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(No.)



PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

Bridgewater and Southern Midlands Learning Federation

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

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

Legislative Council

Mr *Harriss* (Chairman)
Mr *Hall*

House of Assembly

Mr *Best*
Mr *Green*
Mrs *Napier*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	2
SUBMISSION	2
EVIDENCE	18
DOCUMENT TAKEN INTO EVIDENCE	27
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION.....	27

INTRODUCTION

To His Excellency the Honourable Peter George Underwood, Officer of the Order of Australia, Governor in and over the State of Tasmania and its Dependencies in the Commonwealth of Australia.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY

The Committee has investigated the following proposal: -

The development of the Bridgewater and Southern Midlands Learning Federation

and now has the honour to present the Report to Your Excellency in accordance with the *Public Works Committee Act 1914*.

SUBMISSION

The written submission of the Department of Education is as follows:

Background

Following the destruction by fire of the Bridgewater High School facilities in October 2007, the Minister for Education established the Bridgewater and Southern Midlands Education Renewal Taskforce (BASMERT) to address the issue of education and training in the area. The Taskforce included representation from the community, local schools, the Department of Education (DoE), local government and business and was chaired by Tony Foster, Mayor of Brighton. The Department also established an Educational Reference Group of educators to advise the Taskforce on educational issues.

The Taskforce gathered relevant information on education, demographics, educational statistics, business development and local government issues from a wide variety of sources and a consultant surveyed the views of the community. The Taskforce also received a report from the Educational Reference Group on possible models for the future. The BASMERT Report of April 2008 is available at:

<http://www.education.tas.gov.au/dept/infrastructureprojects/basmert/Ministerreport.doc>

The outcomes for this project to date reflect the significant work and goodwill by members of a community committed to the future education of its children, and by increased educational and training opportunities for adults, the renewal of the community as a whole.

Summary of Taskforce recommended directions

The Taskforce applied the following key characteristics of best practice educational provision to the educational needs of the Bridgewater and Southern Midlands Education area:

- Quality early childhood development and care for all children;
- Integrated quality pre schooling and early years education;
- High quality and integrated middle years education;

- Individualised learning programs for secondary students and managed transitions into training and employment; and
- Improved adult learning opportunities.

The Taskforce believes that these needs can best be met through a model that consists of several sites throughout the region, each specialising in providing education and other services to a particular age-group and all sharing a single overarching point of governance.

Taskforce recommendations

The approved recommendations, paraphrased from the Report, and taking into account community feedback to the consultation process, particularly from the Brighton Community, are:

- That the (educational) model described is adopted –
 - a. Birth – Age 4 child and family centres...using the existing infrastructure;
 - b. Kindergarten – Grade 4 early years sites in the existing primary schools...;
 - c. Grades 5 – 8 middle schools...; and
 - d. One Grades 9 – 12 and beyond learning centre on one site in Bridgewater. This will be a new facility.
- That the community is closely involved in all further stages of this project.
- That all possibilities for collocation of services are pursued.
- That a common specialism is introduced for the Learning Centre.
- That an important focus within the new model should be addressing the needs of all students through the provision of individualised and flexible learning experiences.
- That this project be prioritised for Trades Training Centre funding.
- That a communications strategy is introduced early in the next phase of this project.
- That there is a commitment to on-going investment.
- That a community competition be held to find a name for the learning federation.

The vision for the Learning Federation

The following is the vision statement for the Learning Federation.

The Federation will transform the way education and training is provided for the Bridgewater, Gagebrook, Herdsmans Cove, Brighton and surrounding communities. It aims to significantly increase levels of engagement in education and training and employment amongst the residents of the Brighton and Southern Midlands Municipalities.

The Federation will be a student, family and community oriented organisation that provides high quality and engaging education, training and care for learners of all ages.

It will be an enterprise where there is a place for everyone who wants to learn and contribute. Personalisation of learning will be at the heart of the curriculum, pedagogy, facilities and the organisational arrangements. Learning will be facilitated

across a range of campuses and community sites. Education and training will extend far beyond the boundaries of traditional schools.

Every opportunity to build partnerships with other government, non-government and community organisations will be explored to maximise the richness, breadth and depth of learning and care available to individuals. There will be an emphasis on integration of services that features collocation, the building of common community and family friendly service platforms and the shared use of facilities.

Individual campuses will be “small by design” and allow for the development of strong and respectful relationships between students and families and the teams of adults they work with. Students will belong to smaller learning families with their own space where opportunities to develop trustful and positive relationships with adults they work most closely with every day are optimised.

Each campus will develop its own sense of community, but students, families and staff will also develop a sense of belonging and contributing to the whole Federation and local community. Each campus will provide programs that are explicitly aligned to the needs of the learners that attend their “school”. There will be a very intentional effort to develop transition programs that build on the knowledge of students and their families by developing and sharing individual learning plans that increasingly plot a pathway to further education, training and employment as students move through stages of education.

Expectations will be high, and learners will be challenged by a rigorous learning experience that builds on their passions, interests and strengths, and inspires a love of learning. This will equip them to take a productive and satisfying place in the world of work and ongoing education and training.

The vital skills of Literacy and Numeracy will take a priority place in our curriculum, but so too will creativity, curiosity and the capacity to inquire.

Modern learning technologies will be used as a tool to expand students’ world views and to open their eyes and minds to the boundless learning opportunities that surround them.

There will be an emphasis on real and authentic “hands-on, minds-on” learning where students enjoy what they are doing, build skills in working with others and develop an understanding of the relevance of education and how it will enable them to achieve their life ambitions. Our assessment modes will be equally authentic.

The adults who work in the Federation will be both high performing and highly supported. This will be a workplace of choice. We will value the contributions our staff make and provide first class opportunities for professional growth and for individuals and teams to demonstrate innovation, enterprise and leadership. We will hold high expectations of our staff to continually build their capacity to deliver learning and care that works for learners in the 21st century.

We aim to build intellectual and social capital and create increased levels of community cohesion. The learning opportunities we provide will inspire and expand

self belief and life aspirations. Our learning programs and the culture that we develop will enable learners to make the difference in their own lives and the lives of others and motivate them to make positive contributions to their community and the world in which they live.

Existing facilities at the Bridgewater High School

Following the fire, the Bridgewater Primary School relocated to the site of the Green Point Primary School to allow for the temporary conversion of the facilities to house the Bridgewater High School from the beginning of the 2008 school year. These two schools subsequently amalgamated to become the East Derwent Primary School.

The former Bridgewater Primary School building which is now in use by the High School and planned to become the years 5 – 8 Middle School, is representative of the 1970s period with some large, generous spaces but limited access to daylight because of its deep plan with low ceilings. The enclosed nature of the design does not promote the sense of a school that is open to the community but is instead very internalised with small courtyards with an overly robust character deriving from an almost exclusive use of concrete block finishes. The building is in basically good condition.

The project master plan has identified the future potential and value of the existing high school buildings for conversion to the middle school program. In 2009 the Materials Design and Technology Centre of the school was upgraded and will be retained in the new design. There also is an Oral Health Service clinic located on the campus. This clinic which was upgraded in 2007 is very well utilised and will continue in its present accommodation unless other opportunities for improved coordinated service delivery become possible. The remaining facilities of the temporary high school are not well suited to the middle school design concepts and will be subject to extensive replanning and conversion.

