

# DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

## GEORGE TOWN HUB

### REGENT SQUARE



SUBMISSION TO THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
PUBLIC WORKS

**October 2013**

## Contents

1. INTRODUCTION .....	4
2. POLICY BACKGROUND.....	5
2.1 Regional LINC.....	5
2.2 Child and Family Centres .....	5
2.3 Service Tasmania .....	6
3. EVOLUTION OF THE ‘HUB’ CONCEPT .....	7
4. BENEFITS OF A HUB.....	8
4.1 Anticipated benefits to children:.....	9
4.2 Anticipated benefits to families:.....	9
4.3 Anticipated benefits to Tasmanian communities: .....	10
4.4 Anticipated benefits to Government:.....	10
4.5 Anticipated benefits to the economy: .....	10
5. SITE SELECTION PROCESS FOR GEORGE TOWN HUB .....	10
6. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION PROCESSES.....	12
7. SITE AND LOCALITY .....	12
8. DEVELOPMENT APPROVAL AND AMENDMENT OF THE GEORGE TOWN PLANNING SCHEME 1991 .....	13
9. ARCHITECTURAL STATEMENT .....	15
9.1 Site Master Plan.....	15
9.2 Building volume, materials & streetscape .....	16
9.2.1 Building volume .....	16
9.2.2 Existing material palette .....	18
9.2.3 Street context.....	19
10. CONSTRUCTION and BUILDING PERFORMANCE.....	21
11. TRANSPORT AND ACCESSIBILITY .....	23
11.1 Public transport.....	23
11.2 Car parking.....	23
11.3 Infrastructure to support cycling and walking .....	23
11.4 Access to premises.....	23
12. BUILDING SERVICES AND STRUCTURE .....	23
12.1 Power supply.....	23
12.2 Lighting .....	23
12.3 Fire detection system.....	24
12.4 Mechanical Services .....	24
12.5 Security.....	25
12.6 Communications / ICT .....	25

12.7	Public Address .....	25
12.8	Hydraulic Services.....	25
12.9	Structural design.....	26
12.10	<i>Art for Public Buildings</i> scheme .....	27
12.11	Design review .....	27
13.	BUDGET.....	28
14.	PROJECT TIMELINE.....	29

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

This submission seeks the approval of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Work to establish an integrated services Hub to benefit the community of George Town in Tasmania's north.

The development of the innovative Hub concept began five years ago after George Town was identified as a community which would benefit greatly from targeted services and support for children and families.

George Town has a fast growing population, and is the second most disadvantaged community in Tasmania, characterised by high levels of unemployment, low rates of educational attainment and adult literacy.

The proposed George Town Hub at Regent Square will operate as an integrated service centre, where the three principal partners, Learning and Information Network Centre (LINC) Tasmania, Service Tasmania (including Centrelink) and a Child and Family Centre (CFC), will work in collaboration to deliver a range of services for the George Town community.

The Hub concept brings together under one roof, a range of complementary State Government services that provide access to information, learning, government transactions and services for children and families in a friendly and welcoming setting.

It will bring many benefits to the community of George Town.

The Hub will provide a way for the community's most disadvantaged and hard to reach members to be linked with vital health, learning and support services.

Clients who visit the building for any one existing service are exposed to a new range of opportunities, including adult literacy support, adult learning programs and services vital to the health and development of children. The Hub will provide library and information services, computers and internet access, public meeting spaces, community training programs and learning and literacy support.

The placement of the Hub is crucial to its success. Centrally located in the town centre, the Hub is in close proximity to other services such as doctors, chemists, supermarkets and banks. The location is easily accessible and close to parking and public transport.

The site at Regent Square has been chosen as it is open and flexible and makes it easy for clients to be exposed to, and join in, a wide range of services and programs.

It will occupy a relatively small parcel of land, approximately only six per cent of the total area of Regent Square.

The Hub model is already benefiting three other disadvantaged communities with promising results. The West Coast, Bridgewater and Scottsdale Hubs are bringing their communities together, boosting morale and providing education and care services to children to give them the best start in life. Long term benefits will include increased levels of employment and lowered welfare dependency.

The Department of Education (DoE) has followed due process throughout the planning, consultation and development stages of the project, and with the best-interests of the community at heart.

## **2. POLICY BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 Regional LINC**s

In October 2006, the then Premier, David Bartlett, launched the Community Knowledge Network (CKN), bringing together the State's libraries, online access centres, adult education, archives and heritage collections into a single administration.

CKN was established to make information, community learning and literacy services more accessible to all Tasmanians – where, when and how they need them. Its over-riding mission was to make it easier for Tasmanians to connect with services – particularly those needing greater information and technology access, skills and support to fully participate in work and community life.

Key to improving access was to bring services together in an administrative sense and develop a new service model and brand for clients to associate with. In July 2010, CKN formally became known as LINC Tasmania, retaining the goals and mission that had been articulated in the CKN strategy.

This approach to 'joined-up' services had been successfully piloted at the Huon LINC which opened to the public in 2005 as an innovative service managed by the then State Library. Huon LINC combines a library, online access, and adult literacy support, with training facilities, rooms for community hire and other key government services such as a Service Tasmania shop, Business Enterprise Centre and Centrelink office. The building is also used once a month to hold the sitting of the Magistrates Court.

In the 2008-09 State budget, Premier Bartlett announced funding for a further 4 regional LINC centres to be established based on the Huon LINC model. Service Tasmania was a partner in this initiative from the earliest stages.

A Steering Committee comprising the Directors and senior officers of CKN/LINC and Service Tasmania was established to oversee the Regional LINC's project. A project officer undertook research and consulted with communities most likely to benefit from a new LINC, bearing in mind the role and purpose for CKN was to reach out to those most needing support and skills to fully participate in work and community life. The Social and Economic Index of Areas (SEIFA) compiled by the Australian Bureau of Statistics was a key tool used in assessing the levels of need in Tasmanian communities.

### **2.2 Child and Family Centres**

In September 2008, the former Premier, David Bartlett, announced that the Government would build up to 30 CFCs around the State.

CFCs are multi-service centres which aim to meet the health and wellbeing, education and care needs of local children from before birth to age 5 as well as supporting and empowering families in their parenting role, strengthening local communities and offering pathways to employment.

CFCs are part of the Government's comprehensive strategy to give children the best possible start in life. The vision is that children are healthy, safe and curious learners; nurtured by confident, capable families living in supportive communities.

To achieve this, CFC communities are pioneering a new way of working. Current service silos are being replaced by an integrated service delivery approach which places the needs of the child and family at the core. Some Centres are built as part of a Hub with a LINC and a Service Tasmania outlet while others may have a Parenting Centre attached, be on a school site or with a long day care provider in the same building.

