2001 (No. )



PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

# PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

# TASMANIA POLICE ACADEMY REFURBISHMENT

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

## MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Mr Wing (Chairman) Mr Harriss Mr *Green* Mr *Kons* Mrs *Napier* 

# INTRODUCTION

To His Excellency the Honourable Sir Guy Stephen Montague Green, Companion of the Order of Australia, Knight Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire, 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: -

# TASMANIA POLICE ACADEMY REFURBISHMENT

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

# **BACKGROUND**

The Tasmania Police Academy was opened in 1976 to replace inadequate training and accommodation facilities for recruits and staff employed in the Tasmania Police Service. The establishment of the Police Academy not only improved the facilities for training police recruits, but it provided a facility that enabled the Department to develop and deliver training programs to all police. In addition, the complex is used by a wide cross section of the community for various events.

The policing environment continues to change and be affected by a wide range of issues. The dynamics and scope of economic, socio-economic, society values and attitudes, technology and other environmental issues all impact upon the service delivery requirements of the Department. To enable Tasmania Police to respond in a positive manner to this changing environment, recruitment, training strategies and programs need to be continually reviewed and changed. To facilitate this ongoing change, and to enable all training programs to continue to be delivered in a professional manner, a dedicated and suitable training establishment with modern facilities is required.

# **THE PROJECT**

The refurbishment of the Academy will be undertaken in 4 stages, as follows:

- 1. Accommodation Building.
- 2. Classroom Building and Administration Building.
- 3. Administration Building.
- 4. Activities Building.

# Stage 1

The Accommodation Building contains the living quarters for recruits, police undertaking in-service training and external groups utilising the Academy facilities.

The existing accommodation consists of single bedrooms with communal bathrooms and toilet facilities. This style of accommodation is no longer considered appropriate and it is proposed to provide bedrooms, each with its own ensuite to provide some flexibility and address access and disability requirements.

An existing conference facility (Mill Room) located on level 4 is to remain and it is envisaged that this room will continue to be utilised for its current purposes with minor enhancements to facilitate training and conferences.

The Special Operations Group is housed in part of the ground floor and it is expected that they will continue to utilise this area.

Refurbishments to be undertaken include the removal and replacement of carpet; repainting; upgrading of light fittings and furniture; maintenance of all joinery; and upgrading of all window hardware and furnishings. All existing communal bathrooms will be demolished. It is proposed that one of the two lounges will become a dedicated TV viewing space with the other utilised for reading, social gathering and study.

The Classroom Block houses the main Academy teaching facility on the campus with associated office support. In order to increase the morale of students, a resource centre facility is included as part of Stage 1. The classroom located on level 1 which is currently used as a computer room will be converted to a resource centre, which will accommodate computer facilities for up to 20 students.

#### Stage 2

Refurbishment works proposed for Stage 2 are as detailed above. This Stage will also include some reconfiguration of office and classroom walls so as to achieve better utilisation of space.

A new surface will be installed to the eastern half of the Parade Ground falling back to the existing central catchments points. The covered way which runs from the southern end of the Classroom Block to the Residential Block will be re-roofed and the framing refurbished.

#### Stage 3

The Administration Block houses the main Campus Administration, Library, Chapel and Dining Facility.

Refurbishment works proposed for Stage 3 are as detailed above.

# Stage 4

The Activities Wing houses the Gymnasium, two Squash Courts (now used for other purposes) the Commissioner's Dining Room and the Bar. This block has the most potential for use by outside groups.

Minor work, essentially restricted to repair and replacement of existing fixtures and fittings will occur in the Gymnasium and Male Change Room. The two Squash Courts will be reconfigured so as to provide a suitable Female Change facility and a unisex Toilet/Shower for people with disabilities. Rub Down room, Gym room and Manager's room plus Stores will also be provided.

Major failure of the membrane roof over the Gymnasium has occurred. Accordingly, it is proposed that the ballast (pebbles) will be removed and a new Trafficable Membrane system applied to ensure a waterproof structure.

#### Services

In addition to the work detailed above, the following service upgrades will be considered as part of the related works.

