



SUBMISSION

NORTHERN SUPPORT SCHOOL MAJOR REDEVELOPMENT

SUBMISSION TO THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS
18 March 2016



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Introduction

This submission seeks approval from the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works for a major redevelopment of the Northern Support School (NSS), St Georges campus at Ravenswood to amalgamate the activity of the NSS, which is currently spread across two campuses, onto one site at Ravenswood. The NSS currently operates out of the St Georges campus Ravenswood and the Newstead Heights campus Newstead.

The Newstead site has issues in relation to traffic movement and parking that are of concern to families and bus operators. In addition, the playground facilities are not suitable for ambulatory students. Younger ambulatory students have been enrolled at Newstead Heights more frequently in recent times as a consequence of the impact of the growing enrolments at the Ravenswood site.

The Ravenswood site has sufficient area and capacity to cater for the total school population albeit with significant modification to the existing building stock. A consolidation of campuses will achieve significant economy of scale, utilisation of resources and greater shared access to high-cost facilities and equipment. In addition, a single staffing and management cohort will facilitate the appropriate high level professional development required by support staff managing pathways for special needs students and their carers. This project includes the subsequent disposal of the Newstead property once the amalgamation is complete.

The redevelopment of the Ravenswood site will have far reaching benefits for students. Most significantly it will break down the division between students with significant physical disabilities and those without so that it can be a more inclusive environment and provide more opportunities for all students to form meaningful relationships with similar aged peers. The redevelopment will improve basic access which will allow all students to access all areas of the school which is a significantly improved situation, whilst also improving safety in relation to student movement and supervision which is critical for many vulnerable students. It will result in reduced movement and disruption for students who will no longer have to travel between the two sites for certain activities. It will provide necessary infrastructure to support the students to reach their potential.

Overview

In recent years the focus of the Department of Education (DoE) capital submissions to Government has been on refurbishing and redeveloping secondary and senior secondary facilities as a priority area. The previous Commonwealth Government Building the Education Revolution (BER) Stimulus Package provided approximately \$330 million into the State for capital improvement in schools, however primary schools received the majority of this investment.

As a result DoE has taken a strategic approach to seeking capital funding to improve secondary and specialist education facilities.

The majority of the facilities at Northern Support School are a good example, as they are generally in excess of 50 years old, have had limited investment and are in original/poor condition.

Tasmanian Education Policy in relation to Special Needs

Tasmanian Government policy prioritises the integration of children with special needs into mainstream public schools. NSS plays a key role in the success and implementation of this policy through capacity building of both students and educators for successful integration of children with special needs into Tasmanian public schools.

NSS professional development programs facilitate government policy through training and support of Tasmanian public school staff for the care of a student with special needs.

Current government policy states:

DoE through its Learners First Strategy 2014-17 is committed to enabling all students to achieve quality outcomes through their participation in an inclusive, high quality education system that is responsive to their needs through appropriate access and participation in the Australian Curriculum.

DoE supports teachers and their school communities to understand and address the diverse learning needs of students. DoE enacts the requirements of the Disability Standards for Education 2005 by implementing Individual Education Plans for students with disability so they have the same experiences and opportunities as their peers.

Government acknowledges the critical and crucial role Special Schools play in supporting students, addressing their individual needs and providing them with varied experiences and opportunities. These are students who, because of permanent or temporary mental, physical, or emotional disabilities are unable to have all of their educational needs met in a regular classroom without special educational and/or related services.

While philosophy and law dictate that children with special needs should be placed in the least restrictive environment (educated with non-disabled peers to the greatest extent possible), many cannot succeed in the traditional classroom, or even in one having some modification. It is therefore sometimes necessary to provide instructional spaces designed especially for exceptional children.

Current government guidelines state Special School enrolments and access is available for the following students:

For students with significant, identifiable disability which includes a moderate to profound intellectual disability. These students will all have evidence of extensive or substantial levels of adjustment. The student's intellectual disability may or may not be accompanied by severe physical disability, severe health impairment or moderate to severe autism.