The policy context for CFCs is provided by the Government's Early Years policy framework. The Department of Health and Human Services' Our Kids Strategic Policy Framework, and subsequently the Our Kids Action Plan 2004 - 2007 lead to the Whole of Government Early Years Policy Framework which was approved by the Government in September 2005. The Framework sets out the vision, guiding principles, strategic objectives and priorities for investment and action in early childhood development in Tasmania for the future. The age group for intervention as outlined in the Framework is from pre- birth to five years. This is the focal age group for CFCs.

The decision to establish CFCs is also consistent with policy and practice developments that are occurring nationally and internationally. Across the world there is increasing recognition of the importance of early childhood development, as this sets the foundation for learning, behaviour and health through the school years and into adult life. In his work for the World Bank, Dutch economist Jacque van de Gaag emphasises that investment in early childhood development helps to build social capital and equality, which are crucial for prosperity and reducing poverty both in the developed and developing world. (*Whole of Government Policy Framework for the Early Years – August 2005*)

Recent work in this field has been largely in response to concerns that alongside increasing material wealth of industrialized nations, there has been a rise in the rate of societal breakdown. The effect on children and young people has been rising rates of alienation, rebellion, delinquency, mental illness and violence.

At the same time, there have been major breakthroughs in our understanding of the importance of early experience, especially in relation to brain development and theories of attachment and bonding. Our knowledge of the impact of families, communities and societies on the well-being of children is now better understood.

This new policy direction also recognizes the stresses and strains of parenting in an increasingly complex world.

### **2.3 Service Tasmania**

Service Tasmania was established in 1998 to provide Tasmanians with one stop access to government information and services. Service Tasmania provides Tasmanians with access to more than 550 services through its 27 shops across Tasmania. Where possible, Service Tasmania has a preference to co-locate with other Government service providers.

The Service Tasmania shop at George Town, currently located within the George Town Council Chambers, opened for business on 20 August 1998.

In August 2009, the Service Tasmania Board approved a range of 'Guiding Principles' for Service Tasmania's inclusion within a LINC. These included:

- The underpinning goal of Service Tasmania is to deliver customer-centric services to the community. Any changes to infrastructure, location, operational matters or specific elements of service delivery by Service Tasmania will be made in accordance with this central aim.
- Service Tasmania delivers the 'same core service in all shops'. It is acknowledged that from time to time some additional services are offered in some shops; however these arrangements are by exception and subject to Board approval (e.g. banking services at Triabunna, Centrelink services in some shops and so on).
- A full range of services is available to customers in every Service Tasmania shop. A move to a new LINC building, irrespective of the operating model of that building, will

not result in the number of services being reduced in any individual Service Tasmania shop.

- Although Service Tasmania continues to promote 'channel shift', encouraging customers to do business with government via electronic channels (phone and internet), we aim for this behavioural change to be optional rather than forced. Service Tasmania aims to continue offering customers a service delivery 'channel choice' wherever possible.
- Service Tasmania will continue to have its own identity and branding, whether this is in a stand-alone shop facility or within a shared facility.
- Service Tasmania facilities and business practices will comply with all relevant Occupational Health and Safety requirements, security, design, cash-handling and other operational requirements to ensure efficient and accurate delivery of services while providing staff with a secure working environment.

### **3. EVOLUTION OF THE 'HUB' CONCEPT**

As the Regional LINC and CFC projects were being established, it was evident from an early stage in both projects that there were similarities between their service models, with both aiming to reach out to individuals and families in need of extra support, and build their knowledge, skills and confidence. Each project envisaged that rooms and facilities for training and community use would be an integral and important part of their design, as was the need to create warm and welcoming spaces for casual meetings, social activities and informal learning. It was also recognised that the availability of a Service Tasmania shop would draw a range of clients who might not otherwise visit a LINC or CFC.

Discussions were held with various stakeholders throughout 2009 about the feasibility of combining a LINC and CFC to create a single service point in towns which had been identified for both developments.

Queenstown and George Town were the two sites presenting opportunities for the LINC and CFC projects to combine and the community Hub concept evolved from those discussions.

A Hub operates as an integrated service centre in which three principal partners - LINC Tasmania, Service Tasmania and a CFC – work in a collaborative partnership to deliver a range of services to the community.

A Hub is not about building a new library, a new Service Tasmania shop, or establishing a CFC as services that will work beside each other. It is a new approach in which resources are shared. Each service complements and adds value to the others and so offers clients easy and seamless access to everything that is available within the centre.

This is a new way for government to deliver services. While it improves clarity and access for clients, it presents challenges to the bureaucracy in administration and governance. In recognition of this, the government has established a Community Services Hubs Board (CSHB) to oversee the issues and outcomes.

The CSHB membership includes senior representatives of each of the 3 service partners (Director Service Tasmania, Deputy Secretary Early Years and Schools, Department of Education, Director LINC Tasmania), together with senior members of the Department of Premier and Cabinet. The Board reports to the Premier.

#### **4. BENEFITS OF A HUB**

The Hub service model has been in place at Queenstown for nearly 2 years and there is clear evidence of increased community participation. Clients who visit the building for any one existing service are exposed to a new range of opportunities, and there have been enrolments in adult literacy support and adult learning programs as well as increases in library use, despite the decreases in population base. Over time, the integration of staff and the close community connections will encourage and enable new services to be developed.

The presence of Service Tasmania within the complex is a key factor in ensuring that a wide cross-section of the community enters the building.

The range of services on offer includes:

- parental support and expertise in rearing and nurturing children 0-5;
- play-based activities for children and parents together;
- programs that enable parents to support each other;
- adult literacy advice and support;
- information about courses for adults wanting to re-enter education of the workforce;
- access to training in foundation skills such as computer literacy, and certificate courses;
- support to adult learners;
- access to University of Tasmania courses;
- access to a range of services from Centrelink, through Service Tasmania;
- access to government information and payment services;
- artistic and recreational activities that connect people and build relationships;
- free access to computers and the internet;
- free access to recreational reading and information services;
- low-cost access to well-equipped meeting rooms where people can meet to pursue shared interests or hobbies;
- opportunities for people to work as volunteers and gain new skills and experiences, while making a valuable contribution to the local community; and
- free community spaces where people can 'drop in' and read, study or take a break.

The integration of services into a single complex also provides government with the capacity to operate in a more cost-effective manner, removing the need to duplicate resources and equipment, and reducing administrative overheads and recurrent costs such as energy, cleaning and security.

A number of public comments have suggested that George Town needs only a CFC as it already has a library and Service Tasmania shop. However, maintaining separate services would not provide the benefits and synergies that will flow from an integrated centre.

The existing library operates from a room within the Memorial Hall, which is leased from the Council. There is little scope for offering additional services such as an adult learning program from this base, given space constraints and the configuration of the building.

