educational community in this region.

And it was in the last 10 per cent of the time that he was with us that we actually started to talk about, given that you have articulated a purpose, which will come up in the presentation later, given that that is what you want to do, then what sort of facilities will best enable you to deliver that purpose. So it was a really refreshing approach to facilities design because traditionally what we have done, and it's not unique to our department, but we have built the facility and then tried to accommodate what we want to do within that facility.

The Reece High rebuild has given us the opportunity to articulate the educational purposes that we wish to achieve with a design that compliments that purpose. That was the first salient message that Prakash gave us. The second message, and Tim has already alluded to the consultative process that was put in place over the period to date, Prakash affirmed, and indeed complimented, the consultative processes that were already extant at that time in enabling the wider community of Devonport to have their views on what

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should happen arising out of the tragedy last December, heard and addressed. They are the two salient messages that came out of that presentation.

**CHAIR** - Thanks, Mr McIvor. Mr Gourlay?

**Mr GOURLAY** - By way of background I will just quote from some of the reading that we undertook there but it is relevant: 'The challenge of providing educational facilities offers an incredible opportunity to enhance learning as well.'

I guess that's the opportunity that the department has tried to seize in planning the rebuild of Reece High. Again, I will pass over to Lyle Catlin, the project planning officer, who will outline some of the particular educational features that we have been able to incorporate in the proposed plans for Reece High on the foundations that were laid by the two regional committees and the workshopping that was undertaken with the international expert, Prakash Niar.

**Mr CATLIN** - I just bring your attention to the whiteboard because up there we have a vision for the school that was worked through with a small group of people at the Prakash Niar presentation. This is a vision that they came to for the Reece High School. 'Reece will foster a love of learning in all students through an integrated project-based curriculum. It will recognise and aim to fulfil the learning needs of all community members.'

It is important that a school in fact has a signature of its own. Reece is exactly what that says. It does have a love of learning and it does foster the component of integrated project-based curriculum. They are working towards that even now. If I could take the moment also to move on just a little, they also encompass the idea of a community school and came up with a mission statement. They made the statement, realising individual potential through creativity, enterprise, communication and team work. I make the point that I have put up there community school but I want you to hear and understand that that is not the name they are. At the moment they are Reece High School but they have always been a community school and that's an integral part of their organisation.

They embrace the idea of a full-service school. That means that they service their community far and wide, over and above just reading, writing and arithmetic. That's an important part of the school itself. If I can also take you now to the booklet because even though we have said that it is read, I would take you to page 1 of the report at the back - just after page 36 in the first section - Schools are Centres of Community, a Planning and Design Guide.

The first statement on that page, page 1 of that says: 'The learning environment we construct, renovate and replace today provide real and valuable opportunities to enact our vision for learning in the 21st century. It is vital that the processes for sharing, defining and affirming this vision are inclusive, open and dynamic, involving all education stakeholders and the community.'

If I could take you also to the second paragraph on that page which is an important component of it: 'Teaching and learning and community life itself is greatly enhanced in environments where life-long learning is a community value, where everyone is a learner

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and when the school facility is central to the life and learning of the community and the community is central to the life of the school.'

I just make the point that community school vision up there embraces that emphatically. If I could take you back also to page 8 of the book where it says Current Pedagogy and Future Trends, first paragraph, it says: 'Best practice educational and curriculum trends,' I would like to read that to you just to refresh your memory: 'The education concept of the new Reece school continues to be defined through the consultative school system and community processes currently in progress. There are major educational advantages to be seen in the redeveloped Reece High School. One is optimum school size and a second one is innovative school approaches.'

Reece High School is embracing those educational processes. They are looking at the innovative to make it really effective for their community and I make the point that it certainly doesn't take away from the other schools in the area. They are making their own niche for this community that they serve.

I would like to now spend a couple of minutes of talking through the master plan solutions. The site presents opportunities that allow best use of existing buildings and contours, slopes and views, which the architects will later on bring out. We will also see up on the board, when we get to them, a pavilion-style lot of buildings and they are an integral part of the style that the school will be using for teaching. They will use the maximum natural light available and ventilation, offering good circulation of the buildings. This site, as we are starting afresh, offers the perfect opportunity to marry buildings with curriculum pedagogy. Not too often in Tasmania have we the opportunity to stir the very foundations of education and buildings consecutively, one after the other, to produce quality education and we have that opportunity here today.

The school, as far as education go, incorporating the notion of integrated studies in the curriculum. Many schools in Tasmania are embracing that in today's educational model. For instance we have some new emerging components of curriculum that are being worked on some 21 schools around the State now and Reece have the opportunity to be a part of that and what Prakash Niar did by coming over here is he really reinforced to Tasmanian educators that we are about education for the 21st century. He didn't bring a lot of new material to us but he did reinforce that we are on the right track and I think that that is an important component of his visit.

The new Reece High School will be the perfect platform for improved pastoral care and contemporary pedagogy and integrated curriculum. Facilities will be quality buildings that will allow teaching and learning to occur specifically with the capacity to work with individuals.

Already the school has established links with other schools, both here and on the mainland, that are looking at middle school concepts and integrated studies and project work. They have the opportunity to build specific areas for enterprise work, project-based curriculum and really develop out that love of learning that we want in all of our children.

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Outstanding features to support educational outcomes within the plan that we have put to you today include the resource centre, which incorporates facilities for IT both on-line and off-line, vocational education and facilities for studies and reading in that area.

We have also developed it with the capacity to have project rooms with a notion that it will be a classless school, that is, it has the capacity for individuals to embrace education for the sake of education and not be just a part of a class. There is also the notion that we can have there individual work stations that we are exploring as a part of the Prakash Niar investigations.

I put to you today that education at the Reece School will be unique for this area. Again, I reiterate it does not take away from the other schools in the area. They will be unique to themselves and they will develop their own signatures, their own philosophy but Reece will significantly be a school for their own community. Thank you, Mr Chairman.

**Mr GOURLAY** - If we could move on from that background to look at the demand, which is a key consideration for facility planners, and to address that aspect of the submission, I would refer to Mr Simon Barnsley, the Deputy Secretary for Corporate Services of the department and he will speak to the paper that has been included in the document.

**Mr BARNSELEY** - Mr Chairman, I am looking here at pages 11 to 15 of the document and I appreciate that in the committee's request to us, in particular enrolment issues were raised, so what we have done - I will work very briefly through these because I anticipate that there may be questions from the committee later on to drill inside the detail. Generally from a population point of view, the first section highlights that Devonport has experienced very minor population decline of recent times and in general there are population trends that are happening across localities, across States and across nations of a similar trend. That is the growth in the older population and a greater decline in young populations - and we have highlighted the factors that affect the issues of relatively low fertility rates amongst women of child-bearing age, the declining numbers of women of child-bearing age and, in the case of Tasmania, an interstate migration in fact in the 15 to 34 age group. So there are some broad population parameters there but when I come to the specifics, you will see that they are not profound in the total school population.

There are a couple of key student population issues that really do need to be brought about so that when we look at the statistics they are understood. The key of these, and it's affecting all high schools in the State at the moment, are what I've referred to as the two small high school cohorts. In 1993, we changed the enrolment arrangements - and I'll look at Carey McIvor and check my facts - but previously not all students, I think, completed prep. The effect was that one age group went to kinder, then prep, and others within the year if they turned a certain age after 30 June, they went directly from kinder to grade 1. So not all students completed a prep year. In 1993, we introduced a scheme where all students do kinder and all students do prep and all students do grade 1. The effect of that is we had two half cohorts but it wasn't quite as simple as that. What happened is we reduced the cohorts for the year of the change so from then on we had two reduced population groups proceeding through the school system and it has happened that, when it comes to figures, you will see the effect of those. They moved into the high schools - last year was the first year of the small cohorts, I think, Kerry?

**Mr McIVOR** - That's right.

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**Mr BARNESLEY** - Last year was the first year and then we got a second small cohort into the high schools so we had an artificial suppression of the high school population. They are in there at the moment, so all high schools are down in numbers. What's happening now is that they're in the system in years 8 and 9 and the year 7s are returning to normal levels and then in the following year obviously you'll get 7s and 8s at normal level and 7, 8, 9, 10. So that small cohort effect has temporarily reduced the high school population relative to what it would normally be so when we look at the figures we'll see in about 2003-04 onwards, high school numbers rise.

The second issue is that of years 6 to 7 retention, that obviously year 6 is the point at which some parents make a decision whether to stay within the government system or move to the non-government system. Barrington has a very high rate of retention, around about 95 per cent, and we don't see that changing. The 2001 year 6 to 7 retention, when we come to look at the figures, it's interesting to note that there is a changing pattern amongst the high schools and we observe this across schools across the State that parental preferences for schools enrolment do vary, so one can have the same population but the mix amongst schools will differ. Those are some general population trends.

We then raised the issue of likely future high school population profiles and of course with all of our modelling, because we have enrolment details for all schools in the State, our modelling is based upon picking up the kinder, prep and years 1 to 6, so when we get to high school we have a good long look ahead because we know the kinder, prep, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 - and they march in lock-step fashion through the system - so you can, with some comfort, project what the high schools look like. The only factor that can change that is interstate migration, and that isn't coming through as a strong factor or, secondly, what I call 'intrastate migration' - regional effects - where we see people moving from different areas. As I understand it, for example, there's a move of people off the west coast to reside in the Burnie area and the workers then travel back to shifts, so there are those intrastate effects. Once again, I don't see in the figures that we're seeing large intrastate effects in Devonport, Devonport appears to be fairly stable, but that can influence within kinder, within the high school projections, but we have a level of comfort that the medium-term outlook is fairly stable based on the enrolment numbers we have.

I might move to predicted trends - and I'm here at the bottom of page 12. We've commented briefly - and we've chosen to run the enrolment projections here on Reece, Devonport, Ulverstone and Latrobe. Obviously when you radiate out, you then have Penguin, Sheffield and Deloraine but within those four high schools you capture very much the population. There's not a lot of interaction between those high schools and those radiating out of Sheffield, Penguin, Deloraine -

**Mr HIDDING** - Ulverstone?

**Mr BARNESLEY** - Ulverstone, I would have kept in the group.

I might then move straight to page 14, where I think we can highlight and bring together in a practical way what we see. We've chosen to look back five years and forward five years. I know in the visit this morning there were some comments on how many did Devonport High School have a long time ago but if we go back ten and fifteen and

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twenty years we get a totally different look for the State - I mean, it was a very different dynamic for the State at the time. But what I would highlight in these figures is that you can see that if I work on the graph, the first line - the highest line - is that for Ulverstone High School and what you are seeing there is a fall away up to the present but with the projections that we see, based on current primary school enrolments, we see Ulverstone High School as being very stable, just over the 600 mark.

The next on the graph is of course Reece High School and Reece illustrates very clearly that small cohort effect. You can see Reece coming off a figure of 711 in 1996, it falls away and you can see from 2000 it dropped, 2001, 2002, and then 2002, 2003, 2004 it then comes back up again and that dip from when they go from 600 down to about 550 and back up to a touch over 600, is the cohort effect and stable.

The next school that we see is Devonport High School, which starts in 1996 at about 467, it drops away and then comes back up. When we go inside the details of this, this illustrates the effect of changing enrolment patterns due to parental preference. So there is movement amongst schools of parents choosing how to enrol. Finally, we see Latrobe High School, which started at 450 in 1996 and then it fell away to 2001, 2002 - and once again with the cohort effect it very much mirrors the experience of Reece - we see it coming back up and being fairly stable.

I appreciate there might be some discussion on some of those specifics of those numbers later on but that is the broad trend and those figures are taken directly off our modelling, as I said, and what we do is we have every primary school enrolment, we know the patterns of recruitment from primary to high school so we can map each primary to the respective high school and, for example, like Spreyton Primary where they shared enrolments, you project on the basis of the enrolment history and you can then project through with comfort. So those numbers come straight off primary school enrolments.

Finally, on page 15, we did pull out the year 7 enrolments in each high school which do illustrate the effects of change amongst schools. You can see the Ulverstone High School as being relatively stable, Reece High School showing some fluctuation both up and down, and the Devonport High School pattern you can see that since 1998, the year 7 intake for Devonport each year has risen on the previous year. We could go further into those and the principals of the respective schools are certainly in a position to talk about where their enrolments come from but that is the broad pattern that we see and projecting through to 2006, coming back to page 14, what we are seeing is a total student population that from 1996 to 2006 has fallen away. In the years from 1996 to the present it is a combination of, I think, population change and the cohort effect, and for the future with a fairly stable population, you can see that it comes back up to around about the 2 100, 2 175, 2 140, 2 133.

**CHAIR** - I think you said 1996, 2006; it shows 2 363.

**Mr BARNESLEY** - Sorry, I was referring to the year, Mr Chairman.

**CHAIR** - Oh, I see.

**Mr BARNESLEY** - Sorry, I was reading off the top. Those are the figures on the population, as we see it.



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**CHAIR** - Thank you. Did you want to call anybody else? Mr Gourlay.

**Mr GOURLAY** - Yes, if we could. If we could just work through the list of contents of the project, which pretty well follows the detailed submission, I would suggest that the acting principal of Reece High, Mr Phil McKenzie, be provided an opportunity to speak to the school component of the submission.

**CHAIR** - I would just like to check with members of the committee to see that we are all in agreement that we hear the presentations first and then ask questions later, or would anybody like to ask any questions about enrolment at this stage?

**Mr HIDDING** - Just a question, Mr Chairman, of how far you go down the list before -

**CHAIR** - Before having any questions, yes. Perhaps we might pause here, then, just before Mr McKenzie's presentation and see if there are any questions on the evidence to date. Mr Hidding.

**Mr HIDDING** - Mr Chairman, I understand that the committee asked for some material to be presented in particular - I think there was a copy of the letter around here somewhere, if the Clerk has it. Catchment figures and related population and demographic information in relation to the three high schools. Firstly, is there any reason why you've included Ulverstone High? Where's the overlap there?

**Mr BARNESLEY** - The reason for that is that since we've been doing all of the consultation work on the high school at Reece, we have always tended to keep Ulverstone in the group of schools. So the information that we generated to date through the consultation and so forth, has included Ulverstone. There are communities such as Forth, and ones travelling that way, where there's some movement between Ulverstone and Devonport High in particular.

**Mr HIDDING** - The figures and demographic information that you've provided - this is basically page 14 - I would have hoped for substantially more information either before this meeting today or at this meeting today. Have you brought along any of your background numbers for your demographics?

**Mr BARNESLEY** - I don't have anything beyond this with me today.

**Mr HIDDING** - Don't you? Like kindergarten enrolments, for instance, for 1996 and the last few years, to see where that's going in these catchment areas specifically?

**Mr BARNESLEY** - In looking at the requests from the committee, I was looking at the high school figures. I have some numbers here, these were quite a bit earlier in the piece and haven't been updated for the 2001 actuals - these were generated some months back. For example, all that I have is all primary schools in Barrington and I don't have it broken down - oh, yes we do. Looking at the project consultant commission brief - can we get some copies of that?

**Mr HIDDING** - What I'm looking for is how many new kids have come in, what's generally happening in the enrolment?

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**Mr BARNSELEY** - Very briefly I'll read through these numbers and we'll arrange for copies of this page to be table. For the feeder primary schools for Reece, which is East Devonport which is shared with Devonport High; Hillcrest, Miandetta and Spreyton - for 2001 K to 6 FTEs are 1 290, and by 2007 the projection for that is 1 215. If we then combine Reece and Devonport - and that picks up East Devonport, Hillcrest, Miandetta, Spreyton, and that would be the proportion of Spreyton that comes towards Devonport and Reece - Devonport Primary, Nixon Street and Wilmot, they move from 2 247 to 2 119 over the period 2001-2007.

**CHAIR** - Both in decline, then - slightly.

**Mr BARNSELEY** - Slightly in decline over those years, yes.

**Mr HIDDING** - You don't have a separation for the kindergarten enrolment?

**Mr BARNSELEY** - Not at this stage. It would be very easy to generate that and I could provide it at relatively short notice.

**Mr HIDDING** - And seeing you're going to provide it later, also the statewide number, which I'm aware that someone, at least in your department, told me gave us some numbers of kindergarten enrolment statewide. I just want to match that to this equation.

**Mr BARNSELEY** - With the kindergarten numbers, you're looking for the comparable schools there plus the statewide number.

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes.

**Mr BARNSELEY** - Yes, I can do that.

**Mr HIDDING** - Unless there's any argument about what a feeder school is for that, I think that's generally accepted, isn't it?

**Mr BARNSELEY** - That's why we've tended to group the schools together, then if parental preference changes you look at the broad population.