Service Planning

Industrial and social development of area

Brighton's industrial and commercial growth is amongst the fastest in the State. Over the past few years numerous businesses have relocated to Brighton. Companies such as Polyfoam, Stramit Industries, Tasmanian Freight Services, Woolworths and Statewide Refrigerated Services have led the move, providing job opportunities for local residents. The State Government has commenced construction of an \$79 million transport hub with the relocation of the railway yards from Hobart to a new site at Bridgewater. This will accelerate the industrial growth with manufacturing, transport and brewing companies indicating their intentions to establish in the area. This growth, coupled with the growing horse training and intensive agriculture industries, will provide new opportunities for employment and ancillary business development.

Age demographics

Brighton is currently Tasmania's youngest local government area (LGA) with 35% of its population in the 0-19 years age group. The Southern Midlands is the third youngest LGA with 29% of its population in this age group (Ref 1: ABS 2006). In addition 42% of the population in Brighton LGA is of parenting age (between 20 and 49). At a suburb level, Gagebrook is the youngest suburb in Tasmania with 45% of its population in the 0-19 years age group.

Brighton has higher birth rates than other areas of the State. This has been sustained in recent years while overall in Tasmania the birth rate is declining. In addition high levels of new families in Brighton and Southern Midlands are bringing in more 5-19 year olds.

These factors indicate that schools in the Brighton and Southern Midlands local government areas may be less affected by population decline in the school age years than elsewhere in Tasmania.

Enrolment patterns – current and predicted

The renewal of the education programs and facilities will also potentially attract a higher level of local retention to the program at the middle school and above.

ENROLMENTS

Current	2009	Projected	2012
East Derwent PS (K-6)	374	East Derwent PS (K-4)	294
Herdsmans Cove PS (K-6)	238	Herdsmans Cove PS (K-4)	179
Gagebrook PS (K-6)	240	Gagebrook PS (K-4)	159
Bridgewater HS (7 -10)	288	Middle School (5-8)	360
		9-12-Adult	243

TOTAL	1140		1235
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Notes

Middle School total assumes that all predicted grade 5 and grade 6 enrolments will enrol

9-12-Adult total - years 11 and 12 numbers based on 70% retention from grades 10 to 11

9-12-Adult total - assumes that all BHS grade 10 students will stay at Bridgewater

9-12-Adult total does not include students who could enrol from other schools

The Learning Federation has the potential to attract enrolments from the Derwent Valley through to Oatlands to specific programs offered by the post year 10 facilities at the Bridgewater campus.

Learners returning to formal education and training

Changes to Commonwealth Government policies for qualification for income support (“Earn or Learn”) will also impact on Learning Federation enrolments by encouraging youth and interested adults to return to education. Three groups will be affected:

1. Early school leavers on Youth allowance: 16 – 20 year olds will be required to participate in full-time employment or training from 2010 to grade 12 or Certificate 2 level;
2. New Start Allowance recipients over 21 years can attract a training supplement if engaged in education or training; and
3. Sole Parent Benefit recipients can also attract a training supplement and will be required to engage in education or training once the youngest child turns 6 years.

Data supplied by Centrelink for the Bridgewater, Brighton, Gagebrook 7030 postcode for learners returning to formal education and training of 31 July 2009 reveals:

Youth Allowance - Jobseekers:

35 aged 16 - 17
159 aged 18 - 20

Youth Allowance - Students (full-time study):

51 aged 16 - 17
47 aged 18 - 20

731 Parenting Payment single customers (eligible for Training Supplement), and

832 Newstart allowance customers (eligible for Training Supplement).

In addition to the above figures there will be some potential impacts changes to the parental income test.

Building better schools

The Building Better Schools policy framework is aimed at enabling the Department to implement an approach to investing in school infrastructure which is based on a number of core project planning principles, including the following:

- the project should be able to demonstrate improved student outcomes in terms of improved student learning, engagement and wellbeing pathways and transitions;
- there is a fair and equitable distribution of funding for school improvements across all government schools in Tasmania;
- planning for the project must take account of demographic and student enrolment information in terms of enrolment trends and projections;
- the project must be consistent with and be reflected in the school's strategic plan for improving educational outcomes for students;
- the project should demonstrate that the condition of the current facilities is poor, poses an occupational health and safety risk, and/or continued maintenance is not economically viable;
- it must be fit-for-purpose, viable and achievable within a realistic budget and agreed timeframe;
- it must focus on long-term (not just short term) school improvement; and
- unless an urgent redevelopment need emerges, the project should be based on a formal Project Plan (School Upgrade Plan) developed in consultation with Learning Services, staff of the Finance, Facilities and Business Support (FFBS) Branch, the Principal, staff, students and parents of the school, and the broader school community. The project should also have the support of the relevant School Association.

Strategic Asset Management Plan

The Department of Education's Strategic Asset Management Plan (SAMP) provides a strategic framework for the efficient use and management of property and built physical assets consistent with corporate goals and objectives, and in compliance with government directives, financial management strategies and legislative requirements.

The current Strategic Asset Management Plan was approved by the Treasurer in July 2007. The plan sets out the Department's goal of optimizing built asset resources to support current and future community needs and best practice, and to enhance contemporary teaching and learning practices.

The Department is guided in the management of assets by key government planning initiatives which are interpreted and embedded in Departmental policy and service delivery approaches. These include:

- Tasmania Together – vision and goals for the Tasmanian Community. The impact of this on asset planning generally emerges within departmental planning frameworks.
- The Tasmanian Curriculum Framework for the Kindergarten to Year 10 age group.
- Student at the Centre which is a plan designed to support Tasmanian public schools to further improve both the educational experience and the results of students.

In addition, the Department of Education has an inclusion policy that states “to the fullest extent possible, students with disabilities should be educated in the company of their age peers while also being provided with curriculum and support that effectively meet their needs.”

Project Proposal

Steering Committee

The Learning Federation Project is under the governance of a steering committee to coordinate cross agency issues and advocacy. Committee members have included:

Mr Andrew Bennett, Manager Bridgewater and Southern Midlands Learning Federation (DoE);

Mr Tony Foster, Mayor Brighton;

Mr Andrew Finch, Director Finance Facilities and Business Support (DoE);

Ms Jenny Gale, General Manager Strategic Policy and Performance (DoE);

Ms Siobhan Gaskell, Director Information Services and Community Learning (DoE);

Ms Maree Gerke, Director Regional and Community Engagement (Tas. Polytechnic);

Dr Irene Gray, Manager Educational Performance (DoE);

Ms Deborah Leisser, Area Director South East – Disability, Child, Youth and Family Services (DHHS);

Mr Ronald Nash, Consultant;

Mr Bob Phillips, General Manager Learning Services South East (DoE); and

Inspector Glen Woolley, Police Tasmania.

School and community consultation

The Bridgewater and Southern Midlands Learning Federation has the strong support of the local community. The BASMERT process included wide and extensive community consultations that lead to far reaching recommendations for the improvement of educational programs and facilities.

