



PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

Major Refurbishment of Riverside High School

*Presented to Her Excellency the Governor pursuant to the provisions of the
Public Works Committee Act 1914.*

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

Legislative Council

Ms Rattray
Mr Valentine

House of Assembly

Mr Brooks (Chair)
Ms Butler
Mr Shelton

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1 INTRODUCTION

The Committee has the honour to report to the House of Assembly in accordance with the provisions of the *Public Works Committee Act 1914* on the -

Major Refurbishment of Riverside High School

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 This reference recommended the Committee approve works for a major refurbishment of Riverside High School to provide contemporary and flexible learning environments, general learning areas (GLAs) aggregated into grade precincts and safer and improved vehicle movement and parking. The works also require the relocation and/or repositioning of the art department, hospitality and catering, the canteen and administration areas, to support the redesign of GLAs into grade precincts, to improve connectivity across the campus and to support the internal movement of students and staff.
- 2.2 The proposed works have been developed in response to a number of identified deficiencies, directly resulting from the age, nature and layout of many of the school buildings. The school facilities were built in the 1960s, and they have been well maintained and some specialist learning areas have been refurbished to varying degrees over time. However, a considerable amount of the existing accommodation, particularly in GLAs, is undersized, ageing and in need of extensive refurbishment. Maintenance and energy management due to building stock age and design is also an issue.
- 2.3 Classrooms are traditional in shape, restrictive in size and not appropriate for modern teaching and learning conditions, particularly with large class sizes of up to 30 often being accommodated. Existing GLAs vary between 55 and 72 square metres (sq.m.) of floor area compared to a contemporary minimum target of 75 sq.m. The current distribution of GLAs does not support the needs of grade groupings and therefore creates difficulties for the provision of collaborative teaching and learning. The current location of GLAs result in inefficiencies created with student movements between class times. Education and student needs have changed significantly since the 1960s and the original learning areas are not conducive to 21st century learning and contemporary teaching practices.
- 2.4 Existing specialist learning areas vary in adequacy to enable contemporary teaching and learning practices. Existing art facilities are constrained in a very tight space with poor storage. The cafeteria is currently located in the lower ground floor of MDT and does not provide for students to sit undercover for lunch. The existing library is outdated and is considered unsuitable for refurbishment.
- 2.5 The existing administration facilities are under sized for the school and poorly planned. The current configuration is difficult to extend successfully. Space limitation and current proximity of existing staff areas continue to challenge effective and efficient support for students in a modern education environment.

- 2.6 The school site extends to the north of Brownfields Lane, an area that currently provides overflow parking. The existing bus drop off and pick up zone is located at the school entry. The current traffic flow is difficult to manage and requires careful management to ensure user safety. There is no dedicated student waiting area or shelter.
- 2.7 As a result of these issues, the school has consulted widely to determine a program of works that reflects the needs and priorities of its students and the broader school community. This has resulted in a work program with the following elements:
- Refurbishment of the ground floor of Building 2 to provide a new learning hub (library), library workspace, Science, Technology, Engineering and Mechanics (STEM) lab and SAFRR Centre (SAFRR is an acronym for the school's values: Safety, Achievement, Fairness, Respect, Relationships);
 - Relocation of the cafeteria into the ground floor of Building 2 (adjacent to the new library area), creating a new internal informal learning and social area with an adjacent covered area providing the opportunity for outdoor learning and eating;
 - Extension of the ground floor of Building 2 to provide a new administration wing, which will include a functional and welcoming new front entrance to the school;
 - Refurbishment and extension of the upper floor of Building 2 to incorporate Years 9 and 10 grade learning areas, teaching hubs and grade teaching offices;
 - Refurbishment of the existing art teaching area (Building 4) and repurposing of the adjacent canteen and grounds maintenance areas to extend art teaching space and provide a media teaching, art storage and an external covered area for art teaching;
 - Refurbishment and extension to existing Building 5 to incorporate Years 7 and 8 grade learning areas and grade teaching offices;
 - Landscaping works to incorporate courtyard spaces for the canteen and SAFRR Centre, modifications to existing car parking areas to accommodate visitor parking, student drop off zones, bus lay-by and linking pathways for students to the main campus; and
 - Provide excellent separation of pedestrian and vehicle movement by relocating the bus turning circle away from the main school entrance and including two new zebra crossings to maximise pedestrian safety across the site.
- 2.8 These works will provide the following benefits:
- Utilising the existing building fabric and site infrastructure, where possible;
 - Refurbishment of existing GLAs to a contemporary size and design standard to allow for flexibility and adaptability including the provision of six additional GLAs;

- Repositioning specialist art and hospitality functions to better aggregate GLAs into grade cohorts with appropriate support functions and spaces;
- Creating year-level learning precincts within the structure of the campus;
- Opportunities to establish and reinforce links between year groups and supporting functions;
- Relocating the cafeteria to create a destination space;
- Relocating the library adjacent to a new student common to create a cohesive multi-purpose space adaptable to formal and informal teaching and learning;
- Creating a new central hub, comprising the new library, new canteen, and central courtyard, as the heart of the school around which year groups are clustered, and focusing the majority of cross-campus pedestrian movements into this space;
- Rationalising and strengthening internal student and staff movement;
- Repositioning administration to improve size, functionality and connectivity to the inner campus;
- Positioning indoor and outdoor learning spaces to take advantage of the solar access and mitigate prevailing winds whilst maintaining views and vistas from the site;
- Locating indoor learning spaces adjacent to outdoor learning areas to provide for flexible learning and breakout opportunities;
- Providing greater opportunities for the school population to utilise outdoor courtyard areas;
- Relocating vehicle movement and parking to improve safety and car parking capacity and to ensure a safe operational environment through the construction period;
- Maintaining existing access where possible and providing new bus and vehicle drop off areas; and
- Replacing ageing and inadequate infrastructure.

