

Montello Primary School – Redevelopment

Submission to the Parliamentary Standing Committee
on Public Works

3 July 2024



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1 Introduction

The Department for Education, Children and Young People (DECYP) seeks approval from the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works (PSCPW) for the redevelopment of the Montello Primary School (the school).

The project will provide priority redevelopment works identified through the Concept Plan (Attachment 1). In 2021, the Tasmanian Government made an election commitment to provide \$7.1 million for the redevelopment of the school. Community feedback was considered and the Tasmanian Government commitment has been supplemented by additional funds of \$2.8 million, together with a \$50,000 contribution from the school.

Extensive community and stakeholder consultation has assisted in defining the scope of works to include contemporary learning areas, improved accessibility and safe student drop-off and pick-up for the total \$9.95 million investment as per the attached Concept Plan (Attachment 1).

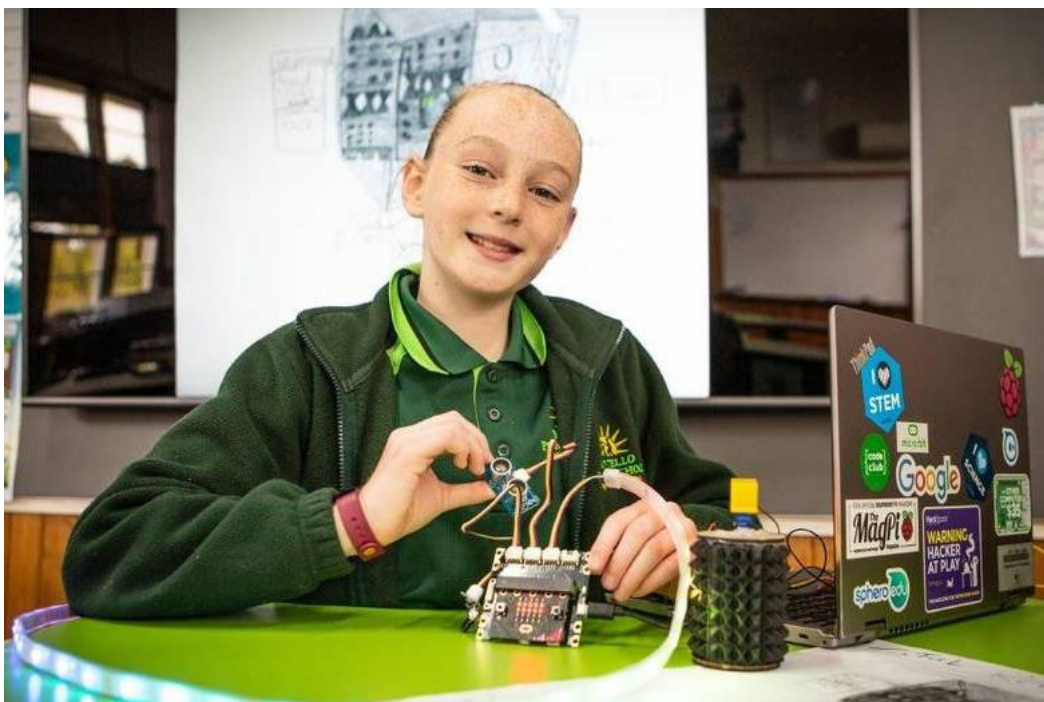


Image: Montello Primary School World Class Coder

This project will redevelop existing buildings to manage safety and security, vehicle movements and arrivals, accessibility, and the provision of contemporary learning environments.

Reconfiguration of the Years 3-6 learning areas will provide improved connectivity and contemporary learning environments to create spaces that cater for a range of users, learning styles, group sizes, and flexibility for multiple uses and changes of use over time.

Driveway improvements are proposed including an extended on-site driveway area for student drop-off and pick-up to improve safety and flow.



Image: Montello Primary School students

2 School Philosophy and Community Connections

The school has created strong community partnerships, to fulfil its mission of “Making People Shine”, assisting all students to maximise their learning so they might confidently face the challenges ahead of them as independent lifelong learners.

The school strives to build quality relationships within the community between students, teachers, and parents. It recognises parents as the child's first educators and believes in creating partnerships to optimise learning. In addition to the core learning areas, the school offers a range of support programs such as Literacy Intervention, Keeping Kids Connected, BillyCATS, a Life Skills program, pre-Kinder Learners Program, Physical Education, ICT, Kitchen & Garden, Water Awareness and Learn to Swim programs and Breakfast Club.

The school places significant emphasis on encouraging both formal and informal opportunities to meet and to build a team approach to improve learning outcomes for all children.

