

**THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS MET AT
HENTY HOUSE, LAUNCESTON, ON FRIDAY 18 APRIL 2008.**

INQUIRY INTO ROCHERLEA PRIMARY SCHOOL, ROCHERLEA

Mr DAVID BUTTON, JAWS ARCHITECTS, **Mr MALCOLM HALES**, PRINCIPAL, ROCHERLEA PRIMARY SCHOOL, **Mr ADAM MULCAHY**, PROJECT OFFICER, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND **Ms ELIZABETH BANKS**, GENERAL MANAGER, LEARNING SERVICES NORTH, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

DEPUTY CHAIR (Mr Hall) - I would like to invite whoever is first cab off the rank to speak to the submission, if you would like, and then we will give opportunity for members to ask questions.

Ms BANKS - From the northern suburbs' perspective this development is the second phase of the project that has been going for some time, the first phase of which, the Mayfield Primary School site, is close to completion. A number of options were put up for phase 2 of the project and the option before you was the preferred option after a very extensive community consultation that involved the Rocherlea and other primary sites around the northern suburbs and included a range of processes to try to gauge feeling. We are hopeful that this project will enable a real community kind of schooling approach which has already begun at Rocherlea under its current principalship and which engages our young parents in the 0 to 4 age group particularly and also indigenous families because the northern suburbs has an over-representation of Aboriginal members of the community. Those are probably two of the major focuses for the work. The third focus is to really grow the potential of two schools sharing a site in terms of the facilities that are there, such as the school farm and the other natural facilities its land and opportunities bring into the future for the grade 7 to 10 cohort to work in partnership with the younger students in a range of new and innovative learning opportunities.

DEPUTY CHAIR - Thank you. Any questions for Liz on that aspect of it? I understand it was an extensive period of consultation. You had members from council, members of the community, parents, the whole lot involved.

Ms BANKS - Yes. Ivan Dean and Frank Knott, members of the Mayfield school community as well Rocherlea and Brooks.

DEPUTY CHAIR - Initially were quite a few issues brought forward. I believe there were people who were not happy to start off with, is that the case?

Ms BANKS - That is the case for a range of reasons and various community groups had their own particular perspective on it. For example, the Rocherlea Community Garden were very concerned to ensure that they would not be disadvantaged by this. There were members of the local community who were concerned that the school might lose its identity. We worked through all those issues in a really fair way so that everybody had

their say in coming to consensus and that was part of the reason that the consultation took so long.

DEPUTY CHAIR - Are there any further questions to Liz? I think that has covered it off. Malcolm?

Mr HALES - I want to go a little deeper into the background about the process that we went through and indicate how much the community support the current proposal because, as Liz said, there were some issues. However, the majority of those issues were around the school closing and that was the number one concern that parents had. I think what this process did was to give them a bit of insight into the fact that there were other options. School closure certainly did not come from the parent group; it came from the fact that as soon as a group such as this was put together to talk through the range of options in the north, the media speculation was that that meant that Rocherlea was going to close. That caused some angst and concern within the parent group. But as we moved through the discussion and through our meetings in this consultation period it came to be that that was not necessarily the whole circumstance, that there were several options. Option one was that the school would close; option two was that there would be a redevelopment on the current site; and option three was to relocate to a new site and have a new school built. We worked hard as a school community to work our parents and other community members through this because, as was mentioned to you this morning, the decision was made by the committee that the school would not close and therefore that came down to two options - either to redevelop or go to a new site.

We did figures and we looked at a plan of what redevelopment might look like and we looked at what a new building might look like on a new site. Then that committee, with the support from the local community and the local parents, found that the preferred option was to go to a new site because the redevelopment of the site, as I have mentioned this morning, would have meant that we would have spent \$2 million, I think, and we would have lost resources and facilities by doing that redevelopment. However, the relocation to a new site actually meant that we got an increase in funding and we maintained all the resources and all the facilities that we currently have.

A lot of hard work went into making sure that the community understood the ramifications of it all and in the end I would be struggling to find one parent or one community member now who would look unfavourably on their students having what will end up being some of the finest facilities in the State in terms of education, learning environment and playground facilities and all that that goes with those aspects. The community now believe they will have a state-of-the-art primary school. I believe that students in a disadvantaged area deserve the same opportunity as students in any other school and where we are currently we do not match what others might have.