An Adult Literacy Coordinator has been accommodated within the George Town library but has no rooms for confidential discussion, and no spaces in which clients and tutors can meet with any degree of privacy. This limits the effectiveness of the service and its value to the community.



Equally, the Online Access Centre and Service Tasmania operate from separate premises in the Memorial Hall and the George Town Council Chambers respectively. There is no opportunity for collaboration or resource-sharing. Clients usually have to deal with a number of providers in different locations when they access more than one service.

The building design for the George Town Hub is open and flexible and makes it easy for clients to be exposed to, and join in, a wide range of services and programs and to foster the further development of this service approach into the future. It will be a public space, open to all in the community, in which most services will be free or low-cost to encourage full participation.

The Hub includes a number of multi-purpose rooms that will provide much-needed spaces for small meetings or consultations that will allow the adult literacy support program to flourish and support more clients, as well as opportunities for visiting professionals to consult with parents and families in a private space. The larger rooms will be equipped to allow a range of group programs, including those that will help people to build their basic skills and re-engage with learning in a supported environment. These options are not possible in the current configurations of buildings and spaces.

These rooms will also be available for community booking for meetings, lectures or social activities and will be complemented by other casual and comfortable spaces such as the library reading room, the foyer or the family lounge where people can come to read, study, enjoy local artwork, check emails or join with others in a shared interest or hobby.

The Hub will translate the values of community open space into the built environment, providing a welcoming, inclusive and non-judgmental centre for all members of the community. It will remove barriers to community participation in information research, adult learning and social interaction and make it easy and natural for clients to benefit from multiple services in the course of any one visit.

The State Government is encouraged in its efforts to establish CFCs by similar initiatives which indicate that bringing service together in an integrated way with shared values and clear operational principles, we can expect improvement in a number of areas for a number of groups of people.

#### **4.1 Anticipated benefits to children:**

- improved health and wellbeing, from pre-birth onwards;
- higher birth weight;
- better chance of being breast fed longer and fully immunized;
- reduced risk of teenage pregnancy;
- reduced risk of substance abuse;
- better prepared for school entry;
- improved cognitive development;
- improved literacy and numeracy;
- improved behaviour and social skills;
- better learning outcomes, especially for those at risk; and
- staying at school longer, hence improved life chances.

#### **4.2 Anticipated benefits to families:**

- more confident and competent in their parenting role;
- better able to access the services they need;
- feel more supported in the local community;

- less maternal depression; and
- better functioning families.

#### **4.3 Anticipated benefits to Tasmanian communities:**

- stronger more cohesive communities;
- improved levels of community safety, with less crime and less domestic violence;
- services more responsive to local need; and
- improved range of facilities for children and families.

#### **4.4 Anticipated benefits to Government:**

- services more integrated, effective and efficient;
- better linkages between levels of government;
- improved interagency collaboration with reduction of duplication and waste;
- positive public perception of services for children and families;
- lower government expenditure across several agencies in the medium to long term
- maximum benefit for the taxpayer's dollar; and
- potential savings in the longer term for re-investment in government priorities.

#### **4.5 Anticipated benefits to the economy:**

- expansion of early childhood education and care programs allows more parents to participate in the workforce, employs more local people, and significantly contributes to the economy;
- higher levels of employment and earnings;
- lowered welfare dependency; and
- better qualified and skilled workforce.

## **5. SITE SELECTION PROCESS FOR GEORGE TOWN HUB**

George Town is one of three areas in the State where a Hub is seen to fit local needs. Having the CFC alongside and connected with the LINC extends the opportunities for personal and community development through the provision of a wider range of activities and supports. The inclusion of a Service Tasmania outlet provides an attraction that assists with the provision of integrated government services to the community of George Town.

Using information from the Australian Bureau of Census and Statistics' Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA), which provides measures of socio-economic conditions by geographic area, the LINC project officer identified George Town as a potential site for a new LINC from an early stage in the project. George Town is the second most disadvantaged community in Tasmania after Bridgewater and has high levels of unemployment, with low rates of educational attainment and adult literacy.

The project officer undertook a consultation process through public advertisement to establish any potential partners for inclusion in a regional LINC. The Community House and community-managed Online Access Centre both decided to remain as separate entities in this process.

By December 2008, agreement had been reached with George Town Council for the town to be confirmed as the site for one of the 4 LINC's. The other nominations were Queenstown, Scottsdale and Sorell (subsequently deferred as a capital saving in the 2010-2011 Tasmanian budget). Bridgewater was added to the list as part of the creation of the Jordan River Learning

Federation.

Premier Bartlett announced George Town as a site for a regional LINC and a CFC in his State of the State address in March 2009.

Internal consultation between project officers continued to explore fully the possibilities, issues and advantages of developing a combined service centre to include both the LINC and CFC. The Local Enabling Groups (LEG) established to oversee the CFC development at both Queenstown and George Town were key stakeholders in these discussions.

Following general agreement within government and community representatives to adopt the notion of a community Hub rather than retain a CFC and LINC as separate buildings, the proposal was put to each council for approval.

In June 2009, George Town Council passed a motion noting their preference for the western side of Regent Square as the site for the new LINC and agreeing to explore the options for integration of the CFC and LINC.

The Regional LINC's project had developed a set of principles to guide the process of site selection in each of the nominated locations:

- close to shops and other services such as banks, supermarkets, cafes;
- high level of street appeal and visibility to passing traffic;
- easy pedestrian access from convenient parking or public transport points - ability to undertake multiple tasks from a single starting point;
- suitable for out-of-hours access – good street presence and visibility, with activity levels after hours to increase security of staff and clients; and
- land in public ownership – budget did not include land acquisition.

Regent Square was able to meet all of the criteria and was already an accepted location for the library service.

By December 2009, the LEG had agreed that their preference was to integrate with the LINC in the town centre rather than a separate location. There were concerns that either of the school sites would potentially alienate a number of clients, whereas integration with the LINC offered clients a wider range of services as well as easy access to other services within the community.

Plans were drawn up reflecting these decisions and first lodged with the Council in June 2010.

The proposed Hub development on Regent Square was approved by the George Town Council but appealed by a community group wanting to preserve Regent Square. George Town Council at its ordinary meeting held on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2012 adopted the following resolution:

*“That the George Town Council refocus attention on alternative sites for the proposed LINC complex and encourage the Government and Department of Education to have an open and imaginative mind to achieve the best outcome for George Town’s long term future.”*

Following assessment of alternative sites, George Town Council provide the general comment that many of the sites identified did not provide adequate area for the proposed Hub in its current form when car parking and external play area are taken into account and alternative sites were limited to those providing the required dimensions and area should the department be of the view that the Hub could not be separated.