3 Contemporary Pedagogy and Learning Opportunities

The Department for Education, Children and Young People Strategic Plan 2024-2030 outlines a shared vision for children and young people in Tasmania. The Strategic Plan connects the work of everyone in the Department to:

- ‘Our Why’ Bright Lives. Positive Futures.
- ‘Our How’ Every child and young person is known, safe, well and learning.

DECYP aims to enable Tasmanians to engage in positive, productive, and supported learning, and to encourage them towards lifelong learning. The DECYP Pedagogical Framework (Attachment 4) aims at quality teaching and learning and is informed by educational research about best practice. Providing the right facilities is an important component in the delivery of these outcomes by creating environments that facilitate learning opportunities to occur in varied and appropriate settings available to teachers and students at the time of need.

DECYP aims to provide facilities that:

- Are contemporary and fit-for-purpose.
- Have enduring quality.
- Remain adaptable to changing learning needs and evolving pedagogy.

- Minimise costs to building maintenance budgets.
- Minimise energy consumption and impact on the environment.
- Are well integrated with the site and existing infrastructure and buildings.

4 Current Learning Environment Constraints

The learning spaces at the school comprise a series of non-contemporary, disconnected single classrooms that are split over three main levels, with accessibility not meeting current standards. These environments prevent interaction and the sense of community to enable formal and informal learning.

Limited space does not allow for group, team or individual learning. Bathroom facilities are old and remote from learning areas leading to long journeys away from teacher supervision.

Office spaces for teachers, administration, support workers, specialists and management teams are limited. This means that many staff share spaces making one-on-one student support difficult to provide.

5 Enrolment Demand and School Capacity

The school currently has an enrolment capacity for 475 students. As of March 2024, there are 276 students enrolled at the school. The projected enrolments numbers are anticipated to decline slightly over the next three years.

The school's enrolment capacity is maintained by the proposed scope of work with the provision of contemporary learning areas being the design focus rather than enrolment capacity. The Fully Enclosed Covered Area (FECA) is proposed to increase from 3,942m² to 4,431m².

Enrolment Demand/Projections

MONTELLO PRIMARY SCHOOL					
FIRST TERM CENSUS ACTUAL 2022-2024 & PROJECTED 2025-2026					
	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Kinder	19.5	30	18	18	18.5
Prep	34	41	32	35.5	36
Year 1	33	35	40	36	34
Year 2	30	32	37	38	36
Year 3	41	28	31	33	31
Year 4	48	39	27.4	29.5	33
Year 5	42	47	42	34.5	33.5
Year 6	37	43	49	44	35
Total Persons	284.5	295	276.4	268.5	257

6 Montello Primary School Site

The school is situated uphill from the Burnie City Centre. Nearby is the Burnie Aquatic Centre, and Police and Citizens Youth Club.

The total site area is 3.45 hectares. The buildings and structures on site equate to a FECA of 3,942m².

The campus comprises original post-war weatherboard clad buildings, later two storey additions, a general-purpose hall and administration area, and two double classroom demountable buildings. All buildings are well maintained and remain serviceable but with problems of glare, sun and noise in windy conditions.

The additions of the past are now very restrictive for contemporary needs. Level changes prevent disabled access, toilet blocks are remote from learning areas, classrooms are disconnected from each other, from common areas and the outdoors. These issues prevent an easy flow from one education setting to another and break lines of supervision. The general-purpose hall can hold large assemblies but is not a good setting for smaller gatherings.

There are presently no rooms available for professional support staff to operate within the school to assist children and families.

Outdoors, there is a lack of support for outdoor learning opportunities and the sports courts are in need of base repairs and resurfacing.



Image: Montello Primary School students with produce grown in the school garden

7 Community Consultation

DECYP undertakes extensive community engagement for all major capital works projects. DECYP initiated a community consultation from 22 November to 17 December 2021 for this project. The purpose of the consultation process undertaken was to seek feedback on the long-term strategic Concept Plan for Montello Primary School and inform development of the scope of works for the Government's funding commitment.

A Community Engagement Outcomes Report (Attachment 2) was prepared following this consultation process, which was made available via the consultation database, school channels and on the Department's website in the first half of 2022. Feedback assisted to identify priority works for further consideration through the design process. Accessibility improvements, contemporary connected learning spaces, more bathrooms, parking, and drop-off and pick-up improvements were aspects of the school the community identified as priorities. These will be delivered through the proposed works to Montello Primary School.

In 2022-2023, workshops were held with the school's staff to identify their priorities for the redevelopment, and following intensive design investigations, the final Concept Plan for proposed works was presented to DECYP's Asset Strategy Executive Committee (ASEC) for approval in October 2023. ASEC and the Department's Executive Group approved the Concept Plan (Attachment 1), the priorities of which were supported by the funding allocation inclusive of the additional \$2.8 million provided.