**Mr HIDDING** - That's presented in that way. I particularly want the Latrobe High feeder schools as well. I don't know much about Ulverstone High but with the three we looked at today I'd like to understand 2001 data - how many new kids enrolled. It's buried in here, there's no question, but I just want that -

**Mr BARNSELEY** - Yes, we can generate that.

**Mr HIDDING** - So you're making that available to us, that's being copied now, and if there's any other information we'd appreciate it. While we're on the subject of information, the letter also asks for copies of any reports provided to the secretary in regard to the proposed rebuilding of the Reece High School. In that, at least I, as a member of the committee, was hoping for information on due diligence of other alternatives to rebuilding Reece High School. When you construct something, there are a number of ways to do it and you would test one against the other, and what have you. Surely

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somewhere the secretary of Education has been made aware of opposing views and cases, so we were seeking copies of any reports provided to the secretary. I don't think we have any of those. Is there some reason we don't have them and when would they be made available?

**Mr BARNESLEY** - Firstly, in regard to the reports provided to the secretary, the decision to rebuild Reece was made by the Government very soon after the fire. The information that I have just referred to, and the information that's contained within these, the way in which the work proceeded - as Mr Gourlay has indicated - is that, firstly, the focus was on construction of temporary facilities at Devonport High School. That occupied the entire efforts of the agency from the date in December through until the end of January. There was a broad commitment by government that was made within a couple of days of the fire to rebuild Reece and that was then left at that point whilst the focus was on the redevelopment of Devonport High School. The next stage of that was the appointment of the committee, under the chairmanship of Mary Binks, which conducted a consultation, and information was provided to that group comparable to what we have talked about here. I am not entirely confident the Binks report had figures in it or not. Phil, can you recall was there a presentation on population projections for that consultation?

**Mr McKENZIE** - I don't think there was.

**CHAIR** - Which consultation?

**Mr BARNESLEY** - That was the Mary Binks consultation.

In answering the question, there are no reports beyond what you see here in relation to this matter because in the due diligence process what we had was the broad decision by government to rebuild but it was a broad commitment and beyond that we then entered into a consultation phase, which was under the chairmanship of Mary Binks. Coming out of the consultation was a report delivered on 10 April with the set of twelve recommendations that are in the body of the report. Flowing from that we had held off on the development of the next stage of any building process, which is the project consultant commission brief, and as soon as that was completed that gave the shape to this brief, which we compiled and went out. So that the options for the rebuilding of Reece are canvassed through the various design options that we worked through here. This had a set of population projections within it about that issue.

**Mr HIDDING** - Why were the population projections in that report, if you had your hands tied and you were going to rebuild it in any case?

**Mr BARNESLEY** - Because the population projections are highly relevant to the size of a school that you build, the nature of the school that you build and the flexibilities. As in fact is written on the whiteboard there and is contained within here, the design brief is for a school to accommodate 500, with a maximum capacity of 600.

**Mr HIDDING** - So nowhere since the school was burnt down has anybody ever written to the secretary and said, 'Dear Dr Forrest, as a senior educator or as a line manager or as whatever, we have some concerns at the effect on other schools in the region'? There was nothing like that?

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**Mr BARNESLEY** - There was nothing, to my knowledge, of that form of written report. In responding to that, I think the point to bring out is that the situation in Devonport was very stable. We have three - four, if we include Ulverstone but let's leave Ulverstone out - three well-established high schools where we've seen some fluctuation as between Reece and Devonport - and I think driven by parental choice at various times. The decision by the Government to rebuild Reece was against a very stark background where there had been a major fire; had the fire not occurred there were no issues in enrolments in Devonport or Latrobe high schools. They were seen to be three high schools experiencing various changes, driven by broader population changes in the Tasmanian community, and no different to most other communities across the State.

Looking at Carey McIvor, as the district superintendent, where we started from is not a community with any question over the viability or appropriateness of the high school buildings that were there. I'm sure the only discussion that occur at district level is debates about minor works and where we should spend money on doing up which high school and what feature and what next.

**Mr McIVOR** - That's correct. The only vehicle where that dissenting view with regard to whether we should rebuild or not was aired was through the community consultation process. Certainly at the public meeting and certainly in written submissions that went to that consultative committee, there were views that said, 'Don't rebuild Reece. Use the money, if it would be available, to do other things to enhance educational provision in this district'. But there was certainly nothing formally, to my knowledge, received through the department. It went through that consultative mechanism to the minister.

**Mr BARNESLEY** - There were one or two media stories that raised the issue, I recall. To my knowledge the submissions would have gone through the Mary Binks report and reflected in the various submissions there.

**Mr HIDDING** - Recognising the letter actually asks for reports to be provided to the secretary and not letters, I'm happy with that and I'll use the FOI process to -

**Mr BARNESLEY** - Mr Chairman, the only question is that we have tabled the Mary Binks report - there would be copies of submissions that are not part of that evidence that we would have copies of and we'll certainly arrange to table those, which will be the submissions to the Mary Binks committee.

**CHAIR** - We have an analysis of the phone survey, the face-to-face interviews and the public meeting, why do we not have an analysis of the Mary Binks committee's report?

**Mr BARNESLEY** - It is all there.

**CHAIR** - The whole of the report?

**Mr BARNESLEY** - The only thing that we haven't given you is a copy of every single submission received by the Mary Binks committee.

**CHAIR** - But an analysis?

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**Mr BARNESLEY** - The report that we have is the summary analysis report.

**CHAIR** - To what extent have you or anybody in the decision-making process been influenced by the consultation process in any of these forms, bearing in mind that from four days after the disastrous fire you have all been committed to rebuilding?

**Mr BARNESLEY** - Firstly, in responding to that question, the overwhelming view coming through on community consultation was support for the rebuilding. Notwithstanding the Government's already stated commitment to the rebuild, recommendation 1 emerging from that committee was 'proceed with plans to design and build a new state-of-the-art educational facility on the Middle Road site'. Then it proceeds through to ensure ongoing consultation processes to undertake research and then various views on what the facility should be. So the consultation process, notwithstanding that there were dissenting views and the views that were expressed were along the lines that Mr McIvor alluded to earlier, a strong outcome from the community consultation was support for the Government's commitment toward a rebuilding. At that stage the scope of the school, the design of the school, the funding and all of those issues, I would characterise as the broad commitment to the rebuilding, and it is through the subsequent phases that the detail has come in that we are seeing here today.

**Mr McIVOR** - Mr Chairman, if I could refer you to appendix 3, page 1, second paragraph, I think that clarifies the purpose of the consultative committee: 'and it was formed to solicit and analyse submissions from community members interested in putting forward ideas and issues they believe should be considered when making plans for the rebuilding of an educational facility in Devonport.'

**CHAIR** - Referring to the analysis of written public submissions, it shows that a total of 121 submission were received, and of that number 64, or 52.9 per cent, stated emphatically that Reece High School should be rebuilt. The details in this analysis are showing that 33.9 per cent of the people, numbering 41, assumed that it was going to be rebuilt, and that is not surprising when it would have been stated 4 days after the fire that it would be.

But the ones who emphatically stated that it should be rebuilt, it was not a very high majority, was it - 52.9 per cent? You were saying earlier, I think, Mr Barnesley, that the overwhelming percentage of people at the public meeting were in favour of it being rebuilt, but the response to requests for public submissions was certainly not overwhelmingly in support of rebuilding. Would you agree?

**Mr BARNESLEY** - At stages like this it is often difficult to read surveys, and I think that to characterise the percentages in raw terms - I believe that we had 53 per cent who say it should be rebuilt. The total number of submissions was low relative to the total population in the community, and the phone survey - these are the written submissions.

**CHAIR** - Yes.

**Mr BARNESLEY** - Of course, with written submissions you need a fair bit of motivation to make one, which is why we did the phone survey and at page 8 of the same appendix, the phone survey -

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**CHAIR** - I wanted to come to that in a moment. But, to deal with the public submissions, you say you need a fairly high degree of motivation. It is quite easy if somebody phones to express an opinion. Usually the people who make submissions are the ones who think about the matter in depth and therefore have, perhaps, valued opinions, well thought-through opinions. So would you not place more reliance on the content of public submissions that have been made by people who have taken the trouble to make them, rather than those who merely respond to a telephone call?

**Mr BARNESLEY** - That is a reasonable argument around those submissions but if one puts weight on that, then I believe that one has to bring in the 41 from people and others who were making submissions about the form it should take, and I think the 16 who suggested alternatives, when measured against the broad community opinion and, I believe, the Government's assessment of the situation that led it to make an early decision, which reflected the Government's recognition of the need to provide a strong commitment to provision of quality education facilities, that in combination I still consider that on the information that is presented here it is reasonable to make the statement there was very strong overwhelming public support for the rebuild. And going back to the decision-making process by Government at the time, and the succeeding public debate around the issue, the views opposing the rebuild did not gain a strong momentum in any quarter.

**CHAIR** - Are you able to tell us the effect of the wording in the public advertisement? What did it invite people to make submissions about?

**Mr BARNESLEY** - I don't have that wording available.

**CHAIR** - Could that be provided?

**Mr BARNESLEY** - That certainly can be provided, yes.

**Mr McIVOR** - Just a couple of observations on the statistics - and there are lies, damn lies and statistics, and I appreciate that sort of argument - with the written submissions in effect what you have is about 88 per cent of people in this community saying 'Rebuild Reece High School'.

**CHAIR** - Eighty-eight per cent of the people in the community, or the ones who responded?

**Mr McIVOR** - Sorry, who made written submissions: 88 per cent of those people are saying 'Rebuild Reece High School'. Some are saying 'Rebuild Reece High School but make it different to what it was'. That is the 13.2 per cent. And then you have 34 per cent who are associated with the school, either as representative groups like P & F, school councils, individual students and families and so on. But the overwhelming message from the written submissions was very clear that the school ought to be rebuilt, and where the variation arose was in the nature of the facility - and when we look at the master plans later, we have tried to pick up a lot of those intentions there.

**CHAIR** - Well, I don't know that you are justified in drawing the conclusion that 88 per cent, or whatever number you mentioned, were in favour of rebuilding, because we are told that 52.9 per cent were emphatically in favour of that. Of the remaining 41, 33.9 per cent of the submissions were made by people who assumed that it was going to be rebuilt.

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They weren't expressing an opinion, according to this, as to whether it should or should not, they were assuming it was going to be rebuilt, and had suggestions about the manner in which it should be rebuilt. There may be something that is not in this that you can tell me about that would indicate that those people were supporting the rebuilding and not merely making suggestions about what should happen, bearing in mind that they knew when they made the submissions the Government had already decided to rebuild. So I just challenge the accuracy of what you say when you include that 33.9 per cent as people who are in favour of rebuilding when their submissions, we are told by this analysis, were made on the assumption that it was going to be rebuilt. We are not told that they were supportive of it being rebuilt, just that they had suggestions about the manner in which it should be rebuilt, knowing it had been decided to rebuild.

**Mr McIVOR** - Mr Chairman, my interpretation of that is that if they are making suggestions about the manner of the rebuild, they are supportive of the rebuild.

**CHAIR** - Well, they may or may not be. I don't think you can necessarily draw that conclusion, particularly as we don't know what they were invited to do in the advertisement because we don't have a copy of the advertisement.

**Mr McIVOR** - That can be provided. As a member of the committee who read all the submissions, I believe the interpretation that I have just placed on those submissions is the accurate one.

**CHAIR** - It may be, but it is not necessarily so, that's what I am saying.

**Mr McIVOR** - I understand that.

**CHAIR** - Can you tell us the effect of the wording in the advertisement then?

**Mr McIVOR** - Well, we can certainly get a copy of that advertisement and will table it.

**CHAIR** - You are relying on their response to it and you are drawing certain conclusions. What is your understanding of the effect of the wording? What were they invited to make submissions about?

**Mr McIVOR** - Okay. My response to that question is that the public of this community were invited to make submissions on the rebuilding of Reece High School. In doing that, people chose to say 'No, you shouldn't do it, the money could be better spent elsewhere on education'. 'Yes, you should rebuild it and build it as it was'. 'Yes, you should rebuild it and you should make it a state-of-the-art educational facility that will cater for the educational needs of this community well into the future'. They were the broad categories of response.

**CHAIR** - So you are saying that the 41 people, 33.9 per cent, were saying, 'Yes, rebuild it', when we are not told that here. We are saying that they made submissions and were assuming that Reece High would be rebuilt and submitted suggestions as to the format the new school infrastructure should take. There is nothing in that wording to say they were saying 'Yes, it should be rebuilt and do this way'. They were certainly saying 'do it this way', but they were aware that the Government had already decided to rebuild.

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**Mr McIVOR** - Mr Chairman, my view would be, though, that if you are not going to rebuild it or you don't believe it should be rebuilt, why would you have views on how it should be rebuilt? That is why I am interpreting that statistic as being in favour of the rebuilding rather than not.

**CHAIR** - Well, it may be, but one would have thought they would have said so if they wanted to make that part of their submission, surely.

**Mr HIDDING** - I think we need a lot more information on that, Mr Chairman.

**Mr KONS** - Mr Chairman, just a point there on what Mr McIvor is saying. It's the community consultative committee which is those people requesting the community to give them some guidance, and they have interpreted that in the way it is analysed in there. So we are removing ourselves too far away from what the community expectation is.

**CHAIR** - So that committee called for the submissions, did it?

**Mr McIVOR** - That's correct.

**CHAIR** - I think we need to see the advertisement before we can draw any particular conclusions.

**Mr HIDDING** - I think somebody said a moment ago what the community consultative committee was set up to do was to look into matters relating to the rebuilding, which is really about facilities at the school, is it not, and design and the rest of it. So it seems to me that if that committee took upon itself to go out and seek some sort of mandate from the community, it was hardly necessary because the Government had already said it was going to rebuild. But it is that progression that I am interested in as to what the instructions to that Binks committee were and what the offer to the community was on how and what to respond to. Perhaps, Mr Chairman, when we get all that information we can revisit that.

**CHAIR** - Yes, I think we need to look at the advertisement.

**Mr KONS** - There were dissenting views from members of that consultative committee.

**Mr McIVOR** - Within the committee itself?

**Mr KONS** - Yes.

**Mr McIVOR** - Yes, there were.

**CHAIR** - What percentage dissented?

**Mr McIVOR** - Just looking at the membership, I would say a definite minority. In fact as I look down the list, there would have been one who was, I would say, consistently opposed.

**CHAIR** - To rebuilding on the site?



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**Mr McIVOR** - To rebuilding.

**CHAIR** - Who was that?

**Mr McIVOR** - Mr Paul Ibbott is on the public record as indicating his opposition to rebuilding.

**CHAIR** - How many altogether were dissenting from the decision to rebuild on the site from that committee?

**Mr McIVOR** - I'd say that was it.

**CHAIR** - Only one.

**Mr McIVOR** - That wasn't formally tested, I must state for the record, but certainly as a participant in the discussions it was clear that Mr Ibbott had a different view on how it should be proceeded as opposed to the rest of the group.

**CHAIR** - So the majority of members of that committee, apart from Mr Ibbott and two others and the mayor, were either government members or government employees, were they not?

**Mr McIVOR** - The community members were Heather Shepherd, Angela Castles, Paul Ibbott -

**CHAIR** - I am saying apart from Mr Ibbott and two others - and that is Ms Shepherd and Ms Castles and the mayor - all the others were either government members or government employees, were they not?

**Mr McIVOR** - The chairperson at the Reece High School council doesn't -

**CHAIR** - No, I said the mayor - oh, I see, the chairperson has agreed. Oh yes.

**Mr McIVOR** - Mrs Rickards.

**CHAIR** - Yes.

**Mr BARNESLEY** - And the three members at the end.

**CHAIR** - Yes, I've referred to the three members at the end and the mayor, so Mrs Rickards is not either, but the others are. The majority of members of that committee were either government employees or a member of the Government, in the case of Mr Best.

**Mr McIVOR** - No, I think it is about 50:50, isn't it?

**CHAIR** - There were ten members, so -

**Mr McIVOR** - If you include the chair as non-government you have a majority of non-government.

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**CHAIR** - Yes, you're right, it's 50:50. So half of them were government employees or government members of parliament, and of the five who were independent of government, one of them dissented. That's the situation, is it?

**Mr McIVOR** - There were five government representatives or employees, six non-government, and of the six non-government one had a dissenting view on the rebuild of Reece High School.

**CHAIR** - Well, I must have miscounted, I thought there were five government and five non-government.

**Mr McIVOR** - No. I think you've missed out the mayor.

**CHAIR** - No, I took her into account.

**Mr McIVOR** - Okay, so I have counted someone twice. It is 50:50, yes.

**CHAIR** - I thought we'd agreed on that.

*Laughter.*

**Mr McIVOR** - And one of the 50 per cent was not in favour of the rebuild.

**Mr KONS** - Eighty per cent of the community people supported the rebuild.

**Mr McIVOR** - That's right.

**Mr HIDDING** - Twenty per cent didn't, but that was one person.

**Mr McIVOR** - Into statistics again.

**CHAIR** - On the phone survey, could anybody explain why there was a question of whether the rebuilt Reece High School should offer years 11 and 12 when the Don College won't?

**Mr BARNSELEY** - The phone survey was a part of the community consultative group's exercise. I think that Carey is in the best position to respond to that.