Additionally, following a non-conditional offer to donate land at Anne Street as an alternative

site for the Hub, the department commissioned a detailed site suitability assessment report jointly undertaken by Artas Architects and JMG Engineers and Planners. In summary the report concluded that the Anne Street site had the appropriate physical characteristics to accommodate the proposed Hub facility and there were no significant planning constraints for the Hub at that site, however the Regent Square site was preferred because of its more central location, better public access and proximity to shops and other services.

## **6. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION PROCESSES**

For the Regional LINC's project, the principal consultation strategy was:

- public advertisement to assess interest from any potential service partners;
- discussion with community houses, online access centres, registered training organisations, schools, any other similar service providers;
- regular consultation with Council as representative of the community;
- advice to Tasmanian Library Advisory Board; and
- a public meeting to show plans and answer questions.

For the George Town project:

- 2009 - consultations between project officer and potential service partners including the CFC Local Enabling Group;
- November/December 2009 - public advertisement in the *Examiner* inviting expressions of interest from potential partners;
- Early 2010 - project officer attended LEG meetings to consult on needs and refine as architectural plans developed;
- 2010 - project officer held several discussions with the OAC;
- August 2010 - public meeting in George Town to show plans;
- September 2010 - project officer addressed Chamber of Commerce;
- June 2011 – Director LINC Tasmania met concerned citizens and representatives of the local historical group to discuss the proposal in greater detail and explain the rationale for service integration;
- August 2011 – open letter to George Town community from Director LINC Tasmania advising that 6 alternative sites had been investigated but were not considered suitable;
- December 2011 – public meeting held at request of concerned community members;
- 2012 onwards - formal processes in Resource Management and Planning Appeals Tribunal, Tasmanian Heritage Council and Tasmanian Planning Commission.

## **7. SITE AND LOCALITY**

The site for the proposed George Town Hub development comprises part of a parcel of Crown land leased to the George Town Council known as Regent Square. The total area of Regent Square is approximately 6.2 hectares.

Regent Square is located towards the western end of the main commercial areas of George Town and comprises an entire block bounded by Macquarie, Elizabeth, Anne and Cimitiere Streets. It contains the George Town Memorial hall on the southern section with frontage to Macquarie Street. The use of the Memorial Hall includes a library, on-line access centre, meeting rooms, multi-purpose space and indoor sporting activities. External to the building are

car parking and landscaping.

The remaining area of the Regent Square is generally grassed with scattered trees, footpaths, an exercise area, childrens' play area, skateboarding facilities and a rotunda. The area is used for passive recreation purposes, with occasional organised functions and events. The site is also used informally for parking of campervans.

Regent Square is zoned Public Recreation in the George Town Planning Scheme 1991. Land to the east is zoned Business. Land to the north and west is zoned Urban Residential.

Both the Memorial Hall and Regent Square are permanently listed on the Tasmanian Heritage Register.

## **8. DEVELOPMENT APPROVAL AND AMENDMENT OF THE GEORGE TOWN PLANNING SCHEME 1991**

In October 2010, the George Town Council approved amendment 2/2010 for a site-specific provision to make the use class of Civic Building discretionary on the same part of Regent Square, subject to considerations of external appearance, adequate access and parking and the physical relationship to other buildings on the Square.

On 20 October 2010, the Council approved a planning permit application made by the Department of Education for use and development of a single-storey civic building for a LINC Service Tasmania, CFC and bus shelter known as the 'George Town Hub'. The Council's decision was appealed to the Resource Management and Planning Appeal Tribunal (RMPAT) and on 2 March, the Council's decision was replaced with a refusal. RMPAT determined that, while some of the functions were encompassed by the definition of Civic Building, a number remained prohibited on the site.

On 12 October 2012, planning consultants Johnstone McGee and Gandy Pty Ltd acting on behalf of the Department of Education, lodged with the Council an application for the combined amendment to the Planning Scheme and planning permit for the proposed Hub development. The Council subsequently resolved at its meeting on 17 October 2012 to initiate and certify the draft amendment and to grant the permit. The George Town Council concurrently referred the Hub development to the Tasmanian Heritage Council for consideration as required by the provisions of the *Historic Cultural Heritage Act 1995*.

The Council exhibited the draft amendment and planning permit for public comment and received a significant number of representations supporting and opposing Council's approval. In accordance with the provisions of the *Tasmanian Planning Commission Act 1997*, the Council referred the matter to the Tasmanian Planning Commission (the Commission) for assessment.

The Commission convened nine days of hearings commencing on 14 February and concluding on 28 June 2013 to consider the draft amendment to the George Town Planning Scheme 1991 and the permit for the proposed LINC development.

Following consideration of the issues raised by 18 representors and having heard the evidence submitted on behalf of the Department of Education, the Commission concluded that *'the draft amendment, with modifications, will provide a significant social benefit where a need has been demonstrated, is consistent with the relevant State, regional and local planning strategies and policies, furthers the objectives of the Act and has been prepared in accordance with State policies. The draft amendment is supported and should be approved with modifications'*.

Further, the Commission concluded that *'the permit specifying the use and development for the site is interconnected with the draft amendment. The proposal for use and development of the Hub, to co-locate a Child and Family centre, LINC Tasmania and Service Tasmania on Regent Square is supported. The permit should be approved with modifications.'*

The Commission subsequently approved Amendment 1/2012 of the George Town Planning Scheme, subject to a number of modifications to delete the bus shelter, provide a 1.8 metre wide footpath on two frontages and realign the access road.

The Commission also issued Planning Permit DA 2012/80 to approve a single-storey LINC, library, meeting rooms, Service Tasmania and departmental offices, CFC and associated parking.

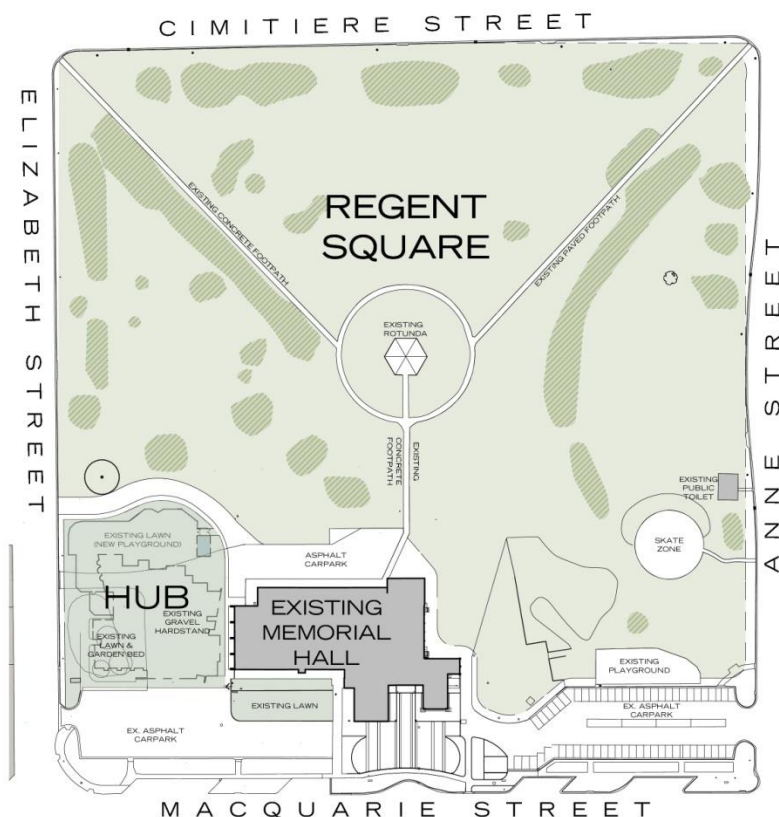
Full copies of the Commission's Decision, Amendment 1/2102 and Planning Permit 2012/80 are appended to this submission.