Access to a Special School can be varied to meet individual students' needs and can include the following arrangements:

- *Access to a Special School on a dual enrolled basis while maintaining enrolment in their neighbourhood school is an option available for students in DoE schools with extensive or substantial levels of adjustment.*
- *Students may access Special School programs and facilities including short-term intervention and specialist programs, in special cases.*

- *When access to a Special School is proposed during a school year, for students requiring extensive or substantial levels of adjustment the arrangement will be negotiated by the principal of the school in which the student is currently enrolled, the special school principal, the parents or guardian and the appropriate Learning Service personnel.*

Capacity Building for Special Needs

The Northern Support School is a specialist education facility located in Launceston with an enrolment of approximately 100 students from Kindergarten to Year 12, supported by 100 staff including teachers, teacher assistants and support staff.

NSS students encompass children with both intellectual and physical disabilities currently located across two campuses.

The Newstead Heights campus caters for school aged students with physical and medical conditions whilst St Georges campus at Ravenswood caters for students who have an intellectual disability.

Educational programs are delivered in socially appropriate class groups and, as well as a standard curriculum, there is a focus on communication, life and social skills.

NSS has many teaching aids and practices in place that are impractical for main stream schools to implement. Students requiring substantial levels of adjustment may benefit greatly from these tailored practices, resulting in greater learning and preparedness for the future. In addition, these practices provide a greater capacity for parents and main stream teachers to further manage and support a child's special needs.

Professional development can greatly assist mainstream teaching staff with the necessary knowledge and skills to teach children with special needs and facilitate Individual Education Plans (IEP) for children who attend their school.

Parent programs are also critical for parents of children with special needs. Encouraging parent involvement and the inclusion of a Parent's Room helps to support and encourage the family unit.

There is an identified lack of transition and work opportunities for school leavers with disabilities, and traditional work experience models do not work for this group of young people, due to their high level of need, challenges adjusting to changes in routines and relationships, and the difficulty of sourcing appropriate work placements. NSS facilitates this transition through the Off-Shoot's Community Garden. Students are introduced at an early age to the garden as part of the school curriculum. The project provides training and work experience in a supportive environment, preparing the students for further training or employment in the nursery industry.

Students engage in a consistent, ongoing, authentic work experience in a familiar, supportive setting, working with appropriately skilled adults who have an understanding of their needs and disability.

Current Educational Needs and Priorities

21st Century Pedagogy and Learning Opportunities

The vision is for a Centre of Excellence in Special Education that would be responsible for building capacity in local schools and be a supportive host for the government school network of support teachers in local schools. A feature of this centre would be dual government school enrolments wherever possible to build connections for students and support capacity building for schools.

The NSS redevelopment will support the school to engage students with disabilities in learning and to give them the best chance of reaching their potential through allowing the school to embrace 21st century understandings around how young people learn and specifically how young people with sensory needs are able to learn.

We now know the effects of dysregulation on the brain and its impact on learning and engagement and we know that we must make reasonable adjustments so that our students can participate on the same basis as their peers.

The NSS students all have moderate to severe intellectual disabilities so the option to regulate through top down approaches such as self-talk is limited, however through meeting sensory needs and the use of somato-sensory input we can support our students to become regulated and engage in learning.

The redevelopment will provide a facility that will give the school the opportunity to become a Centre of Excellence for students with disabilities and a capacity builder for the practice in all of our schools.



School Philosophy and Community Connections

The school is striving to become a Centre of Excellence for the education of students with disabilities to support mainstream schools and to produce teaching staff who can become leaders in mainstream schools.

The school is currently focussing on developing high level practice in understanding reasonable adjustments, understanding behaviour and dysregulation, embedding alternative augmented communication (AAC) into learning and to support every child's right to communicate.

The school has a strong philosophy that we need our students to reach their potential and have successful pathways to contribute and engage meaningfully with the community. As a result of this focus there is also a strong emphasis on building the profile of the school and creating sustainable and valuable community partnerships.

Enrolment Demand

At present, the school has 98 enrolled students – 63 at the St Georges campus and 35 at Newstead Heights. It is anticipated that initially the enrolment demand will grow, however the enrolments are governed by a placement committee to ensure the most appropriate enrolments are accepted. The vision is for the school to build capacity for mainstream schools which will in turn ease the pressure of enrolments as satisfaction with mainstream schools continues to improve.