Continuing consultation has been built in through the creation of a Community Advisory Group of interested local residents that are consulted on key decisions of the project through monthly meetings.

Learning Federation progress is also reported on through monthly Brighton Alive meetings, articles written for the Brighton News, the display of plans and models in

community facilities, the Learning Federation website, school newsletters and special communiqués to staff and the community.

Big Picture School workshops have been conducted for the design of the years 9 -12 and adult facility and have included students, teachers, parents and community members. The workshop process has canvassed design inputs and choices and reported back on the basis for the design solutions. To date the workshops held this year at the Brighton Civic Centre and the Bridgewater High School on 15 October, 4 November and 3 December have included 67 participants.

Community consultation is occurring for the Child and Family Centre project. The local enabling group, which includes local residents, has met and is due to recommend their preferred location for the Centre to an Interdepartmental Committee for approval.

Big Picture education

Together with the move to a middle school approach the community has approved the adoption of Big Picture educational philosophy for the new years 9 – 12 facility.

Many of the key elements of the BASMERT vision, as replicated in the key design principles developed in consultation with staff and parents, resonate with the principles and design elements of Big Picture education.

Big Picture Schools originated in the USA in response to falling levels of attendance, success and completion in a struggling inner urban school in Providence, Rhode Island. The first Big Picture School opened in 1996. More than 60 Big Picture Schools were operating around the US in 2008.

Big Picture schools in the USA report significant improvements in attendance, retention and completion i.e.

- exceptionally high student attendance rates (94% on average);
- very low drop-out rates (2% on average); and
- 99% of Big Picture graduates are accepted into college (the equivalent of a university or TAFE in Australia).

Big Picture School approaches in Australia began in 2006. The movement is championed by Big Picture Education Australia, a not-for-profit organisation which aims to bring about “vital changes to Australian education by starting innovative and successful schools and changing the conversation around education.” Big Picture Education Australia is based in Melbourne. Big Picture schools (and TAFE colleges) operate in WA, Qld and Victoria.

In Tasmania, six high schools are currently adopting Big Picture approaches to their local context at Ulverstone, Prospect, Rosetta, Claremont, Ogilvie and Clarence High Schools.

By definition, Big Picture schools are based on three founding principles:

1. learning must be based on the interests and goals of each student;
2. a student’s curriculum must be relevant to people and places that exist in the real world; and

3. a student's ability must be authentically measured by the quality of her or his work.

Bridgewater and Southern Midlands Learning Federation facilities

The Learning Federation in its present form will incorporate the following elements:

- Three kindergarten to year 4 primary schools at East Derwent, Gagebrook and Herdsmans Cove Primary Schools (under construction by the provision of BER funding and not part of this submission);
- Three birth to age 4 centres for launching into learning at each of the three primary schools (also under construction by the provision of BER funding and not part of this submission);
- One years 5 – 8 middle school to be accommodated by converting the existing temporary Bridgewater High School building;
- One new years 9 – 12 facility and adult facilities to house the Big Picture schools that will also incorporate elements of the Tasmanian Academy and Polytechnic on Bridgewater High School site;
- One Trade Training Centre funded by the Commonwealth Government located on the Bridgewater High School site which is under the project management of the Tasmanian Polytechnic;
- One Learning and Information network Centre (LINC) at a site yet to be determined; and
- One Child and Family Centre funded by the Commonwealth Government on a site yet to be determined.

Facilities for the Brighton township area remain subject to further community consultation and do not presently form part of the Learning Federation.

Temporary accommodation

The accommodation of the current years 7 – 10 high school during the development of the new and refurbished buildings will be managed on site by staging the new and redevelopment works and by adding another demountable classroom unit for use until the end of 2010.

By using the demountable classrooms on site, two year groups can be accommodated to allow for the first part of the redevelopment works to proceed once the design and approval process has been completed. When the first part of the new years 9 – 12 facility is completed, years 9 and 10 will move into this new accommodation and free up the remainder of the existing building for redevelopment.

Facilities design principles

Extensive community consultation and specific design strategies will aim to maximise the potential for the facilities to be viewed as belonging to the community. Other requirements will be aimed to give the facilities a long purposeful life with sufficient flexibility to accommodate changing programs and technologies. These strategies that will inform the design will include:

- The Bridgewater campus to be a collection of related buildings that imparts an open village atmosphere rather than a large institution;
- Everywhere access to Information Communications Technology (ICT) through wireless access with laptops as well as kiosk desktop computer stations;

- An ICT hub in the Big Picture School that serves as a focus for high end computer user needs and support;
- Building the school community through social food opportunities in café settings;
- A community café with commercial kitchen to assist students to participate in hospitality programs and events that may also support other events on campus;
- Recognition of teachers' professional needs through high quality professional learning resource and learning areas;
- Rigorous environmental sustainability as a lighthouse project aiming to achieve 5 star Greenstar status;
- Learning spaces that support the Big Picture education and middle schooling best practices with some ability to continue to be designed by future users for their particular needs;
- Sanitary facilities that are comfortable individual suites with access from common areas that do not create the opportunity for anti-social behaviour;
- Appropriate acoustical character for the nature of the rooms and spaces;
- Some flexible spaces with street appeal that may serve as sites for enterprise possibilities that support learning programs;
- Good links between indoors and outdoors that promote openness and the potential to continue learning outside;
- Maximising the availability of natural light which in many studies has been shown to lead to better educational outcomes;
- Separation of front of house welcoming areas from back of house internal functions;
- Accessibility after hours; and
- Outdoor areas with civic qualities that promote a sense of pride, ownership and respect by the community and that provide for positive social and learning opportunities.

Learning and Information Centre (LINC)

The LINC will potentially combine a range of Australian, State, local government and other organisations all working collaboratively to provide a one-stop service hub, including a library, online access centre, adult learning spaces, Service Tasmania and other public services.

The intention is to establish a vibrant hub for learning opportunities where individuals can take low-risk first steps into learning, build on existing knowledge and skills in order to maximise life chances, and become equipped for work and enterprise without the need to travel out of the local community. The LINC may provide information for people interested in vocational education and training, eLearning and other courses, and a range of community education activities and programs, including computer courses.

The LINC will actively support adult and family literacy and promote awareness of literacy issues in the local community, via a range of programs which cater for adults and children. The LINC will also proactively build strong links with the wider business and general community by identifying and assessing education and training needs, and brokering courses and programs with providers.

The building will become a community meeting place and social hub located close to other services in a local retail and service hub. It will be designed so that it is easy for customers to find services and navigate through the building.

The Community Knowledge Network (CKN) are currently investigating two potential sites; one at the High School site and one on Crown Land adjacent to the civic centre. Consultations and negotiations with the Brighton Council are continuing through input into a Local Area Structure Plan which is yet to be finalised. The Brighton Council is supportive of the concept and understands the value that the facility will bring to the community.

Prior to the engagement of an architectural consultant, the CKN will undertake an Expression of Interest process for community groups interested in being involved in the Bridgewater LINC.