The Tasmanian Heritage Council's Notice of Heritage Decision dated 19 December 2012 approved the George Town Hub development subject to a condition "that a plan for the interpretation of the heritage values of Regent Square be prepared and submitted to Heritage Tasmania and be to the satisfaction of the Works Manager; and that the recommendations of this interpretation must be implemented within 12 months of the building's completion." The approval is valid for a period of two years from the date of the Notice.

## 9. ARCHITECTURAL STATEMENT

### 9.1 Site Master Plan

The new Hub is located on the edge of the central public open space, Regent Square. It is sited directly adjacent to the Memorial Hall at the end of George Town's primary commercial precinct. This places the Hub in a central location for ease of public access to a building that provides numerous community civic services and functions.



The impact on Regent Square can be calculated as follows:

Description	Total Area m <sup>2</sup>	% of total area
Total site area (measured to back of kerb from existing Council plan)	62,163	
Total existing developed area of Regent Square	8,984	13.63%
Total area of new Hub development (building footprint and landscaped site area)	3,460	6.39%
<b>Total Developed Area</b>	<b>12,444m<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>20.02%</b>

The portion of Regent Square designated to be developed for the George Town Hub is only a further 6.39% bringing the total developed area to 20.02%. There is no change to the Square's green edge and it will remain as the township's central public open space and continue to provide a diverse range of recreational activities and community events.



Photo 1 (existing)

### **View of the existing Memorial Hall and later extension**

A pedestrian avenue has been included as part of the design proposal and this is situated on a north-south axis between the existing Memorial Hall and new Hub. The avenue will provide a strong physical connection and formalise the pedestrian access into Regent Square. The avenue steps in and out along the access path. This creates wider landscaped zones that are appropriately planted to produce a softer edge and density of planting and not a tunnel effect.

## **9.2 Building volume, materials & streetscape**

### **9.2.1 Building volume**

There is a distinct height contrast between the original brick clad Memorial Hall and the newer Recreation Extension. The Hub uses this idea of repeating forms that also contrast in height and scale. Breaking down the building in this way not only relates to the adjacent Hall but visually reduces the building mass and provides interest at the perimeter edge.



Photo 2 (existing)



Photo 3 (existing)





Photo 4 (existing)

### The extension to the Memorial Hall with a divergence in height, form and scale from the existing Memorial Hall

The new Hub repeats the formal arrangement of the existing Memorial Hall but is asymmetric, lower in height and creates the visual interest through its relationships with the adjacent buildings. Like the Memorial Hall the new Hub contrasts both horizontally (in plan) and vertically (in elevation). The diagrams below illustrate these relationships where sections of the building marked A, B & C undulate 'up and down' and 'in and out' in preference to creating a continuous and consistent vertical and horizontal plane over its entire length.

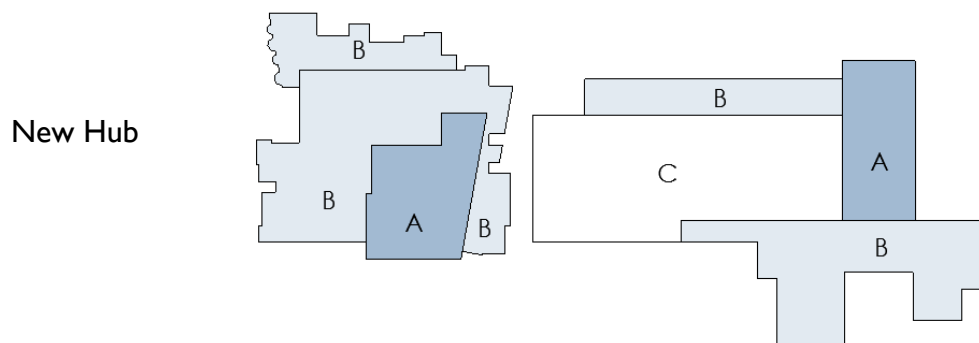


Figure 1

### Diagram of plan and setback relationships between the Hub and existing buildings

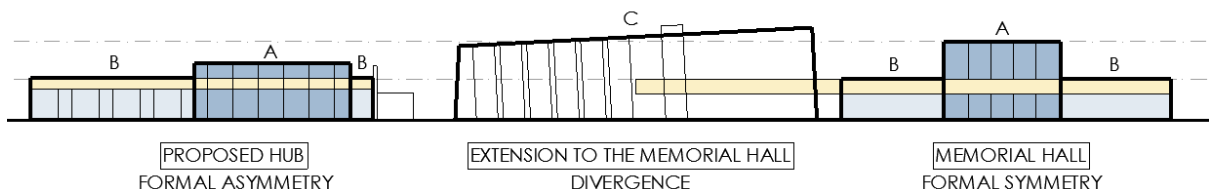


Figure 2

### A streetscape view illustrating the vertical relationships between the Hub and existing buildings

The entry facade from Macquarie Street combines both vertical and horizontal lines evident in the existing Memorial Hall along the eastern façade. The building decreases in volume both towards Regent Square and also towards Elizabeth Street. This edge accommodates

LINC, Lounges and Meeting Rooms. The articulation of the building wraps onto the Western Facade (Elizabeth Street) and then the form changes to cylindrical elements suggesting a lighthouse and relationship to the sea and naval history. The roof on the northern elevation facing Regent Square is organic and freeform - it is playful and suggests movement which defines an activity focused on children.

The internal building volume relates to the functional and spatial requirements of the civic use and user needs, for example, spaces that that will serve as government agencies, information technology, online access, child and parent activities and support, etc.

The total floor area is 1494m<sup>2</sup> to accommodate the functional brief of the integrated Services. The design incorporates a variation in roof form and height to visually reduce the overall volume and provide a variety of scale to the perimeter built edge. This provides the visual clues to identify the different functions within the overall form.