DEPUTY CHAIR - Thank you, Malcolm. Any questions?

Mrs NAPIER - Could you give us an indication of your current class configurations and how they can then be transferred into this proposed new design in terms of the number of classrooms, the sizes and so on?

Mr HALES - We currently have a kindergarten. We have two prep/1 classes, one 2/3, one 3/4, one 4/5, and two 5/6s.

Mrs NAPIER - Under the new set up there will be one more classroom, will there?

Mr HALES - No, it is the same; there will be eight. Obviously each year, depending on the numbers, the make-up of those classes changes. Next year we will probably have a straight prep and two 1/2s. But the new building will accommodate any of those types of configurations for class groups.

Mrs NAPIER - If there were an expansion of the school - a I know people are talking more these days about closing and amalgamating schools - is there adequate space to accommodate that configuration?

Mr HALES - That has already been taken into account and on the draft plans there is a space there. The siting of the building is such that directly next to the grade 5/6 classes at that end there is a space that has been left that will accommodate a new building.

Mr BUTTON - Two more classrooms.

Mr MULCAHY - We have deliberately incorporated that space in such a way that if there were new classrooms constructed at some time in the future, they could be designed to integrate with the existing facilities. It would not simply be a reactionary selection of the building or the construction of another building in a spot that wasn't ideal. This spot has been purposely left on the site so that if that need ever arose we could address it in a proper way.

Mr BUTTON - On the site plan and landscape plan, DA1B, there is a broken line drawn on the Brooks High School end of the site.

Mrs NAPIER - We had some discussion about the seeming separateness of the library, relative to the classrooms, and, for the record, the question was being raised as to why the library didn't appear to be in the centre of the school, taking account of the fact that the entrance is at the western extreme of the building. From the principal's point of view and in terms of managing the logistics of child supervision and teaching, do you have any concerns about the positioning of the library?

Mr HALES - In some ways the library and the meeting room part of it probably will be a bigger use for the people who work in this area than it is for use by the children. I don't believe that the library is any further away than it is from the furthest classroom that we have in our school now. In fact, I believe it is closer. Even though it sits there and it may seem to be detached and added on at the end, its intended purpose is for students to access it either as a whole class or in small groups. But they will always be with an adult, so under those terms of supervision I do not see it as an issue.

This multipurpose area here is another facility that could be either shared use or similar use to what the library is. If we want to meet in small or large groups we could meet here or we could meet in the library, even though this is where all the books will be. In our thinking we have made it really clear that our classrooms are also significant places of learning and we want as many resources in the classrooms as well. We have talked about twenty-first century learning, which means that it doesn't matter where you are in the school, you will be able to access technology or have some access to learning

facilities or books. Because we have been looking at it in the plans, we are really interested to hear that someone thought it seemed to be detached, because we certainly hadn't seen that in our design.

Mr MULCAHY - I guess too, as Malcolm alluded to, throughout the development of the design we have gone through a series of options and when that issue was raised at this morning's site visit it was almost comforting to know that the design we see here today is a result of having gone through those options and that that issue has been thought of in the way they have been developed. Some of the other parameters around the position, shape and location of the library in the administration building and how it relates to other buildings on the site include things such as the contours, the site levels and the existing vegetation and those sorts of things. So as part of a package, I guess, we have tried to consider all those things in terms of the way the building has ended up being positioned, shaped and located - which functional areas in certain parts of the school were needed to be co-located or flexible enough to be connected and those sorts of things.

Mrs NAPIER - We had some discussions about whether it might be useful to have a connecting path of some kind joining the western classrooms with direct covered access to that library.

Mr BUTTON - We accept that - that is a very reasonable assessment. It is a relatively early stage of the landscape planning and following the comments made today we will incorporate a walkway from the far end of the classrooms up around to the library. That would be accessible and equitable ramp-walkway.

Mrs NAPIER - The envelopes of the building - are they all provided with cover as you move from one building to another?

Mr BUTTON - That is correct. It is possible to go from one building to another under cover.