Key design considerations around the LINC will include the articulation with child care provision to support second chance learners and how it may attract disengaged potential learners to support the objectives of the Learning Federation.

Child and Family Centre

Child and Family Centres (CFCs) are intended to support families with the health, well being, care and education of Tasmania's children, preparing them for a healthy life and success at school. Child and Family Centres will:

- offer an integrated suite of high quality programs and services;
- provide local programs for every family with babies and young children;
- meet the changing needs of the local community; and
- be a welcoming place for all.

The Child and Family Centre will provide an innovative and interactive environment that will best stimulate the child's desire to explore and learn. It will also offer a wide array of allied health and user focused services for parenting programs and training facilities and the wider community alike.

The underlying objective of the Child and Family Centre is for the centre to be viewed as a learning environment for children that reflects the "developmental" programs on offer. This philosophy is paramount in creating an exciting and challenging environment for children in their interaction with parents, carers and a range of service providers.

Design response

Site masterplan solution

The site masterplan enhances connectedness with the community through siting the new facilities closer to the Green Point Road commercial village and locating those facilities with extended hours of operation and community use closest to the village. These elements will include the Gymnasium and Performing Arts Centre and a Community Café space that interacts with those two elements.

A campus common linking the facilities and distanced from vehicle movements will also increase the quality and appeal of the buildings and outdoor spaces that are connected to this major circulation system.

The 9-12 and adult facilities will address Green Point Road and form sunny courtyards sheltered from dominant weather patterns. The campus will appeal to the streetscape as well as the internal pedestrian experience. The buildings that address the street will have narrower ends that reduce their visual bulk and scale down to the local residential pattern. The more community focussed elements of the building program will be located on this sunnier, street side.

Accessibility

The buildings and landscaped areas will meet Australian Design Standards for Access and Mobility (AS1428.1 – 2001) and Department of Education Capital Planning and Development Design Guidelines. Using a participatory and consultative approach throughout the design process will ensure that the built environments are responsive and appropriate to all users' cultural, emotional, spiritual and practical needs.

Environmental issues / performance

The projects funded under the State Government's Capital Investment Program will be lodged with the Green Building Council of Australia with the intention of achieving a five star Greenstar rating. This process brings a high degree of rigour to the true sustainability of the design and its construction and includes professional peer assessment. Considerable prestige is attached to five star Greenstar buildings by the community as being the embodiment of leading practice in the national context.

The Key concepts include energy conservation, occupant wellbeing, resource and waste management, recycling that includes retaining and reusing existing buildings, analysis of material and product total life cycle including its commercial after-life , toxin free materials including minimisation of toxins produced through manufacturing, using renewable resources as well as local materials, products and services. Making the data from building management systems available to users as an educational tool for sustainable concepts is also important.

Sustainable building design strategies will include:

- low emissivity (low-E) coatings for all windows and exterior doors to reduce air to air heat loss and solar gain that are well sealed;
- maximise reflective and bulk insulation to walls and ceilings;
- concrete slab on ground with perimeter insulation to maximise thermal mass;
- maximise natural light into the building and provide shading devices specific to diurnal sun paths;
- energy efficient sources for hot water such as evacuated tubes and heat pumps;
- maximise natural ventilation;
- high indoor air quality through minimising off gassing materials and appropriate ventilation using heat-exchangers;
- install operable vents and highlight windows to dump hot air and expel any indoor air pollutants;
- collect and harvest water, connecting downpipes to tank storage for re-use;
- provide leaf guards to gutters and first flush diverter or filter to tanks;
- integrate water efficient landscapes and specify water wise plants to reduce outdoor water use;
- maximise the aesthetic qualities of internal finishes, fixtures, fittings and furnishings for increased user satisfaction and comfort;

- focus on user-centred design and ergonomic design strategies to maintain health and productivity;
- select energy-saving devices; and
- using design impact benchmarks and indicators in conjunction with cost estimate models to guide and implement sustainable strategies.

Landscaping

The proposed landscape treatment will work across scales through the campus. The existing pedestrian route through the grounds will be reinforced as a major internal link from the school buildings through to the Greenpoint Road village. It is intended to work with the future streetscape treatments to build on and reinforce the sense of local ownership.

Semi-enclosed areas will give screening from the elements and provide learning and social opportunities on the outside of the buildings suitable for the different age groups. A difference in levels between the middle school and the years 9 – 12 and adult facility will provide a sense of demarcation without creating a barrier that would segregate the campus and dissipate the sense of the campus common area as belonging to the community as a whole.

It is hoped that further school community participation in the completion of the landscaping will occur through the Trade Training Centre which can take advantage of on site opportunities on site through horticultural programs.

Providing all-weather access for the school community throughout the school is also an important design consideration. Paths and covered ways will make all weather links between buildings and reveal the rich life of the campus through the comings and goings between the various buildings.

Vehicle circulation / parking

The project will meet Australian Design Standards for Parking Facilities (AS/NZS 2890.1- 2004). The campus masterplan excludes vehicles from the central pedestrian areas other than for emergency access and general maintenance. Car and bus drop zones will deliver children to the site without road crossings. The Green Point Road car parking area can be extended to support growth and intensification of the community use of the facilities. The restriction of car parking to the perimeter zone, in three distinct areas, simplifies parking arrangements and prioritises the pedestrian amenity of the campus core. The parking areas include:

- middle school car parking in the present location of the temporary high school car park;
- recreational area, overflow car parking at the site of the original high school car park; and
- a lineal car park along the Green Point Road frontage that serves the new buildings with potential for extension to wards the future community buildings.

Art for Public Buildings Scheme – artwork proposal

The Arts @Work program offers the potential for a significant commission in a prominent location(s) of the campus that can be appreciated by the school and greater community. It is anticipated that this project will attract high calibre submissions

Tasmanian artists to participate and develop their skills as a worthy contribution to the Tasmanian Collection.

Funding and Project Management

Building the Education Revolution

The project has captured a significant amount of funding through the Commonwealth Government's Nation Building and Jobs plan economic stimulus package. The Building the Education Revolution (BER) funds that have been approved to schools in the Learning Federation include:

BER funds allocated	Amount (\$)
Bridgwater High School	
* Science and Language Centre	\$1,970,000
National School Pride	\$125,000
* Primary Schools for the 21st Century	\$2,000,000
These funds come from allocations to the three primary schools below as a contribution to the development of the future middle school	
East Derwent Primary School	
Primary Schools for the 21st Century	\$1,500,000
National School Pride	\$150,000
Gagebrook Primary School	
Primary Schools for the 21st Century	\$1,500,000
National School Pride	\$125,000
Herdsmans Cove Primary School	
Primary Schools for the 21st Century	\$1,500,000
National School Pride	\$125,000
Total BER funds	\$8,995,000

* Only these amounts are reflected in the Source of Funds table below. The other funds are committed to BER projects under construction at the three primary schools.

Project budget

The following table outlines proposed funding sources for the project;

Source of funds	Amount (\$)
Building Schools for the Future Funds – State CIP	30,000,000
Building the Education Revolution – Commonwealth Government	3,970,000
Learning & Information Network Centre funds – State CIP	3,500,000
*Commonwealth Indigenous Early Years National Partnership	8,090,000
Total source of funds	\$45,560,000

* Includes recurrent funding from 2009 through to 2014.