3 PROJECT COSTS

- 3.1 Pursuant to the Message from Her Excellency the Governor-in-Council, the estimated cost of the work is \$12 million.

The following table details the cost estimates for the project:

Description	Cost Estimate (\$'000)
Buildings 2, 4 and 5 and central courtyard	8,133
Site distribution infrastructure upgrade and asbestos removal	255
Bus turning circle and layby, visitor carpark, and substation	554
Construction contingency	900
Total Construction Budget	9,842
Up-front expenses including consultants' fees	1,065
Furniture and Equipment	800
Design and post-occupancy contingencies	213
Art Work	80
Total	12,000

4 EVIDENCE

4.1 The Committee commenced its inquiry on Tuesday, 4 September last with an inspection of Riverside High School. The Committee then commenced the public hearing at Henty House, whereupon the following witnesses appeared, made the Statutory Declaration and were examined by the Committee in public:-

- Rob Williams, Deputy Secretary, Corporate and Business Services, Department of Education;
- Natalie Odgers, Principal, Riverside High School; and
- Health Clayton, Senior Project Architect, ARTAS Architects.

Project Overview

4.2 Ms Odgers provided an overview of the proposed works. Ms Odgers highlighted that key focuses during planning had been on providing contemporary learning spaces to promote flexible, collaborative and independent learning, establishing grade precincts to support an already strong grade culture, and centralising social spaces:

Ms ODGERS - Our school community is extremely excited about the redevelopment. You would have seen that today during your visit to our school. We see it as an amazing opportunity to set our school up for the future. These opportunities do not come around very often so we are very mindful that we want to get this right.

..... In terms of our learning environment it is about getting our learning spaces to be much more contemporary. You would have seen this morning how cramped those spaces are for the quite large class sizes in our school, usually between 27 and 30 students in a class. We are making those more inviting spaces that allow for a greater degree of flexibility when students are engaged in learning, and whether that is around explicit instruction that a whole class is involved in through to group work and a lot of collaboration, which is very much the way students are learning now, those bigger spaces will provide that flexibility for students to be able to work in different ways. The design allows for students to be able to go into other break-out spaces and social spaces, so that whether they are working on technology in groups or independently, that supervision, that line of sight, is there. That will be a great advantage for our students. The size of our classrooms is a challenge for us that I think has been addressed through the redevelopment.

Providing those purpose-built grade spaces and that strong grade culture and ethos is a really important part of our school. It is really well established in our school and is how we build those strong relationships with our students and keep them connected and supported in what is quite a large high school environment. While we have that culture, our facilities and our buildings do not allow us to really work in that way anywhere near as well as we could if our buildings reflected that. Having those designated grade areas where they can access the staff they work with and where all the services, whether it is lockers, amenities and all those things, are close by, will be a real advantage.

We also believe that some upgrades to some specialist facilities, which will include our arts, food and hospitality areas, is a real advantage for us. We are really excited about that opportunity. The other strength for us is that it allows us to centralise those social spaces for students. As you would have seen this morning, the inclusion of a cafeteria space that has indoor and outdoor seating is a vast improvement on what our students have now in their break times. Having spaces where they can be sitting and socialising is really important and that is an important part of our learning. It will create a hub through the centre of our school with the upgrades to the central courtyard quadrangle area that will connect with

those inside spaces students can access. It will also allow us to centralise those services everybody uses in a common area, including our library facility and student support area and other services such as our support team, our school psychologist and our social worker. All those people will be located centrally in a space that is very easy for students and parents to access. At the moment those offices are dotted around the school in whatever space we can find for the, so a lot of those services will be centralised.

The other feature is improving traffic flow into the school. By moving our bus turning circle, we believe the flow of traffic into the school when parents are dropping students off will ease a lot of that congestion and make things safer, separating the access by traffic where pedestrians are and then the entrance to the school.

A modern and more suitable administration area that provides an improved and welcoming public space for people coming into the school and a larger space where we are able to add additional services that cannot be located in our front administration area will be a real feature for us. It will include things like effective and suitable meeting spaces for members of the public and parents and also for staff collaboration.

.... One of the things that might not have been direct in the consultation process but has really underpinned all that is having a clear idea in our school community about what we want teaching and learning to look like and what we want our spaces to look like to support that type of learning environment. That is another thing we have been able to keep coming back to. Our design reflects wanting our students to take that greater level of responsibility and be more independent around their learning; particularly as they get into grades 9 and 10, those spaces look quite different and start to be more like an adult learning environment where students take greater ownership and work more independently.