**Mr McIVOR** - In developing the phone survey, what the consultative committee was trying to do was to get some feel for some of the issues that are already emerging through the written submissions, and one of those issues was: ought we not have years 11 and 12 at the new Reece High School given the relatively low levels of retention and participation in this region. We thought that ought to be asked as part of the telephone survey.

**CHAIR** - What is the enrolment at the Don Secondary College at the moment?

**Mr McIVOR** - In round figures, we're looking at about 1 000 to 1 050 students.

**CHAIR** - What is the optimum number there?

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**Mr McIVOR** - They would say that they are pretty close to that optimum at the moment. I wouldn't like to misquote their perception but they are pretty much close to capacity.

**CHAIR** - Mr Catlin, you said words to the effect that this proposal to rebuild Reece on the former site would not affect other schools in the area, is that a fair summary of what you said?

**Mr CATLIN** - I did say that. Educationally, it wouldn't affect them, that's correct.

**CHAIR** - So having inspected the Latrobe High School this morning, I find that difficult to accept that if Reece High School is built on the former site - a state-of-the-art school, as we're told in the submission - I find it difficult to accept that that would not have an adverse effect educationally, and as far as enrolment is concerned as well, on the Latrobe High School.

**Mr CATLIN** - As an educator, Mr Chairman, I believe that it's the programs that will attract kids. There will be a short term, I believe, where people would be attracted to a new building but in the nitty-gritty of it, parents make decisions about programs and placing children in schools because of programs and I believe the other schools can hold their own in this community.

**CHAIR** - Do you really believe that Latrobe High could hold its own, retain -

**Mr CATLIN** - Educationally, yes, I do.

**CHAIR** - And retain somewhere near the present enrolment?

**Mr CATLIN** - I do. I believe that the status quo will stay there overall. There may be some dipping in the first instance but I believe that overall their programs are sustainable.

**CHAIR** - Why would it only be in the first instance?

**Mr CATLIN** - As all new schools and new facilities then there would be an attraction for a short term but I don't believe it would be long term. I believe that people would see their own local community engaging educational programs for those kids out there.

**CHAIR** - But the new facilities are not going to deteriorate at an early stage so they're going to be state-of-the-art facilities for the next decade, surely?

**Mr CATLIN** - I don't believe children will travel past their local school. That's my experience in the past. On most occasions they will go to their local school because travel is an issue for kids. We're talking distances, aren't we?

**CHAIR** - How much between Latrobe High and Reece High?

**Mr CATLIN** - Can anyone help me with that - 20 or 30 kilometres?

**Mr McKENZIE** - Between Latrobe and Reece, 8 kilometres.

**Mr CATLIN** - Only 8 kilometres, okay.

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**CHAIR** - Well, doesn't that affect your opinion? If you were thinking it was 20 kilometres -

**Mr McIVOR** - Mr Chairman, the students -

**CHAIR** - I will come back to you in a moment. Doesn't that affect your opinion?

**Mr CATLIN** - I still believe that Latrobe will sustain their own programs and make programs suitable for their own kids.

**CHAIR** - But doesn't the distance factor that you misunderstood influence your opinion?

**Mr CATLIN** - I did think it was 20 kilometres but I don't believe it will make a difference, no.

**CHAIR** - What about children living at Spreyton, half way between?

**Mr CATLIN** - Parents out there will make a decision according to what their either elder children have done or they will make a decision on the cuff at that time. I don't know, I can't predict the future, but I do know that if children have a tendency to go to Reece or to Latrobe in this instance, then they will follow their peers on most occasions.

**CHAIR** - But do you really think they are going to be influenced by what their elder children did when there was no state-of-the-art, fine new high school available to them?

**Mr CATLIN** - I still think the programs out there will sustain themselves, that they will be able to put together programs and have programs that will be attractive.

**CHAIR** - Which programs are you referring to?

**Mr CATLIN** - Any programs that the school run. I don't know what their programs are because I'm not familiar with their educational program but any program that they have that they will be building to suit their own kids.

**CHAIR** - But surely you'll have to know what the programs are before you can express any view about whether that's going to attract children to enrol there or remain there?

**Mr CATLIN** - I have been a teacher for some 30 years and I believe strongly that schools look at their intake of what they have coming through and I believe they will build their programs accordingly to the needs.

**CHAIR** - Do you think that Latrobe High School will be able to compete on an equal basis for enrolment with a new Reece High School rebuilt on the site? Do you really think that?

**Mr CATLIN** - I do. I believe that the department over a period of time upgrade and substantiate schools and program materials so that they can compete on an equal footing level. I believe that. Government have an obligation to make sure that that process is in place and flows through and I am convinced of that.

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**Mr GREEN** - I know we're talking about schools here, Mr Chairman, but does anybody else get a crack or do we have to put our hand up?

**CHAIR** - Sorry, I was going to invite Mr McIvor to make his comment but I will call on you first and then give him the opportunity.

**Mr GREEN** - Can you give some examples of when the last opportunity to have a look at a new school coming into a community had an effect on others? When was the last time we built a new high school?

**Mr CATLIN** - I'm fairly new to it so I will pass this to -

**Mr BARNESLEY** - One that Lyle can relate to is Newstead College because he was at Newstead College. I think Brooks High School would be another example but I think equally that you could look at Queechy High School and in this area, Carey, the Penguin Primary?

**Mr McIVOR** - That would have been the last one, yes.

**Mr BARNESLEY** - And I think Exeter Primary, but I'm not sure. That's a selection of schools -

**Mr GREEN** - Was there a noted trend away from the more established schools in the areas to those new schools or did people rely basically on -

**Mr BARNESLEY** - In the case of Queechy, I don't believe so. Using the Queechy example, Ravenswood High, in fact we had Ravenswood High - a not terribly old school, Mr Chairman, I can't recall the year of Ravenswood High but mid-1970s - their community made a decision that they no longer saw the school to be viable, which was a different situation altogether. But in the case of new schools, I don't believe that Brooks radically shifted the enrolment patterns in Launceston. If you wanted that information we could endeavour to see what we can identify but that is some many years ago.

**Mr GREEN** - No, that's all right. I'm just trying to pick up -

**Mr HIDDING** - The closest to the high school, that's a long way away of course. Anyway, it's a valid test.

**Mr GREEN** - You mentioned twenty pilot schools that you have underway at the moment adapting a new educational criteria and the new Reece High School would be picked up as part of that. Can you explain just what you are talking about in that regard in terms of the criteria and how, if that's successful, it will be expanded into other schools?

**Mr CATLIN** - That's a good question but Carey is the best one because he's in charge of that program down here.

**Mr McIVOR** - Thanks, Lyle. What Lyle is referring to is one of the initiatives out of Learning Together which is a wholesale review of the curriculum. It's called the Curriculum Consultation. It's a three-year project in the initial phase and what it involves is twenty pilot schools in the first year and another twenty pilot schools next

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year which are exploring what it is we ought to be teaching our kids to best prepare them for the future and, importantly, how we ought to go about that and how we ought to assess that learning as it occurs. Last year, for example, there was a statewide consultative process that established the values and purposes that ought to underpin a State education. Those values and purposes have now been captured, if you like, in what are referred to as the new essential learnings. What are the things that we believe kids need to know to be best prepared for the future, to be active participating citizens in that future, and to have the necessary social and cognitive skills to be effective adult members of our community with a zest for lifelong learning?

The twenty project schools have been asked to test that stuff. Okay, we've come up with these essential learnings but how are we going to deliver them, what are they going to look like in a school context and how are we going to assess them? Reece High School is one of those project schools and it's in there because of the opportunity to marry the facility design stuff with that new curriculum stuff. So that's the project Lyle was referring to earlier, the curriculum consultation.

**Mr GREEN** - So the expectation would be that those styles of programs would then be facilitated in schools across the State?

**Mr McIVOR** - Yes, within the next five or six years all our schools will have adopted the new essential learnings and the way in which those schools address them will have been formed by the piloting work going on this year and next.

**Mr GREEN** - In terms of the work that's been done on the optimal size of schools in terms of their student numbers, how would we establish that framework?

**Mr GOURLAY** - In the document that's submitted as evidence, research has been identified and iterated in this document on page 8 which gives a brief synopsis, if you like, of some of the writing and research on school size. I can only reiterate what's here: 'many international studies during the past ten years indicate the positive effects of small school size on student attitudes and achievement. This is particularly true of the effective and social domains where smaller schools contribute to a stronger sense of belonging and improved attendance and participation rates but is also true of student academic achievement. Small schools are generally more community-friendly and are far more likely to be regarded as centres of their communities and vice versa'.

We also know that where large schools exist, locally, nationally and internationally, educators who find themselves in charge of those schools work very hard to break down the mass of students into smaller groups or, if you like, subschools, and there are various devices in terms of school organisation to achieve this. But it's characteristic of any school that's above 500-600 that there will be devices employed and built into the organisational models for those schools which create smaller groups within the school. That might be on a grade basis, a horizontal grouping or a vertical grouping, it could be subschools - a multiplicity of ways of organising that. But the idea is to get smaller groups of students with a set group of staff who get to know the students really well and the programs are directed -

**Mr GREEN** - I guess the point I'm making is that the philosophies and the reasons behind establishing the new criteria are based solely on the educational outcomes as opposed to

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basically the building they're housed in. You can adopt these programs in the school infrastructure we have existing; you don't need to build a new school to facilitate the types of programs we're talking about for the future.

**Mr GOURLAY** - That's certainly true. The initiatives that we've been identifying, both in terms of curriculum, curriculum content and pedagogy that represent best practice and emerging trends, can be practised in existing schools and that's one of the points that Lyle's making, that Latrobe High will be equally able to deliver such innovative and exciting programs through its set of facilities, as will the new Reece High. But what we have is this perfect opportunity in an ideal world to blend the latest in curriculum, and Tasmania's at the forefront of development of new and exciting curriculum trends that leave the old traditional subject areas behind and look at the new and emerging fields of education and to marry that and dovetail that with the shape of the buildings. There are significant features being incorporated in the plans which facilitate delivery of the new curriculum and the latest in pedagogy.

**Mr HIDDING** - Mr Chairman, there are a number of questions I'd like to ask Mr Gourlay and Mr Catlin but I'd really like to move on.

**CHAIR** - Did you have any more questions, Mr Green?

**Mr GREEN** - Not at this stage.

**Mr HIDDING** - I wonder if we could have the principals of the neighbouring schools on to look into that.

**CHAIR** - Yes. Mr McIvor, did you give the evidence you wanted to while I was asking questions of Mr Catlin? Was there something else you'd like to say about that?

**Mr McIVOR** - I didn't, Mr Chairman, but I think I can hold on that. I'm not sure that we don't need a break for five minutes. Some of us may need to freshen up, as it were.

**CHAIR** - You want a comfort stop?

**Mr McIVOR** - That's exactly the phrase I was looking for.

**Committee suspended.**

**CHAIR** - We might go on with somebody else's evidence and come back to him rather than waiting.

**Mr GREEN** - I noticed, Mr Chairman, you've got the copy of the advertisement. Do you have that there?

**Mr BARNSELEY** - With the advertisement, we're going to get the full advertisement and the whole set of information together because I want to make sure what advertisements we did. My recollection is there was more than one advertisement.

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**CHAIR** - In different wording?

**Mr BARNESLEY** - I would want to get the evidence right for the committee. It's something we can arrange tomorrow and provide to Shane tomorrow, so it would be fairly quick. I would be expecting to give you all of the figures, the full submission to the Binks committee, the text of the submissions, plus the advertisements that gave rise to it and the background of the committee.

**Mr GREEN** - Mr Chairman, in light of the discussion we had about consultation, is it appropriate that we give Mrs Rickards the opportunity to say what she believes from the actual school community's perspective?

**CHAIR** - Everybody will have an opportunity and Mr Gourlay is working out the timetable, I think, as to who gives evidence next.

**Mr GOURLAY** - We were just going to provide the opportunity for the people who actually prepared the material that's brought together in the report to speak to it or elaborate on any aspect of their evidence.

**CHAIR** - I understood Mr McKenzie was going to give evidence next and then if Mrs Rickards or anybody else who's been sworn wants to give evidence they certainly can.

**Mr HIDDING** - Mr Chairman, I would rather suspend any further information on the consultative process until we have the information that Mr Barnesley was just talking about. That's where we are. We're hamstrung, we don't know what the question was. We don't know what the writing instructions were, so I'd rather do that tomorrow when we've got the information.

**Mr GREEN** - Mr Chairman, I certainly make the point that we did discuss at length the community's perspective - that is, the school community's perspective - or slant on the school burning down and where it's gone from there is important to the deliberations of the committee.

**CHAIR** - Certainly.

**Mr GREEN** - It's not a matter of arguing about what went in the paper, it's a matter of the on-the-ground people who were involved from day to day from the time the tragedy occurred, so I think it is important under those circumstances.

**CHAIR** - I think we all agree that will happen. I assumed Mrs Rickards would be giving evidence, I assumed that would be the case.

**Mr GREEN** - I would like for you to consider her giving evidence sooner rather than later.

**Mr KONS** - I'll support that, Mr Chairman, because I believe that we have a representative of that consultative committee who was a government employee or associated with the Government in any way that will bear light upon what actually went into the newspaper and what made them formulate the decision in the way it did happen, instead of us presuming to know what the background material is and making our own interpretations



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of that when you've got people who were part of that process and understood it better than we could.

**CHAIR** - I don't have any problem with that at all. I'm happy for the evidence to be given just as it was intended, and then we can come back to it, depending on what's in the advertisement. Mr McIvor, did you wish to say anything else before Mr McKenzie gives his evidence?

**Mr McIVOR** - No, I'm fine for the moment, Mr Chairman.

**CHAIR** - Thank you. Mr McKenzie, I think it was intended that you give your evidence now?

**Mr McKENZIE** - Thanks, Mr Chairman. I have a few small points to make. I'd like to refer you to page 16 of the document where I was asked to write the school community submission. There are a few points I'd like to make about the submission, that that was prepared by me in conjunction with staff members, with students, with parents and friends and with the school council. First of all, when the school was burned down on 5 December and the decision was made to relocate or colocate with Devonport High School, one of our concerns was the enrolment of our current students. At that time I think two of our students moved to Latrobe High School, I think one moved to St Brendan Shaw College. I say those figures because I think that stresses first of all the viability of Reece High School as a unit, especially significant coming into the fact that we would have at least two years of cramped conditions. I think, secondly, it probably shows the reluctance of families who are established in the area to move schools.

I believe Reece High School is a highly viable school. I think its continuation, as we said in the consultative process earlier in the year, offers the choice for families and it makes one of three schools, I think, in the Devonport area - Latrobe, Devonport and Reece - that are highly viable and thriving schools. One of the things that makes Reece High School such a strong school is its strong and 40-year-old culture. A couple of the aspects of that, I believe, are the sense of belonging to the school, and that has been strengthened, I guess, by the adversity that the school has faced. Its sense of community and school ethos which, while hard to explain, comes into the feeling that people have about Reece High School which has well and truly been documented and spoken about. Also the programs that are offered at Reece High School make the school highly viable, as again do the programs at Latrobe and Devonport High.

Some of the things that I see about the new school that I wrote about in the submission, the new buildings and probably in many ways a new school arrangement, would be that the teaching and learning environment would offer areas for what we have learned about good learning environment to what we know about how children learn. One of the things we have been careful to put into the plans for the buildings are areas for different learning styles to take place. For example, groups of, say, 25 in the old classroom-type arrangement, smaller groups and areas for individual work. Two of the aspects we are laying greatest emphasis on first of all are integration of curriculum and the curriculum consultation we spoke about earlier on this afternoon.

The facilities in the rebuilding will enhance the ability for curriculum to be integrated for what now constitute various different subjects to develop what strength, what degree of

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integration of these subjects that we want to put into effect. That can be done easily here through facility provision. The new school too, I think, would offer a state-of-the-art technology school where, through the use of technology, the ICT - information and communication technology - learning opportunities for students would be enhanced.

I think a couple of closing statements I would make to reinforce what I wrote here are, first of all, I think the new school will reinforce again, like the existing schools do, the concept of lifelong learning as it is spelt out in the latest documents from the department. I think it will be of course a school for the twenty-first century, with the added enhancement of course of new facilities. But the most important thing that I would stress in the rebuilding of the school is that a school is made viable not by just its buildings but by the programs that a school offers and by the relationships that are enhanced and developed within that school - teacher to teacher, teacher to student, student to student - and the relationship the school has with the community. I wrote about community access in my submission there.

**CHAIR** - Thank you very much, Mr McKenzie. Mrs Rickards, would you like to give evidence now - is that in accordance with your program, Mr Gourlay?

**Mrs RICKARDS** - Thank you, Mr Chairman. I think as a parent firstly, when Reece High School burnt down it was quite devastating. As chairperson of the school council I've been involved with the school for seven years off and on through P&F and school council. On 5 December I was called and was right in the forefront the whole time during that stage. I've been involved on the community consultative committee and I've also been on the project steering committee and have had a lot of input through P&F, school councils and also the community at large. I think also being in the position I am as an accountant, I've also had a lot of input from a lot of the community around the Devonport area as well.