Project costs

Cost estimates

Description	Amount (\$)
Building Works, Site works and Services (see next table)	21,270,000
Contingencies	630,000
Project Design / Management / Authority Fees and Permits	1,890,000
Furniture and Equipment	970,000
Artworks (Art in Public Buildings Scheme)	80,000
Post occupancy commissioning works	130,000
Allocation to Learning & Information Network Centre (LINC)	3,500,000
Allocation to Child & Family Centre building and recurrent	8,090,000
Allocation to Brighton community learning facilities	9,000,000
Total	\$45,560,000

Indicative cost elements of building works, site work and services

The following table outlines indicative costs of major components applicable to the building works.

Description	Amount (\$)
Common Infrastructure	
Carparking, minor roads, civil works, landscaping	1,920,000
Gymnasium	2,240,000
Science Centre	1,670,000
Performing Arts Centre	2,280,000
Years 5 – 8 Middle School	
Convert existing functional layout to middle school	2,000,000
Years 9 -12 and Adult Learning Centre	
New buildings	11,000,000
Other items	
Gagebrook Primary School birth to age 4 facility	500,000
Total	\$21,270,000

Project timelines

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

BER projects High School campus - Gym and Science Centre	
Consultant team BER commission	June 2009
Contract documentation and pre – tender estimates	August 2009
High School campus tender and award construction contract	November 2009
Construction commencement	December 2009
Construction complete	June 2010
Construction defects liability period	12 months
High School campus - Middle School and Years 9 – 12 and adult facilities	
Commence feasibility studies, masterplanning and consultations	October 2008
Call for tenders for construction contract mechanism	September 2009
Award construction contract mechanism	November 2009
Parliamentary Standing Committee Hearing	December 2009

Construction commencement	February 2010
Completion of first stages for occupation	June 2010
Completion of final stages for occupation	December 2010
Construction defects liability period	12 months

LINC	
Pre-planning complete	March 2010
tender and award construction contract	October 2010
Construction commencement	November 2010
Construction complete	June 2011
Construction defects liability period	12 months
Child and Family Centre	
Decision on preferred site	December 2009
Tender and award construction contract	July 2010
Construction commencement	August 2010
Construction complete	February 2012
Construction defects liability period	12 months

Building procurement methodology

To capture the BER funding available to the Bridgewater High School, early development of the proposals for the specialist educational facilities for the Gymnasium and Science Centre was necessary. These projects therefore become the leading projects for the High School campus in advance of the deeper community consultation and design of the main facilities.

To minimise the potential risk for disputes that arise when multiple contractors share a site, a strategy was developed to award a multiple portion contract that covers the construction of the campus facilities on an ongoing basis as designs are finalised and approved following the BER elements.

The construction starts required by the Commonwealth Government dictated that the BER components of the project needed to be tendered in September 2009. In addition to the fixed prices offered for the Gymnasium and Science Centre, tenderers were required to submit a percentage based offer for builder's margins and preliminaries. This offer would then be activated to allow the remaining elements of a \$15.3 million construction program at the campus to proceed as separable portions of the overall contract.

Potential project constraints – Bridgewater campus elements

Risks or constraints identified in relation to the project timeline and the final scope include:

- Prolongation of the design phases causing tightening of timeframes for the project to be complete for the beginning of the 2011 school year in satisfaction of community expectations;
- The potential for a reduced competitive sub-contracting market due to the current levels of construction industry activity, particularly in the south of the state;

- The many issues causing unpredictability for post year 10 enrolments; and
- Service provider coordination for the LINC impacting on design timeframes.

To manage these and other building procurement risks, the primary construction contract has emphasised a mechanism for a cooperative team approach between the Department, consulting architect and contractor. This Project Control Group has now formed and has advanced its role into the BER construction elements of the Gymnasium project at the campus. The contractor's willingness, expertise and market leverage is being deployed to identify and resolve ongoing cost and time issues.

Other potential for managing the overall scope of any unavoidable budget overruns to specific project elements may include:

- Managing within the project contingency;
- Some flexibility within furniture and equipment allocations to reuse items in the short term; and
- Securing sponsorship within the supportive local business community for noteworthy items.

EVIDENCE

The Committee commenced its inquiry on Monday, 21 December last when it was conducted on an inspection of the site of the proposed works following which the Committee reconvened in Committee Room 2, Parliament House whereupon the following witnesses appeared, made the Statutory Declaration and were examined by the Committee in public:-

- Andrew Bennett, Manager, Bridgewater and Southern Midlands Learning Federation;
- Andrew Finch, Director, Facilities and Capital Planning;
- Elvio Brianese, Forward Brianese Architects; and
- Matt Bilsborough, Senior Project Officer.

Project Budget

The Committee sought an explanation of the discrepancy between the estimated cost of the proposed works of \$40 million detailed in the Message from His Excellency the Governor-in-Council and the estimated cost detailed in the submission of \$45.56 million. Mr Finch responded:-

Basically, we have just put the range of funding sources available and they have come from a number of State sources as well as Commonwealth sources. In terms of the building program, it will not be to the value of \$45 million, given that some of the Commonwealth indigenous funding is actually recurrent funding, hence it has the asterisk on it. It is probably more in the order of \$5 million - we are still working through that. Essentially the building works are probably going to be in the order of \$42.5 million.

... there is some recurrent cost included within the child and family centre - \$8.090 million - and that is something we are working through at the present time. It would be in our interests to seek approval for up to this level of funding, although it will not be quite as high as that, given the recurrent element.

It is a similar issue to one when we did the new schools process recently. When we put the minute together for the Governor-in-Council it was based on an estimate. Since that estimate we have sat down and worked this through and the figures are higher than at that time, with all the funding sources included.

Background

Mr Bennett provided the following overview of the project:-

.... this project aims to provide the public infrastructure that will support a major transformation of how education and training, and related services, are delivered to learners of all ages in the Bridgewater and Southern Midlands communities.

At its heart is an intention to lead urban and community renewal through the provision of first-class contemporary education and training facilities and programs. Our aim is to provide a model where there is a place and a pathway for every learner to succeed.

This project had its genesis in the fire that destroyed Bridgewater High School in October 2007. However it is important to remember that, prior to the fire, there were widely held concerns about the effectiveness of the education and training provided to the Bridgewater and Southern and Midland communities. Despite the population of Brighton municipality being the fastest growing of all municipalities in Tasmania, enrolments at the high school were in decline. Community confidence in the school had decreased and increasing numbers of students and families were choosing to bypass the school in favour of public and private schools located in Rosetta, Glenorchy, New Town and beyond. For example, in 2006 just 42 per cent of students from the high school's home area were enrolled at Bridgewater High School - years 7 to 10 - and those figures have been pretty stable or have declined.