### 9.2.2 Existing material palette

Concrete panel (textured and smooth), glass, aged copper and terracotta brick create the palette for the Memorial Hall and Extension.



Photo 5 (existing)



Photo 6 (existing)



Photo 7 (existing)

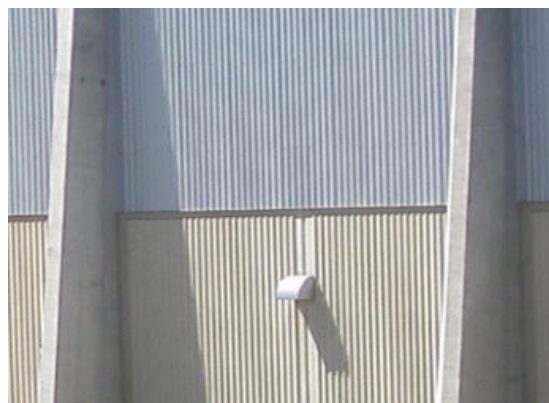


Photo 8 (existing)

### Material Palette – brick, metal sheet, concrete

The materials and profiles repeat in the new Hub and combine the use of masonry (concrete block) with metal and textured sheet wall cladding. The use of concrete block is purposeful in its contrast and surface mix of smooth and split face. A brick header used on the original Memorial Hall is also used as a feature wall element. Using bricks and blocks as building elements relates to our understanding of scale and provides a much needed contrast to the palette of larger building elements. Metal in a vertical rib profile draws from

the existing Hall Extension. The front face exposes smooth metal cladding in shades of grey and copper. Cladding materials to Elizabeth Street and Regent Square are a combination of textured and smooth ply panels.

### 9.2.3 Street context

The new building retains and extends the formal forecourt of the existing Memorial Hall. The built edge relates to the commercial precinct of the main street.



Photo 9 (existing)



Photo 10 (existing)

#### **Context of Extension and Hall - forecourt and setback from Macquarie Street.**

The new Hub will support Civic activities relating to the access of information networks, new knowledge and services that extends to the whole community. Where Regent Square meets the Memorial Hall and Extension there is a strong vertical edge created by the Memorial Hall and Hall Extension. The Hub will continue this vertical edge and 'fills the gap' to define the square.



Photo 11 (existing)



Photo 12 (existing)

#### **Existing built edge to Regent Square and open hardstand parking.**

The northern edge adjacent to the Square will provide over 900m<sup>2</sup> of high quality landscaped recreational space dedicated to experiential play for children under the age of 5. The new planting is endemic to the area - attracting birds, butterflies and other small animals. These landscape elements will be seen and appreciated from Regent Square.

A pedestrian link runs between the Extension to the Memorial Hall and the new Hub. This provides important access between Macquarie Street and Regent Square. The pavement of the link way will be wide but articulated at the ground plane using a combination of

pavement edging treatments and low planting. Low tussocks and 'bladed' plants less than 400mm in height will be mass-planted in blocks of alternate species to provide contrasting and complementary colour and texture at the ground level.

To provide some shade and to help articulate the facades of the buildings either side of the pedestrian link, small upright deciduous trees (ornamental pears) will be distributed on a grid pattern. These will be planted as mature stock and form pruned to ensure clear sight lines are maintained through the length of the walkway. The combination of low, ground-level planting and clear trunked avenue of trees will help minimise opportunities for anti-social behaviours along the walkway length.

A summary of the façade forms is as follows;

#### **South Elevation - Macquarie Street**

The main entry to the LINC Services creates the formal relationship to the Memorial Hall and is articulated as -

- Volumes and scale that is similar but lower in height to the Memorial Hall.
- A range of materials (with cues from the existing material palette) in a variety of scales.
- Formal glazing pattern that wraps into the entry space and creates internal light filled spaces.
- Vertical blades in a contrasting colour that add texture, depth and interest to the facade.
- A concrete up stand which protects the building edge and provides a place to sit.
- An extended canopy to signify entry.
- The facade reduces in height toward Elizabeth Street and continues with a similar glazing pattern and material palette.
- Formalised entry sequence into Regent Square through a highly landscaped pedestrian avenue that maintained vistas into Regents Square.

#### **West Elevation - Elizabeth Street**

The building changes in character from formal to freeform identifying the CFC -

- Continues the formal articulation from the Macquarie Street elevation which extends to accommodate the entry to the training room and meeting rooms.
- A change in form and materials is deliberate and is used to identify the CFC.
- The roof element is organic creating a sense of movement.
- The attached cylindrical element, reflecting George Town's nautical past, provides internal space as cubby, cave, sleep-out, etc. and create a dynamic building edge clad in weathered vertical timber and provides a connection to the landscape and its context.
- External cladding of plywood sheet offers a softer and more tactile element, as well as providing a harder wearing surface for the requirements of external child play.

#### **North Elevation - CFC from Regent Square**

The form is playful and dynamic but returns to the formal asymmetry of the front street facade -

- The organic roof provides a large overhang for sheltered outdoor play and is able to be used throughout the year.

- The columns are 'tree-like' and provide a playful interpretation of the structural form.
- Changes in material create the opportunity for a mix of brighter colours that can be easily changed over time.
- Extended views and physical connections to the outside extend across the facade - with a focus for both child and adult interaction with the outside.
- Relates to the park rather than existing built form.

#### **East Elevation - CFC entry and Pedestrian Street**

- Provides a separate and discreet entry into the CFC.
- The entry uses a contrast of coloured glass and surface materials to create interest.
- Adjacent council parking will provide easy, safe and secure access into the facility.
- The facade steps down to reduce the scale and volume at Regent Square.
- The textured masonry blade wall creates the landscaped pedestrian avenue into Regent Square that connects back onto Macquarie Street and the central precinct.

## **10. CONSTRUCTION and BUILDING PERFORMANCE**

The fabric of the building and all associated energy related systems are required to comply with Section J of the Building Code of Australia (BCA) and will be provided in accordance with the prescriptive requirements. It is assumed that the building will be constructed to meet all 'Deem to Satisfy' provisions of the BCA.

Design strategies considered to support passive design as a priority over mechanical engineering solutions include:

- orientation - north facing;
- natural ventilation - air intake and cross-ventilation maximised with mechanical extraction and recycling of air minimized;
- night cooling of the thermal building mass;
- shading and solar control;
- use of winter sun penetration to heat the building mass in appropriate areas;
- maximising the use of natural day lighting to reduce artificial lighting and heat emissions;
- developing a thermally efficient building envelope with the appropriate balance of glass, mass and insulation; and
- double glazing.