I think as all these community things came into place it was great because we felt that the Devonport community wanted to have an involvement in the school. We wanted to see it rebuilt and we were told it was going to be rebuilt to start with so of course a lot of the concern went out of it at that stage because we thought, 'This is great, we're going to have it redone and it's going to be really good'. When the community consultative committee was set up I suppose I was quite shocked at the submissions that were received in relation to the non-building of Reece High School. I found that very hard because I suppose I already had it in my mind that it was going to be rebuilt, like a lot of the parents and I think the community of Devonport.

That sort of threw me back a bit so I probably didn't have as much input as I would have liked to have had in that community consultative group, perhaps because I was trying to keep a very even keel on trying to see both sides of everything, which made it very difficult. I think I came out of it okay because I felt that I did use my judgement and it wasn't only as a parent of Reece High but as a person within the Devonport community and I thought that consultative committee came out with a very favourable ending to it.

As a parent, I feel I have the right to choose which school my child goes to and I choose my school on what it delivers, how it delivers and what my child is going to get out of that school. I don't base it on what the school looks like, I don't base it on front stuff.

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My children went to Reece High because it had the best programs for my child at the time and that's what I want for my child.

To be honest, I didn't even look at Latrobe High because it wasn't in my area as such. I felt being in West Devonport I didn't have to acknowledge that my child could go to Latrobe anyway, so it was never in my categories. It was a choice between Devonport and Reece High at that stage. I think the feeling of the community within the Devonport area is possibly that the choices they have, especially on the western side, is Devonport and Reece. East Devonport and Spreyton do have a choice of going to whichever one they like and, as far as I know, I think the majority would probably come through to either Reece or Devonport, but I'm not sure of the figures.

We put a lot of hard work in to where we've got to so far. It's been a struggle and a half but the community behind the school is absolutely amazing. They've put so much in and even the Devonport High community has put so much in to help the collocation of that type of thing as well. I just think the community of Devonport would really benefit from having two high schools within that community and within that city as such.

**Mr HART** - Mr Chairman, thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak with you again about a matter that's causing our school community great concern. As you'd be aware, the decision to rebuild Reece High was made pretty much before the smoke had stopped rising into the air and I and my school community believe that the Government erred significantly in making that decision so quickly. In making that decision there are a couple of major issues which I believe weren't thought through at the time and still haven't been thought through adequately.

I believe specifically that these problems to which I refer are first of all financial responsibility and secondly, equity issues. I think that it's simply financially irresponsible to rebuild Reece High School on its current site and I say that because within the Devonport area - and I'm including Latrobe in that - there is ample teaching space available, there are many resources of buildings that have been upgraded and so on recently that will need to be duplicated and I believe that we simply can't afford that sort of expenditure when it is not necessary.

Speaking of my school specifically, at any time there are between eight and ten classrooms that are empty each lesson. They're heated during the winter, they're cleaned and we spread out into them, however they aren't used specifically and are available to accommodate extra students. I understand that Devonport High School have similar space but I'll allow Terry to speak to that.

I just want to reinforce again that I don't believe extra teaching space is required. I've never been asked about the capacity of Latrobe High to accommodate extra students and I think that in itself is reflective of the narrow view which has surrounded this matter. As people have said, it is an issue that is I suppose peculiar to some extent to the north-west coast, that we tend to look at the towns as very separate entities and I don't know that we should perpetuate that.

I don't think we should kid ourselves because I believe that the new school if it's built - and I believe that the plans are fabulous and it's a wonderful school; I'd love to be principal of a school with facilities like that - I don't think we should kid ourselves that if

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it goes ahead it will spell the end for Latrobe High. I was amused in one way I suppose but saddened in another when I was trying to find the graphs with projected numbers and so on in this that you can't see the line for Latrobe High and I would really hope that that isn't indicative of the long-term view.

I'm not just saying I believe Latrobe High won't continue to exist. I believe that parents particularly from Spreyton which is a shared school when faced with a choice, given the committee had an opportunity to look at our facilities today, when given the choice between the facilities we can provide, regardless of the programs we offer, which I believe are of high quality - and I know that the programs of the new Reece High School will be of high quality - but I think the thing that will make the decision for parents is the facilities that are available in combination with those excellent programs.

I don't think it will be a hard choice for the Spreyton parents in particular, likewise Devonport. We do have some students come to us from Devonport and I believe that they'll be faced with a pretty easy decision to make as to where they send their children. I'm not angry about that in any way. If I was a parent with a child in that area - obviously every parent wants the very best for their child and this is a very good school, there's no doubt.

At the moment we would expect to collect about 30 students from Spreyton Primary School next year. At the moment I think we have about 80 students from the Spreyton area. If we don't pick up a year 7 group with 30 Spreyton kids in it and that continues over four years we'll be 120 students down and then we go below that dreaded 300 mark - we would be around 250 and at that stage a secondary school finds it very difficult to offer the full range of courses that they should be offering. Once you have to narrow your curriculum then parents tend to take their children away in droves and it snowballs. I can't see how, short of compelling people to send their kids to Latrobe High from the Spreyton area - and I don't think that can be done either - we can retain that Spreyton enrolment.

The other issue that I wanted to talk about briefly is equity. There's no doubt from reading this, as I said before, it's a wonderful school. My understanding of the State education system is that there should be a fair degree of equity between schools. I think in terms of resources, in terms of teaching skills, in terms of the general programs and so on that schools can offer, there should be equity between government schools. I think building one state-of-the-art school in an area which is within five minutes of bus travel from Latrobe, where our facilities can in no way compete, is going to have a really adverse effect.

The facilities for students will be magnificent and there is no doubt that parents expect the best for their children and as a parent myself I would expect that my children would have access to a similar facility. The fact of the matter is that Latrobe High simply can't compete; Devonport High to a lesser extent, but Terry will talk about that later. Devonport has had a significant amount of money poured into it over the last few years as a result of the collocation and upgrading of the gymnasium and so on in the last few years. Latrobe High is a 1960s school that is really struggling in terms of facilities. There is going to be a huge gap in terms of the resources available to Latrobe High students and to Reece High. In terms of equity, I think we have real problems there.

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The other matter I would just like to briefly raise is duplication. I wonder why it's necessary to duplicate libraries, performing arts areas and so on. I think we would be aware there has been a large amount of money spent in the Devonport area recently on those types of facilities and, again, there will be new facilities of that nature in this plan.

There is one last point I wanted to raise and that is when we were talking about the written submissions earlier, Latrobe High did put in a written submission and it represented all our staff and community. It concerns me, and I know it is difficult with statistics and so on, that that written submission is treated in the same way when we're looking at percentages as a written submission from an individual or a telephone submission from someone who's been rung up. Significant thought went into that submission and I think it should be weighted accordingly when it's being considered.

**CHAIR** - So you consider, and probably with justification, that that was regarded as one submission when the percentages were being taken of those in support and those against?

**Mr HART** - I think in coming up with percentages that would be the only way it could be considered.

**CHAIR** - Even though you say it was representative of your community after consultation?

**Mr HART** - School community, with school council, parents and friends and staff.

**Mr GOURLAY** - I would just comment on a couple of things that Mr Hart said at the outset and then clarify some facts. On day 1 of the fire, in this very room in fact, all the principals were brought together - and this includes the principals of the neighbouring high schools and the feeder primary schools - and in a forum to discuss the options that were open to the department, many possibilities were canvassed at that stage. Rob, I remember you speaking at that meeting. I just wanted to say that there was the opportunity for input by the principals and Rob did articulate at that meeting that Latrobe had capacity to accommodate some students and it was clearly an option at the time for the department to spread the students amongst other schools. A decision was taken during that meeting to endeavour to keep the population of Reece students together and the option of collocation was one of the options floated at that table and there had to be due diligence done to prove that that was a possible option and what the implications of it were. When it was settled and proven that that would be a realistic option the other options became of lesser priority. I just would clarify that point.

**Mr BARNESLEY** - Mr Chairman, could I make one observation on a point that Mr Hart raised? I realise that we're going to bring forward the submissions from the Binks committee but in conferring with Mrs Rickards I understand that Reece put in a submission that counted as one, Devonport would have put in a submission that counted as one and Latrobe as one. So I think, if we are to take that point, when we get the submissions it would be useful to re-evaluate them to give balance to all.

**CHAIR** - I understand. Thank you.

**Mr BRYANT** - Mr Chairman, I won't take too much of the committee's time. I want to pick up a couple of themes. I would like to pick up the theme that Mr Barnesley raised in an earlier comment he made, that of retention of government schools, which in Tasmania

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generally goes against the national trend and is very encouraging. I think it gives evidence that we do have a strong and viable government system in Tasmania and governments of all persuasions are to be applauded for that. My feeling about one of the reasons why in particular this area has such a strong retention is because of the three high school model that we've had in this particular environment. I think we make each other strong because there is a very fierce but friendly rivalry between the schools and I think that element of healthy competition between us has been something that has helped the government system that we represent present a very credible alternative to parents in terms of the quality that is on offer.

The second point I'd like to pick up is that Tim Gourlay quoted comments about impact of size of school communities and school learning groups. Certainly one of the biggest challenges for high schools generally at the moment is that of producing a supportive school environment and every evidence suggests in our professional field that we can do that best when we have numbers under 500. That's a fairly arbitrary number but I'm trying to illuminate the point by simply saying a manageable size school is in the order of 500. The quality of relationships that Deb spoke about when she gave us an insight into why she chose a particular school are best enhanced in those sorts of environments. Certainly as a person who exists on a daily basis in the collocated schools, which has a population of 1 000 at the moment, the concept of trying to formulate a supportive school environment for that 1 000 would indeed be very challenging and I would certainly be resorting to the sorts of strategies that Tim illuminated in terms of subschools and those sorts of things.

We are simply offering in this comment the notion that secondary school environments are very challenging. Students have that particular time of their lives where they're making that transition from childhood to young adulthood. One of our responsibilities is to accept that it is one of the last safe places for students to make mistakes and receive appropriate counselling and move on with a clean sheet. The impact of mistakes later on can be quite life-altering, both in terms of personal choices and educational outcomes. I think maintaining schools - and we're certainly the envy of Australia in terms of our general school size in the high school environment. I am the president of the Tasmanian Secondary Principals Association and in that capacity I travel extensively on the mainland. I was recently in Korea at the International Confederation of Principals where the Korean Government mandated on the last day that they were going to reduce their class sizes to 35 and thought that was a wonderful step forward. We wouldn't have classes anything like that in our system.

At that meeting Tim referred to, the day after the fire, I believe that the whole first flagging on the notion of collocation came from me representing our school. We have no fear at all of the advantage that Reece would have down the road with a new building because, again, I pick up Mrs Rickards thoughts about quality of programs, quality of relationships. We would hope that those few comments might help the committee in its deliberations.

**CHAIR** - Thanks, Mr Bryant. I wouldn't have thought you'd have anything to worry about in those terms that you commented on secondly but, if you were the principal of Latrobe High, would you not have a different view?

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**Mr BRYANT** - I was the principal of Latrobe High for six years. When I took over the school there were 320 students in it and there was only one student from Spreyton Primary School at the school at that time and that was the son of the office lady. We worked hard on offering quality programs and attracted more and more students. That particular feeder area out there is one of the fastest growing domestic areas in Tasmania in terms of the growth that is being experienced and the house prices and everything are going up accordingly. It was quite late in the six years that I was there that we started to get an injection of funding in terms of the upgrading of the MDT and the new science labs and library complex that I believe was opened in my first year at Devonport but was started in my last year. Again, I believe that the issue that's being well brought out by other speakers is that parents will make judgments around the quality of what they see you trying to do.

**CHAIR** - The situation would be different now with Reece High being rebuilt as proposed than it was when you were principal at Latrobe High, would it not? Do you not think that the state-of-the-art building would provide much stronger competition for Latrobe High prospective students and students than was the case when you were principal at Latrobe High?

**Mr BRYANT** - I think it's a fair consideration that you ask me. In my analysis of the declining enrolments at Devonport High School, the one year that was out of sync with the decline was the year that the gymnasium opened and so Devonport High got a blip in its enrolment that particular year, which was then negated in the following period of time. Certainly there will be people who will make judgments about the desirability of what it looks like on the outside but I would have every confidence in the teaching teams in all the locations, that they would present a viable program for parents that, again, because of the way we can tailor to suit the individual needs of our children because of the size issue, we have a strong insight and capacity to monitor what we're doing when we have schools under 500 students.

**Mr HIDDING** - Mr Chairman, I'd like to ask both principals the same question - there are probably slightly different numbers. Firstly, to the principal of Latrobe - and while it's a little hypothetical, I suspect both of you have bent your mind to this question - what would you do with 200 new students and \$5 million? What would the Latrobe community do with that outcome?

**Mr GREEN** - Can I add something to that? Where would they come from?

**CHAIR** - No, we'll have one question at a time from one member at a time. You can ask it later.

**Mr HART** - I suppose the short answer to that, Mr Hidding, is try to redevelop our facilities to as close to this type of facility as we could get.

**Mr HIDDING** - Could you, do you think, with \$5 million? It wouldn't be as good but you can do a lot - it would go a long way.

**Mr HART** - Yes. You've seen the state of our facilities. They are inadequate and would need a fairly massive refurbishment, however the space is already available. The space

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is there, it's improving it and I would say that with \$5 million you could certainly do that particularly well.

**Mr HIDDING** - Just to probably answer Mr Green's question, if you were to combine the numbers of the three schools and mandate a line, I suppose, that wouldn't be necessary if both schools spent \$5 million. You would think they'd both be around the same sort of quality. But it just so happens that the numbers would equate to about 700 each which, from discussions this morning, it would appear that both of them feel that around 700 is the optimum number. So my question then to the principal of Devonport is: what would you do with 250 or 300-odd extra students and \$5 million? What would you do with that school?

**Mr BRYANT** - With \$5 million we could produce substantive accommodation as opposed to the temporary accommodation that we have there and we would be able to go a long way towards building the extra facilities that we should need, that I showed you this morning, in terms of the toilets and the changerooms and the things that are inadequate in our present situation.

**Mr HIDDING** - Is there anything that is proposed in here that you couldn't provide for \$5 million?

**Mr BRYANT** - I'm not sure.

**Mr HIDDING** - All the nice things that Reece are about to get, is there anything that you could not provide with \$5 million? I guess that's to both of you.

**Mr BRYANT** - My concern would be that which I have already raised, which is the actual school size and the inherent quality of the programs that you get through, I guess, a quality control in terms of size. I know all my kids and their parents and the general circumstances of how they live and the problems they bring to school on a daily basis. In conjunction with a supportive school environment team I feel that I can quickly respond to an emerging need. I'm not sure whether I would have that capacity in a bigger environment.

**Mr HIDDING** - Of, say, 700 students?

**Mr BRYANT** - I've been working at Devonport High over a period of 380-440. We expect to go close to 500 next year and that will probably be about the stabilising point, so certainly 200 or 300 more would represent a significant impost on top of that task. I believe the key issue to providing quality learning programs is that supportive school environment underpinning all the relationships that occur on the campus. I'm not as interested in the facilities as the relationships.

**Mr HIDDING** - So in your position as the head of the principals organisation, what is the situation in Tasmania? How many schools are at that optimum 450-500?

**Mr BRYANT** - We certainly have excess accommodation, particularly in the high schools in the Hobart area and the northern suburbs. Schools in Tasmania are regarded as quite big once they get over about 600.



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**Mr BARNESLEY** - I can respond to that, Mr Chairman, I have those numbers with me. We have Ogilvie with 1 124 -

**CHAIR** - That's an all-girls' school, isn't it?

**Mr BARNESLEY** - Yes, correct - New Town High with 761, that's an all-boys' school; Kingston, 754; Riverside, 703; Queechy, 674; Clarence, 644; Prospect, 618; Ulverstone, 616; and Reece is next at 570. So roughly the top quarter is about and over that 500. The other 75 per cent range down to Rokeby at currently 291. I could table that, Mr Chairman.

**CHAIR** - Thank you very much.

**Mr HART** - I would say obviously your structures need to be different in a larger school so that you are able to know your kids well and have people who are supervising them closely, however I think just reading out the names of those schools that you have they are all very strong effective schools. I think Reece's excellent reputation in the past was built at a time when it was around those sorts of numbers, so I don't believe that 700 is an unworkable number at all. I think it adds to the strength of the school, in fact, in many ways.

**Mr GREEN** - If I could take the hypothetical a little further, Mr Chairman, in terms of the \$5 million being broken up between each of the schools, how would you propose, Mr Hart, to break up the demographics in terms of encouraging people from Devonport to go to Latrobe - because that's really what we're talking about here, isn't it? It's bussing them from Devonport to Latrobe.