#### **VENTILATION TO GYM AND BAR**

The existing ventilation for the gym and bar is currently run from one common plant. This means that when ventilation of one area is required the other area is running also even if the second area is unoccupied. A split system is proposed to be installed in order that each area can be independently operated.

## OCCUPANCY SENSORS

Occupancy sensors for the accommodation block lounges will be installed which will automatically control lighting to these rooms. Lights will only be switched on when rooms are in use thereby saving energy.

#### TOILET EXHAUST

Exhaust from a single toilet at the far end of the classroom block does not comply with the current requirements. A small mechanical exhaust system is proposed to be installed.

#### IMPROVE CLASSROOM VENTILATION

Classroom heating and cooling is controlled by one thermostat per floor. If a room is in use, other than the one with the thermostat, temperature control is inadequate. Whilst the cooling capacity of the existing plant is acceptable, heating banks are proposed to be installed so as to improve the heating capacity. Use of occupancy sensors to control new 'shut off dampers' will

shut down supply dusts to unoccupied areas of the building. This function will reduce the heating and cooling loads on the plant and save on running costs.

#### KITCHEN VENTILATION

Depending upon the options adopted for the kitchen upgrading, the smaller of two exhaust hoods will be removed, thus minimising maintenance and operating costs.

## LPG CYLINDER UPGRADE

Changing from the existing domestic size cylinders to bulk cylinders will allow the purchase of LPG at a bulk discount rate of approximately 55 cents per litre as compared to the current rate of 80 cents per litre.

#### ADMINISTRATION - FIRE HOSE REELS

Fire hose reels in the Academy buildings generally do not comply with the current codes and are installed too low. The reels will be replaced and installed at an appropriate height.

#### CLASSROOM - TEMPERED WATER

Tempered water control will be provided to the toilet washbasin at the far end of the corridor in the Classroom block to comply with the most recent codes.

#### GYMNASIUM - HWC UPGRADE

The current hot water storage cylinder exceeds the capacity required. The cylinder is rated at 40.5 KW, and one element has burnt out. A system for heating water using a heat pump is proposed that should have a payback period of 2.5 to 3 years.

#### CARPARK FLOOD LIGHTING

The two parking areas in front of the Administration and Gymnasium blocks are proposed to be floodlit to enable users of the carpark, safe access to their vehicles in the later hours during darkness.

# COSTS

These costs are the latest revised estimate, calculated since the reference of the project to the Committee:

Details	Cost
Initial capital investment	\$ 3,159,000
Land acquisition costs	Nil
Project management	\$ 385,000
Builder's fees	\$ 210,000
Total Project Cost	\$ 3,754,000

# **EVIDENCE**

The Committee commenced its inquiry on Monday, 29 October 2001. Members inspected the site of the proposed works. Following such inspection, the Committee commenced hearing evidence at the Tasmania Police Academy. The submission together with the documents entitled "Tasmania Police Academy Refurbishment – Budget Estimates" and "Tasmania Police Academy – Proposals for Upgrading" were received and taken into evidence. The following witnesses appeared, made the Statutory Declaration and were examined by the Committee in public:-

- Richard McCreadie, Commissioner of Police;
- Frank Ogle, Director (Corporate Services);
- Ian Latham, Manager (Asset Management Services);
- Peter Catherall, Project Manager (SEMF); and
- Andrew Grimsdale, Architect.

#### Overview

Mr Latham provided the Committee with an overview of the proposal:

The academy first opened in 1976 and the major function at that point in time was to undertake the recruit training for police cadets who were coming through the system at that point in time. As the academy progressed the facility became involved more and more in the development and delivery of in-service training courses for our own police staff. That involved courses for promotion and specialist courses such as search and rescue, CIB investigation et cetera. A bonus for us was that community groups commenced to use the facilities here, especially the gymnasium side of it. The Police, Citizens and Youth Club was developed; groups from the outlying areas used it as well. There's a child care-centre which operates in the gymnasium now four days a week. The auditorium has become popular with school groups and through these activities this has allowed the police department to develop

community relationships and that has been very beneficial to the department in being able to gain the confidence of people out in the community.