They are the key things we are trying to achieve.

Development of the Proposed Works Program

- 4.3 Ms Odgers provided some background on the process that underpinned the planning of the works program. Ms Odgers stressed how important the extensive consultation process with students, staff, the school community, other schools and Artas had been in developing a master plan, including guiding principles to inform the work program and to help establish the school's redevelopment priorities:

Ms ODGERS -The consultation process we have already spoken about has gone on for a long time and while that has been, perhaps at times, tedious, it has also been to our advantage that we have had that extensive consultation. That started early last year and we were able to take advantage of the fact that there are now a lot of schools across the state that have been through significant capital works. We were able to visit schools on the north-west coast and in the south. Those visits were with a small working party to make them manageable but those people then took the lead in working with the rest of our school community in the consultation process and they were able to come back to the school and share, show photos and talk through examples of what they had seen in those schools.

We were also able to benefit from taking all our staff and a group of students to visit some schools in the Launceston area, such as Brooks High, Prospect High and Kings Meadows High, which have all had recent redevelopments, to benefit from their experiences and then look at what may work in our context. We have certainly taken some ideas from a lot of those things. Having students and also our non-teaching staff go out and visit - people who work in different roles in our schools see some of those things we do not necessarily see as teachers - was really beneficial as well.

Following those visits to other schools, we were then able to come together in an extensive consultation forum that had staff, members of our school community through our school association and student representatives, and we worked through a process to start to prioritise what we wanted to come out of this opportunity.

The development of the guiding principles we used included having flexible learning spaces; having an orderly and safer flow of students; having high-quality student-centred learning that fosters the pursuit of effort and achievement; ensuring we have warm, calm, comfortable social learning spaces that connect indoor to outdoor and are easily supervised and enhance those trusting, respectful relationships; having timeless, enduring and sustainable design which is maintenance-friendly; and having efficient work spaces that allow for collaboration and centralised location of services. In going back over those many times during the design process, I am really comfortable that we have really honoured all of those things. Even where we have had to make changes to our designs, where we have had budget constraints and those sorts of things, we have been true to these other things that our school community has asked for and have really guided all the conversations we have had in that process.

Once our master plan was completed, Artas came to another consultation forum where that was shared with that same broad group, and then there was an opportunity for the group to give feedback. That feedback was overwhelmingly positive and was probably more about much more detailed things than the master plan. People were really happy that the process, and the work Artas had done with us really reflected those big-picture ideas about what people wanted for student learning in our school.

Some minor alterations were made to the master plan but, as I said, they were very insignificant in terms of any major changes. We then worked through the more detailed part of the plan, but those guiding principles have really allowed us to completely reimagine what the school looks like. I think one of the priorities for us has been to try to get everything in the right place, and while \$12 million does not achieve all the things we would like to have happen for our school - because you would have seen this morning there is work that could be done in probably every area of the school - but we have focused on the right things because funding of this size is not going to come along very often for our school and it is about making sure we do those really essential things so that down the track, if there are other smaller lots of work that are done to our school, those things will be able to be addressed knowing that things are in the right place.

..... A final thing I will mention with our consultation is something that has informed our work. You may have noticed in some of our classrooms a quality teaching and learning framework on display. That was developed in my first year at the school in 2016 and was an extensive process that included input from all our staff, students and parent community, and it guides what we believe teaching and learning should look like at Riverside High School. Our students know that language. We talk to them about that and it is about empowering them to take ownership of their learning.

- 4.4 The witnesses indicated that, while the focus for this project was on improving GLAs, the master planning exercise had identified that other specialist areas would need to be relocated to accommodate the preferred GLA configuration. Mr Clayton explained how the master planning process and preferred configuration of GLAs that resulted had led to changes to specialist areas, such as art and hospitality:

Mr CLAYTON - Ms Butler, you would have seen on the tour that the general learning areas are largely original in this site. Once you look at that and the population we are trying to deal with on the site, the focus and priority established by the working group was around creating high-quality general learning areas. The focus in this project, the brief I was

speaking about before, was around creating high-quality learning areas and not necessarily moving into the specialist areas. The specialist areas we are upgrading are largely due because we are looking to relocate them to create these grade group clusters we have done. The arts area was moved because it was sitting where we wanted to create a cluster of classrooms. The home economics second classroom had to be moved because that is where we wanted to locate that central space. Really the focus is on the general learning areas and the other things have happened by course of the process of the master plan.

- 4.5 The witnesses also noted that the master plan included elements that were not able to undertaken within the budget for the project. However, the witnesses did indicate that the master planning process and the design of the proposed works ensured that these additional elements would not be built out and could be easily and seamlessly integrated should additional funding become available in the future:

Ms ODGERS - In the original part of the plan we were very keen initially to have a covered area that could be used for outdoor sports. That was in the earlier part of the plan as one of the things that had to be taken out when we were over budget, but the space is still there for that to happen should there be future funding down the track. That was certainly included. Our gym, which we did not go into this morning, is a reasonable space but it could certainly be improved.