**Mr HART** - At the moment there are Metro buses running between Latrobe and Devonport. We have students bussing into Devonport regularly. That problem isn't a huge one. I don't think that we would be setting up programs to compete with one another. I think there would need to be close consultation with the community as to the appropriate educational program in each site. I think there would be differences which were appropriate to the population that we served and to be setting up programs for the purpose of competition I think undermines what State education is about.

**Mr GREEN** - I'm just talking specifically about the demographics of the catchments.

**Mr HART** - The transport issue isn't a problem.

**Mr GREEN** - Right, but you'd be saying basically everybody east of the Mersey River, Port Sorell, that they would be your - is that what you're suggesting?

**Mr HART** - Yes. I'd imagine for a balance in the numbers East Devonport would probably come to Latrobe, Spreyton, Railton; otherwise they would be pretty much the same schools that we draw from now ... East Devonport, I would imagine.

**Mr KONS** - Could you say if it wasn't steered in that sort of a direction it would have that outcome, if it individual choice of parents to send their kids either this way or that way -

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**Mr HART** - I think that's the way it would go. With the figures that are in this report that have changed the slant of the graphs slightly is the fact that the Barrington district over the last three or four years, Carey, parents have had to send their kids to their home area school and if they wish to do other than that they are required to apply to do that through the district office. In other words, parents have been encouraged very strongly and there have been some changes to the schools - East Devonport used to be a Latrobe High School school and it's now totally Reece; in fact it was a shared school, Terry, during your time wasn't it, East Devonport?

**Mr BRYANT** - Yes.

**Mr HART** - Now it is a school that is in Reece's area and there have been some changes. Nixon Street - there was a real mixture of the schools that Nixon Street students went to and Nixon Street was identified as a Devonport High feeder school.

**Mr BRYANT** - I think Nixon Street was always Devonport High.

**Mr HART** - They used to go in all directions.

**Mr McIVOR** - Mr Chairman, if I could just comment on that home area policy, to which Rod is referring, for the information of the committee. This district, along with all other districts in the State, does try to affect the flow of enrolments into our schools, both at a primary and a secondary level. It is quite deliberate to ensure that we get the best and most effective use of the educational facilities that we have. So, for example, in this district going back a few years the primary school next door - Devonport Primary - kids could rattle around in, yet you could go a couple of blocks over to Nixon Street and they would be burgeoning out of the classrooms. The reason for that really had very little to do with educational provision, it was more about community perception or not liking a particular principal relative to another person and the substance underlying the reasons for those choices weren't very sound.

The second problems with it though was that, as a result of the burgeoning in one school, you had understandable pressure to create more spaces in those schools, so minor works programs were being allocated to Nixon Street Primary because it was getting bigger and needed more space whereas other primaries in the area had space to share. So the enrolment of home area protocol grew out of: is there a way of better managing the enrolment at the local level? And Rob is correct, it has been quite effective in redistributing enrolments along lines that can lead to more stable projections in each of our schools. If we translate that protocol to the situation we're confronted with here, then in 2003 we will have a school, in theory, of 500 kids - Reece High School - with a capacity of 600 kids. Currently, there are 570 kids at Reece High School. Assuming those families wish to their children to continue at that school they will have priority for spaces in that school, so the remaining capacity is 30 kids and those 30 kids will be out of area and therefore they'll be making requests to enrol at Reece High School. The protocol is that when those families turn up at the school they wish to attend, if they are not part of the home area, they are referred to their own home area school and/or to the district office to seek an out-of-area enrolment. Those out-of-area enrolments are processed here and either result in the parent deciding that the home area school is the appropriate one or convince us that there are personal circumstances associated with the request that warrant the move to a non-home area school.

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But if we come back to the situation that has been painted with regard to Spreyton Primary, if in 2003 we have 570 Reece High School kids who traditionally go to that school, there are 30 spaces, in theory, left that are up for grabs. If Spreyton is the school that says, 'Yes, we'd like our children to go to Reece High School' then you could assume that either the 30 come from Spreyton and Rob's figures are right or, what is more realistic, is that with the attraction of a new school there will be interest right across the district in that new facility. But to keep the analysis simple, let's assume that half the interest comes from the Devonport community and half the interest comes from the community beyond Devonport, then conceivably Latrobe High might lose fifteen kids and Devonport High might lose fifteen kids. So that's the way it could unfold.

The other observation I would make on the model is that if we gave the hypothetical and we looked at where the students would come from, I think realistically what would happen, given the understandable and probably not defensible, but the understandable sort of community parochialism that we have here on the north-west coast, Devonport families will make the choice about a Devonport school. I reckon the scenario we'd have in 2003 or 2004 would be what we currently have: we would have in the order of 1 000 kids on a cramped, collocated site now called Devonport High School because there isn't a Reece High School, and we'd still have a population in the order of 350 or 400 out at Latrobe. So in looking at how the enrolment protocol works, I am confident that we can manage the 500 to 600 enrolments at Reece High School, given the model that we have in place.

**Mr HART** - In fairness, Carey, I think you're guessing a couple of things there, aren't you. You are guessing that Devonport people will make judgments on the Devonport school. You don't have anything to back that on, but the issue with Spreyton kids is that Spreyton school isn't out of area.

**Mr McIVOR** - No, that's right, it's a shared school.

**Mr HART** - And it's not equi-distant between Latrobe and Reece High School, it's closer to Reece in fact. I believe that those 30 kids will come from Spreyton and I don't think that the majority of Spreyton people see themselves as Latrobe people. I think they will make the judgment to go to Reece particularly - and I think it will be the excellent facilities that will be available to them that will swing them that way. I also have kids in the school currently who are enrolled there in grade 7 saying that they are there until the new Reece High is built, and then they're going. So it's not only the new kids coming in, it's existing students we have who will go.

**Mr McIVOR** - The comment I make on that is that there is a protocol in place to control that drift.

**Mr HART** - No, there's not, Carey, because they're not out of area.

**Mr McIVOR** - But the space has to be there, that's my point. The other comment I'd make, though, is that in terms of the basis for the scenario that I describe is that there hasn't been, to my knowledge, a significant drift this year from the Devonport schools to Latrobe High arising out of the crowded situation at Devonport High.

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**Mr HIDDING** - I'm not surprised, we've seen Latrobe.

**Mr McIVOR** - That's what leads me to the conclusion that in theory you might see this region as geographically mobile in an educational sense, I don't think it is in reality.

**CHAIR** - Mr McIvor, could I ask you a hypothetical situation in your position as District Superintendent of Barrington? If you look at the catchment areas for the students attending Devonport High, Reece High and Latrobe High, say there were no high schools in this area and you were asked to organise a high school system to serve those students living in those catchment areas, how many high schools would you plan?

**Mr McIVOR** - It is a hypothetical, but my judgment would be, in response to that question, that there would be three high schools in the order of 600 students in this geographical area.

**CHAIR** - But you are needing to accommodate 1 400 and it's not likely to be any more, it's going to be approximately 1 400. Would you plan to have three high schools in those circumstances and, if so, why?

**Mr McIVOR** - The why is probably easier to answer than the number, to be frank with you. I'd go for three, based on the advantages associated with smaller school populations. I argue that from the perspective of regardless of the facilities in a school, that the relationships that can be nurtured between teacher and student and their peers is critical to successful learning. So if there aren't budget considerations here, I would err on having smaller schools, so with a population of 1 400 I'd be quite comfortable with secondary schools in the order of 500.

The nature of the student that we are receiving into our schools at an earlier age in fact brings with it a whole lot of social complexity and emotional damage that makes the notion of the traditional model of a teacher to 25 kids problematic. To answer your hypothetical, I would err educationally on the side of a smaller school than we're obviously going to be able to afford in the current climate.

**CHAIR** - Can anybody tell me whether the department is giving any consideration to having another high school in Launceston, bearing in mind the enrolments at Riverside, Prospect and Queechy being up to the 700 level, in view of what Mr McIvor was saying, if you share his philosophy?

**Mr BARNESLEY** - I can respond that there are no proposals on the table for a new high school in Launceston.

**CHAIR** - But is the department satisfied that the children attending those schools where the numbers are nearly -

**Mr GREEN** - You asked a hypothetical question of Mr McIvor and now you're asking that to be confirmed hypothetically based on the Launceston scenario.

**CHAIR** - I'm just testing the department's recommendation here, which anybody on the committee is entitled to do.

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**Mr McIVOR** - Mr Chairman, before Mr Barnsley answers your question, I think the -

**CHAIR** - I hadn't quite finished asking it, but please go ahead.

**Mr McIVOR** - The hypothetical you painted, you talked about 1 400 students. The figures that have been presented in the report are in the order of 1 500 or 1 520, so that would be three schools of 500 students, which is what we're proposing to build here with Reece High School.

**CHAIR** - I thought the figures were 591, Reece; 397, Devonport; 405, Latrobe - which is about 1 400.

**Mr McIVOR** - Sorry. I was projecting forward to 2006 where you've got about 1 520.

**CHAIR** - Yes. The question I was asking before Mr Green interrupted was, does anybody suggest that the quality of education at schools with enrolments such as Riverside, Prospect and Queechy, the ones that I recall - and there are others that were higher - is less than it should be?

**Mr BARNSELEY** - At one level, I think that's a question that in my role in the organisation is very difficult to answer, but from my opinion there are not major issues on the table - and Carey McIvor as the superintendent would be broadly aware on those - on the quality of education of those schools. On the other hand, they will bring into the debate the fact that we have selected Riverside, Queechy, Prospect and Brooks, which is 561, equally in Launceston - and Tim Gourlay is well aware of this - we have some outlying schools - for example, Port Dalrymple, Lilydale and Deloraine. As you can appreciate, parents can go from the intervening towns Deloraine way or Prospect way, so that when you begin to go out to the district highs, Lilydale has a total enrolment kinder to grade 10 of 519. What was the other one I referred to? Deloraine High School is here, Deloraine is at 320 but there are 30 or so senior secondaries. About 290 in the secondary sector.

It is a very difficult question to answer because whenever you pick an area it depends on how tightly you draw the boundaries, that there's a degree of flexibility around. Port Dalrymple has a total enrolment of 539 which includes 34 senior secondaries, so it's 500 kinder to grade 10 with 206 in the 7 to 10 sector. If you look at our district highs the secondary sectors range from Sorell at 358 down to Ouse at 26, so there are many different models of education. So I think you go back to Mr McIvor's point that it is very hard to answer those hypotheticals, because it depends on the community that exists, the traditions that have grown up there, the family associations with schools and so forth.

**CHAIR** - But my last question wasn't hypothetical. It was, because of the numbers at those schools that I mentioned, up to in the order of about 700 pupils each at high schools, does anybody in the department suggest that the quality of education for children at the schools with those numbers is less than it should be and less than it is in schools with enrolments of about 500 to 600? That shouldn't be a difficult question. It seemed easy to answer that if one had the view that it is a good quality of education at 400 to 500, what is with 700?

**Mr BARNSELEY** - In answering the question, there are not proposals on the table for any high school in Launceston because it concerns the quality of education.

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**CHAIR** - Oh, I see. But I am not asking if there are proposals on the table. I did earlier with another question for a different purpose. What I am asking is can anybody say what the quality of education is at those high schools in Tasmania with enrolments in the order of 700? Is it less than those with enrolments of 500?

**Mr McIVOR** - To be totally honest with you, I can't answer that question with the information that I have available to me at present. What I would say, though - and I think I would be speaking on behalf of any principal in the secondary system in the State - is that they would be doing the best that they possibly can with the students and staff ratios that they have. If school sizes were smaller, then their capacity to do even better would be enhanced. I think that as a general principle is true. It would be widely supported, but it is a resourcing argument.

**Mr HIDDING** - But isn't there a balancing issue there, though, of facilities and resources that comes to a school of 700 as opposed to a school of 400? It ramps up considerably, doesn't it, where a principal, for instance, might say, 'On the one hand, ideally I'd like 500 students. On the other hand, while there are some downsides to having 700, there are that many more facilities, music, art, the rest of them'. We have been to both of those kinds of establishments and had a close look for a number of different reasons.

**Mr McIVOR** - There are more resources, there are not necessarily more facilities - and that is part of the issue. But a school of 500 I personally believe, based on the research, is an optimum size for a secondary school, and that is why the Reece High School model is proposed to be a school in that order. But there is no doubt if you have 600 kids you attract more dollars through your resource package and you attract more staffing. If you have 700 you attract more as well. But, not surprisingly, as those schools get larger in number they then internally reconfigure themselves in the ways that were described earlier in the afternoon, so that they can maintain the smallness to build relationships in a larger institution.

**CHAIR** - And give, do you believe, the same quality of education that can be provided in the school with 500 students?

**Mr McIVOR** - I personally believe that the quality of education that you can provide in a school of 500 is easier is easier to provide to that standard than it is in a larger school. It can still be done, but it comes at greater cost to individual teachers and leaders in those schools. But I would not want this committee to think for one moment that a school in this State that has more than 500 students does not provide the same quality of education compared to a school with 500 students or less.

**Mr BARNESLEY** - Mr Chairman, I would seek your permission to in fact return to a question Mr Hidding asked earlier -

**CHAIR** - Certainly.

**Mr BARNESLEY** - and it was the question Mr Hidding asked of the two principals here of if you had another \$5 million dollars and another 250 students. I just want to draw out of that the issue that there is a third school in that equation because, even though it is a hypothetical, underneath it if we are saying there's \$10 million to rebuild Reece, then

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your question of the two I think begs a question of the third school being Reece, that if we didn't rebuild Reece and invested the money in the two schools that we see in the kits, what is the impact on the Reece community? I do think that the committee needs to be giving consideration to the real communities that do exist around schools, and that is the flavour that we in the department have got from day one. Tim refers to the meeting in this room on the afternoon of the fire, which was quite stressful for all parties concerned, and the rapid strengthening of that community. So I would just like to raise that issue and put it on the table.

**Mr HIDDING** - Sure, but there was a Ravenswood School community, and it was subsumed into Brooks. There was an East Chigwell school community which was subsumed. There was the Myrtle Park Primary School community. Amalgamations are painful and I am not putting on the table any proposal for amalgamation in a straight planning sense. In a straight planning sense my question to the two principals was to get an indication from them as to whether they could use \$5 million wisely and whether they could come up to the sort of level that is proposed in this wonderful school here, and the answer would seem to be -

**Mr BARNESLEY** - The answer is yes, but -

**Mr HIDDING** - The other answer is of course that it would be highly political and, yes, it wouldn't be very easy, but that's not the point.

**Mr BARNESLEY** - From the department's viewpoint I would make the point that I wouldn't call it political from our point of view; I would call it a community issue, because in the very case you raise of Ravenswood, the community was given control of that issue. The department stood back. You could ask Elizabeth Daly the question, but very clearly the department stood right away, and I was in the department at the time. Queenstown Primary, the department stood away from that, and District Superintendent Arthur. It emerged out of the community, and that was to form a district high. So where those have happened they have happened well. You raise the North Chigwell example to form Mount Faulkner. There were various allegations of whether the department did or did not stand away from that, and it was a more difficult process, even though at the end of the process all the parents think that is a really good outcome

**Mr HIDDING** - Do you understand the community understands the department to be the government to be them? There is no difference between the department and the government. Within four days it was announcing the school was going to be rebuilt. You can't suggest the department has been hands-off on this. The expectation is there, and that is the situation we are talking about. What I was putting on the table was a planning issue, and I am not yet getting into that community issue.

**Mr BARNESLEY** - I just wanted to raise the issue. I accept Mr Hidding's point. I just wanted to raise the contrasting view.

**Mr HIDDING** - If Latrobe was to close under a scenario that seems to have been put by the principal of Latrobe, if it went substandard after four years because one of its feeder schools went off and it seems to me it gets a bit of a spiral on and it gets harder and harder to maintain. If the school was forced to close and you had the community coming forward saying, 'This school is just not up to it any more; we want to close it', where

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would 250 students fit comfortably in Reece and Devonport, because that's where they've got to go? Where in the planning for Reece are you getting ready for a possible influx of a couple of hundred students?

**Mr BARNESLEY** - If I could respond initially, Mr Chairman, and then I might ask Mr McIvor to respond as well. I think firstly that the issues Mr Bryant raised regarding Latrobe's student class numbers of 22-30, schools ebb and flow, so I believe that the scenario you put you put very forcefully as though it were a fait accompli and I don't see it as such.

**Mr HIDDING** - You're saying that you don't agree that the school could possibly close. We as a committee surely when the principal - the head of a neighbouring school community - gives his professional evaluation that he is particularly worried that the school would be forced to close eventually as a result of this process, surely it would be then my job to ask you where the other two schools would subsume into them the students of Latrobe? Surely that's got to be in the planning or what you're doing is ruling out any possibility that it could possibly get to that.