Mrs NAPIER - I have been trying to look at the diagrams and they do not actually show neatly -

Mr BUTTON - The landscape plans don't clearly show that but that certainly will be achieved.

Mrs NAPIER - So you could go from the kindergarten block over towards the hall and you still wouldn't get wet?

Mr BUTTON - All the way through here is under cover and then these two roofs here overlap, so you can come through to administration -

Mrs NAPIER - So there is a roof over the access to the toilets on the western end?

Mr BUTTON - Yes, that is all roofed. There are some quite large outdoor covered areas for wet winter days where the kids can play outside.

Mr MULCAHY - In fact we deliberately ensured that. We have gone through a couple of revisions of that to make sure that the width of the overlap of the roofs is adequate so that two people can pass each other under covered access, for example. One of the good

aspects of this design is that the roof overhang, which is on the northern side of the buildings, providing some solar protection in summer, actually acts as the covered area for circulation, but then acts as the covered area for the outdoor eating spaces on the northern side as well. So we can effectively incorporate three functions within that design of the roof and how it will operate. That was important to us from a facilities design point of view. One of the common issues we hear when we visit schools across the State is the difficulty associated with access between buildings and protection from the wind and the weather, so for us in designing a complete new facility that was an important point. Basically from a point near the entry of the site you can access all the spaces - all the learning areas and the facilities - under the cover of a range of different roofs that interconnect at some point.

DEPUTY CHAIR - Mr Best has just come back in. Brenton, Sue has just asked a question about the library and I know you had a concern. We have sort of had an answer, so do you want to add anything to that?

Mr BEST - I was reading here that quite a lot of effort has been put into the library. On page 16 of your submission you say that it ensures central access to staff and students and that there are resource issues. I accept the fact that you have looked at lots of configurations and that is the conclusion you have reached. I would probably have a different view about where it sits but that is just my view. I might not be right - in fact I definitely hope I am not. I think it is a very good report and I am particularly impressed that you have laid out the foundations of the plan itself within the social connections of the Tasmania Together framework. I am just trying to find what page that may have been on. I thought that was a really important part of the whole project. I do not know whether you want to add anything to that. Also, maybe you can tell me about taiko drumming and karate.

Mr HALES - I can tell you about that.

Mr BEST - Yes, and you might talk about some of the social stuff.

Mr HALES - One of the aims that we have had at Rocherlea Primary School, certainly in the time I have been there, is to make sure that we align and realign our students and our families with a focus on learning, and that school has a purpose to provide a learning environment for students. Just as much as it is the school's responsibility to provide a learning environment, it is also a family and student responsibility to engage with what we offer.

I think we have done particularly well in differentiating the curriculum a bit and that means offering a variety of options for kids to participate in that meet their needs and their understanding. The other thing that I believe that we are doing really well is that we are engaging the community in what we are doing so they are aware of our aims and goals and part of that is to provide a social environment that supports kids' safety, supports their learning and supports their being supportive of each other at school.

In 2007, we introduced an options program to our upper primary students. That is part of differentiating the curriculum and giving some opportunities for kids to engage in different sorts of activities, all with a learning focus. So far from last year to this year we have had music, art, computers, a group of kids writing a newsletter, taiko drumming,

karate, et cetera. We now have Mark, who comes in and takes the taiko drumming with the students. It is a Japanese drumming program and at the moment, for some reason unknown to me, we have only girls involved in it. Our initial reason for putting it on was to support the boys because it is loud, active and physical and we thought, 'Won't this be great for all these boys in our school', but the boys did not want to do it. The girls are doing it. If you were to come out sometime and hear and watch them perform it is fantastic - it is discipline, is about training the brain to do repetitive actions, to get rhythm and beat and follow all that sort of stuff.