Mr WILLIAMS - When we do each of these developments we do a master plan. This is quite a big redevelopment so we are getting a lot done, but quite often for the smaller ones we might go into a school and have \$4 million to \$5 million to spend so we do a master plan exercise at the beginning to make sure we don't build out the opportunities for when further funding might happen in the future. Every one of these projects gets a master planning exercise at the beginning so we keep space and opportunities for the future.

Mr CLAYTON - We had lots of other little things that were on the wish list and are still on the list if funding became available, including a new floor for the gym and an undercover all-weather surface, because the grounds get fairly wet down around the edge of the river which is where the sportsground area is. We have looked, in consultation with the school, at the big picture of where they would like to see everything done, but there are very few projects we get to work on where we get to do everything we would like to.

Ms ODGERS -As to those other things we would like to see happen in the school in future, I don't think there would be any school that went through a capital works project that wouldn't have more things they want to do. We have things positioned in the places they need to be that support the culture of the school and the way students learn. If other portions of money become available in the future, they will be able to be added. All those things that might be on the wish list that do not get done now can easily be added to the works and aligned to what is already there.

Mr CLAYTON - There was a very conscious decision that anything that changed could be added in reasonably seamlessly.

Benefits of Grade Precincts and Social Spaces

- 4.6 The Committee questioned the witnesses on the potential benefits of co-locating year-levels into specific grade precincts. The witnesses indicated that benefits included establishing close positive relationships between students within year-levels, between students and staff, and providing close access to support services for staff and students:

CHAIR - With the grade spaces, you mentioned there is a specific space for each grade for better social inclusion. Is that, in effect, to help address bullying across the board? I am not saying your school specifically, but from an educational point of view, is it an added benefit of that?

Ms ODGERS - It is around building those positive relationships and close connections between the cohort and the staff that work closely with them. Each student belongs to a home group and has a home group teacher. That teacher is located in that space and their grade leaders and assistant principal are probably located in that space as well. It means that for any aspect of support students may require they have those people at close access. It is about building a positive culture that minimises those issues. Like any school, of course we have some of those challenges. You do not put over 700 young people together and not have challenges around students getting on, but it is about how we build that positive culture. I think what that does is take a big school and break it down into some smaller schools. Our students still mix across the board for a lot of their specialist areas, which you would have seen today when you were moving around the school.

Mr WILLIAMS - We have tried to do that in all our other rebuilds as well. It does not always work but largely schools want them in the grade areas not only for the ease of teaching them and supporting but because the kids like it as well.

- 4.7 The Committee also noted there was a significant focus on redeveloping social spaces, and understood, from experience gained through other school redevelopments, that this created a more inclusive environment and fostered a sense of ownership, pride and belonging amongst students. The Committee sought to expand on the potential benefits that these improved, flexible and user-friendly social spaces can provide:

CHAIR - We saw the canteen, which reminded me of my old school canteen. A wonderful example of the complete change in attitude in student culture would be Latrobe High, with the redevelopment of its canteen area and the eating space for students, where the kids have their lunch but also spend their recess and lunch. I was a prefect with the current principal of Latrobe High. I have explained at school assemblies even last year about what students had compared to what they have now with the inclusion and ownership within the school that students feel. Schools have more open, adaptive and welcoming environments, which is important. Is that something that has been part of your consultation with your own students? Has that informed what they feel is important for them?

Ms ODGERS - Yes, it has definitely come through around those guiding principles from all community members about the need for those social spaces. An important part of learning for students is how to connect with other kids, how to relate to other people and cope in those spaces where lots of students are moving through. I guess while we have our grade spaces, we have those common areas everybody is accessing. One of the things we have tried to do in that is to create a space that is very flexible and multipurpose. I believe that space will not just be something we will see used in break times because it can be used for lots of other purposes. There could be times when students are in there learning and it opens out from the library space. It could be used for public events and things like that. It has been a key thing that we make sure our spaces are flexible enough for them to have those multiple uses. It is that blurring of the boundaries between the classroom and those social spaces so you get maximum benefit from all those areas.

CHAIR - Without having a running commentary on it, part of the advantage at Latrobe is, as a teacher told me, that for some students who may not have interacted in that social space while at school, learning how to engage and eat properly and socialise within that environment really helps those students from some backgrounds and environments.

Contemporary learning spaces outside the classroom are very important. Is that something that, in your experience, would assist as well?

Ms ODGERS - Absolutely. It is that social learning where students learn how to interact in different situations, how to manage themselves in those circumstances and focus on those respectful behaviour that we want to see between students. It takes it outside the classroom and provides much more choice for students to be interacting in different ways. We saw today students standing around in groups and that is not necessarily conducive to positive interaction all the time if they are clumped in those big groups, so I think this will give us a much more supportive environment with a lot more choice for how students group together and that indoor-outdoor space will be an advantage as well.

Does the Redevelopment Cater for Future Growth?

- 4.8 The Committee understood that the school catchment area was experiencing considerable growth. The Committee sought assurance that the proposed works provided adequate capacity to cater for potential growth in enrolments. The witnesses confirmed that planning for future growth was a key consideration in the planning process. In particular, the provision of six additional GLAs and the inclusion of a number of other flexible learning spaces, that could be easily repurposed to accommodate a range of uses, were key measures to ensure the school could readily cope with any potential growth:

Ms RATTRAY -I am interested in future planning for the school. What is the projection for student numbers? Are we looking at futureproofing the school as well? I sometimes think we are looking for the now and I am interested in what has been done for the future, because I know how much of a growth area this is - your feeder area, particularly around Legana, which the member for Rosevears never stops going on about. I am really interested in where you see the growth of the school and whether we are providing that for the future.