**Mr BARNESLEY** - The Government's policy position is that there will not be forced school closures. Where there are issues around long-term viability - and I think we can go back to Ravenswood as the exemplar - there was a community debate. There were many issues at play in the Ravenswood community and I believe that the school was concerned that they wanted the identity of being with Queechy or Brooks, that the name Ravenswood and the community - and I think Lyle was fairly closely involved in that too - was making active choices there. Mr Green raised the point of the Government's policy, so that the decisions about futures -

**Mr HIDDING** - Just before you proceed, one of the issues of the school community at Ravenswood as I recall - I was an alderman on the council there, as was Mr Wing, for quite some time - was that when a school gets below a certain level it has trouble standing up with any sort of pride at inter-high swimming carnivals, inter-high sports things and it's just below par when you have other schools with 700 students. So the heart tends to go out of the place and it is no wonder the community finally puts its hands up. Therefore a government policy of no forced closures is actually quite a bad policy when a school's bumping along the bottom.

**Mr BARNESLEY** - It's not my part to - I don't want to go down that track -

**Mr HIDDING** - No, it's not a policy issue.

**Mr BARNESLEY** - but I think what I'm raising is that the planning processes we have in the department would react at district level - and Carey might pick this one up as well - to emerging trends. They don't suddenly happen to us. I don't see the technical planning issues of space to be the huge issue here; I see it to be around the viability of schools which is for the district to work on at all times - the breadth, the depth, the sophistication of the curriculum, the outcomes - all of those issues change all the time. As I illustrated in the numbers, whilst the points you raise are quite relevant, it depends on the sort of community service as to what's viable.



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I indicated the vast array of schools that we have. In the Huon Valley we have Glen Huon Primary with 90 children, not many kilometres out of Huonville which has 600 students. There are ways in which schools differ greatly in the programs they do. Maybe Carey can expand on that.

**Mr McIVOR** - Yes, I can make a couple of observations on that issue. Those discussions are ongoing in the district, regardless of whether Reece High was burnt down or not. For example, one of the high schools in the district is Penguin High School. That's gone under the 300 figure and as a result of that trend emerging a couple of years ago there are discussions going in that community about it becoming a district high school and aligning itself with Penguin Primary which is quite adjacent to the school. So those sorts of negotiations are at community level.

Another example is out here in our country schools we have a number of small rural schools - Sassafras and Moriarty, for example. Discussions have been ongoing with both those schools about looking at resource-sharing arrangements to make both those schools viable. Indeed Latrobe High School has been involved in some of those discussions with a possibility - and it's nothing more than that at this stage - of the notion that Sassafras Primary, a small school of 45 kids, being aligned to Moriarty Primary or La Trobe High School. So those sorts of discussion are occurring regardless of what happened with Reece High School. It's part of business, I guess.

**Mr GREEN** - How many kids are at Yolla?

**Mr BARNESLEY** - At Yolla District High there are 413 - 154 secondary, 233 primary and 26 kinders.

**Mr HIDDING** - Is all that information in the material I'm getting?

**Mr BARNESLEY** - No, that's not. Once again, I can table the census of the district highs broken down to kinder, prep, secondary and senior secondary.

**Mr HIDDING** - I'm particularly interested in the Barrington district.

**Mr BARNESLEY** - It's not all schools but the district is listed there.

**CHAIR** - Thank you, we'll take that into evidence together with the other documents.

Mr Hart, when we were inspecting your school this morning you did mention that there were some students or parents who already said they were just waiting for the new Reece High School to be built and they intended to enrol there. Would you give us some details about matters such as that?

**Mr HART** - I can't give you exact numbers on that but I was speaking to some grade 7 students the other day about matters related to their senior schooling and they said, 'Oh, we're going to Reece as soon as it's ready'. It was really just at that level of conversation. However I'll look into that now that's happened to find out how many and what impact that may have.

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**CHAIR** - I'm not asking you to inquire; I just wanted to have on the record what you'd told us informally this morning. Did those students indicate why they'd be going to Reece High?

**Mr HART** - Because it'll be new, that was the reason.

**CHAIR** - So you feel that's obviously an attraction for children and their parents to stay at that school?

**Mr HART** - Yes, I would hope that they will be so involved in the life of Latrobe High when the time comes and their friends would all be there that they will remain. That was disturbing because it was the intention of them and their parents when they enrolled at our school.

**CHAIR** - Mr Bryant, when the students from Reece High School leave your school, what spare space or unoccupied rooms would you expect to have? Mr Hart has told us that at Latrobe High, I think, there are eight to ten classrooms at any time vacant. What would be the situation at Devonport High School?

**Mr BRYANT** - I think the outcome is going to be very determined by how some of the additional space we now have reverts. We took over the Adult Education building, and if that reverts to the Adult Education, which I believe is a signed-off statement at the moment, then that disappears. Regarding the temporary accommodation - I think there are eight or nine equivalent rooms up there - obviously terrapins are expensive to move and so they will sit there until such time as they are needed elsewhere, although I imagine the Kingborough Council will want theirs back because I think they had it sold before we asked for it. So discounting those two buildings we would still have some excess accommodation. I could not quantify it but it would be excess accommodation in only classroom stock. We do not have really enough of the specialist facilities for what we are doing at the moment. We would need additional workshops. We would need at least an additional lab, as I indicated while we were walking round today. We would need additional toilets, showers, change-rooms, those sorts of things. The fact that we are bussing a lot of students off the campus for health and physical education purposes to use local facilities, we had a full program there on our own before we had Reece. So, yes, there would be some extra space but it would have to be augmented significantly to make it a campus capable of conducting the full range of subjects.

**CHAIR** - Yes, you would still have needs such as the ones you have indicated. Mr Hart, in the same sort of terms are you able to say what your main needs are at Latrobe High School?

**Mr HART** - Yes, there are rooms, for example, a second home economics room which was converted into a classroom because we don't require two home economics rooms at the moment. Obviously those sorts of specialist facilities would need to revert back to what they were. Classrooms that are currently used as offices: we looked at one of those while you were there, and that would need to return to a classroom. We would need art rooms, another art room and there is one that backs onto the one we looked at, which would need to revert to an art room. Facilities like that.

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**CHAIR** - Perhaps if we can just consider sitting times, because I am thinking that if it is convenient for members of the committee and witnesses we might now proceed to the actual designs and the plans. Could I ask if any witnesses have any difficulty about time if we proceed now. Is that convenient for everybody to do that?

**Mr HIDDING** - I guess if we have finished with the principals they don't have to sit around.

**CHAIR** - No, so Mr Hart and Mr Bryant, you are welcome to stay, and Mr McKenzie, you want to stay, I think. I think it would be good if you could stay, Mr McKenzie. Mr Bryant and Mr Hart, if you wanted to leave, don't feel under an obligation to stay but feel welcome to remain as long as wish. Thank you both very much for coming and for the time you both gave us this morning to show us around your schools. We appreciated that and we appreciate your evidence.

### **Mr HART and Mr BRYANT WITHDREW**

**Committee suspended.**

**CHAIR** - I think we are dealing now with the plans, so who would like to start?

**Mr BARNSELEY** - I will hand to Eric Richardson. Are you going to take us through the plans?

**Mr RICHARDSON** - Yes. I will be guided by the committees preferences in that matter, how much detail you want to get into. It is all contained in the evidence, but I will try to highlight it as briefly as possible in view of the time, if that is satisfactory.

**CHAIR** - Yes. Even despite the time, I think that is the approach to take anyway, because we have it in detail. But for the purpose of the record and the transcript, if you would just like to highlight any particular matters.

**Mr RICHARDSON** - Thank you. Also, with your agreement, I will ask my colleague, Mr Wilkinson, to address some parts of it, as we worked on different parts in different ways. I would like to address the evidence on pages 25 to 35, and appendix C, the drawings.

Page 25 begins to describe the situation that you viewed this morning, the condition of the site. As you noted this morning it is formed of two parts, a steeply shelving part and a flat part. The flat part is the sports field. The shelving part, the sloping part, is where the high school was, and after the fire where the remnants still are. It has a slope of some 26 metres, which makes for an interesting design issue. I have listed in the evidence the remaining buildings and tried to get an extent of the damage and the potential for re-use, the main contenders there being buildings known as 1A and 1B which were extensively fire damaged. They do have concrete frame structures which in large can be re-used. There is damage to external cladding and the need for improvements as well which will affect the exterior of those buildings. Building number 2 which was formerly Materials Design and Technology, has suffered no fire damage and, apart from minor updates, is in

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pretty good condition to be incorporated into the new school. Building 4, the former Home Economics building, lost the entire upper floor, has cracking on the outside and has other features which make it very difficult to re-use cost-effectively. Building 6, the gymnasium down the bottom of the hill, has no fire damage whatsoever but is in need of upgrade. The substation building was very heavily damaged and the switchboard has become useless and unserviceable, and the building enclosure complies with current regulations and therefore not a useful asset to retain.

Other assets: The site-works and services, the driveways and car parks as you can see on the western side are all re-usable with minor adjustments and improvements. The services underground in the area of the buildings are all unserviceable and have either been abandoned already or removed already, but major hydraulics services to the site outside that area are still usable. There is also an existing electricity supply which comes towards that substation which we can backtrack along to adequately locate the facility. The landscaping is also another asset which is in good condition in the west part and the northern part of the site. There is further information on those services to be found in the engineering section of this document, and with your agreement, Mr Chairman, I would not go through it in any more detail than that.

Subsequent pages 27 and 28 talk about the list of facilities which have been identified to be incorporated into the new facility. They have been established by a process described on page 26 by consultation and assessment with the Department of Education in its brief, analysing the proposed teaching program including the incorporation of new curriculum developments and the opportunities being talked about by the educators, and consultation with the school representatives themselves, and of course close consultation with the Department of Education facilities.

I don't propose to go through the list of rooms exhaustively other than to say they've been grouped into learning spaces and support spaces. The learning spaces are principal learning areas and work spaces which will tend to produce a greater degree of flexibility and multi-use in the general areas that we're used to. The project studios so-called, and associated spaces, are again trying to take the specialist areas and provide additional multi-purpose use for them so they can be used for a broader range of learning approaches than specialist areas have been traditionally used for.

One sub-group of that is the performance areas and partly the movement areas, and given the community emphasis and involvement on the project, there has been a grouping of those more specialist facilities and trying to extend their multi-purpose function to better interface to the community. But they are the straightforward teaching spaces for those sorts of specialised activities you would find at a high school, just a little more flexible.

The support spaces are the usual- administrative, and so on- including the administration and staff and student amenities. The information resource centre is referenced as a function which includes both some of the traditional library and more modern information handling, plus some sorts of services and functions which better support this information issue.

I might be able now to talk to the slides up here and address the broad site planning approach which has been taken to the site. This is the band of buildings that burned down and those of you who knew the building - probably better than I - they were a very

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dense collection of buildings with rather small and convoluted spaces between them. We are proposing, after, I think, twelve or fourteen iterations of looking at the options, to extend from the existing buildings - there are a pair of bands which more or less go across the contours of the land, although the contours sweep around on this side of the campus - and link those with a broad set of land forms, terraces, which come down the centre, creating two significant external spaces: one to be more part paved and active for kids playing and so on, and one more retaining the parkland setting and garden setting for more passive recreation. Flanked lower down by the active recreation hard surface areas are the courts, and so on, here, and then supported by the active recreation - footy grounds, soccer fields, hockey pitches, and so on, that are down here.

The intention is that the Mill Road will still be the address point with some tidying up of the traffic control arrangements in here, considering the difficulties of this roundabout on the corner, but producing a main arrival point for buses and visitors who don't know the place and allowing then an identified formal entry or an easily recognised image entry but with a range of other entry possibilities for students and staff and those who know where they are. This other arrival zone here is to reuse the existing car parking space that's already there, primarily for staff and perhaps used by visitors to the school outside of those hours.

Next slide - this developed up into a more specific footprint and we can talk about the particular disposition of the activities on the campus, given these two bands, like that, coming out of the existing buildings and growing a new set out of the old .., and the two spaces linked and dominated by the central information resource centre. So in this existing building down here, we're proposing that it be redeveloped to accommodate the work space areas for years 9 and 10 in a flexible arrangement for more senior students. In addition, some science facilities, and on the lower ground floor the existing canteen with some upgrade and improvements.

The building in this area here - materials design and technology in what is known as building number two, the proposal is to also include art in that area and to break down the barriers between the various activities, allowing the spaces to offer a range of activity options to students and staff in a kind of hands-on somewhat messy kind of range of activities - noisy, and so on.

**Mr KONS** - Just to get a bit of a perspective of that, what is the approximate measurement of the information resource centre?

**Mr RICHARDSON** - That is approximately 25 to 26 metres.

These pavilion buildings here are to respond particularly to the years 7 and 8 cross subject learning modes which are developing around the State - the middle school learning processes - and each of these has a group of these, called principal learning areas, which we will talk about in a bit more detail.

This long building here has been designated as a catering complex but it has the teaching facilities for music, drama and for dance, and for the clean making activities associated with sewing machines and light crafts, and so on, and the food working areas. I hesitate to use the words 'home economics', but traditionally those are the kinds of functions

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there. All we've done there is enable the walls between them to be opened so they can be used in a range of different modes.

The gym is still down at this location- we wish we could move it but the linkages between here and here have proved not strong enough to spend the money on building significant lengths of building or walkways through it. The work proposed in here is simply to bring it up to a more current standards of facility.

That is the broad master plan approach at the moment. I would like to then talk about each individual building to the extent that you find interesting. We can go to the plans and tell you what's in them or you can refer to the plans there and perhaps leave it to questions. I am very happy to do either. Mr Chairman, I will be guided by you- would you would like to go through each individual floor plan.

**CHAIR** - I think that would be of assistance to the committee, but I will be bound by the members.

**Mr GREEN** - There was talk earlier about individual learning and how it's been carried forward to the complex in each building.

**Mr RICHARDSON** - I think we can best illustrate that by looking at the plans of one of these buildings here - if we go to building 1A, please. I might refer to my colleague, Mr Wilkinson, in this respect. There are three floor plans of the existing building. If we pass over to the last floor plan, which is the student canteen and cafeteria, when you look at these two floor plans - buildings 1A in your plans there, gentlemen- you can see representative layouts of work spaces and you can see ranges of what might be teaching tables or they might be work stations and ranges of resources applied to those areas, popped in corners. You also see lines which are talking about folding back the walls, reducing them, sliding elements, glass, et cetera. This represents a way of using these spaces for everything from traditional classrooms through to the ability of each student to work quietly and independently at each of those work spaces, depending upon the activities that the teachers instruct them to be doing at any particular time.

You will see another variation of the theme on the upper floor where we have project studios identified. They have a little bit more specialist support facilities with them but, again, you can see ranges of furniture and layouts which are indicative of group work and potential individual and independent paced work. Perhaps we could look at the 7-8 buildings which also bear on this issue.

**Mr GOURLAY** - Just before we leave that, can I just reinforce a couple of features that are in that building because it's particularly significant in that it has come out of the international trends and the research that was done in the early part of the preparation for the project, the early planning, and if we think of the schools that we have around us and the schools that we went through with rows of classrooms on one side, or in fact both sides of a corridor, lend themselves to teacher-directed learning which we know in fact from research that is not the best way that kids learn. People learn by doing, they learn by hands-on, they learn better by student-centred activities than they do by listening to a master teacher talk. There are places for that model. The spaces - it's got significant implications for the built environment in a school - and these spaces, as you see, have got an emphasis on project rooms where kids can involve themselves in practical projects

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outside of the traditional MDT and art and food technologies but in the actual main learning areas and learning studios. Another feature of these areas is they cater for various sizes of groups so that there's capacity for one to many, teacher-directed staff, lecture mode - there's also lots of individual rooms for small groups, meetings and medium-sized groups.

Another really innovative feature, which we have borrowed from overseas, is the provision of individual workstations for each student, so once a student is working on their project or their individual work, that they can have themselves a workstation that is something that they can personalise and spend a lot of time on, quite different to going from room to room on a traditional timetable chasing a subject-based curriculum, and that's a real innovative feature of this plan, that there's enough space and enough capacity for each of the students to have a dedicated workstation/work desk.

**Mr GREEN** - So what you're suggesting is that you won't have the normal style of roster that we used to have where you were programmed in and you went to a class that looked exactly the same as a class you'd just come from - maths to English, basically.

**Mr GOURLAY** - Can I respond by saying that concurrent at the same time as developing the plans and on the basis of research, in the governance of this project we've got three groups: we've got a steering committee that's responsible for the reporting upwards and the overall control of the project; we've got a project working party which is the architects and the project officer and the staff representatives and community reps that are really into the nitty-gritty of the plans and we've got a school operations group that fills principle chairs, and that's really looking at what happens within the spaces. It's trying to ensure that, as we said, we've got this beautiful opportunity here to marry and purpose-build the facilities to match the latest trends and developments in curriculum pedagogy. So the school operations group has the responsibility of the internal school organisation - timetabling of how you allocate people to spaces and development of the new curriculum, which is quite different to the subject-based curriculum we know in the past - the professional development for the staff, which is absolutely critical when there's change to make sure that that side of it gets an appropriate emphasis, and implementing the operations of the new school.