Existing Facilities

The site comprises:

- the main school block of mixed design and construction, comprising some quality adaptable spaces and other areas not suitable for reuse in a special needs context;
- rudimentary external play areas;
- a separate Kindergarten with playground; and
- extensive grounds and market garden.

Whilst the site is expansive and relatively flat, the existing St Georges facilities present a number of problems for special school design and layout.

The overall existing fabric is of a poor to reasonable condition and internal planning is not favourable for the successful operation of a special school. Traditional school planning of regular classrooms of similar size do not facilitate the special educational needs of children with diverse needs.

Good design would provide variable classroom sizes for a range of class sizes and teaching environments to provide for exemplar teaching and learning appropriate to individual children's needs.

The general arrangement of buildings does not provide the necessary space and supervision sight lines for appropriate outdoor play spaces.

The Ravenswood site was originally a mainstream primary school and whilst it has, over the years, been adapted for special needs students, buildings and grounds require major investment to realise the vision of a Centre of Excellence in Special Education.

In order to meet best practice guidelines for special school planning and design, a major refurbishment of the existing facilities is required, which includes demolition of some existing building fabric.

Community Consultation

The Department of Education established a Project Working Group comprising representatives from the following organisations:

- Learning Services North;
- School Association;
- School Management and student support staff;
- Project Consultant team; and
- DoE Capital Project Officer.

The master plan has been shared with campus staff, parents and carers and return comment considered and incorporated as required. The School Association supports the master plan.

Families are welcoming of the facilities that they believe their children should have and that can be developed on the Ravenswood site.

Proposed Works

Planning projects for Children with Special Needs and Disabilities

Children with special needs, and the type and severity of their needs, may vary dramatically from one academic term to another, and from one school to another across the region. In addition, ongoing review and revision of applicable regulations and guidelines necessitate a significant degree of flexibility in the physical facility.

Building Costs

The project must achieve value for money and needs to achieve a balance between 'realistic needs' and 'wish lists' to keep costs within realisable parameters.

However, access and inclusion for children with special needs and disabilities should always remain a high priority.

Major refurbishment works may cost almost as much as a new build, however minor works to existing premises may prove cost effective. Special school projects are more costly because they are for a small number of students with a high level of needs and require more robust specialist materials, safety and security systems, mobility equipment and hydrotherapy pools.

New Build versus Refurbishment

This project commenced with an extensive feasibility study to assess the scope and potential cost implications of a campus amalgamation.

Three proposals were developed ranging from a total refurbishment, combination refurbishment / new build to a total replacement with an estimated cost in excess of \$12 million.

A subsequent more detailed master planning study, again assessing three possible options, confirmed the preferred option of a major refurbishment and minor new build as providing an appropriate balance between the required level and quality of accommodation and predicted cost.

Site Planning and School Design

A collaborative engagement process was undertaken by the Project Working Group during the preparation of the design for the proposed works.

Initial discussions reviewed the previously prepared master plans to ensure the proposed scope met the brief and was achievable within the allocated budget. The design team modified the master plan to suit the brief and budget, and prepared a number of different options exploring the site's potential, ensuring the best possible arrangement of building functions and relationships.

To underpin the design process, a set of guiding principles was established that identified the key objectives driving the project. These provided the working group with clear directives which guided the decision making and thought process throughout the project's development.

Key Objectives

- consolidation of two campuses into one providing learning spaces for +/- 100 students with ambulant and non-ambulant disabilities;
- upgraded amenities to cater for student numbers and needs and enable efficient staffing;
- safe and efficient student drop off and pick up;
- accessible, inclusive and easily supervised social spaces; and
- welcoming frontage/entry to the school.

All proposals were thoroughly reviewed and considered before the preferred option was agreed upon and subsequently issued to council for planning approval.

The preferred master plan evolved over a four month consultation period with the many involved parties to eventually encapsulate the aspirations of the school, address the briefing requirements of the DoE and reach the project's target budget.