Ms ODGERS - There is no doubt it is a growing area. We are constantly doing enrolments and we see people moving into the area. Lots of people from the mainland are moving into the area. I believe we are putting in place a plan that sets us up for the future and will give us more classroom space than we have now. At the moment obviously some classrooms are going and some are being added, but I believe it works out to be at least six general learning areas in addition to what we now have so it does create room for those increased numbers. The projected numbers, as you will see from the report, are going back up again. They are probably not as high as they were a number of years ago but the numbers coming through our associate primary schools are certainly projected to be higher, so I believe we will be in a position to be able to manage that. The school is actually not at capacity now in terms of enrolments.

Ms RATTRAY - There are currently 740 - is that correct?

Ms ODGERS - There are about 730 students at the moment but our capacity is 850, which would make for a very crowded school with those classroom sizes, but there has certainly been a higher number at the school than there is at present.

I believe it is setting up for that. There are a lot of quite flexible spaces created too. Even the room off the library opens up and can be used as a learning area so those sorts of things will allow for some increased numbers in the future.

Design Specifications, Building Materials and Fittings:

- 4.9 The Committee questioned the witnesses on the design and material specifications for the project, seeking assurance from the witnesses that these

specifications were not excessive or imposed unnecessary costs on the project. Mr Clayton assured the Committee that the specifications were not excessive and were designed to ensure the school was able to leverage the greatest return with respect to the priorities identified in the master plan.

- 4.10 Mr Clayton did note, however, that some materials are not available in Tasmania or were not available as an off-the-shelf item, meaning they must be made to order. In doing so, measures are taken to ensure the use of local suppliers or suppliers that have established supply chains into Tasmania, and to ensure that sufficient stock is ordered so damaged or worn items, such as carpets, can be easily replaced:

CHAIR - the colourings, the carpet tiles or tiling all readily available? We do not have to freight an extra metre from overseas, as has happened previously?.....You know I am going to ask about the design specification so we may as get all my questions out of the way now. There is nothing in the specifications that are over the top or ridiculous and not required. Obviously we have standards to adhere to but have we stuck with readily available materials, not specifically required manufactured materials?

Mr CLAYTON - As we alluded to before, we started with a master plan with a lot of items on it and through the planning process a few things had to drop off. One of the key components we have to consider is the budget and trying to maximise what we provide the school. There is no, I suppose, bling - sorry to quote you.....There is more about functionality.

CHAIR -We tend to have this conversation every committee around expensive construction. Curved walls, angled walls, all those sorts of things, cost more to build, which means they could have to be changed. Things such as carpet can go over-the-top on the specifications or they want a specific type that is not readily available which adds more when you have to change it.

Mr CLAYTON - Carpets are a challenge for us, Mr Brooks, because nothing is made in Tasmania; it all comes in from the mainland. We are trying to use suppliers readily supplying into Tasmania. We are using them through other schools. We always order additional, say, carpet tiles, and we leave them with the school so if there is some damage we are not trying to get it out of different dye points and things like that. We have all those sort of things built in. Most of the lights we are now putting in are all made to order anyway and components of those come from overseas, but they are normally manufactured and put together in Australia.....Nothing is now made here and basically that is why we wait so long for lights. A few standard block lights go into office buildings that are available off the shelf, but other lights are made to order. Carpet tiles very rarely sit in a warehouse anymore, but are made to order. They can make them reasonably quickly these days. Using local suppliers is an important factor for us when we are considering the makeup of the palettes.

Current Infrastructure and Maintenance Issues

- 4.11 The Committee noted that the proposed works included plans to fix a number of infrastructure and maintenance issues. The Committee sought further information on the works that would remedy these issues:

CHAIR - I have a couple of general questions covered in the site inspection, but it is important we get them on the record. You mentioned that reroofing is included and the importance of that upgrade. Can you briefly take us through why you are doing it and what the benefit is?

Mr CLAYTON - Part of the brief we were given was that there were some existing in-ground services issues and a leaking roof associated with building 2. As we saw from looking up and

through the corridor, it is an extremely low corridor that goes up and down and has internal downpipes. They are traditionally in a lot of schools around the state and they all leak. We are looking to what we call 'over-roof' so all the water is distributed to the outside of the building and we will pull out that low-level roof structure. As we discussed on site, we do not want to invest this money into teaching and learning areas and have the water come through roofs that fail.

As I alluded to earlier, we are also upgrading the in-ground services to accommodate the new sewer and stormwater. Some earthenware pipes in the ground have passed their use-by date and we are not going to spend all this money on new toilet facilities and things like that only to put them into pipes that could fail at any moment. There have been some existing in-ground water issues. I am working over at the primary school and the builder said we are building on a swamp, and that is what it feels like at times. We have done some things, mainly around building 5 in the subgrade ventilation around the floors and things like that to address those problems.