With the karate bit, we were following a model from the United States called the Personal Skills Project and that was about redirecting students' energies into constructive and purposeful activity. There are a number of things that we have done in our school for that and one is to have a really strong health and PE program and we are doing that really well. The other thing we wanted to do was give some purpose to the kids' aggression and exercise so we have introduced karate, which requires some sort of discipline. A karate teacher comes in once a week and works with a group of children. I think the success of these option programs can be shown because last year we had a number of students who did not want to be involved because it was something different. This year we started the option programs and the students were straight in. We do not have any students who do not want to participate. They get it by choice and it runs for a term each and then they can choose something else. That is what the taiko drumming and the karate are all about, along with a whole range of other things. It means that we refocus the number of students in this school and the student/teacher ratio drops to an average of 8-12 students to one teacher. We also have a group this year that work in science, which is part of their new curriculum; so we are focusing very much on the learning areas. That is what that program is all about.

Mr BEST - Congratulations on it, it is good.

I do not know whether you have commented about the actual cost estimates for the project -

DEPUTY CHAIR - No, we are about to get onto that.

Mr BEST - I think these reports are starting to get better. I know we have our turmoil with some of these reports but I think this is a very well-presented report in the sense of the cost. I know it is very hard, the tendering process is some way off and you have to be careful how you go with these figures. Someone will probably comment and say they think the contingency is a bit low but if you put it up too high we are going to say that it is too high but I think that is a pretty good estimate of where you are at.

I noted things such as the consideration of relocation of airconditioners and things like that but whether that is possible and whether you want to do that or not, who knows. To me that displays a level of consideration about trying to get good value for dollar where it is reasonable and sensible, but some things do not work out that way. That is my comment - I am not sure if Mrs Napier wanted to ask questions about that but certainly the design concept is a very interesting one using the analogy of the cross-section of a pine cone, which gets the message across.

In regard to the library, I notice you are going to use some of the art for public buildings in the special space for a 'reading cubby' and a 'pirate lookout', which sounds interesting too.

Mr BUTTON - That is a suggestion.

Mr BEST - A suggestion at this stage, right.

DEPUTY CHAIR - In regard to funding, we have \$2 million from the Feds and the State Government contribution is about \$941 000. The asset sales constitute quite a large sum from the existing school site - and I asked about this morning. How has that figure been derived? Did a valuer put that figure on it? It is a bit over \$1 million so it is quite significant.

Mr MULCAHY - Without having been involved in the project for its entire time, I can only comment that that has been a component of the project since the very beginning. I know the department has only begun to look at the value of the site and that sort of thing, but that is a component of the asset sale, which has been effectively earmarked for this project. There is a fairly extensive process by which we would identify a property for sale, value it, and then go through the correct channels to dispose -

DEPUTY CHAIR - What happens if that does not come to fruition in the next financial year or so? How do you accommodate that? Is there a drag on the consolidated funds?

Mr MULCAHY - Not necessarily. I guess the sale of this property is one of a number of properties identified under the Government's asset sales programs. At this stage we have been allocated that money from that program as opposed to from the specific sale of this site, if you like, although the sale of this site would be part of the overall program providing funding for similar government projects. At this stage we are comfortable with that.

The sale of the site obviously could not occur until a new site is constructed midway through next year and we would not be endeavouring to pursue that sale for a while after that to ensure that the new school was up and running successfully prior to moving on with that. We are confident the funds will be available with that proposed timeframe in mind.

Mrs NAPIER - Just a quick question on the rationale for the parent room being associated with the multipurpose room rather than the early childhood area. It seems to me that as a consequence of the Launching into Learning program particularly, a facility that is designed for the very young children and/or parents could have resulted in a slightly different design for that kindergarten area, but you may have something else in mind.

Mr HALES - We talked about where we would locate that and we had a lot of discussion about that parent room because we really wanted that to be down towards the early childhood area. But also it is to do with the access, because this will all be fenced to here and if we had a parent room down there then, because that is fenced and the main access is down through here, people would have to go perhaps all the way around there so as not to cut through here and across classes. This enables people to come directly into this area. It is purposely located near the canteen and this larger hall so that we may be able

to run some activities in here for parents to share that facility as well if they wish. There was certainly a lot of debate on that and that was probably one of our longest discussion points. If parents want to access that room, they drop their children off and just come to there and they can stay there. There are adult toilets here.