The site master plan allows for the following works to be undertaken:

- learning areas separated into three key areas – junior, middle and senior;
- refurbishment and extension of proposed junior classrooms with covered outdoor areas off classrooms;
- refurbishment of middle school classrooms with areas of covered ways;
- new senior classrooms located within the refurbished existing brick building with a new senior learning deck adjacent – within a landscape sensory courtyard;
- provision of dens throughout classroom wings for specialist teaching of individual students;
- relocated music room, with acoustic insulation;
- new fully accessible amenity blocks for students to DoE specifications distributed throughout classroom wings with additional ambulant toilets with set-up to suit school occupational specification;
- new laundry rooms – one per wing (junior laundry existing, to be retained);
- new staff amenities;
- new visitor toilets;
- access controlled gate from reception area to general school;
- refurbished support staff offices and parent meeting room;
- new staff offices and meeting room located within the existing building fabric;
- new staff room;
- new groundsman's shed;
- formalised staff parking areas and car turning areas;

- new covered way to reconfigured bus turning area;
- space allocated for a new community garden kitchen;
- new sensory/crash room and rebound therapy rooms adjacent to the gym;
- new landscaped junior play area with some relocated play equipment;
- newly landscaped passive play area with covered ways to the perimeter, fully fenced with refurbished trampoline and new sand pit;
- extension to existing gym including new PE office, storage, crash and rebound therapy areas; and
- new hydrotherapy pool with associated change areas with covered way connecting to school.

The site master plan has the following advantages:

- accommodates the required number of students, but allows for future expansion of services;
- reuses the existing building fabric where possible;
- welcoming, readily identifiable front entry with dedicated access visitor parking;
- redeveloped and activated frontage to the school;
- redevelopment of the existing school gym to enable whole school assemblies to take place;
- upgraded amenities to suit student needs (toilets, showers and laundries);
- rearrangement of the existing school bus turning area to enable safe and efficient pick up and drop off of students;
- accessible and easily supervised social spaces (passive through to active play) to ensure inclusiveness for every student whatever their particular needs;
- provides opportunities for outside learning adjacent to indoor learning spaces;
- creates and identifies year level learning precincts within the existing building structure (junior, middle and senior);
- provides the opportunity for development of links between year groups, yet still enables safe separation of vulnerable students;
- modified office spaces and staff amenities to cater for increased staff numbers; and
- new hydrotherapy pool for therapy and water safety.

Architectural Statement

The fundamental architectural approach for the NSS is to provide a safe, welcoming, practical, simple and adaptable campus that caters for the specialised needs of the building's end users.

As most of the works are within the existing building fabric there has been no pre-defined style to this project other than to ensure a harmonious overall appearance. A people centered approach ensures that the design meets the users' very specific requirements in terms of circulation, lighting and acoustics, safety, functionality and durability rather than the users' modifying their behaviors to suit the building, as is currently the case with the existing facility.

The spaces have been created to provide experiences that also benefit the staff and the community as a whole. The NSS is a specialist school for students with ambulant and non-ambulant disabilities and, as such, the design is an "access-for-all" solution in line with current best practice. This means that along with inbuilt passive systems such as acoustic insulation for moderation of sound, staff have a high degree of control over the heating, cooling, and lighting of spaces to cater for the visual and sensory needs of their students and every space that is potentially used by a student is accessible from a physical and sensory perspective to allow for maximum inclusion of all students.

General Learning Areas

The general learning areas (GLAs) have been developed to provide inclusive learning environments for all students regardless of their disability. These spaces will allow for:

- flexibility within the layout to suit varying student abilities and ages;
- focused work environments; and
- access to a variety of sensory experiences (indoor and outdoor capabilities).

The learning spaces need to be flexible enough that students can learn one-on-one, in small groups or as a whole class. Modern learning spaces have the ability to function as an extension of the teaching and learning, with the building providing inviting and warm spaces that students want to be in.

As the school caters for students of varying physical needs, the classroom environment is able to be controlled to a high degree by the room teacher. Lighting levels and temperature are able to be controlled in each classroom to suit the requirements of the occupants. Acoustically, the rooms are heavily insulated to reduce echo in the rooms and interference from external noise.

Generally the GLAs are naturally well lit (with the ability to be controlled by the class teacher to suit students with vision impairment) and have good access to natural ventilation. The junior and middle classrooms have direct access to their own secure outdoor yards where students can retreat and recharge or work in small groups. These yards open onto the year group general play areas further extending the learning environment. The senior wing has access to a large outdoor learning deck and to their own sensory courtyard for use in class time.