The building is some 26 years old now and during that period of time the only maintenance carried out on the building has basically been statutory maintenance and emergency maintenance on the building. We have not been in a position to spend significant funds to upgrade the building through those years.

We have now come to a situation where the building itself is starting to show its age. Many of the furnishings, the carpet, curtains, drapes et cetera are the original ones which were installed back in 1976. It has lasted very well but as you can see through your walk around it is now starting to show the signs of age in all areas - the accommodation block, classroom block et cetera.

Also, the profile of the recruiting within the department has changed significantly. In 1976 when the academy was first opened the profile of cadets coming into the academy was basically young male adults and the academy was basically built for that purpose, as you've seen with the communal showers, toilets and small bedrooms.

The profile has now changed. We have people applying to join the police force from the age of 18 through into the mid-forties. We have mothers applying to come into the police force, single parents and a diverse range of ethnic backgrounds also apply to join the police service.

It's felt that the standard and type of accommodation which we offer is not really suitable for today's environment. People expect a little more in the way of home comforts when they come to live here. The course is some 32 weeks that they're on site for and we consider that there is a need to upgrade facilities, especially in the accommodation area to provide for en suite accommodation to make the 32-week stay more accommodating for those students on site. As I said, the age of the building has lead to many of the surfaces becoming degradated; carpets, curtain finishes, paintwork et cetera is all starting to show its age.

In addition, with the advent of legislation in respect to disability, occupational health and safety, many of the features through the academy do not comply these days with those regulations. We do not have appropriate disability access through the various floors. To gain access into this accommodation block, for example, to come down here we don't have any access for disabled persons to gain access to this floor. Similarly with the accommodation area, we don't have suitable disability access.

The building code standards, as Mr Catherall pointed out earlier in the day, fire hose reels in particular do not comply with current standards. So the building is also becoming outdated in complying with various standards.

Also, the community groups are becoming more prevalent. Over the years the department has developed relationships with Neighbourhood Watch, Bush Watch and a series of other community groups. These people often use the academy for seminars, conferences et cetera and we need a facility which reflects the degree of professionalism that is within the Police Department. They are the main reasons and the need as to why we have applied to government for an upgrade of the academy.

#### The Commissioner of Police, Mr Richard McCreadie added:

Could I just emphasise the importance and the need for training itself. There was a thought at one stage that perhaps the academy could go and that all police training could be university based. Well, I mentioned over lunchtime that we now have a very strong partnership with the university but a big percentage of the training is vocational training - and that's firearms training, self-defence, all those sorts of things - for it to be carried at the university as opposed to this academy it would simply require a huge shift of police staff because the expertise isn't within the university within the academic sphere.

If you reflect on our history, I say unashamedly that this is the service that is most free of corruption right around Australia and it is the best performed service. If you look back, I think that you could say very comfortably that the very wise decision to build 25 years ahead of most other services a purpose-built academy to facilitate and to underpin police activities was a very wise decision.

I mentioned before - and Port Arthur has been and gone - the response to Port Arthur was second to none and if ever I had a fear it was that this was like a training exercise and then I thought, 'Relax, that's what you've trained for'. I think the response that was mounted for that would be a justification for any money that's ever been spent on training and over the years we've resisted in tough times. Of course it's always very tempting to downsize your training and so forth and we've resisted that at all costs.

So I simply say that there are two aspects to this. One, the time has well and truly arrived that as a utility it needs to be picked up but the need for training in all its aspects - and there will be even more detailed training to come, particularly in cyber crime and computer fraud and so forth - that it just becomes absolutely more important that this facility is of a standard to facilitate that over the period.

#### Mr Latham continued:

If I may add one comment on that training perspective. Many of our courses now are not only directed at police officers themselves but we undertake training in domestic violence, crime prevention, drug education prevention, which not only offers training to our own people but people in a range of other government departments such as Education, Community Services - so the training aspect is more than just our own agency these days.

# The project

Mr Catherall and Mr Grimsdale outlined the detail of the project:

Mr CATHERALL - Really, year one involves bringing up to date the accommodation block. We've brought in and introduced the computer classroom to the top level of the classroom block. I think I overheard comments earlier on a consideration in doing that has been so that the recruits feel that there's a level of equity being spread around as well; that it's all not just being put into one area but that there are various areas of benefit. So there's been decision-making taken along those lines.