Ms BANKS - The parents that we want to target through Launching into Learning and through the Aboriginal Early Years Program are often those who have not had a very successful time at school themselves. So we were very careful and worked with the Aboriginal unit to find out what was important. We wanted to ensure an easy and inviting access for them, not having to go through big crowds of kids and stuff like that. The same with the offices, being able to have a direct access and regard for their privacy appeared to be really important for those groups which was interesting because I had not thought about that before this project.

Mrs NAPIER - The Aboriginal program that is currently operating, is that likely to happen in that parents room or in another area that is attached to the library?

Mr MULCAHY - We are actually currently investigating that. There have been a number of discussions about the utilisation of the spaces within the school and as part of that exercise we have looked at the Aboriginal Education Unit, how many staff they have, how many days a week they need to operate, whether or not there are synergies with the two proposed visiting professional rooms in the administration building or whether the activities are better suited to the parent room adjacent to the multipurpose hall. We are actually also investigating - budget permitting - the creation of an additional space to accommodate those staff members.

Mrs NAPIER - It looks a bit squeezey when you look at the combination, with Launching into Learning growing, as we hope it will.

Mr MULCAHY - Exactly, and our investigations have identified five-days-a-week and fairly constant occupation of their space to deliver their service, if you like, so it is exactly that. If we try to merge it with another activity in another space on site that is likely to be very difficult for those people in terms of timetabling and sharing space. At the moment we are really looking at where another space could be located to offer that service from the site but with an independent space. That is a bit like the landscaping, the ongoing development of the design towards the tender stage, and we are looking at that at the moment.

Ms BANKS - The Launching into Learning Program in this design is actually really nice and flexible because you have opportunities when kinder is not on.

Mr HALES - Kinder at the moment operates as just one kinder group and it operates two full days a week which gives this room -

Mrs NAPIER - It gives you a bit of freedom of use as well.

Mr HALES - Yes, and because they are co-joined classes it also allows us to open that space up for preps and that can form part of parents coming in and working et cetera. I am also aware that the Federal Government are looking at kindergarten going to 15 hours, that is one of their options, so that still would -

Mrs NAPIER - It would still allow for that.

Mr HALES - Yes, that would still allow us to have that two days a week. We would like to have the parents in there as much as possible so it allows for these classrooms to be used, as well as having meetings there. If they are not being used then we can certainly use that space - this is for our school association as well - they meet a couple of times a week. There is the finance group and a fund-raising group and they often meet. They would use that facility at the moment as well.

Mrs NAPIER - Is it your intention to have your own community garden - I think there is some money available federally for a vegetable program or something like that - or is it your intention to continue the links with the Northern Suburbs House?

Mr HALES - I think it is imperative that we continue those links because they are very strong at the moment and, if anything, we want to strengthen those. Not only do we use the peace garden as a facility but we also do a lot of other interaction with our students. But that does not mean that in the future that we would not have something else on the Brooks site, bearing in mind that they already have their farm in that area, too. I do not know what the future might bring but maybe the peace garden may be for the preps to grade 3s or 4s and maybe the 5/6s to link with the 7/8s. Maybe the 5s, 6s, 7s and 8s have used some of their other gardening facility up there. There is certainly no intention to break any of those links with the community centre at the moment.

Mrs NAPIER - In talking about the 7/8s, you have the relocation of their oval across to the west - it looks as if there are a few trees between them on the design - that is logistical? Have there been discussions with Brooks over supervision and times you would use it and all of that kind of thing?

Mr HALES - Yes. One of the prerequisites, I guess, for relocating Rocherlea to the Brooks High site was ensuring that the more informal grade 7/8 play area, which will become the Rocherlea sports oval, was able to be relocated and we have ensured that that, in conjunction with Brooks, can be positioned further to the west with a couple of issues being addressed as part of that. One is the proximity to neighbouring residential properties in Goya Road to the west of the site and the other is looking at the topography and reorienting and repositioning that oval to ensure that it fits appropriately. The biggest issue for Brooks at this stage is the fact that it is a more an informal 'kick the football' type area between the goal posts. It has really been about maintaining that amount of space and repositioning it with those goal posts so that grade 7 and 8 kids still have that area within proximity to their learning areas which are almost immediately adjacent so that there is no disruption to the way that they currently operate within their school.