Within close proximity to the GLAs and located in every year group wing are dens. These small rooms provide opportunities for specialist one on one teaching and safe, supervised retreat spaces for dysregulated pupils. These rooms are also easily supervised from hallways and GLAs depending on their location and are an essential support feature to the general class areas.

Amenity Blocks

Provision of suitable amenities is of particular importance to this project because of the high level of care required for many students. New facilities are designed to cater for the increased student numbers and to ensure safe working environments for support staff who often spend half the school day attending to students' needs.

Amenity blocks are in three main areas for students' use – junior, middle and senior. All blocks have assisted toilets with ceiling mounted hoists and at least one shower, of a size to cater for students in even the largest powered chair. Additionally, ambulant toilets are provided for more independent students. The layout of these areas is arranged to allow for efficiency for staff and ease of supervision, while the single block arrangement of facilities assists students with memory and locating WC's when required.

Significant input from school Occupational Therapists and Support Staff has enabled the development of a list of specific equipment required and the specific installation details required for such a specialised school. This list will be fulfilled through the relocation of existing equipment wherever possible and the purchase of new equipment as required.

Administration, Executive and Allied Staff Areas

The current administration area will remain mostly unchanged, apart from very minor refurbishment work (painting and new carpet where required) as access and visibility is generally good. Offices have been allocated for the school executive (Principal, Assistant Principal, Business Manager and two Advances Skills Teachers), I.T. staff, Social Worker and the school Psychologist with a larger office "hub" for itinerant allied health staff such as Speech Therapists and Occupational Therapists. The Parent's Room is located near the administration area for security and enables parents to wait and have meetings with staff in privacy.

Two new meeting rooms have been included in the design, which can be opened up to form one large meeting room for staff training/development and board meetings. The larger meeting room will have full video conferencing facilities to enable the school to make the best use of online opportunities and connectivity.

A new staff room will be located adjacent to the existing library and will be partly inside the existing building fabric and part new extension. Adjacent to the staff room, new staff toilets and a shower have been included.

Hall + Gymnasium

The existing gymnasium has been extended to form a large multipurpose space, with the capacity to be divided into two independent spaces for active uses. The extension will allow the whole school to gather together for an assembly, which is currently not possible, and will also allow for performances by local theatre companies on site. With its external links

the new hall will also be readily accessible for school fundraisers and functions after hours without compromising general school security.

The hall will also be used as a place where students will gather undercover and wait for their buses to arrive at the end of the day.

In addition to the main hall space extension, space has been allocated for new PE staff offices and stores. New rooms for the essential rebound therapy room and crash circuits will be accessible for use in PE lessons and via a secondary access, and will be free for use during general class time when necessary. The rebound and crash circuits offer valuable outlets for pent up energy and frustration by students and represent best practice in specialist education facilities.

Hydrotherapy Pool

The hydrotherapy pool will be large enough to cater for a class at a time and will provide essential water safety education and therapy for students; it is a vital addition to the PE facilities located at the existing campus, and will allow the current water safety and therapy programs now located at the Newstead site to continue at the refurbished Ravenswood site. Adjacent to the pool entry are fully accessible change facilities for males and females, along with the necessary plant and storage areas. The pool will be linked to the main school building via a new covered way. Its location on the master plan will allow for future school expansion and central access for the current students.

Play Areas

The outdoor social spaces/play areas are divided into four main areas to ensure the youngest and most vulnerable students are separated as required from the most active pupils. Some play equipment will be relocated and some equipment will be new.

The junior area will be completely separate from the general play areas and fenced, with access restricted to the junior students only, to provide a separation and safety. The play area is intended as a “front of house” area and will assist in the remodelling of the school entry. Visual links through fencing allow some connection to the main active play area, but students will be physically separated. Equipment will include relocated abacus and screens, a relocated climbing gym and new sandpit with a relocated shade structure, relocated trampoline and areas set aside for quiet time/retreat by reclusive students.