Mr GRIMSDALE - Some of the things in that classroom that we're looking at doing, as Peter alluded to before, is upgrading facilities like the light fittings. There are no low bright light fittings in there and there's people working at the computer so you have OH&S issues with glare off the computer screen. So part of his proposal for the classrooms is to bring all that up to a lot better standard and a contemporary classroom standard. So the ceilings will have acoustic panels in them so that you can cut down the reverberation time in the rooms and make them a lot easier to teach in without having teachers having problems hearing themselves because of their voice bouncing off the back wall. It is also for the students sitting on the machines, they can actually then not have the problem of eye strain that they probably get a lot more now with the level of light fittings in there.

Mr CATHERALL - That's an approach that's been taken across the board in terms of the place is 25-26 years old and to bring it up to speed. That's been a consideration in all of the work that we've looked at, like the discussion at the very start about the kitchen equipment. That's another example of bringing it back up to modern-day standard ...

Year 2, the work is to then concentrate firstly on the classroom block, doing those sorts of things that Andrew was talking about, coming through these removing the dark finishes and brightening of those sorts of spaces up. With some things on the end of year 2, remembering that year 2 is only \$530 000 worth, to extend that work program across into the administration block as well. Year 3 is the completion of the work that we'd be starting up in the administration area with the new offices for the admin staff and that conference room beside it.

Slotted into those yearly budgets we've actually made allowance for general maintenance. This is a minor small item but if you read down through these lists you'll pick up small items coming in. If we're in that building we're going to do the maintenance while we're over there. We're not going to get through to the end of it and then go back and do the maintenance. We'll document those sorts of things as we progress through - and not all of those issues have been identified. We're aware that you walk through this building and there's door handles that need work. That detail will get picked up at a later date rather than - we've just provided a contingency amount to try to take into account that no money has really been spent down here on maintenance.

# Project budget

The Committee questioned the witnesses as to the budgetary timetable of the project, specifically as to whether savings could be achieved by staging the works over two years rather than three, as proposed. The witnesses responded:

*Mr LATHAM - I would estimate that we would* (achieve savings).

Mr CATHERALL - What I think you're saying is that if that's the change of financial year and we've got some funding availability up to June 2002 and then in July we get some more we could actually structure our budgets to run over those two periods. Yes, it would be cheaper to do it.

You're going to lose on the builder's preliminaries. That's the biggest area - the costs for the builder to set-up. He's got to come here, set-up, go away, come back, set-up again, go away. Yes, it will probably cost more but unless there's a magic wand that gives us a bigger budget then there's not really a solution to it.

**Mr LATHAM** - And that is the catalyst behind going back to government this year as part of the CIP process to see if we can have the funding altered.

Later during the hearing the following exchange occurred in relation to the tendering arrangements:

**Mr KONS** - As far as the tender documentation for the building of the works, will it be a project based on a three-year approach or will builders be allowed the option of funding the projects themselves to do it in one job lot?

Mr CATHERALL - We really have to have that discussion yet. The way lan and I have been talking about it, it's probably going to be three separate tenders - year 1, year 2 and year 3.

**Mr GRIMSDALE** - You're talking about design and construct really, are you, by saying you'd get a builder to fund it themselves?

Mr KONS - Instead of doing it over three years, to do it over -

Mr GRIMSDALE - I'm not sure too many builders would want to carry that sort of money and do it all in year 1.

Mrs NAPIER - Are we talking about a \$600 000 difference over three years or two? Which did we finally decide upon?

**Mr McCREADIE** - Three in round figures, yes, on estimate \$600 000 over three.

**Mrs NAPIER** - So if you did it over two years, what are you saying your savings are by doing it in two years rather than three?

**Mr CATHERALL** - You save on your preliminaries basically.

Mrs NAPIER - If you break it up into three tenders that presumably -

**Mr CATHERALL** - The more you break it up the more builders you get in , the more expensive it becomes.

Mrs NAPIER - So I guess what I'm trying to get a feel for - and I think Steve's on the same track - is we don't know from whence you would find that additional money at this stage. It might be through a commercial arrangement or otherwise but what are the savings that you could make if you could do the whole project in two years rather than three years? Which presumably would mean you'd do it in one tender rather than three or so.