Just getting back to the gardens as well, Brooks are currently establishing what they call a Bush Tucker Garden just further over to the west and that is currently a work in progress so I guess there is a potential future sharing or integration of primary school students into that program as well at some point in time.

Mrs NAPIER - The only other question I have is in terms of the green design. I am delighted to see green design built into it with solar panels, water tanks, as I understand

it, and so on. What systems are available so that children can read and monitor what electricity is being generated, what is happening with the water and so on as part of the complementary education process?

Mr HALES - We certainly are keen that all the building's operating systems are fairly easily read and understood by the children. With the solar water heaters we are debating amongst ourselves at the moment whether in the toilets, for example, we do not have an electric boost on them so that on days when there is not much sun the hot water is not very hot, it is a bit cooler. There are ways that they can get a direct feel for it.

Mrs NAPIER - Williamstown High in Victoria has some great educational features in their design so that kids can see, read and monitor exactly how it is working.

Mr BUTTON - We are investigating that. We are investigating an electrical meter in each classroom - I think that is going to be a bit expensive because of having to subdivide and do all the wiring as separate rooms.

Mrs NAPIER - It would be good though.

Mr BUTTON - It would be good to have that somewhere and if not in every classroom, maybe we can nominate a space -

Mrs NAPIER - For the older ones maybe.

Mr BUTTON - the multipurpose room or somewhere, so that if people turn on heaters, lights or even electrical appliances, they can see electricity being used. We certainly intend that somewhere that will be part of the school, but possibly not in every classroom.

Mr HALES - I think that is a good point. I think if we can have best practice around that, my aim and goal is to have the best practice ICT of the green image and what we can do with furnishings and all those things so that we become a model school. We hope that someone in Victoria will say, 'We know of a school in Launceston, Tasmania, that does all this; we need to go down there rather than go to Williamstown High'. Just as we talk about other schools, we would like them to be talking about us in a whole lot of ways.

Mrs NAPIER - I looked at the work on the web site. I have not visited Williamstown High but I have read about the design and it would work so well with maths, science and environmental planning, and it would also work well for the rest of the community. People would visit your school to see how they could enhance the education of their own children as well as investigating design systems. Maybe if they have some ideas over there we could expand on them.

Mr HALES - Yes.

DEPUTY CHAIR - As well as the library we have the community meeting area. If I could be the devil's advocate for a moment, I wonder about the necessity for that, given that I presume that there is a community meeting area within the precincts of Brooks High School. Is that the case? There is the existing Rocherlea community centre as well.

Mr HALES - We are really fortunate that we have a very supportive parent association which is working extremely hard to promote and support the school. Two years ago they were probably broke; in the last two years they have fund-raised, they have about \$5 500 in the bank account and they are really excited and pleased about it. They do a couple of things in our school - one lady runs the school banking; we have another group of people who come in and when there is a fundraising effort on, they use our staff room. At the moment when they have their fundraising committee meetings they are using the breakfast room.

There are some times when that group is sharing our staff room with teaching staff, and I do not have a problem with that. I think that is good practice and it shows a supportive community between us and the parents. But there are times when it is inconvenient because we want to have meeting in our staff room or staff are having a break and want to talk about issues that might be confidential and they have parents in the room at the time.

We are talking about them coming and having pretty much access to that parent room for their own resources where the parent bodies store the things they use in the school - urns, second-hand clothing et cetera. They would use that as their room, where they have their own lock-up things and where they can come and go. They would still have to come through the office but it is not going to impose on any staff or any other meetings we have.

Mr MULCAHY - On that point, one of the things that we have deliberately done throughout the design process is to try to incorporate as much flexibility as possible to enable all those different groups that operate within a school, and within a school community, to access the facilities for the things they need to do within a school. For example, looking, say, at the library, the library space as a whole is designed with the correct number of square metres, if you like. Within that, though, we have been able to create a meeting space which can be divided off from the main library room so we are kind of doubling up on the functionality of that space enabling community groups to use it or making it available for staff meetings or other activities. We have tried to do that right throughout the design to pick up on those little things to make sure that it is a full community facility at the end of the day. I guess the parent room is another example being incorporated within the multipurpose hall as an entirety. In terms of floor area, that building has a number of different spaces which complement each other within that overall building.