Other key sustainable solutions incorporated within the building design include:

- A Building Management system that allows both automatic and local control of heating and cooling systems. Connection to security system ensure heating and lighting is not left on.
- Enhancing the indoor environmental by:
  - ventilation - to provide ample amounts of outside air to counteract build-up of indoor pollutants;
  - day lighting - to provide good levels of daylight for the building users/occupants;

- thermal comfort - to provide a high level of thermal comfort and mean radiant temperature (human energy balance) and includes assessing air temperature, humidity, air movement, clothing levels and metabolic rates, etc;
  - avoidance of hazardous materials - to reduce the health risks to occupants from the presence of hazardous materials;
  - maintaining noise levels at an appropriate level;
  - specifying interior finishes that minimise the contribution and levels of Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC's) in buildings;
  - specifying products with low formaldehyde emission levels;
  - mould prevention - to design services that eliminate the risk of mould growth and its associated detrimental impact on occupant health;
  - daylight glare control - design to reduce the discomfort of glare from natural daylight;
  - utilizing high frequency ballasts - avoid low frequency flicker associated with fluorescent lighting;
  - appropriate electric lighting levels - select lighting types appropriate to use rather than over-design; and
  - optimizing external views - provide occupants with a visual connection to the external environment.
- Minimisation of greenhouse gas emissions associated with operational energy consumption and maximise potential operational energy efficiency of the building - in relation to mechanical, hydraulic and electrical servicing of the building. Strategies will include:
    - insulation to all external walls, ceilings and floor elements;
    - integrated sensors to high level windows that will automatically register and control thermal comfort levels;
    - access to Natural Gas; use of Solar Panels to heat domestic water;
    - zoned lighting with integrated movement sensors, auto-dimming or light switching to make it easier to light only occupied areas;
    - energy efficient light fittings (LED and T5 fittings), as well as external lighting on photo-electric cell on a time clock mechanism;
    - design to minimise or eliminate energy use for spaces when unoccupied; and
    - shared energy systems throughout the facility that can minimise maintenance, energy and resource consumption.
  - Reducing the reliance on potable water usage through efficient design of building systems, rainwater collection and water re-use'. Strategies will include:
    - water meters that manage and monitor water consumption;
    - use of water tanks to collect, store and re-use rainwater for toilets and laundry;
    - water efficient plant, equipment and fixtures;
    - Water Efficiency Labeling & Standards (WELS) rated internal fixtures and fittings, including front-loading washing machines, etc; and
    - use of native plants endemic to the region which, when established, will require little or no irrigation.
  - Extensive use of low embodied energy/high re-cycled content materials has the potential to reduce carbon emissions, support indoor environment quality, low embodied energy and water, recyclability, disassembly and de-materialisation. Recycling waste storage - include storage space that facilitates the recycling of resources used within buildings to reduce waste going to landfill.

- PVC minimisation - reduce polyvinyl chloride (PVC) products in buildings with alternative materials.
- Sustainable Timber – timber is selected from certified environmentally-responsible forest management practices - Australian Forestry Standard (AFS) and/or Forest Stewardship Council (FSC).
- Flooring - floor coverings have a reduced environmental impact - linoleum, rubber and composite floor coverings and/or have a recycled content and/or a contractual agreement has been set for the supplier to take back the flooring at the end of its service life for re-use, recycling or re-processing.
- Joinery - joinery that has a reduced impact on the environment relative to alternatives.

## **11. TRANSPORT AND ACCESSIBILITY**

### **11.1 Public transport**

There is no public transport system within George Town, however an existing private bus services does operate and utilises the street verge in Elizabeth Street opposite the proposed development site.

### **11.2 Car parking**

It is proposed that the development will utilise the existing car parking currently provided along the southern edge (both east and west) of the Regent Square. The spaces to the south of the proposed building are re-formalised and include 2 additional accessible car parking spaces for people with a disability. The existing area to the north of the existing Memorial Hall is established as a car park and also provides two accessible parking spaces.

### **11.3 Infrastructure to support cycling and walking**

Provision has been made to incorporate both cycling and walking. Bike racks are identified in and around the main entries. Staff shower and change areas have been provided for convenience.

### **11.4 Access to premises**

The new building will meet the Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards as referenced in the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). Four accessible car parking spaces have been provide from the car parking area, two from the main Hub entry and two from the CFC entry. Each entry provides compliant access into and within the building.

## **12. BUILDING SERVICES AND STRUCTURE**

### **12.1 Power supply**

New power supply from existing pad mounted substation.

All distribution boards to be provided with residual current device protection.

### **12.2 Lighting**

Majority of lighting to consist of T5 fluorescent or compact fluorescent fixtures with LED highlight fittings.

Feature light fixtures to be incorporated for highlighting architectural and landscape elements.

External lights to provide general and security lighting around the building controlled via photoelectric cell, motion sensor and time clock.

Security and car park lights controlled via photo-electric cell and time clock.

Emergency lights will be installed as required.

### **12.3 Fire detection system**

Fire detection system as required, including main fire indicator panel. The proposed fire services shall comprise the following systems;

- smoke detection system serving offices and family centre areas, etc;
- heat detectors protecting rooms which might be subject to spurious alarms if smoke detectors are installed, such as cleaner's rooms or toilet areas;
- fire indicator panel controlling smoke and heat detectors and building occupant warning facilities – located in the main lobby. The system will be connected to DoE's brigade monitoring apparatus;
- interconnection of mechanical services equipment such as mechanical plant shut-down with the fire indicator panel for shut down or control during fire emergencies;
- building occupant warning system throughout the building in the form of localised sounders; and
- magnetic hold-open devices will be provided for all smoke doors.

The building occupant warning facilities will comprise local sounders which will be ceiling mounted. In the event of a fire alarm, all sounders will simultaneously operate.

### **12.4 Mechanical Services**

*Interface Facilities:*

Whenever the fire detection system operates, all mechanical systems will be shut down.

*Air conditioning:*

Cooling duty will be avoided wherever possible, with the exception of Server Room, Board rooms, training and child rest areas and any computer resource rooms, rooms with high density computer layouts, or high occupancy counts with additional thermal load.

*Air Filtration:*

Conditioned areas equal to mid-level panel filters. Remaining areas have natural ventilation.

*Ventilation:*

Natural ventilation in accordance with Building Code of Australia requirements to be provided to all occupied spaces via openable windows or openings.

Mechanical draw-through ventilation will only be provided to occupied rooms that natural ventilation cannot otherwise provide.



Exhaust – mechanical exhaust provided to all toilet and amenities areas.

*Heating:*

Floor and radiant panel heating powered by a central natural gas boiler or heat pump system with provide the bulk of the heating requirements.

**Building Management System:**

A BMS will be provided for the mechanical control system, lighting and security.