Mr KONS - Can that go out as a non-conforming tender as an option? You have your three components but the builders would come in, may be given the opportunity to say, 'We'll prepare one contract for the lot, we'll fund it'.

**Mr GRIMSDALE** - Are you allowed to do that, though? That'd be like the Government would then be taking a loan from a builder.

*Mr KONS -* No, I think that's been done before.

Mr GRIMSDALE - It's something I'd have to check out with the tender review committee.

Mr OGLE - Can I also add, while some of the thought has been around a three-staged approach, the other option is to join years 1 and 2. If you start the project in, say, March it's the end of this financial year and you're joining it with the beginning of next financial year. Really, between those two you have \$1.6 million plus \$500 000 so you've got \$2.1 million.

The other thing you've got to remember in this process in terms of cash flow, that \$1.1 million is out of our strategic asset management plan and we've still got some properties to sell. So we need to sell those.

# 'Interface' with the University of Tasmania

The Committee questioned the witnesses regarding the co-operative arrangement with the University of Tasmania. Mr McCreadie responded:

... this is now a designated campus because, for example, in your recruit training you get 50 per cent accreditation for first year if you BA in police studies. But the reality is the university hasn't got this facility and can't make it. It would have to be built down there. They haven't got the space, for example. We've just upgraded outside of this from an OH&S point of view, the academy range underneath, because it had lead pollution problems. I don't know what we spent in the end - \$291 000. If you wanted to abolish this and say it can all be under university training you can't pick that up and take it.

So the value was, heads or tails, I think it was a Labor Government when they came to power that said to do up a proposal to sell it. They didn't say they wanted to sell it, but they didn't say do up one telling them why you can't sell it or why we shouldn't sell it; it was why you should sell it. So we did up a proposal to sell it. But then we looked at how the university would provide the vocational training - that is, defensive driver training, firearms training, self defence, baton training - all those sorts of things that are not part of academia. It's just a nonsense. So the economy of scale is not there. You couldn't bring it all in under. We are very keen and pleased with our partnership programs

saying that on this side we've got all this tertiary study, you'll find that there'll probably be a centre for excellence for police studies in cyber crime and so forth and also you've seen that the university are very interesting in becoming the centre for terrorism training and research - mainly research - and so forth. They all sit quite separately to the sorts of things that are done down here.

What we do do in our officers' course is we actually pay the university a faculty fee to come in a deliver the training for administration and all those sorts of things here at the academy. So, there is no space at the university and it can't happen.

# Occupational health and safety

The Committee questioned the witnesses as to whether the proposed works would remedy the occupational health and safety deficiencies of the facility. Mr Grimsdale responded:

In the areas that we're putting money into, yes. Say, like the accommodation wing, there's a number of issues ranging from the stair that we walked up the fact that there's dangerous edges to it, a single step going in right through to access suites in the building. So that'll be brought up to compliance. But if we're not doing anything back in another part of the building that won't happen until we start work into that part of the building.

The way the building surveyors view a facility like this is it's deemed to comply at present day because it was built okay when it was built, it complied with the regulations. But you have duty of care obviously and so once you start doing work, yes, it triggers off a reason for fixing up as much as you can in that particular area. If all these buildings were conjoined and against each other, it becomes a greyer argument about where you stop. But if we only do work in the accommodation wing wall the management plan would say that the work in this wing would get upgraded next and it would go sequentially through.