CHAIR - Part of it effectively will bring down the ongoing maintenance costs of the older infrastructure as well.

Mr WILLIAMS - Yes, correct.

Disability Access

4.12 The Committee sought assurance that disability access for students was being adequately catered for in the redevelopment:

Ms BUTLER - I am not sure who is the best person to answer this question but can someone run through the disability access points?

Mr CLAYTON - With the access to premises standards we are required to have access but it is difficult to provide it from the street; obviously we went down that driveway which is quite steep. There is designated disabled parking at the front of the school, which is the new car park near the entry. The front doors are all accessible. That is all flat and level. All the door thresholds and the latch clearances comply with the disabled code. You can make your way all the way through the ground floor of building 2, where we had lunch... ..There is an existing lift located at the end of that building which we are re-using. That takes us up to the first floor of building 2, so that gets us out from there. The access then out of building 2 comes out on to the outdoor area. There is a ramp that we bring down the side of the building, because you would have seen the level differences between that and the courtyard space. We have ramped down the side there to overcome the tiers. That gets us across to building 5. Once you are in building 5, that is all level. Where we demolish the building that currently houses the library, at the back of that we will build another ramp that comes out the back of the undercover social area and that will link us into the art buildings. There is an existing ramp access into the top end of MDT. You cannot go from the top and bottom from art from MDT. We have not put a lift in there, but from the other end of the MDT building there is disabled access. There is already disabled access into the gym and the performing arts areas, which was previously provided. As part of this project, providing access to all areas has been a challenge at times but something that has been considered is using that large social space to transition through as well.

Ms BUTLER - So a student catching the bus will be able to go from that bus waiting area and access the school that way?

Mr CLAYTON - Yes, from that bus area you can either come in through the front door and then access it as I described, or a student could come off the bus and enter through that new student entrance we spoke about onsite; once you enter that courtyard, you can make your

way either over into building 5 or up the ramp once you get under cover into the social space. Once you are there, you can access the other areas.

Ms BUTLER - That's great, thank you.

Mr VALENTINE - What about braille plates and stuff?

Mr CLAYTON - The tactile indicators you are talking about are not just in the disability code anymore; they now sit in the Building Code, the national code for construction. Any ramp has to have them and any main stairwell handrails have to have the tactiles built in.

Tender for Construction

- 4.13 The Committee recognised that construction industry demand was currently high, and noted that this can often lead to higher tender bids. The Committee was interested to ascertain the witnesses' views on how this would translate into the tender bids and the impact this might have on the project. The witnesses noted that buoyant construction demand always presented challenges, particularly in Northern Tasmania. They were confident, however, that in developing the budget for the project, such circumstances had been adequately addressed, and if necessary, there were ways that the project could be managed and modified to meet the budget without compromising the school's core priorities:

Mr SHELTON -The economy is going strongly at the moment and everybody in the building game is busy. I know the tender is out at the moment, but how confident are you that the pricing of this will come in on budget or around the tender price? That is the first question because a lot is happening out there and when that happens prices typically go up. What consideration has been given to that at the moment and how confident are you?

Mr WILLIAMS - We are reasonably confident. We built a contingency into the project. We have had record investment, certainly in schools and in other infrastructure areas across government, including the Royal Hobart Hospital and the university in Launceston, which is creating a squeeze in a number of trades. We had a couple of projects last year and the year before where our assessed value of the project when it went out to tender came in higher, but that has sort of been adjusted for now. I sit on a roundtable the Deputy Premier has put together around the construction pipeline, where people like myself and others in government are working to try to make sure we have a smooth flow of investment into the industry because we know that people who work on painting and flooring are hard to find at the moment. We do our best and put contingencies in to make sure we cover them as best we can.

Mr CLAYTON - Projects of this size in northern Tasmania are always a challenge. There is only a very small number of builders pre-qualified to this level. I understand three contractors are pre-qualified and are pricing this project, and three is a good number for a project of this size in Launceston. I think we will know this time tomorrow much more comfortably, but the tender market is a challenge at the moment. We are seeing results on- or under-budget and we have seen results over-budget.

.....We have some strategies in place, as Mr Williams alluded to, and the contingency is there to absorb any minor adjustments needed. As part of the tender, we also identified some things that are - I will not say less critical because everything is critical - able to be pulled out reasonably quickly and, if the process goes well, can be added back in very easily at the end of the project if contingencies have not been spent.

Mr WILLIAMS - ... We are also getting a quantity surveyor to check it just before we go to tender. We do the early work and then we will get the quantity surveyor in at the last minute to recheck that things are still how they thought they were. Then we have the contingency and then we have the process of value-managing the project. If it comes in over-budget, when it comes to tender we have to have a process with the working group - they will have to go through it and work out what comes out. That could be anything from reducing the quality of some of the fittings or simply not doing a particular part of a project. We only have what the budget gives us. We have to manage it within budget, which means sometimes you get expectations that are not met because you thought you were going to get what was in the scope originally but something had to come out. Sometimes you have to manage people's expectations as you trim back. We only have \$12 million and we will spend \$12 million and no more. We are pretty used to that process. Every project goes through a very similar process.