The central area has been identified as a passive play zone, where vulnerable students can stay protected under covered ways, or more reclusive and quiet students can have some retreat/reset time away from the hustle and bustle of the active play areas. This area will incorporate synthetic turf rather than grass which would otherwise become patchy and dangerous in winter. This area will retain the existing in-ground trampoline (new cover) and it is intended that the Arts Program’s nominated interactive sculpture will be located here. The yard will also be used for quiet play activities such as dressing up and playing quiet music on the radio. The passive zone will be separated from the active play area by gated pool fencing, with the area between the active and passive zones identified as a transition zone. This transition zone will incorporate both steps (for students in a hurry) and ramps for wheelchair users. A multi-level sandpit in this zone will enable access from multiple heights.

The active play area is located on the western side of the campus and will be a vibrant, busy play area for the most active and boisterous students. The existing hard court will be retained and adjacent asphalt will be extended to allow for ball kicking and trike riding. Some existing play equipment in this area will be retained: the hammock and donut swings and a swing set. The liberty swing from the Newstead site will be relocated here.

The sensory garden will also function as the senior courtyard and is intended as a quiet, more studious space where students can participate in outdoor study. The memorial fountain from the Newstead site will be refurbished and relocated in this space, in an area that will allow for quiet contemplation. The concept of the sensory garden is that long term, the landscaping will develop so that travelling along a path through this space will allow students to experience the different textures and scents of the plants growing there. Herbs used in cooking lessons will most likely be grown in this space too.

Building Materials

Building materials have been informed by the existing materials used on site, i.e. bricks, weatherboard and colorbond. These have stood the test of time at the school and are maintenance friendly. As a large component of the existing facility is to be retained and a domestic feeling to the site was preferred, a majority of the infilled areas immediately adjacent existing buildings are of the same materials to ensure a harmonious appearance. New areas use brick and cement sheet (in place of weatherboards) to create interest and difference in some areas, with the essentially traditional materials set out in patterns to add contrast and texture to familiar building forms. Some existing timber windows on site will remain, with new windows and those being replaced constructed of powder coated aluminum to reduce maintenance and increase durability.

Internally, floor finishes will be durable vinyl in colours and patterns suitable for autistic children. New walls will be generally lined with plasterboard and, to 1,200mm above the floor level, with impact check plasterboard and painted compressed sheet dados. This will enable the walls to retain a domestic feel, yet be durable enough to cope with pupils learning to steer wheelchairs.

Finishes will be considered, simple, durable, warm and friendly. Colours will also be used on doors to classrooms to help students identify which room is theirs and directional flooring will assist with navigation around the school buildings and grounds.

Sustainable Design

The DoE has developed a policy on integrating sustainability on all major projects to exceed the mandatory performance standards and minimise the reliance on active building services.

This development is designed to comply with and exceed the minimum National Construction Code (NCC) energy efficiency requirements.

The NSS redevelopment project will:

- Take maximum advantage of passive design principles such as solar access, natural ventilation and topography. Most of the existing buildings benefit from solar gain and breeze across the school day and new buildings will be positioned for maximum benefit also.

- Use elements such as windows, building massing and external shading to minimise energy use. New buildings will incorporate all of these principles and existing buildings will, wherever practically achievable, be retrofitted with similar features.
- Ensure the buildings are appropriately insulated. This is a fundamental for any new building. In regard to existing buildings, accessible roof and wall spaces will have supplementary insulation systems installed.
- Select and use materials that have lower environmental impact and beneficial life cycle costing. The building industry in general is very well serviced with products designed and manufactured to the National Building Code ecologically sustainable development (ESD) compliance.
- Employ energy saving devices such as low energy efficient appliances/equipment and use renewable energy sources where possible. Generally, the commercial fittings and fixtures used in education projects have been designed and manufactured to Australian Standards for ESD.

The final design will undergo a thermal modelling study to identify additional measures such as thermal break windows that may be practically included at an appropriate capital cost from a local source.

In addition, this project will review all existing infrastructure to ensure as practically achievable that all water, electrical and effluent supply and systems are operating at optimum efficiency.

Tasmanian Government Art Site Scheme

The project budget allows for \$80,000 for the provision of artwork via the Tasmanian Government Art Site Scheme.

The objective of the Tasmanian Government Art Site Scheme is to enhance the general public's access to and understanding of contemporary art and reflects the diversity and skill of the Tasmanian artistic community.