Further, long-term outcomes for the community revealed in ABS data painted a worrying picture of a severely undereducated, undertrained and underemployed community - all indicators where disadvantage was heightened relative to the vast majority of other Tasmanian and national communities. For example, university qualifications in the Australian work force ran at just under 30 per cent - 29.6 per cent - in 2006. In the Gagebrook community it is 0.8 per cent and in the Bridgewater community just 2.5 per cent. If we go to greater than year-10 training, post-compulsory qualifications - what we now call Certificates II, III, IV and diplomas - 52.5 per cent of the Australian work force have that level of qualification or beyond, but for Gagebrook it is 15.5 per cent and for Bridgewater it is 22.6 per cent. You may be aware that there are good estimates now that 40 to 45 per cent of jobs need minimum qualifications at that level.

Unemployment in 2006 across the Australian work force was 5 per cent; it was 28 per cent at Gagebrook and 14 per cent in Bridgewater. Youth unemployment ran at 10 per cent nationally; in Gagebrook, 31 per cent and for Bridgewater, 26 per cent. I have a whole list of other statistics that would support that.

The Committee questioned the witnesses as to why only 42% of students from the 'home area' were enrolled at Bridgewater High School. Mr Bennett responded:-

Community confidence in the school itself. Outcomes at the school were seen as not meeting what people needed. There is a level of stigmatisation of the Bridgewater community and groups of people who see themselves as more aspirational than others in the local area were sending their students elsewhere. Also, we have to be honest, the outcomes weren't as we would want. I can give

you some figures. Attendance figures in 2006 - at the high school in particular - were running at around 20 per cent absenteeism. That has now climbed to around 30 per cent. I would not say that since the fire there have been some fairly compelling reasons for our not being able to stay at the 20 per cent level, but the 20 per cent itself is worrying.

... we have the highest number of youths and the highest number of single parents in Tasmania. As an aside - and this is something that has influenced my thinking during the research and during the SIPS, the State infrastructure planning system; we are interested in the demographics, particularly where people live and where they are moving to - there is a figure called SIEFA, an amalgam of a number of indicators of socioeconomic disadvantage and during that process and talking to people from DIER, they identified that there are some collector districts within our Bridgewater and Gagebrook community that rate at the same level as remote indigenous communities in Western Australia and the Northern Territory. That is a little graphic understander of the situation - I have a concept of what life might be like in some of those communities, and you don't usually think that that sort of thing is on your doorstep.

One of the challenges we have in those areas is that it compounds upon itself - where education hasn't been a huge part of that family and generationally hasn't been part of that community for a long time, why would it be so for the next child that comes along? That is one of the challenges that we are dealing with upfront - the model we are trying to develop here is a more family-friendly one that accounts for those sorts of things. The attitude is 'Why would I be involved in education? No-one has in my family; no-one has ever got anything out of it. All I have ever done is get into trouble at school, so why would I go?' It gets down to that level.

Following the fire, the Bridgewater and Southern Midlands Educational Renewal Taskforce, called BASMERT, was convened and given the task of making recommendations about the future education and training needs of the Brighton-Southern Midlands areas. I would like to divert slightly there. At that stage, after the fire, there was a relatively simple range of choices: we don't do anything about it, so we don't have a school here anymore; we replace the school as it is; or we do something very different - and if you think about it, that is what is on the table in front of you. I think a fairly smart and brave decision was made to look at it more broadly, given that the fire wasn't just the issue. Those figures I talked about before had been in place there for a long time.

... Our aim is to make this such a compelling model, both in terms of the infrastructure we provide but also the model of education and how we relate to our community and families. We are very strong on that - that this is a place you want to go. 'I would rather be there than be at home. I would rather be there than be on the streets, mucking around with mates and getting into trouble.' That is a huge challenge, but we had to take it on; otherwise we will just keep recreating this downward spiral that we already have.

The taskforce consisted of community, Education department, business, industry and local government representatives and was chaired by the Mayor of Brighton, Tony Foster. Over a period of six months it consulted extensively with the local community and leading educationalists and gathered research into worldwide best practice in collecting information about demographics, including future population trends and education needs for the area. The taskforce subsequently provided a report to the Minister for Education in April of 2008. After due consideration, the minister made an announcement in August 2008, where he outlined a model for future education and training in the Brighton and Southern Midlands municipalities based on the taskforce recommendations.

The model included provision for all ages, from birth to adult - we now talk about 0-99 - and identified the need for an integrated approach from education and health and other key services in order to better meet the needs of the community. I divert there to add that we weren't just simply talking about recreating a school; we recognise that to engage families there needs to be far more to it than 'I'm just sending my kid to school from nine to three during the day.' That hasn't worked.

The minister also described maximising opportunities for shared use of facilities by students, staff and the community at large. The model announced by the minister responded to five key needs identified by BASMERT during the course of its work. Those five needs are: quality early childhood development and care for all children; integrated quality pre-schooling and early years education; high-quality and integrated middle years education; individualised learning programs for secondary students and managed transitions from learning into training and employment; and improved adult learning opportunities.

I would now like to briefly outline how this project responds to each of those needs and enacts the minister's announcement. The first of those need - quality early childhood development and care for all children: a children and family centre will be built in the area, and funding for this component comes from the Commonwealth indigenous early years national partnership. Services provided through the centre will be complemented by early childhood and parenting programs provided at the three primary schools. That extends the excellent work of current Launching into Learning, birth to age 4 programs. That is a real opportunity for us - those programs have been highly successful and set a good model because they are very family-friendly, they get out into homes and they make schools and similar institutions very welcoming to families. They are not just in schools - we have them at the library, we run some out of the Civic Centre and we run them at our local nursery. Whatever it takes, wherever we need to go, this program will be provided.

The Committee questioned the witnesses as to how the Child and family Centre was proposed to be staffed. Mr Bennett responded:-

... The child and family centre is more than just early years education, which is what the current Launching into Learning programs are, with a little bit of other care services. For example, we would invite in child nurses, perhaps a GP, in some schools we have brought in people from Housing because this has an impact on a child's health and capacity to access education. The services we provide through the CFC need to - and are required to because of the funding source - meet the parameters and the implications of the key targets made very clear in the national partnership.

We will need more staff and a different range of staff. We think there is some opportunity for some co-location and integration of services. One good way to think of the CFC is a range of services that will attract families - for example, we might have someone come along who needs to access some support in housing. We would have a facility for them to do that. While they were doing that we would be providing child care and good quality early years education programs for the children.

...I am talking here around the children and family centres and the interplay they all have with Launching into Learning in our primary school sites. Together these provisions will respond to a growing body of research that emphasises the importance of early years education and care in ensuring our youngest children are school-ready and positioned to maximise their potential development. In terms of sheer economics, for a dollar invested in the early years - zero, one, two or three years - the return is up here. When you start

investing at age 10, 12, 13, 14 or 15 years, the return is down here. There is a very strong correlation so for whatever level we put this at there is a good reason to be investing heavily in that area.

Integrated quality pre-schooling and early years education: the three kindergarten to grade 6 primary schools - Gagebrook, Herdsmans Cove and East Derwent, remembering that East Derwent is an amalgamation of Green Point and Bridgewater primary schools. That was set up this year and has operated as a single school. They will become birth-to-grade-4 schools - a radical change from the current provision - and will be refurbished to provide improved facilities for early years. Predicted enrolments for Gagebrook are 160; Herdsmans Cove, 180; East Derwent, 300 - and that does not include our birth-to-grade-4 centres.