- 4.14 Mr Clayton also highlighted that the project had discrete, easy to manage stages, and indicated that this may have a positive impact on the tender outcome:

... This is a good project in the fact that it is staged. It is not a \$9 million-build that has to be done at once all in one go and it all comes up together, which puts stress on some of the builders. It is not necessarily the builders; it is also the subcontractor resources. Our subcontractors are much smaller in the north of the state than potentially in Hobart. Being staged, the first part of the stage includes the turning circle, which is a few hundred thousand dollars, and will be done basically as a standalone civil contract project. We have the first lot of buildings that will be built off building 5, which is about \$2.5 million, plus the artwork, so that is a standalone project. We have to finish that and hand it over so we can move all the kids into there. Then they come back over into building 2 and we build the outside of building 2, the shell of the new area, which is the admin and so on. Then we move them out and come through.

It is very staged so it will be quite a manageable project for a builder. Feedback I have had from the industry is that it is one of the better projects that has come out because it is quite manageable and the resources are not going to be intensive. That does not mean we are going to hit the budget number but, fingers crossed, we will.

- 4.15 The Committee also sought further information on the potential benefits that may flow from the project for other local firms. The witnesses pointed out that the tender criteria had significant weighting toward the use of local suppliers, and the Department aimed to design projects in such a way that ensured local firms and suppliers could be readily engaged:

Mr CLAYTON - ... Using local suppliers is an important factor for us when we are considering the makeup of the palettes.

Ms RATTRAY - Is using local suppliers included in the tender process for those firms that are going to be tendering, that they use as many locals as possible?

Mr CLAYTON - As part of the tender process there is the SME, which is now being expanded and has a greater weighting in the tender process. I think it has gone from 10 per cent to 20 per cent.

CHAIR - The local benefits test?

Mr CLAYTON - Yes.

CHAIR - ... Are you going to apply for an exemption from the local benefits test requirement of the contract?

Mr WILLIAMS - No. I can tell the committee now that in the five years I have been Education, we have not put a construction contract outside of Tasmanian firm and we try to make sure we set them up so we can get the little firms doing the little work on the west coast and the north-west coast. We try to make sure we spread it around and I think we're doing a good job of that. This will go to one of the bigger ones because they are pre-qualified but they are all Tasmanian companies.

Ensuring the Key Elements of Contemporary Learning Consistently Underpin School Upgrades

- 4.16 The Committee recognised that consultation within a school community was a fundamental component of determining priorities and informing what works should be undertaken. The Committee was also interested to know, on a more broad level, how consistency is achieved across each school upgrade, to ensure the basic or common elements of contemporary educational spaces are considered and factored in to the planning process, thereby ensuring modern and flexible teaching approaches can be promoted and supported across all schools.
- 4.17 The witnesses noted that staff from the various divisions within the Department of Education, the school and consultants collaborate to ensure a consistent approach for each school project. The witnesses also highlighted, however, that specific priorities developed by the school are used to ensure any redevelopment meets the needs of the school community. This approach enables the school to maintain its individual character and identity, including its own teaching and learning philosophy, while still adhering to the Department's requirements for the basic elements of contemporary educational spaces:

Mr VALENTINE - The consultation seems to be broad-ranging and valuable from what we have heard today, which is very good. It is very important to see what is happening in other places and to get feedback from the school community. There are a number of learnings you get from that but there may be things no amount of consultation may reveal. Given the forward planning for school upgrades, one would think some basic metrics may need to be considered and the department may be best placed to provide to approach it like this. I am interested in how the department makes sure some of the principles of modern educational spaces like this are put into this project - that is, things such as the ratio of open spaces to students, the minimum provision of ICT infrastructure or facilities, classroom sizes and so on. How does it occur now, and possibly going forward, to make sure that when we get a build like this - and as you say, it is quite a significant amount of money - a lot of those basic metrics and needs end up being built into the project?

Mr WILLIAMS - That is a really good question. It is a bit of combination between what the school wants to get out of it, what the people sitting in the back row who are facilities development people know from redevelopments we have done in other schools, and working with the architects to bring that vision together and make sure we can record it. We use building standards. We look at what size the classrooms are - for example, the hallway upstairs in B Block you saw today, the long hallway with little classrooms, is a standard 1950s-60s design, a 50-metre square classroom, which does not work for us in the modern age.

I am not an education professional myself, but I can talk about the notion of tandem teaching. If you have a classroom that can open up, an experienced teacher can be doing something down one end of the room and at the same time mentoring and observing the practice of a teacher who is inexperienced and new. We are absolutely conscious that good teaching does not come from the classrooms, but it completely aids and supports the

learning practice. I guess the steering committee we have in place guides the project. The school is obviously a very strong presence, and Learning Services are the people who are responsible for the operation and management of schools across the state. All these people are involved in the working group, including the school association. Some of you may not have met the lady from the school association today but she was there.

CHAIR - The committee will probably put those members that we spoke to on the record as well. While you are answering that, when you are talking about Learning Services and the management around it, do they also include experienced teaching professionals?