DEPUTY CHAIR - Thank you for that. On page 18 there is reference to car parking and pedestrian access. I note where the extra 28 car parking spaces are being provided thereabouts, next to the existing ones. In terms of pedestrian access and children's access, I presume that most of the kids come from the existing school site on that eastern side so now if they are walking obviously they will have to cross George Town Road which is a busy road. Have you had any safety concerns with that? Is there any need for an overpass? That becomes an expensive proposition of course.

Mr HALES - That has all been talked through. Our current figures show that, out of our 180-odd children, I think there were 120 -

DEPUTY CHAIR - It did have a breakdown there somewhere.

Mr HALES - When we actually broke down the figures we found that not as many students actually came from the Rocherlea suburb as we had originally thought. There are 111 from Rocherlea and 51 from Newnham and then four others - from Windermere, Dilston and Mowbray Heights. So three-fifths of our students come from Rocherlea and the other two-fifths come from across that side.

Mrs NAPIER - There is some work that has been done on that intersection, though.

Mr HALES - Adam might like to comment on where we are headed with that.

Mr MULCAHY - We have liaised with DIER, the Launceston Council and also with Metro on a number of fronts and there was some work undertaken by DIER to investigate traffic movements and whether some sort of traffic control measure at the intersection would be advisable. At this stage they have suggested not but it is still being monitored. They have suggested that we look at repositioning pedestrian crossings to move students further away from key intersections and that kind of thing, that we improve the footpath access and I think the Launceston Council have undertaken some of that already and have budgeted for further work next financial year. We will also be in discussion with Metro about just rerouting buses as required to ensure that students that can be redirected to the new site. Some of that work is yet to occur based on our project time frame, if you like. We have had the initial discussion, undertaken some of the initial investigation, know what we need to put in place around the time that the school is being completed and ready for occupation -

Mrs NAPIER - That is term 2, 2009.

Mr MULCAHY - Yes. Later this year we will be getting back on to that ready to -

Mrs NAPIER - You would expect it to be done before the school is occupied?

Mr MULCAHY - Yes, definitely. We will be having those discussions with them again later in the year to then undertake that work necessary for term 2 next year.

DEPUTY CHAIR - Any further questions from members?

Mrs NAPIER - You're a parent?

Mr HALES - A teacher.

Mrs NAPIER - Have we had anyone representing the parents?

Mr HALES - No. One person was going to come but he had to go to work. We will have to have a meeting.

Mrs NAPIER - Yes.

Mr HALES - In fact I did think others were coming, but apparently not.

Mrs NAPIER - They must not have been too worried then because they would be here otherwise.

Mr MULCAHY - Yes, they would.

DEPUTY CHAIR - Any further questions to the committee?

Mrs NAPIER - I have one quick question. What is your current building cost index?

Mr MULCAHY - A good question. Over the past five years we have seen prices go up a lot, initially in construction materials I think but followed very closely behind by labour costs. I think for us, as a department tendering a lot of projects throughout the course of the year, we are currently experiencing some very good tender prices on bigger projects around the \$1 million range and upwards. The quantity surveyors who work on the cost estimates for projects are a little bit conservative but that is probably based on the evidence from the last four or five years in the construction market. At the moment we are actually enjoying some relatively good tender prices and some of our projects are coming in under budget, so I guess we are starting to maybe see a slight drop off in the level of work which might then correspond with some better prices. With this project going to tender in the middle of the year, we feel that that is also potentially a good time for government projects. With perhaps not a lot of activity happening around the end of the financial year and the beginning of the next one, it potentially represents a good opportunity to put a project out to tender when the market would normally be fairly quiet. We are hopeful that that trend will continue for this project but I guess overall there has been a bit of activity drop off and prices are just stabilising at the moment.

Mrs NAPIER - It was running at about 5 per cent or 6 per cent, wasn't it?

Mr MULCAHY - It was, and I think in about 2003 and 2004 it was even higher, but is probably dropping back down to under 5 per cent - probably 3 per cent to 4 per cent.

DEPUTY CHAIR - Thank you very much for your attendance.

THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.