Further consultation with the school and broader community on the proposed works commenced in November 2023, and completed on 1 December 2023. The consultation process was promoted via the school's channels, the DECYP website and social media channels, and through mainstream media coverage. Only one public submission was received by DECYP during this consultation period, which sought further information about the advertising of the Burnie City Council Development Application.



Image: Montello Primary School play space

8 Design Approach

The architects design approach and the DECYP Built Environment Guide Design Principles (Attachment 3) have guided the design process and are reflected in the Concept Plan:

- **Flexible Learning Environments**

Flexible learning spaces support teaching and learning practices that are responsive to student's needs. Learning areas are well resourced with access to innovative technology.

- **Inclusive Learning Environments**

The learning environment allows students to establish and implement behaviour regulation strategies in an inclusive atmosphere that supports restorative practices.

- **Access to Amenity and a Healthy Environment**

The essential requirements for physical health and wellbeing are provided including personal hygiene facilities, fresh air, daylight, and access to the natural environment.

- **Community and Belonging**

Clearly defined, welcoming spaces create a strong sense of community to build and support trusting relationships between parents, students, staff, and the wider community.

- **Accessibility and Safety**

Providing equitable and safe access to all users. All spaces to be visible so all members of the learning community are safe and visible at all times. Pedestrian and vehicle movements to be separated and managed safely.

9 Proposed Works

The proposed works have been identified through the design process to meet the highest priorities of the school.

The key concept for the redevelopment is to bring together the Kindergarten to Year 2 learners and Years 3-6 learners into two well-connected learning communities. Each of these will enable learners and teachers to collaborate in ways not previously possible with the current and very restricted layout. The main elements of the proposed works are:

- In the existing courtyard, a new two-level building will create opportunities for flow between existing and new learning settings and provide a central location for the school's maker space. This building also includes a social stair/auditorium which links the two levels and is available for groups to gather without having to interfere with activities in the general-purpose hall.
- Create a new pedestrian forecourt which links to the publicly accessible school areas of reception, hall and dining area.
- Relocate the administration and reception functions to create a welcoming front to the school.
- Create professional support offices in the former administration area.
- Replace the existing toilet block in its remote location with new individual private toilet cubicles in multiple locations nearer to learning spaces.
- Improved accessibility of school buildings with a new lift to give access to the two main floor levels with a ramp for access to the half-level change.
- Removing two existing classroom demountables. One demountable will be relocated for the ongoing provision of Outside School Hours Care. The second demountable will be removed from the school.
- Reorganise and extend the drop-off and pick-up vehicle area so children are not required to cross any roadways.

- Repair the outside ball court and relocate the kitchen garden to be nearer the new dining room and outdoor learning settings.
- Improve the early years outdoor learning areas.

10 Sustainability Approaches

The design implements sustainability approaches to support the school's commitment to sustainability. The key approaches are:

- **Material Consumption**

The design adapts and utilises the existing building's concrete and masonry construction where possible which reduces material consumption.

- **Materials and Systems**

Materials from renewable resources will be used wherever possible. Design choices will consider the life cycle, energy consumption and environmental impact of materials and systems and maximise energy efficiency.

- **Reduce Energy Consumption**

The design incorporates high performing insulation with energy efficient heating/cooling systems and energy saving lighting. Glare proof glazing solutions will offer a solar gain and maximise natural light.

- **Wellbeing and Air Quality**

Plentiful natural ventilation will maintain indoor air quality. Materials used will have low or no Volatile Organic Compound (VOC) gas emissions. Natural light and new connections to the outdoors offer new opportunities to teach, learn and play.

- **Retain Natural Habitat and Biodiversity**

The school grounds adjoin a natural watercourse with abundant flora and fauna. Visual and physical connections with this natural resource provide a strong connection to nature and biodiversity which will be untouched during the redevelopment. The existing kitchen garden has multiple vegetable beds and fruit trees. The redevelopment includes plans to collect rainwater which will be used to irrigate the kitchen garden.



Image: Montello Primary School NW School Athletics Carnival

11 Accessibility

The school is presently split over three main levels making access for people with disabilities impossible to many areas. The new building will include a lift to access the two main floor levels with a ramp to the half-level change into the existing southern wing. Full accessibility will be achieved to all building areas including toilet facilities. This has been a long-standing and difficult issue for the school.

12 Tasmanian Government Art Site Scheme

The school presents an excellent opportunity for a suitable artwork to be incorporated into the redevelopment. The artwork component is being progressed by Arts Tasmania with members of the Project Working Group.

Arts Tasmania has commenced planning the Expression of Interest process to procure a local artwork that can inspire learning and interaction.