#### **Grounds**

The Committee questioned the witnesses as to whether all the property upon which the Academy is located was required. Mr McCreadie responded:

... let me say that the houses we occupy - we've thought about selling those but some instructors and so forth live in them. Going through the process of subdivision - as you go along there's a strategic radio area that would take a lot of dismantling and then the driver training. If you bulldozed the houses you'd get a row of probably 15 waterfront blocks. That's something that might be

considered into the future. On the top side there's a fair bit of land, but when the new highway comes through it carves into it fairly heavily. To sell off probably the blocks down there you would need to re-establish and relocate the skid pan and the driver-training area and it would probably negate any benefit from the waterfront land. So in tough times we looked at every aspect and we looked at subdivision and we looked at cutting off the waterfront blocks all that sort of issue

But in terms of the internal stuff, because of the community exposure it would be a sacrilege to let the football ground go. We hire out our driver-training facility to all the professional driver trainers, plus ambulance, plus fire. The radio aerial can be relocated around that we lease it out for agistment to old Clarrie for his horses and so forth. So what you've got left is - and we've let that out for nothing - the national and State cross-country course happens right around the academy grounds and so forth. There is a fair bit of land and at some time in the future if things got really bloody-minded there might be a fence right across up by the little thing and the rest of it's sold off and it's a possibility at some time in the future.

The \$1 million - we've sold off everything that wasn't painted, nailed down or screwed over the period and we've realised from asset sales \$5 million or \$6 million and most of that has been put in. The Strahan Police Station was built with money from asset sales - no government money.

Bellerive was completely reformed with asset sales money. Devonport has been done twice with asset sales and no government money and \$1 million for this. It's all government money we recognise. But we've been very businesslike in selling off anything that didn't serve a useful purpose at this stage, realising the money and putting it back in and that's how we've lived.

#### Maintenance

The Committee questioned the witnesses regarding the effect of the proposed works upon the recurrent maintenance budget. The witnesses responded:

Mr OGLE - We haven't done any detailed business case on that as yet. Like most of these things we'll go through the process and we'll have to make some policy decisions, for instance, like will the cadets clean their own rooms once a week and keep them up to a certain standard and then service the accommodation and the bathrooms once a week? Those sort of policy decisions will come in later. So without a policy decision, I can't do an estimate.

Mr McCREADIE - And that's exactly what we're thinking. For your benefit, in the old days with the cadet regime they had a very rigorous daily inspection for dust and penalties and that, but we think that it would not be unreasonable if we left the facility to them to maintain it right through the week and then it's just the once a week make-over. At the moment because they're so run down it's once a day make-over and so forth. We can make the adjustment.

The other thing is with flexibility we've learnt to live very frugally and make adjustments over the period and it really comes down to the priority. If the priority is to shift something extra down here to maintain this at the time we'll do it. In between, this has survived and we've shifted off to do a whole range of other things in other areas - and that's Bellerive and Devonport and Strahan and all that sort of issue.

Mr LATHAM - The other issue is too we've sold probably over a hundred houses in the last three to four years which means that we're down to a portfolio of approximately 130-odd properties throughout the State now and the Government has provided a \$2 million program to upgrade those residences. So our maintenance costs in respect of our housing will be reduced significantly. Whilst we'll be obliged to maintain our police residences it's not going to cost us to the same degree as it has done in the past and that'll free up money to direct back to the academy as well.

# **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

The refurbishment of the Tasmania Police Academy will enable the Department of Police and Public Safety to maintain its efficient and effective delivery of services throughout the State. The refurbishment will provide a facility suitable for contemporary recruitment and training programs to be developed and delivered, and also, a facility that the community will be able to utilise and assist Tasmania Police in establishing working relationships with the community.

The project will also prevent the further degradation of existing facilities and allow for compliance with the requirements of the Building Code of Australia and the Disability Discrimination Act together with occupational health and safety legislation and guidelines.

The Committee was concerned at the cost of fees and charges for the project and consequently requested the Auditor-General to assess whether or not the scales used to produce the estimates of fees for the components of the project were in accordance with contemporary industry scales. The Auditor-General advised, *inter alia*, that "the project fees quoted by SEMF do not appear to be unreasonable for a project of this character and scale on the

assumption that they cover a like range of consultant fees and are of average complexity".

The Committee is strongly of the view that the project be staged as a 'non-conforming' two year contract that would realise a cost saving of approximately \$300,000.

Accordingly, the Committee recommends the project, in accordance with the plans and specifications submitted, at an estimated total cost of \$3,531,000.

Parliament House HOBART 10 December 2001 Hon. D. G. Wing M.L.C. *Chairman*