The briefing process for the Art Site Scheme has commenced with the project working group. Expressions of interest will be sought from the Tasmanian artist community and a selection committee will select the preferred artwork. It is expected that this selection process will be finalised by June 2016 with evaluation criteria that will include comment from the student school population.

Project Management

Funding and Budget Estimates

Funding for this project of \$6.6 million is provided in the 2015-16 Capital Investment Program for the Department of Education – \$2.6 million CIP funding and \$4.0 million from Asset Sales.

The project funding is divided into the following components:

Description	Budget Component (\$,000)
Construction, including design contingency	5,025
Furniture and equipment	450
Upfront expenses including consultant's fees	525
Art in Public Buildings	80
Contingency including construction contingency, post-occupancy works, and escalation allowance	520
Total	6,600

The furniture and equipment budget will provide for all loose fittings, fixtures and equipment, either refurbished and reused or purchased new to commission the buildings to operating capacity.

Upfront expenses include architectural and engineering fees, building surveyor approvals, authority permit expenses and land survey fees.

In line with project management best practice, a contingency sum has been allowed for to provide additional funds in the event of design amendments, unforeseen construction costs, additional expert advice and post occupancy changes.

Artas Architects and quantity surveying sub-consultant Stehel have provided cost information and estimates for the project, based on the current master plan design. The project is currently in the detailed stage of the design process and the construction estimate may vary by the time tenders for construction are called. A design contingency has been allowed to cover this.

Recent advice from the Quantity Surveyor has indicated that the initial cost estimate for the Hydrotherapy Pool may be underestimated. Further work is being done to understand this more fully. The DoE has supported the continuation of the existing plans and agreed to proceed to tender.

Details of the preliminary construction cost estimates are provided in the attached Quantity Surveyor Report and summarised as follows:

Construction Budget	Cost Estimate (\$'000)
Building works, including design contingency	3,835
External works	1,190
Total Construction Budget	5,025

The current construction estimate indicates that the schematic design is within the available project budget.

Project Timeline

The key upcoming dates for the project are as follows:

Project Task / Phase	Completion Date
PSCPW hearing	18 March 2016
Development Application submission	January 2016
Design development finalised	January 2016
Documentation, preparation for tender	Feb-March 2016
Tender date, 3.5 weeks	April 2016
Tenders close	Late April 2016
Tender assessment and approval	April 2016
Contractor appointed	May 2016
Construction commences	May 2016
Construction completed	June 2017
Defects liability period	June 2018
Post completion review and evaluation	May 2017
Project completion	June 2018

Potential Project Constraints

Risks and constraints identified in relation to the project budget, timeline and scope include the following:

Identified Risks	Risk Mitigation Strategy
The pre-tender estimate will exceed the total available budget.	The DoE has supported the release of the tender package as a whole and will work through any funding issues that may arise.
Planning approval will not be forthcoming to meet the time frame for tender.	Application for a planning approval was submitted in January 2016 and approval received on 23 February 2016.
Design development will not progress in a timely manner to meet the time frame for tender.	Weekly Project Working Group meetings have been scheduled to ensure design can progress in the timeframe required working with consultants and the school to expedite this process.
Design not meeting requirements for 21st century pedagogy.	Weekly Project Working Group meetings with key school staff to ensure 21st century pedagogy can be achieved in the new facility. Senior DoE Educators are involved with the design development process.
Delays occur during construction.	Regular site meetings will be held throughout the construction phase that updates the construction programme. Adequate programming has allowed full documentation of the construction package to minimise the risk of technical difficulties during construction.

Conclusion

The major redevelopment of the NSS will refurbish the existing Ravenswood site to provide a modern contemporary and flexible learning environment that will allow specialised support to students with special needs.

As noted in the program, this project is now in the detailed design phase. Seeking approval from the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works at this stage in the process aims to provide assurance to the NSS community that this project will proceed to tender and construction as soon as possible.

The provision of 21st century specialist learning environments at the NSS is critical to the provision of contemporary learning practices and improving student outcomes and retention. Whilst the need to undertake these redevelopment works is high, it should also be noted that the \$6.6 million funding allocation provides a much needed injection into the State economy.

It is therefore recommended to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works that the redevelopment works proposed for the NSS proceed as detailed in this submission.