In terms of funding, serendipitously or by good luck the BER money that came along enabled us to expend more money into redeveloping those schools as birth-to-grade-4 centres. Without that it would have been a lot more difficult, and that work is well underway.

The Committee questioned Mr Bennett as to why there was a need for a birth-to-grade-4 centre as well as a child and family centre. Mr Bennett responded:-

For a couple of reasons. In that community, access and moving around from place to place is difficult. There are low levels of transport, and we want to localise provision as much as we can. Gagebrook community is four or five kilometres from the community hub, the civic hub, and that is a significant impediment to access for a large number of people. When you drive around that community, the most common sight you will see is mums - usually mums - pushing prams with kids. They have no cars, or they drive cars without licences and get themselves into real trouble. So we are conscious of that. Also, we want to make kids school-ready and the best place to make kids school-ready is to have an entree into schooling. I had a wonderful example of it. I was meeting with our development officer in the children and family centre at Herdsmans Cove Primary School earlier this year. A mum came in who you could see was doing it tough. She had had a relationship with this school for a couple of years and she had a three-year-old. She said, 'I just came in because I thought I could help' and she was moving things around. She felt completely at home, knew where things were and went out and made herself a cup of coffee. She read some books and put some kids work up. Just as importantly, the three-year-old kid, a tough-looking little boy, came in, knew where to play and spoke to the people I was speaking to. He felt right at home.

That is in stark contrast to what can happen at some schools where it is hands-off and the parents don't get involved. We want to engender that from an early age. If you do it only at a children and family centre, which offers another range of services, then it is less likely we will do that. However, remember that we will provide Launching into Learning services, birth to 4, in a range of sites, whatever it takes and wherever it takes the school nursery - the nursery school farm - and wherever people go. Our aim is to provide a range. We know that one size won't fit all, however we will need something really excellent that will really stand out - like a children and family centre - to provide those services.

‘Big Picture’

Mr Bennett outlined the ‘Big Picture School’ concept as follows:-

The big picture education model that emphasises one student at a time will be put in place. This approach focuses on student interests and learning goals as the cornerstone of developing individual learning plans. The emphasis is placed

on building relationships in an environment where schools and organised structures will be small by design - I talked about that out at the high school, so I will not repeat myself.

Improved adult learning: I will summarise that. You know about the 9-12 and adult learning centre; you know we'll have a trade training centre and a learning and information network centre - I am not sure how familiar you are with those, but I am happy to talk to that if you want.

We already have high-level partnering and integration with other adult learning providers, especially the Community Houses. The emphasis on adult learning will provide a wide range of entry points and learning pathways in recognition that adults come with diverse education and training needs. Those vary from soft re-entry - people who just need to get back to learn how to use a computer and so on - to someone who wants to upgrade their trade qualifications or is interested in going to university. We need to find a way to engage them.

We intentionally designed this project to have high levels of shared use with the community. You saw this morning those plans and spaces where we will build a performing arts centre, a gymnasium, which we see as a 24/7 sort of provision, the trade training centre itself, the sports field where we intend to build in a multimedia centre, which will be attractive to people who are interested in music and putting CDs together. We have intentionally built in a range of facilities that will be attractive to the community outside of school hours.

In conclusion, this project is comprehensive and ambitious; it is based on a strong foundation of contemporary educational research and is a highly strategic response to the education and training needs of the whole community, and there has been extensive community consultation from the very early years of the taskforce. There are now high levels of expectation that the project will deliver significantly improved buildings programs and outcomes for the community.

Design

Mr Brianese briefed the Committee on the design approach as follows:-

While we were on site we looked at it holistically and the buildings that are eventually rolled out will be buildings that are sustainable; buildings that reflect this developing pedagogy that Andy was talking about. More importantly, we want to ensure that the buildings are accessible to the rest of the community. In the building rollout it is also important that the buildings are used as tools for educating children. There is that sustainable component where we have buildings that can be monitored and students can be part of that monitoring system. So buildings become tools of education as opposed to just spaces that are inhabited.

... We are looking at the site to be porous. It is important that buildings are articulated to address Green Point Road. It is critical that the common space, that internal street which is on the master plan, is a link to the rest of the community. It links the sports field, the education precinct and the community. We see that that common space has a 24/7 access, with passive security.

... The polytechnic straddles the sports precinct and the education precinct. The reason is that it can have its own access off Green Point Road. It can have large trucks - that sort of equipment - with its own access. What we have learned in the early years of designing schools is that cars and people don't mix. As soon as you allow cars in the middle of a site, it is dangerous. It is not something you would recommend because there is conflict between the two, so

ensuring accesses are kept on the perimeter enables the heart of the school to be safe.

The buildings will only do so much. What we have at the moment is a building on site that turns into itself; it is not a welcoming building.

... If you are driving by, and you didn't pick up on the play equipment, it could be anything. It could be a warehouse, a prison or whatever and it does not really address Green Point Road. It almost turns its back to Green Point Road.

Mr Bennett added:-

We need to think, and this is the challenge, that the organisational model for student learning - how we organise timetables - will be significantly different. So you will not have a bell and then suddenly hundreds of kids have to move from one place to another. If we take the 9-12 component, for example, in that model of education the learners, when they are well schooled or well trained and when this model is working well, will spend three days on site and two days potentially off in an internship or a workplace. So they are down to three days and during that three days they have their home base and they work from there. The notion is that is where they spend most of their time. Then when they need to access the trade training centre, they go out. It is not as if they would be regulated and then the bell goes so off you go.

Similarly, in the middle school, our program there will change, though it will have to be done gradually because we have some learning to do around this. Our model there will be around four parts of learning. One is what we call our focused learning - literacy, maths, English - the core stuff that we know all kids need to do. They will spend a large part of their day on that - 25 per cent or a little bit more because we really want to push that. So even up to 12 noon they would be on one site and not have to race around.

The second component is an integrated curriculum component where they use the learnings from science and maths to work on a project with another group of kids, because we know that one of the great skills we need to learn now is how to work with other people. The best way to learn that is around a very focused intent, around a purpose to build something, put on a play together or write something together. The third component of that is a personalised learning component - the specific interest that you research. Neither of these requires great movement around a site.

The fourth component is community-based learning, where they might be down at the Civic Centre doing maintenance or they might be going to a local childcare or an aged cared facility, whatever it may be. Recently Gagebrook Primary School won a national award in a program called 'Are You MAD?'. MAD stands for 'making a difference'. You get kids to choose subjects that are really of interest to them. They were really interested, for example, in the spotted quoll, so they worked out all the things that could happen. They wrote letters about how feral cats were causing a problem. They wrote to Peter Garrett because someone was apparently going to import this specific cat from South America that was a killer of the quoll, and they got letters back from him. They put signs around the community about keeping your cats in.