That is going to happen concurrently with the development of the school and it will be a process that will merge over the building period of the school. So there is no timetable identified at this stage but it's expected that these facilities are so accommodating that they could be adapted to any operational model that the school really wishes to put in there, but they do particularly lend themselves for a contemporary mode of educational delivery.

**Mr McKENZIE** - I suppose, Mr Chairman, one of the things that we could sum up that with is that we are building a school for the immediate and for the less foreseeable future. We hope we've made provisions here for long-term development. This is the sort of building that we'd be able to move into tomorrow should it be available.

**Mr RICHARDSON** - The challenge to us to design or convert some facilities so that that large range of teaching or learning activities can take place from traditional classroom - we might still have them - right through to the individual workstation but to allow the

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school to evolve into that and to reflect all the things that the curriculum consultation process is putting into the system. So we try not to paint into a corner.

These particular floors talk about a certain range of uses from an individual through to small group meetings, through to the classrooms and other buildings talk about other sets of facilities which support those other range of activities, if you like. I'd like perhaps to go to years 7 and 8, general teaching facilities. These buildings reflect an attempt to enhance the middle school room process which is happening with success around the State, we've learnt, and is happening in existing facilities. Every time you talk to teachers they say, 'I wish we could da da' and they've done some minor works things. So what we're trying to do is produce a pair of principal learning areas which can be conjoined so that teachers can teach together or separately and then these facilities - we call them principal learning areas because the majority of 7 and 8 students learning will take place in there. In order to have that happen they need some ancillary and resource spaces and it's very like a primary school model, that there are wet areas and withdrawal areas, stores and resource areas, et cetera.

This particular model looks at those two able to be conjoined as main learning areas, ditto those two, but in the middle a withdrawal space which can serve as one, two or open it up and four and interflow between them. Ditto the wet serviced areas - the ability to flow and move between them. This is the teachers' will, so the teachers can be right there and connect to their students. There's much more that the space becomes related to the class of the years 7 and 8 middle school than the individual workstation in the more senior levels.

We have a number of those, there are pavilioned so that we can get light and ventilation to these multiplicity of areas. We've looked at trying to put these resources on the outside and we end up with just about a black box.

**Mr KONS** - Just a question, you've got the teachers there on the bottom, what would be wrong with having them in the middle so you'd be able to look after all four areas?

**Mr RICHARDSON** - Nothing on the surface of it - and we examined that as a request at length - but what we find is that it displaces more important facilities which should be closer to the centre. It ends up putting them in a black hole as well and it also doesn't give them the potential for quite enough separation when they need to do a bit of work without always being on tap. So, in balance, the notion of them being able to access it externally, get some light and vent, but still being able to connect there rather than being right in the centre. It sort of taking away the image of teacher controls all - a little bit more of that independence and student-directed feeling.

**Mr GREEN** - By the same token is there the opportunity to - it's a bit hard to see there - to see across the way?

**Mr RICHARDSON** - These are glass walls here. All these things have glass walls on them so the ability to connect both physically through all the rooms and to visually see through, has been enhanced as much as possible.



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**Mr CATLIN** - I think it would be fair from an educational point of view to say, Mr Chairman, if I could, that when the classes are going the teachers will be out in classes anyway, so basically they meet there for their teaming process anyway.

**Mr RICHARDSON** - So that is the general learning enhanced version for the 7 and 8 students.

If you want to move on to some of the more specialist facilities we can go perhaps to building 2 - and I might ask my colleague, Mr Wilkinson, to speak to this one as it's not a building I've had a great deal of involvement in.

**Mr WILKINSON** - This is the old MDT building, and whilst it's not in bad condition at the moment from some leaks in the roof, we've had a look at - these walls should be shown as dotted lines, it's just a matter of graphics on the computer side of things that's shown them as solid but actually we're taking out these walls here to open up this area through here. Currently the building has a metals area here and a woodwork area through here. The main entries to this building at the moment will be retained. There's level access through here and this is the entry through into the centre of the building.

You'll notice that the staff area is located in the middle and that's a new feature of this design. The staff area at the moment is currently down this end, which is being converted into a storeroom for project storage. So they've got views into the wood and metal areas at one end and into the design and graphics studio at the other end. One of the uses this building currently doesn't contain is art, which will be going into this area here and we propose to build them a new darkroom facility and a store for some art materials and equipment and also relocate their kiln in here.

The heavy metals area, if you like, where the welding will take place and also any oxyacetylene gear will be housed - two welding bays are shown there - and the ventilation equipment, those pieces of equipment used that are here at the moment, will be relocated over to this area. That is the gas bench where the valves and the hoses will be kept and there are some work benches to work on. You can see the indication for storage here on either side of this wall. The entry at this end - we're proposing to provide a level walkway through to this entry which currently has steps. These plans, I guess, are in the process of being improved and developed all the time so it's a snapshot of about a week ago.

**Mr RICHARDSON** - If I could interrupt there, you saw the facilities at Devonport High School and the way they've been interconnected visually and spaces flow one to another with the wood and metal not being at opposite ends of the place. They're the kinds of improvements and bringing together we're trying to achieve.

**Mr GREEN** - Can I ask the obvious questions as to why you'd want to move that infrastructure associated with heat and exhaust from one end of the building to the other?

**Mr RICHARDSON** - The real answer is we'd prefer not to, from an obvious financial point of view, but from an educational point of view, having the metal so far away from the wood activities under teacher control and the breaking down the barriers of subjects, the thing should be design solution, not a material solution - you go down there for metal

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and up here for wood. So we've looked at the least costly option - taking what's there, unbolting it and rebolting it in.

**Mr WILKINSON** - So we're not actually modifying any of the structural components of the building, it's simply dividing walls.

**Mr RICHARDSON** - I think we could move on to the next film - the round building. This building has been called the information resource centre and contains a number of functions including some traditional library functions and some non-traditional library functions but also information technology support facilities. It's grown in a master planning sense in this location to signal a number of important educational matters that this architecture is trying to reflect. The first is the centrality of information that's handled in modern life.

The second is the breakdown between subject boundaries, so that if life presents us with problems they are all together - we don't get a problem in maths and a problem in science separately, so knowledge is integrated and the issues to do with this circular form started out trying to say that knowledge is integrated and there is a crossover and the boundaries are broken down. In a building like this, if you were sitting here, you can see through clearly what's happening in another area over there, quite apart from making excellent supervision for librarians. It makes those connections very obvious to students. There's also something to do with the unity, I suppose, of the school and its process, although there is a linearity in that this important information building links on that axis, the activity spaces on both sides.

The building itself includes a normal control point, teacher-librarian technical services facilities here- you'll be able to check out and control stuff there. But what we're getting in here is this vocational education and futures education with some staff there, with their resources, able to interface with students coming and going there.

This area here is for more traditional library function of a reading area where kids can chat and learn to enjoy literature and sit down and read. This area here is an open user area, as you'd find inside a library with perhaps more emphasis on computers and a range of different resources. This area is again another space that you'd find in a regional library, it is a discussion/withdrawal. So a group can get in there with access to the resources here and work away without disturbing others. It has a dual function in that this space adjacent to it is to house staff from the department's Imagine program or the IT Centre for Excellence.

There are a couple of staff in the area and while it's not formally part of the school, it's part of the community interface and part of the support of the enhanced information management. So we have those staff in here with their working capabilities who also need to interface with teachers and the community and will use this as a meeting space. In here we also have the actual computers and the staff who will maintain them and look after the computers around the rest of the school - the servers and the switch gear and that kind of thing.

This will be the teacher-librarian's office per se and it allows this staff to supervise this way and that staff member to supervise that way. One thing librarians hate is kids round the corner behind a meeting room playing up or doing whatever they shouldn't be doing

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and while this bases itself on independent work, at least we've got a much better overview. We did a square plan and we had corners like you always have. These are some highly desirable resources that get hired out and referenced, so they're in a location like this so they can be overseen and assisted by the librarian there.

Lastly, we have the staff resource office where staff can prepare their lessons and teaching aids and those sorts of things and utilise their resources and maybe duck in and out of there.

So that's that building, it's a deliberately different form from the rest. We're trying to say that while the debate that has been going on is to one side, Reece is going to be still on the site but it is going to grow out of its old buildings and we're trying to create some new forms and some new recognition- something happened on 5 December and it be that all the debate and public involvement could turn out something different - and we'll come back to that theme a little later - something different in buildings which relate to the future of education rather than so much to the past.

**Mr GREEN** - It seems to me that you've only got one access in and out. Does that meet Occupational Health and Safety standards?

**Mr RICHARDSON** - We'll have to have fire escape issues - you have ... fire alarm rings and electronic blocks and that sort of thing.

**Mr GREEN** - They'll be incorporated into the design?

**Mr RICHARDSON** - Yes, you certainly couldn't get a building permit without doing that.

**Mr GREEN** - So why aren't they included?

**Mr RICHARDSON** - In this drawing?

**Mr GREEN** - Yes.

**Mr RICHARDSON** - Because we probably haven't decided where they are. If I drew it here I'm not sure yet if they're going to step out into a two-metre drop. Ideally they won't and they'll be put there. I think you could say that about a lot of the things - why I've drawn this here and not there. It's a technical issue that's taken for granted, I guess - we just have to do it, you don't get a permit without one. So yes, there will be alternative escapes.

**Mr KONS** - I had the same question. With self-certification we'd probably get away with that.

*Laughter.*

**Mr RICHARDSON** - No, they don't trust architects either; we used to certify and we had one on the team but he's not here today.

We'll move on to the next building. This has about six teaching spaces and we've put them together in a way that they can work independently, accessed by a roof down this

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side for class purposes but they can be joined together for reasons of larger group activities, particularly movement and drama things. They get larger groups and they need a space to rehearse their rock eisteddfod or whatever it might be, and we have arranged it such that this music facility, following the slope of the land, is slightly higher so that on even less frequent occasions, I suppose, this can be opened up and can act as a stage to support what's happening in here. If push comes to shove we open up the whole lot and we can seat virtually the whole school community for an assembly occasion, or for a performance for the mums and dads or whatever else. But it is a series of teaching facilities which we tried to add that extra dimension of multi-use to.

Up here these food areas - I call them kitchens - food enterprise, hospitality, because we are trying to, I suppose, give the opportunity for activities beyond the normal or traditional home economics and into more enterprise, but that interrelates. There is a studio there and you saw at Devonport today, they were doing a food demonstration with the sewing machines around et cetera. Sure, that's been forced on us, but the multi-use - perhaps serving of food, learning about table service and hospitality. Also maybe as we saw at Oatlands High School when we were going around, a kids' project ended up feeding the mums and dads that night for \$5, or whatever it might, and the interrelationship between this space is simplified in that connection there.

We also added a few extra toilets in the area in case people come after hours so they can get their toilets here rather than wandering around the campus. These are the ancillary back-up and staff facilities associated with that space. These detail the ancillary facilities that support these spaces, and these are being done - proper music rooms and stores and we have some staff here for control. So it is a range of teaching rooms we hope we can bring together. The closest model I can suggest to you is Newstead College, where their drama, dance, whatever, is actually three spaces. We're planning to do the same sort of issues there.

The last building, which stands on the opposite side of what we hope will be an inviting and interesting entry point, is the administration and services building. It has largely admin. It has the back-up of student services sorts of facilities there, it has the staff common here and it has more 9 and 10 work spaces here. So we have entrance, general office and a book-store, student inter-connections, sick rooms, principals, bursars, APs, full service officers, guidance, social worker - those sorts of things - and a swag of toilets in support of all that. The staff common room, which looks out over that main courtyard - and teachers have been suggesting they will do their yard duty from in here.

**Mr GREEN** - How many will it accommodate?

**Mr RICHARDSON** - That will accommodate the full staff in tight squeeze. It is 90 sq. metres, and the staff numbers are around 43.

**Mr McKENZIE** - It is about 43 teaching staff but not all at any one time.

**Mr RICHARDSON** - Opening off that is the school's conference room, with the ability to connect two spaces on occasions when larger groups want to meet in the conference room, like we looked at at Reece today and sat in at Latrobe today. This is the major circulatory route which feeds from the entry through to the 9, 10 buildings. Perhaps you could just flash up the master plan very briefly for me.

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**Mr GREEN** - Is it likely that under the scenario that is put forward there, that some staff would stay within the complex that they are teaching in, or would you expect that most of them would come back to the common staff room?

**Mr McKENZIE** - One of the things we tried to do was to make that staff room as central as possible and have it within the compound rather than on the edge so it is very much an in-school place and is comfortable. There was a lot of debate. We have been through a number of plans where it was much more isolated than it is now. The very point that you mention there about staff not going to the common room - I think that is the point you're making, Bryan?

**Mr GREEN** - Yes, I am just trying to ascertain whether -

**Mr McKENZIE** - Yes, it was what we were afraid of.

**Mr GREEN** - I was just doing a count of the available chairs.

**Mr RICHARDSON** - Can I clarify that? This isn't the staff's work station.

**Mr GREEN** - No, I appreciate that. It is where they meet and have their lunch and things like that.

**Mr RICHARDSON** - One other thing that I think should promote more staff unity or staff commonality is the fact that there won't be so much subject delineation of staff rooms. To use the common parlance, we won't necessarily have a staffroom full of techies any more, they will be more mixed up, which will promote more interconnectivity, I guess, as a staff which again should use the staff common room more. Certainly from the plans that Eric and Mike have got that are based on the comparison of the staff-room at the old Reece, there should be plenty of room for the staff to be together socially.

There was one other thing, too, that at Reece the middle row, the conference room, connected to the staff - just like we have got on the plan there and in fact it is based on that - with the operable door, or the concertina door, again lending that air of space to the staff room that it didn't have, and vice versa, to be able to use that space and be able to use the staff room from the conference room.

**Mr GREEN** - That table there is the blackwood table, is it?

**Mr RICHARDSON** - That's the blackwood table there.

**Mr GREEN** - They've got that drawing wrong, it's only got one join.

*Laughter.*

**Mr RICHARDSON** - I just wanted to come back to this plan to indicate the all-weather covered accesses which have been designed in so that all students in the rain can get to anywhere on the campus. These terraces, while broad level terraces will have landscaped steps down, we have a range of ramps which meet disabled access requirements to get to all parts of the building across the campus basically.

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**CHAIR** - That's good, and we are very pleased to see the covered walkways, because we were always very concerned about that.

**Mr CATLIN** - I am a fast mover, Mr Chairman.

*Laughter.*

**Mr RICHARDSON** - In addition we provided two other shelter facilities, one broader space - in other words this roof of the covered walkway here to extend out partly over this area to provide a larger sheltered area. We saw that sort of thing working quite well at places like Queechy. And here a shade structure so that people can get out of the sun and we can see that this should enhance the multi-use of this courtyard. You can perhaps see someone addressing a group from over here, underneath that, or reversing it and having a band or a speaker up here, and some ability to bring activities out underneath there.

Another thing on this plan I haven't mentioned is service access. We have been trying to pull together the service requirements of the café and these facilities to be served from a service yard which would utilise the existing access road, the delivery are such things as small service yard and just hand trolley stuff from that parking area there. Currently there is a goat track which goes down the hillside there. It is not really all-weather, and if funds permit perhaps upgrade that so we have community access to that, and people perhaps parking on the court here would be improved. But that is lower down the priority order at the moment.

We will flash to the elevations, and I will just about back out. These are section elevations. This looks from middle road side at the school - it's not true because you are not able to look down at it like reality is. This looks from standing in the court yard looking north at the end of that complex there, the IRC and the 7, 8 buildings. This turns around and looks south. This is the end of that existing MDT building. This is the existing building, and that is the admin and service area, and this looks from down near the gym back up to the west, and this is the side of that existing building and these are the three -

If you agree I will ask Mike, who has been more involved in the materials and the design, perhaps to make some comments on the visuals and construction thereof.

**Mr GREEN** - Before you do, you mentioned you wanted to take advantage of the light in most of the buildings with the aspect of the particular site. I noticed on a number of the buildings themselves the windows designed there are comparatively small.

**Mr RICHARDSON** - It depends on which side. These ones, for instance, because they cop the western sun, and what we want to do is control those. We have light south and we have light north in that particular part of the building.

**Mr GREEN** - Pardon my ignorance here, but wouldn't you require some warmth as a result of the west sun during the day.

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**Mr RICHARDSON** - The western sun is very difficult sun to control. It gets glare and overheating problems in the shoulder of the seasons, basically into the summer and so on, and so the attempt has been to provide the light on the manageable sides, the north primarily, and obviously the south, and to give us something more controllable on that side. You can't control western sun. It gets down to an angle that blasts straight into the room and curtains just don't stop it, you overheat and so on.

**Mr HIDDING** - That's why you don't put kitchens on the west side.

**Mr WILKINSON** - Just in general terms, these building forms have evolved out of the master plan that has taken place over the last eight or ten weeks and have grown into moving footprints and we've started to give them a third dimension - all these elevations that you can see here. This is the performance building, you can see the roof sloping back towards the north. This section is the music area here which has the higher roof over it. Because it's a metre higher in level than the adjacent performance and dance areas and the light materials, studio, it's up that end. That is so that can act as a stage at times when the building needs to be used for a performance of some sort.