Mr WILLIAMS - Yes, the principal, the ASTs, the teachers who are on the working group and the consultation, Learning Services. Perhaps I will make a very quick foray into the structure of the department in four divisions. Learning Services is the school operations made up very much of education professionals who have moved into management; the curriculum area includes the content, the materials and tools that teachers use; and then there is the strategy and performance area. Obviously we are always being measured against NAPLAN and things like that, making sure we have the data around that and that we are going in the right direction in terms of future teaching practices and things like that.

Mr VALENTINE - So those groups have input to the departmental project manager, who I think is an architect in this case, so that we end up with something that is not only very suitable to the school's needs but also ensures an element of consistency through with all those projects. Is that how it works?

Mr WILLIAMS - Absolutely. The fourth division is my division, corporate and business, and that is facilities, legal, HR, IT et cetera. Because I sit in the executive, I get the sense of what the other three divisions are doing. By putting all the people in the same room we get a very consistent approach. If you look at Kings Meadows High, which some of you will have been to, we have the same configuration as we saw today upstairs in B Block, and while it is not going to look exactly the same, we have taken the same approach of getting rid of that dead space, using it more and getting rid of the small classrooms. No school looks the same, but we are using a very similar approach -

Mr VALENTINE - The principles?

Mr WILLIAMS - Yes, and it is the school intent and direction that drives Heath as the managing architect.

Mr CLAYTON - When the project first came to light, the school applied for a capital works project. There is an application process where they lodge what they want and why they need it. When it gets through that procurement process around a project, a consultant brief is developed. That is what comes to us to allow us to tender against it. In that are the parameters of what the school wants and maintenance needs. As part of this project there is a number of maintenance items we need to address. When we get that consultant brief, we also get some design guidelines that come out of the department that establish some key things around planning and development material, and it is a constantly evolving document. The other document that comes with that is what they call the cabling standards. That revolves around the IT requirements, and that document seems to get issued very regularly because it changes. It seems to be that every project has a new one. Once we have that we then have our meeting with the school. You heard Natalie talk about the guiding principles. We are very strong on establishing some guiding principles for the school.

Mr VALENTINE - That are individual to a school?

Mr CLAYTON - That is correct, and they become the focus of the school. The design guidelines are very generic for the department. The IT standards are very generic, specifically for the IT requirements for schools, and what they know works and does not

work. That is right down to how many wireless access points we have in certain areas. That is quite set. I think what Rob was alluding to before was that we still want to have individual direction for the school because every school community has different needs. Those guiding principles and the focus we take on that is extremely important. We capture all that with a return brief. We take all that information in and then we give it back and say, 'This is what we understand'. We do all this stuff before we do any drawing and that is the document we move forward with to establish our master plan.

Does the Project Meet Identified Needs and Provide Value for Money?

4.18 In assessing any proposed public work, the Committee seeks assurance that each project is a good use of public funds, meets identified needs and provides value for money. The Committee questioned the witnesses who confirmed that the proposed works addressed the priorities identified by the school community, with both the school's future needs and value for money at the forefront in the planning and design process:

CHAIR - Do you think this is good money for value for the taxpayer?

Ms ODGERS - I do think it is good value for money, absolutely. For a large school, I think we have managed to do a lot. If you take a school like ours in comparison to, for example, my last school at Scottsdale, you might be creating a grade area with three classrooms; for the number of students we have and need to provide for, I think what we have achieved is pretty impressive. I am really comfortable with what we have worked through and how we have managed to adhere to the principles which came through in that initial community consultation.

CHAIR - You feel it delivers the stated purpose?

Ms ODGERS - Yes, I do.

CHAIR - You mentioned there were a couple of things you would like possibly into the future as well. We will not go into too much detail on those things but taking those aside, does it deliver the public value for the work, not just now but for the future as well?

Ms ODGERS - Yes, I definitely think it does. I think we have set it up for a long way into the future. One of the things we have been very mindful of is that it is going to be serving our community for decades to come. That has certainly been something that has guided the decision-making. .

5 DOCUMENTS TAKEN INTO EVIDENCE

5.1 The following documents were taken into evidence and considered by the Committee:

- Major Redevelopment of Riverside High School – Submission to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works – Department of Education – 4 September 2018.

6 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1 The Committee wishes to acknowledge the effectiveness of the collaborative approach taken by the Department in planning school redevelopments. This approach ensures that school redevelopments focus on the need to provide students and staff with facilities that support flexible and contemporary learning practices, with the aim of promoting improved student outcomes. It also allows for the integration of the individual school needs and priorities as determined by the school community itself, thereby promoting and consolidating a school's identity.
- 6.2 The Committee is satisfied that the need for the proposed works has been established. Once completed, the proposed works will deliver contemporary learning environments, including an overall increase in the size and number of GLAs, a new canteen and library, refurbished and extended art and hospitality teaching spaces, and a new administration wing, including a new school entrance. The proposed works will also create year-level precincts, which will be centred around a hub formed by the canteen, library and revamped courtyard. The proposed works will overcome a number of identified deficiencies with the current ageing school building stock and will provide flexible and adaptable learning spaces to support 21st century teaching and learning practices.
- 6.3 Accordingly, the Committee recommends the Major Refurbishment of Riverside High School, at a cost of \$12 million, in accordance with the documentation submitted.

**Parliament House
Hobart
25 September 2018**

**Adam Brooks MP
Chair**