Image: Montello Primary School Leadership program representatives

13 Project Management

A total of \$9,950,000 is provided for works at Montello Primary School. The funding elements brought together to support the project needs are:

- \$7,100,000 Capital Investment Program
- \$2,800,000 Additional funding allocation
- \$50,000 Montello Primary School contribution

The project cost plan is summarised in the table below:

DESCRIPTION	COST ESTIMATE
Construction	\$8,600,000
Consultant Fees	\$800,000
Statutory Fees	\$30,000
Furniture/Equipment/IT	\$200,000
General Project Contingency	\$58,000
Artwork	\$80,000
Project Management	\$142,000
School Administration	\$40,000
Total	\$9,950,000

The construction tender was released for the Montello Primary School Redevelopment in April 2024. On receipt of the tender, DECYP will review tender pricing against the available budget to ensure the agreed scope of works can be delivered.



Image: Montello Primary School Gifted Online Project participants

14 Project Timeline

The key project dates are as follows:

PROJECT TASK/PHASE	COMPLETION DATE
Concept Plan approved by DECYP	October 2023
Community consultation	November - December 2023
Design development	August - December 2023
Planning Approval received	February 2024
Construction tender advertised	April 2024
Parliamentary Hearing	July 2024
Contractor appointed	August 2024
Construction commences	September 2024
Completion	January 2026

15 Potential Project Constraints

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

IDENTIFIED RISKS	RISK MITIGATION STRATEGY
Budget overrun	Quantity Surveyor estimates undertaken at key milestones and allow time for the Project Working Group design review. Management of contingency throughout construction phase.
Budget overrun due to unidentified infrastructure issues	Review of infrastructure was undertaken as part of Stage 1 of the project to ensure all infrastructure issues are identified.
Program delays	Allow sufficient time for design progress and review in project planning. DECYP review and approval to proceed.
Scope drift	DECYP review and approval to proceed.

Unmet stakeholder expectations	<p>Ensure the Project Working Group has adequate resources to inform stakeholders.</p> <p>Management of stakeholder expectations with regular consultation to the school community as per the management and communications strategy.</p>
Continuity of learning during construction work	Identify staged program with consultant and contractor to minimise disruption to school operations.
Consultant underperformance	Ensure consultant has sufficient resources for the project and is given clear direction and feedback.
Contractor liquidation	Follow Treasurer's Instructions procurement guidelines and employ appropriate tender evaluation requirements.
Change in Project Working Group members	<p>Project documentation up to date.</p> <p>Sign-off of key milestones as required.</p> <p>Continuity of Learning Services involvement.</p>
Unforeseen site conditions	Full review of existing services by consultant team. Ensure project contingency is maintained at start of construction.



Image: Montello Primary School students

16 Conclusion

The redevelopment will provide contemporary solutions to a range of complex site issues. The proposed works will provide safer student arrival and departure, connected learning settings for high-quality education experiences, accessibility throughout, improvements to student bathrooms, professional support offices, a welcoming entry, and improved connections to outdoor learning settings.

Approval from the PSCPW would assure the school community that the solution to the long-standing needs of the Montello Primary School is a step closer to resolution.

It is recommended to the PSCPW that the proposed works for the redevelopment of the Montello Primary School proceed.



Image: Montello Primary School graduating from the Children's University

17 Declaration

The following statements respond to Clause 15(2) of the *Public Works Committee Act* relating to Functions of the Committee.

Do the proposed works meet an identified need/needs, or solve a recognised problem?

DECYP identified priority needs to provide safe access to the school, disabled access through the building, upgraded bathrooms, learning spaces that support contemporary practices and places for professional support. This need was also identified by the school community during the consultation. The design meets these needs.

Are the proposed works the best solution to meet identified needs, or solve a recognised problem within the allocated budget?

The design solution proposes a connected school campus with accessible and flexible contemporary spaces along with improved access to the outdoors. The design has been developed by a key team representing educators, DECYP staff and the school association and is considered the best way to provide contemporary learning environments at Montello Primary School.

Are the proposed works fit for purpose?

The proposed works solve a range of complex issues on the site and have been carefully considered to fit the needs of the school in the long term.

Do the proposed works provide value for money?

The design meets the priority needs for safety and improved educational experiences. This is backed by advice from the project Quantity Surveyor as delivering these outcomes within the allocated budget. The project represents excellent value as it meets these high priority and critical redevelopment requirements.

Are the proposed works a good use of public funds?

DECYP consider this to be a good use of public funds as they will assist in providing quality education at Montello Primary School for many years.



Image: Montello Primary School student

18 Attachments

Attachment 1 - Concept Plan

Attachment 2 - Community Engagement Outcomes Report

Attachment 3 - DECYP Built Environment Guide Design Principles

Attachment 4 - DECYP Pedagogical Framework

Submission photos sourced from Montello Primary School Facebook page.