**CHAIR** - What seating capacity would be there?

**Mr WILKINSON** - At a maximum, probably about 580.

**Mr RICHARDSON** - That depends how you seat them. The kids squashed up on the ground, that's a good number. It's certainly not an auditorium. If you started to put that kind of facility together it's just inappropriate but -

**Mr WILKINSON** - It's only for occasional use.

**CHAIR** - Yes, and is the seating at the same level, not tiered?

**Mr WILKINSON** - Yes, it's at the same level. It also has the ability to be used - these two spaces together or these two together, or any combination you might like.

**Mr RICHARDSON** - Can I just comment on Mr Green's question. There are minimal windows in that particular building as well because of the preference for them to be able to black the place out for drama and dance for a reasonable amount of time. Again, that's another argument to not overdo the windows on the western side.

**Mr WILKINSON** - So around the outside edges of the new school campus, there is a more robust masonry skin, then once you go down through this colonnade and through the linking roof here at the entry, the site of the school will open up in front of you. The terraces you will see stepping down and the edges of the buildings within that courtyard will be of lighter materials with a large predominance of glass.

This is a section you can see, you can see the approximate levels of the car parking area to the west and you come down to the entry level, which is about 38.2, and you can see the terraces stepping down to a south elevation of the 7, 8 principal learning area buildings of those pavilion buildings.

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You can see the information resource centre here, it's designed with a flat, domed curved roof which will be out of steel deck roofing, such as custom .... The structure for this building would be a radial structure using plywood box beams or timber. That has yet to be refined in detail but that's the principle at the moment.

**Mr GREEN** - So in other words the internal ceiling is the same shape.

**Mr WILKINSON** - Yes. There might be timber box beams or lightweight timber trusses going into the centre of that building. You can also see here the covered walkway roofs - that's the front entry canopy. Stepping down the site there are gaps - it's reasonably horizontal - so you get glimpses of the views to the east as you walk down the shelter of the covered walkway.

Looking the other way, again you can see the car park or the entry level up there and you come down into the entry. This is a view of the administration building - there is the entry for that. That is a view of the entry through to the 9, 10 work spaces beyond in this building here and this is the end of the staff common area. That is the terrace in front of the staff common area, and if you go along to the end of that, when you meet the building behind, which is the 9, 10 work spaces, there is a balcony that continues along the front which also provides fire separation between the glass on this level and the glass on that level.

Down below at the base level, or the courtyard level, we intend levelling that out a little more than it is at the moment. There are a series of banks that come down here and providing a new glazed front to the student common area, which is just accessed through a roller door at the moment. This elevation of this glazed panel here is obscure glass with an openable window, and that's the activities room for special teaching needs, I suppose, if you like. It is probably more discretely located around the corner.

This is an indication of the sun shade in that area, that Eric has pointed out on the master plan, and this is the proposed treatment for the MDT building in an attempt to tie the old building into the new buildings that we are creating on the campus. That will continue back along the east edge for about four or five metres and then the balance of that building will remain pretty much as it is at the moment, depending on funding and how the budget is going and what our quantity surveyors tell us we are at that stage. On the courtyard side, it continues back along that - building a new front to that building in terms of masonry and glass. The current building has some steel frames in it which have rusting problems, so there is a maintenance issue to deal with there. We would be looking at possibly reglazing and recladding the side of that building.

**Mr GREEN** - That is pitched?

**Mr WILKINSON** - That's got a pitched roof on it at the moment on either side. It did have two gables but the middle section has been infilled to provide a sloping roof to that side. It's not the prettiest building in the world and the roofs do leak a bit at the moment so we will be attempting to rebuild the end of that and replace the tiled roof that's on it with a new roof.

**Mr HIDDING** - I have a question for the architects. Generally I have no problem at all with the design and the functionality, I think is terrific and well thought out and the



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community has done a good job in negotiating a fine outcome with it. Our committee has been briefed recently on the issue of sustainability in buildings, and that is an issue more or less in some States than ours. We learned that sustainability in buildings related to energy efficiency, habitat protection, indoor air quality and environmentally preferable materials. If I was to get one of these auditors to look at your plans, what would their reactions be? Can we maintain an argument that this is as good as it can be?

**Mr RICHARDSON** - We have tried to take on board those principles in the design of the facility. There comes a point when you have to decide how much of your project dollars are going to go towards supporting someone else's environmental problem, but to the extent that you have an environmentally sustainable building you have to look at the energy cost of the product that goes into it versus the longevity of that material. That area is a more difficult situation when you talk about aluminium, very high energy cost to produce, but it lasts a long time and therefore energy to replace is difficult.

On the other hand, people can argue if it's Tasmanian aluminium it's made with hydro power - however, what we have tried to do is to come up with materials which have long life and, as much as possible, materials which would come locally - not just for ... reasons but also for symbolic reasons to say that this education into the future - you can be world's best practice if your local sells, your local community and your local materials, hence the timber in the structure - not just the library but the performance areas; hence the masonry and brick - those sorts of simple materials.

The next levels are the quality of the environment internally and the care in selecting the materials. We have identified, for instance, the dado would be, say, plywood and not craftwood for ... reasons - the careful selection of paints and those sorts of issues. The other side of the coin is how much energy you have to throw at the building to continually heat it, cool it and maintain it, and to that end the principle is identifying areas of natural ventilation and heating and shading as much as possible, and minimal involvement of air conditioning unless it's a function that absolutely needs it. You walked into those PC-filled rooms today and you can see the problem. If we could be using another method to get that heat out; it needs some degree of control when it gets too cold. So natural ventilation where we can, mechanical ventilation if we have to, and I don't think we have any air conditioning in the place at this stage - Mike, correct me if I'm wrong.

A reasonable degree of thermal mass in the building structures, the brick walls along the west side will pick up some of that sun arguably, but on the other hand brickwork is not a good insulator. The whole building fabric therefore will be insulated with traditional insulation materials rather than just relying on performance of the roofing, walls, and so on.

The tactics of using alternative energy sources just don't bear close examination in a school like this, like installing a geothermal heat pump thing because they're simply not burning that degree of energy. It's a heating issue rather than a ventilation cooling issue.

**Mr HIDDING** - So, if you flew in one of these magical experts on sustainable energy in sustainable buildings you'd maintain the argument that dollar for dollar we've done quite well on this development?

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**Mr RICHARDSON** - Well, we'd argue that we'd made a reasonable effort at it. Mike and I have in fact consulted the Professor of Architecture at the University of Tasmania, whose speciality is the environmentally sustainable design, mainly because we worked with him on another matter, and he's given us extra guidance and assistance in that respect.

**CHAIR** - Who is that?

**Mr RICHARDSON** - That is Professor Roger Fahey. I don't think we'd get 100 out of 100 but I think in respect of the dollars the taxpayers are spending, we'd be doing a reasonable effort.

**Mr HIDDING** - Just by way of explanation, one of the issues raised at our briefing was that because of budgetary issues, often governments are forced into certain heating practices that in an operating sense are way more expensive than another one, but because of the budgetary thing they're forced into it. But that's not an issue here.

**Mr RICHARDSON** - Not at this stage. We don't see any limitations budget-wise on providing insulation, providing the ventilation, providing the long life building materials, and because it had a relatively low level of mechanical plant, then the question of going to higher capital costs with geothermal heat pumps solutions doesn't impact the job significantly.

**CHAIR** - I'd like to ask Mr McKenzie and Mrs Rickards what the school community's view is about the appearance of the west elevation. Personally, I don't find that terribly attractive and I'm wondering what the school community feels about it. It looks a bit like a factory to me and the red section at the end, a little like a prison. The other elevations, I don't have a problem with, but the west one, I do. We had a similar problem with the new magistrates courts at Devonport when that proposal was before this committee some years ago and there were some changes made to the facade. If the school community is happy with that - I'd be interested to know what the views are.

**Mr McKENZIE** - Mr Chairman, there might be quite a few students who might agree with your view that it looks like a prison and that it might feel like one -

**CHAIR** - I'm sure they wouldn't think it feels like one, I'm sure they'd be very happy with it.

**Mr McKENZIE** - We have shown this final product - these elevations - to 40-odd parents last night at a parents and friends meeting and the unanimous verdict was that they were very happy with the plans. In fairness though to your question, nobody expressed any opinion, positive or negative, about the look of the elevation there. It might be pertinent for me to express my view and what I said to the parents. I'm very enthusiastic about the entranceway there. I think that will be a lot more attractive than it looks on the elevation there, especially since we'll be looking down on that, straight down the hill there to the tree that Eric assures me is going to be in line, so I think looking through that will really take the eye.

As well as that, set further down the hill from where the old school was, and some of the things the parents are very keen on is the landscaping idea - what the community can do to make that an attractive entrance, not to cover up that supposedly bland exterior but to

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enhance it. Landscaping in that general wide open entrance, I think, will make that a really inviting entrance to the school.

**Mr RICHARDSON** - Could I make a response too, Mr Chairman? There has been a design review - a process which took place earlier in the week, which my colleague Mike was more involved than myself - but suffice it to say that some comments not unlike your own were raised and we are in the process of responding to that in a minor way.

**CHAIR** - In a defensive way or an amending way?

**Mr RICHARDSON** - Oh, an amending way. We have some proposals being developed to put before the school to ease that sense. But I think also it needs to be read in the third dimension, that you are actually coming down on this building and your eye height is at nearly roof height and that large volume there - which needs to be a bit 'the black box' - will read much more as a sculptural element. Also what's missing from that drawing is a row of gum trees which come from the left and marches and locks step to about two-thirds of the way along. They're the verticals which flow up against the horizontals there. So, firstly, we are responding to some comments and secondly, it's very difficult often to represent a building with views that literally can never be seen by the human eye - you'd have to be underground to see that.

**CHAIR** - Yes, I understand - we don't want to go underground. Who had problems with that view?

**Mr RICHARDSON** - I can't recall exactly.

**CHAIR** - Were they parents or students?

**Mr RICHARDSON** - I think it might have been some of the architects.

**Mr GOURLAY** - Mr Chairman, as part of the design review process, we brought in two independent architects, a lecturer in architecture from the university in Launceston and a prominent educational architect who's done quite a bit of work for education. Those two responded to the solutions and a comment was made about the approach to the school and the sense of entry, the importance of the approach and the entry to the school and the feeling that was generated there. I'm pleased to hear that DSA have taken on board those comments - that's the purpose of the design review, to have an independent evaluation and to provide a bit of quality assurance.

**CHAIR** - I'm very pleased some experts have similar concerns and that it is being addressed.

*Laughter.*

**Mr RICHARDSON** - We have an expert back in the office who I think you know fairly well, Mr Chairman, who also has comments that we take on board very seriously too - that's Mr Smith.

**CHAIR** - Very good.

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**Mr CATLIN** - As part of that design review we've also asked for a 3-D perspective to show us what it exactly looks like, to be generated by the architects, which they're in the process of doing now.

**Mr RICHARDSON** - We did build a computer model of the site to start with and we're just getting to the point of popping the buildings onto it.

**Mr WILKINSON** - It is a work in progress, Mr Chairman.

**CHAIR** - Yes. I was interested in reading the detail of the submission. There were quite a few factors that haven't yet been determined, a decision hasn't been made. I understand since this was prepared, the question of whether a lift will be provided has been firmed up positively and the thinking now is that there will be a lift - I think we were told that on the site by Mr Gourlay.

**Mr GOURLAY** - I certainly indicated that - I defer to the architects again but things seem to be moving towards the incorporation of a lift.

**Mr RICHARDSON** - The inclusion of a lift is included in these numbers.

**CHAIR** - There were still a number of decisions to be made, I see, from the submission and on quite a number of issues.

**Mr RICHARDSON** - In particular with respect to the engineering matters?

**CHAIR** - And the number of rooms, I think, from memory.

**Mr RICHARDSON** - Are you referring to the section headed 'Design Proposals'?

**CHAIR** - I'm not sure, I'm just thinking of what I read the day before yesterday here.

**Mr RICHARDSON** - Page 17 - would that be one of the areas where you're raising that comment?

**CHAIR** - I don't think I've marked it but I just noticed reading through that there were a few decisions that obviously had to be made.

**Mr RICHARDSON** - I refer you to that section, Mr Chairman, because nobody has actually addressed that as evidence.

**CHAIR** - It is section 17 - 'the final number of design of GLAs will be determined during the detailed briefing phase'.

**Mr RICHARDSON** - This section is being prepared by the Department of Education as their brief to us as architects, so this is a statement of a client's intent.

**CHAIR** - I see.

**Mr RICHARDSON** - So in that respect, that schedule of spaces we have there is our response to that intent and it identifies all the spaces.

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**CHAIR** - Yes, thank you. Mr Hidding?

**Mr HIDDING** - I just want to indicate that as far as I'm concerned I'm relaxed about this section of the evidence and am prepared to reconvene on Monday for a general thing.

**CHAIR** - Mr Green?

**Mr GREEN** - I was just going to ask a question about the water pressure. It was an issue that I read in the submission in relation to fire stations, et cetera - the volume of water that we inquired on at the time wasn't available.

**Mr GOURLAY** - There are a few comments I could make in response to the general state of the services on site. A fair bit of damage has been done to the infrastructure. The infrastructure you don't see obviously, and we're talking power and water, particularly there - sewerage and stormwater - and there's ongoing assessment of the remnants of what's left on site but there's going to have to be major remedial work done on all areas, and I know particularly on the hydraulics, the Fire Services mains. If any sections are retained they will be fully tested in terms of pressure, aperture and what have you. Early in the piece we had an engineer's evaluation of the site - pretty comprehensive - which formed part of the commission brief but due to my I've already undertaken further detailed work on that and there's more to go I think. But basically the infrastructure around the existing buildings will be new, and certainly for the new buildings will be new.

**Mr RICHARDSON** - Mr Chairman, in response to Mr Green's question, I draw your attention to page 34 where the engineer has identified the pressure problems you allude to and talks about the required upgrade to comply with current standards, et cetera, and therefore there's an intent to fix the problem.

Lastly, Mr Chairman, just for the record, I draw your attention to page 35 for the intended program and the outline of the budget. I don't think you want me to read it but just for the purposes -

**CHAIR** - No, we've seen that, thank you.

**Mr HIDDING** - Could I ask a question of Mr Gourlay. The \$10 million fund that you have available, how was that arrived at?

**Mr GOURLAY** - It's a good question, through you, Mr Chairman. The budget was the subject of our preliminary work in assessing the cost benefit of the existing buildings that remain on site. We involved a quantity surveyor, we involved an engineer and part of the engineering report on the site involved, as I say, architectural assessment and a quantity surveyor's assessment. Each building was looked at. A cost of refurbishing that building was prepared. A cost of demolition and replacement with new was prepared as a comparison and also we produced a schedule of areas that you would build for a new school - brand new on a greenfield site for a school of 600 grades 7 to 10 students - and that was costed up as a totally new proposal.

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We factored in the savings that could be achieved by recycling, reuse of the buildings that were worthy of it at cost benefit and it was a fairly detailed build up of the budget and I think it's fair to say at this stage of the project that that exercise has stood the test of time and it's still proving to be a valid budget at this stage and we're in a pretty detailed stage of costing now - a full limit of costs - and there's some pressure on areas. There always seems to be with budgets but -

**Mr HIDDING** - The covered walkways would come out, would they?

*Laughter.*

**CHAIR** - Mr Catlin is going to fight to keep them in.

*Laughter.*

**Mr CATLIN** - I have been through that process Mr Hidding.

**CHAIR** - It's essential in the interests of the health of the students.

**Mr GREEN** - I think Don was born in a covered wagon.

*Laughter.*

**CHAIR** - I've lived in a high rainfall area all my life.

Other project costs - \$631 000 - could be we have some indication of what is involved in that?

**Mr RICHARDSON** - It's partly a design development contingency, partly a construction contingency and the third allowance is - help me out?

**Mr GOURLAY** - The post occupancy contingency is in there as well - unforeseen items that emerge as the school occupies the building. There's a contingency that's available to the architect for unforeseen items but, at the end of the day, there always seem to be an amount of items that emerge that the school says, 'Oh, I didn't know that wasn't going to have such and such'. We need some additional landscaping; we need some additional external seating; whatever it might be. It's a little bit of a contingency in there. There are numerous items I guess but -

**Mr RICHARDSON** - There is an item in there that I would have to take on question. It's in my files but there is an actual item that quantity surveyors choose to put under other project costs. It's something like landscaping the bins and that kind of stuff. I'll take the question on notice and get the answer back through the secretary, if that's okay.

**CHAIR** - Thank you. Any further question? Mrs Rickards and gentlemen, thank you very much for all the help you have given us and the information and for answering all the questions that we have asked and for agreeing to provide the additional information. We'll need to remain just for a little while to discuss some procedural matters before we reconvene at a later time to consider this, but we do appreciate all the time that you've given to helping us with the hearing. Thank you very much.

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**THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.**