So my best answer is that it is a different model and there is not a lot of movement at any one time. It will take us a while to do that and to improve, but it is very much that model of a home base and then going out to learn, rather than shooting around. There will be a timetabling challenge for something like the gymnasium - which is popular; kids love it and so does the community - so we are going to have to work out how we use that together. We are talking about a radically different way. Some schools are heading down this pathway anyway. We are not just pulling it out of mid-air.

Mr Brianese concluded:-

The buildings support that pedagogy in that the spaces we are creating will be workshop spaces which will have stoves and sinks in them, so they are not stereotypical classrooms. At the end of the day this is a community project and we want the building to be inviting, so it needs to address Green Point Road and it needs to address the community. The buildings have to be able to breathe. If you are a student in a classroom and the classroom is too hot, too cold or too stuffy, then you don't want to be there.

We are talking about specialised activities like design centres and food areas. If the site has access more than from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. - we were on site today and the place was deserted - and if you can encourage facilities to be constantly accessible, then the people will come. Through that process there is ownership and respect and it is also a passive form of security.

Library/LINCS

The Committee questioned the witnesses as to why there was an apparent duplication of library service in the LINC. Mr Bennett responded:-

LINCS are often around what we call 'second chance learners' - learners who have been disengaged from learning for a long time, who we want to attract back into education and employment through an easy start. Often those learners are turned off by the thought of going back to school because they have a bad history with school; they only ever got into trouble and they don't want to go there. LINCS provide a good access point and a restart to education. The sorts of learning facilities that you provide in a LINC would not have the level of specialisation that you need to provide in a 9-12 setting. That is not to say that some courses will not be run out of the LINC and some students who are enrolled in the 9-12 level would go down there and vice versa. In the best of all possible worlds we would want to attract an adult who had been out of education for a long time - maybe they were having kids or had been unemployed for a time. They come to the LINC, get confident, get a certificate and then they feel confident about accessing higher, more challenging levels of education. We won't be able to provide all of that on one site - we need to provide it across a couple of sites.

The Committee questioned the witnesses as to which adults will wish to patronise the 9-12 site. Mr Bennett responded:-

People who want to access the courses we provide there - the higher levels of specialisation. If they are doing a science course they need to access some sort of science facilities. We are not going to build science facilities in a LINC. If they want to access a trade training centre, we will have a design centre down in the 5-8 centre, and a good way to get into some trade training centre would be to work from there. It would be too costly to replicate those sorts of facilities on both sites.

In the polytechnic world there are 355 certificates that you can achieve. You cannot provide all of those in a LINC, nor could we provide them all in a 9-12 centre. We will need both to provide as many of those as we can, but also we would have adult learners going off elsewhere.

The other sorts of adult learners we would have coming back here are those who have, say, certificate III, and now they are getting improved employment prospects they need to get a certificate IV or a diploma. You won't be able to provide any flexible space that would be part of a LINC, which are really just general learning areas. You need higher levels of specialisation with access to

machinery or equipment or environments. If they are doing hair and beauty, for example, you cannot build a hairdressing facility in the LINC, but you can provide it elsewhere.

Tender process

The Committee noted that the design work which had been submitted was at essentially a concept stage and questioned the witnesses as to how the proposed tender process would proceed. Mr Brianese responded:-

At the completion of the master plan we were able to recognise the series of buildings that we need to build - for example, performing arts, the gym, the science building et cetera. Looking at the funding, there were designated time lines, so there are x amount of buildings of which some have to be finished by 30 June, some by the end of December et cetera. So what we had is a series of buildings and a designated program and there was a budget. With the quantity surveyor, who is part of our team, we were able to put square metre rates on every one of these buildings. With a performance arts building - and we've done those in the past - we know the costs associated with putting one of those together. The same with a gym and the refurbishment of a school. So what we were able to do was test out square metre rates and ensure that the size of these buildings met the budgets.

We designed the gym and the science centre; that went out to tender, so they were completed documents. As part of that component, we also asked the builder to provide us marginal premiums, which is the component the builder charges for the management and infrastructure for the rollout of the remainder of the buildings and that was a competitive process. , As we are designing the building, part of the builder's role is to get three prices from subcontractors for every trade - for example, plastering, painting, bricklaying. What we are doing is managing the risk and every component is tendered.

The advantage that this brings is that we have a builder who is part of the team but who will also assist in the designing of the buildings. For example, say there is a staircase that needs to be built. In the traditional manner we would design the staircase, the quantity surveyor would price it and off we would go. The advantage we have now is that we can use the builder and the builder can say, 'You can save money if you don't make that staircase out of concrete, you make it out of another material'. We know at the moment we can't get bricklayers, so let's use concrete panels. So what we are able to do is use the builder as part of the team to help us manage those costs and ensure that all the requirements are met and be competitive at the same time.

The fundamental problem we have at the moment is the booming market and to be able to pin a builder down to do projects such as this is almost impossible. So to be able to do that now rather than waiting - there are some major projects to be rolled out in January/February - we have the builder in place, he is already starting to speak to his subcontractors, so we are ready to go.

Mr Finch added:-

As a comment, it is fair to say that the process that we are going through is more like a design and development tender process, which is quite common now in the construction industry. But doing it this way allows us to have a more detailed consultation period rather than having to get everything ready, finish it and then go to tender.

Need

The Committee questioned the witnesses about the need for the proposed works. Mr Bennett responded:-

If nothing happens, I guarantee it won't change. If we do something, we might create another need and wouldn't that be fantastic. I get back to my big worries here that we are not reducing the number of unemployed, we are producing the unemployable at the moment. There is that level of disengagement. We have one in three kids who don't go to school in that high school. For every 100 kids who go to that school, we have 155 suspensions at the moment. It's broke, badly. It's not going to work, it is not going to make the changes and it is unfair. It is unreasonable and it is a horrible stain on what we are doing as a society and we can't let it happen. This is brave; it will have a go. Can I put my hand on my heart and say this is going to be 100 per cent successful? No, I can't, but it's a red-hot go. It is imaginative, it is different.

Mr Brianese added:-

But we are not going to get it 100 per cent right. What we want to try to do is get it 80 per cent right because with that last 20 per cent you have to allow for people to have ownership and for the school to evolve.

DOCUMENT TAKEN INTO EVIDENCE

The following document was taken into evidence and considered by the Committee:

- Bridgewater and Southern Midlands Learning Federation – The Development of New Educational Facilities for the Bridgewater and Southern Midlands Learning Federation Resulting from the Recommendations of the Bridgewater and Southern Midlands Education Renewal Taskforce Report 2008 - Submission to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, December 2009, Department of Education

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The Federation should significantly change the way education and training is provided for the Bridgewater, Gagebrook, Herdsmans Cove, Brighton and surrounding communities. Its principal aim is to increase levels of engagement in education and training and employment amongst the residents of the Brighton and Southern Midlands Municipalities.

The Federation should be a student, family and community oriented organisation that provides high quality and engaging education, training and care for learners of all ages.

The Committee was most concerned at the stark levels of disengagement within the subject community and education services currently provided. The Committee believes that the proposed works will address this debilitating culture.

Accordingly, the Committee recommends the project, in accordance with the documentation submitted.

**Parliament House
Hobart
18 January 2010**

**Hon. A. P. Harriss M.L.C.
Chairman**