## **12.5 Security**

The building will include a stand-alone security system to each tenancy with facility to turn off lighting and heating when system is armed. The main security panel is to be located in the student services building.

Selected external doors will be provided with access control equipment to operate either an electric strike or magnetic lock. Where doors fitted with electric locking mechanisms form a nominated emergency exit they are to be connected to the fire indicator panel in a fail safe manner. Internal doors that are locked will be released via a push button.

Closed circuit television monitoring of both internal (Service Tasmania) and outdoor areas spaces will be provided.

Security issues to be monitored on site.

External monitoring capacity will be provided for future connection by client.

## **12.6 Communications / ICT**

Communication to include a wireless system for laptops and hard-wired data system for, staff and public usage. System to be installed to a joint DoE/DHHS/Service Tasmania - Communications Cabling Installation Agreement.

## **12.7 Public Address**

Audio - Hearing Loop

Live wall - Projection walls to main lobby area

## **12.8 Hydraulic Services**

*Water:*

The site will be serviced via a DN100 connection to the nearby Tas Water infrastructure. Within the property boundary will be a BLW metering and backflow (plus possible pressure reduction). TasWater pressure testing will determine the size of this potable water arrangement.

Site ring main reticulation at nominally 50-63mm will be provided to service potable fixtures at buildings, and provide redundancy of supply should sections of the reticulation need to be isolated.

A top up off-take from the site reticulation will supply a site rainwater tank which is used for rainwater harvesting and toilet cistern supply. A registered air gap will be the means for backflow prevention at this point.

The site is protected by existing fire hydrants. Fire hose reels will be added where required in accordance with statutory requirements.

*Sewer:*

The site will be provided with site reticulation via conventional DN150 gravity mains. Site fixture loads are based on the floor plan layouts and AS3500. Connection will be made to the existing BLW network on the southern side of the building:

*Storm water:*

The site will be provided with a rainwater harvesting system to collect roof water from part of the overall roof. This water will be re-used in landscape irrigation and toilet flushing.

The site and building hardstand areas will be drained to the existing Council infrastructure. Wherever possible, the storm water will be directed to water sensitive urban design principles.

## **12.9 Structural design**

*Foundation & Ground Slab:*

Waffle pod slabs will be used throughout for overall strength and thermal insulation.

*Wall and Roof Structure:*

- Steel columns will be used where there are high loads or areas of significant tie down requirement.
- Steel truss roof framing
- Traditional timber framed wall structure and framing.
- Window lintels and door frame heads to suit out of plantation timber wherever possible.
- Steel beams sized to support all operable wall units and where large open spans do not make the use of timber framing appropriate.

*Materials and elements:*

- A supporting a secondary structure of timber roof and wall infill framing.
- Colorbond steel roof sheeting combining Spandek and Custom Orb profiles. Roofs will be fully insulated with R3.5 rated roofs, ceilings and external walls with acoustic insulation in internal walls.
- Window glazing frames will be powder coated aluminium external double glazed units with 2 layers of 6.38mm laminated glass and internally with 6.38mm thick laminated glass to all doors and window glazing.
- Composite aluminium expressed joint cladding system to building commercial street frontage.
- 9mm thick fibre cement sheet with an expressed joint system and/or 12mm plywood cladding in natural texture and shadowclad profile with a painted finish to CFC.
- 450mm concrete upstand at the ground connection will act as a wearing strip to the base of the building.
- Internal walls will be lined typically in 13mm thick plasterboard sheet. Dado or decorative wall panels to 1200mm from floor finish or to ceiling height will be used where high traffic wear is expected. Wallboards and paint finishes will have a low or nil volatile organic compounds rating for emissions. Typically ceilings will be lined

with plasterboard with the addition of some timber veneer lining to the CFC. Extensive use of glass will be used internally to maintain visual connections between spaces and provide easy but unobtrusive surveillance by LINC staff. Sheet rubber will be used as a floor finish in general wet areas, ceramic tiles in public amenities, carpet tiles in public areas and broadloom wool carpet for play zones with children on the floor.

### **12.10 Art for Public Buildings scheme**

An important initiative of the *Arts @ Work* program is the development of regional artists. Accordingly, it is envisaged that the project will offer opportunities for local artists to participate and develop their skills as a worthy contribution to the Tasmanian Collection. This project will provide an opportunity for the wider community to appreciate the art component as they visit and use the new Centre.

### **12.11 Design review**

The Department has initiated an internal design review to critically assess the internal design of the facility, which was originally planned in 2009. The purpose of the review is to confirm that the design addresses the current service needs and functional requirements of LINC, the CFC and Service Tasmania. The design review, to be completed in September 2013, will not alter the design of the building as approved by the Tasmanian Planning Commission in July 2013, however, it may result in some reconfiguration of spaces inside the building within the existing budget allocation.

### 13. BUDGET

The following tables set out the funding source for the project and a breakdown of the elements which comprise the total project cost:

<b>Source of funds</b>	<b>Amount (\$)</b>
Capital Investment Program – Learning Infrastructure Network Centre (LINC) and Child & Family Centre (CFC) funding	6,900,000
<b>Total project funds</b>	<b>6,900,000</b>

<b>Project costs - description</b>	<b>Amount (\$)</b>
Building works, site works and services	5,000,000
Contingency allowance	300,000
Architectural fees – design, documentation and contract administration	540,000
Architectural & sub-consultant fees – RMPAT appeal process	70,000
Statutory approvals (authority fees and permits)	30,000
Furniture and equipment	600,000
<i>Art for Public Buildings Scheme</i>	80,000
Other costs – escalation allowance	100,000
Miscellaneous costs	30,000
Post-occupancy costs	150,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,900,000</b>

The following table provide a breakdown of the indicative costs of the major components to the building works, site works and services:

<b>Project costs - description</b>	<b>Amount (\$)</b>
Building Works	2,850,000
Site Works and Landscaping	700,000
Mechanical Services	650,000
Electrical Services	600,000
Plumbing and Drainage	200,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,000,000</b>

## 14. PROJECT TIMELINE

The timetable for this project comprises the following key milestones and timeframes:

<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Date</b>
Funding announcement selection	September 2008
Site selection/master planning	December 2008 - June 2010
Consultant appointed	December 2009
Community consultation	December 2008 - July 2013
Schematic design	December 2009 - June 2010
Design and documentation	June 2010 – July 2013
Submission for Development Approval	June 2010
Appeals process – Resource Management & Planning Appeal Tribunal	Oct 2012 – July 2013
Design review	August-September 2013
Submission to the PSCPW	September-October 2013
Tender Advertising (conditional on PSCPW approval)	November 2013
Tender closing	November 2013
Builder appointed (conditional on PSCPW approval)	November–December 2013
Construction commences	mid-late January 2014
Practical Completion	December 2014
Defects Liability Period ends	December 2015