



PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

New Brighton High School

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

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

Legislative Council

Mr Valentine (Chair)
Ms Rattray (Deputy Chair)

House of Assembly

Ms Butler
Mr Ellis
Mr Tucker

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1 INTRODUCTION

To Her Excellency the Honourable Barbara Baker AC, 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;-

New Brighton High School

And now has the honour to present the Report to Your Excellency in accordance with the provisions of the *Public Works Committee Act 1914* (the Act).

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 This reference recommended the Committee approve works to construct a new high school for the Brighton Local Government Area to accommodate the fast-growing population in the region.
- 2.2 The new school will be located at 1 Elderslie Road, Brighton and provide co-educational secondary and senior secondary education services, with a capacity of 600 full-time equivalent students.
- 2.3 With a large enrolment currently in the nearby Brighton Primary School, the new high school will provide a much needed local option for these students to continue their studies.
- 2.4 The site is a 10-hectare parcel of land, with the high school earmarked to utilise approximately 6 hectares. The remaining land allows the potential for co-locating the local primary school in the future if required while also providing space for the potential future expansion of the high school.
- 2.5 The new high school will incorporate flexible learning options, a presentation area, learning communities, open space both indoors and outdoors as well as more intimate spaces, social common areas and areas that are welcoming and inclusive. Staff facilities will enable passive collaboration, learning spaces will be contemporary and flexible and there will be access to arts and sporting facilities. Additionally there will be kitchen/café facilities and opportunities provided for Vocational Education and Training extensions.
- 2.6 The proposed works have undergone extensive public consultation from a wide section of the community. Such consultation has informed a number of aspects of the works including feeder schools, school culture, teaching and learning. Infrastructure and relationships and partnerships. This consultation will be ongoing throughout the project.

2.7 The proposed works will include the following:

- A fully enclosed covered area of approximately 8,100 m², situated on four hectares of land with a capacity of 600 students from years 7 to 12;
- Twenty-four general learning areas or equivalent;
- Technology/science facilities;
- Performing arts centre/visual arts facilities;
- Manual design and technology facilities;
- Sporting ground, sports hall, toilets and change rooms;
- Library;
- Food technology area;
- Administration area and staff facilities;
- Staff and visitor parking and bus infrastructure; and
- An Indoor social common area, kitchen/café and outdoor sheltered spaces.

2.8 Additionally, the project is required to provide on and offsite infrastructure and resources to support school operations. This will include the construction of new footpaths, the provision of street lighting, stormwater infrastructure and sewer network contributions, construction of a new roundabout at the Elderslie road and Brighton Road junction, purchase of furniture, equipment, Information Technology and general resources, and relocation of high voltage overhead power lines.

3 PROJECT COSTS

- 3.1 Pursuant to the Message from Her Excellency the Governor-in-Council, the estimated cost of the work is \$50 million.

The following table details the current total cost estimates for the project:

Description	Cost Estimate (\$'000)
Construction, including construction contingency	34,400
Offsite Infrastructure and land purchase	6,901
Up-front expenses including consultants' fees	3,307
Furniture and Equipment	3,500
Contingency and post-occupancy	1,812
Artwork	80
Total	50,000

4 EVIDENCE

4.1 The Committee commenced its inquiry on Monday, 6 December last with an inspection of the site of the proposed works. The Committee then returned to Parliament House, Committee room 1, whereupon the following witnesses appeared, made the Statutory Declaration and were examined by the Committee in public:-

- Kane Salter, Deputy Secretary, Corporate and Business Services, Department of Education;
- Samantha Abblitt, Education Leader, Department of Education; and
- Neal Mackintosh, Director JAWS Architects, Department of Education Consultant.

The following Committee Members were present:

- Hon Rob Valentine MLC (Chair);
- Hon Tania Rattray MLC (Deputy-Chair);
- Ms Jen Butler;
- Mr Felix Ellis; and
- Mr John Tucker.

Overview

4.2 Mr Salter provided an overview of the proposed works:

Mr SALTER - we are seeking approval for a major capital investment of \$50 million to construct a new high school at Brighton. The Brighton local government area is expected to have the fastest growing population in Tasmania up to 2042. Enrolments at the nearby Brighton Primary School are currently in excess of 600 students, with the majority currently transitioning to government high schools in the northern suburbs or to independent schools. The new high school will be the first, purpose-built, years 7 to 12 school in Tasmania and is being designed for 600 students.

The new high school, as we've just been told, will be built on a greenfield site at 1 Elderslie Road, Brighton. We will continue to be working in close collaboration with the Brighton Council and surrounding property developers to deliver a school that supports the wider community.

The Role of Community Consultation in the Proposed Works

4.3 The Department has undertaken extensive public consultation of the project since 2018.¹ Initially this consultation focused around the themes of; relationships and partnerships; feeder schools; school culture; infrastructure and teaching and learning. Subsequent public consultation has consisted of public meetings and workshops, as well as the creation of a community reference group.² The

¹ *New Brighton High School*, Submission to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, Department of Education, 6 December 2021, p 6.

² *Ibid.*

Committee sought more information on who the participants of the community reference group were:

CHAIR - For the record, could you perhaps mention who is on the reference group in terms of mix of people, not the actual names?

Ms ABLITT - There's some people from the business community, also the council, feeder schools, school association representatives, parents and Aboriginal education representatives.

CHAIR - From the Aboriginal Centre or from locally?

Ms ABLITT - From local community groups as well as some of our Aboriginal Education youth workers. I think that's about all.

4.4 The Committee questioned the Department on how the public consultation had influenced the design for the school:

CHAIR - You had a fairly hefty input from members of the public, didn't you, through consultation. You have given us a very full description of that consultation. Whether you want to cover that, how it might have influenced the design of the school?

Ms ABLITT - Yes, and also not only members of the public. Students, other teachers and principals and also education experts that we have got within the department and then I cross-referenced that with research from the mainland as well as overseas.

It is quite comprehensive in terms of making sure that we have got the best possible advice to making sure that Brighton High School is as up-to-date with regard to its pedagogical approach as we can be, but we also have to recognise that we are building a school that is fit for purpose for right now but also into the future. What we don't want to do is to build a school that is built so far into the future that our current teachers don't recognise it, but we also don't want to build a school that is for now and isn't going to be ready to take on our future thinking.

4.5 The witnesses explained that this community consultation will be ongoing:

Ms RATTRAY - Community consultation is significant but it has been quite a while since 2019, so could we have a snapshot of where we are with it, and what's planned for the future, given that 2025 is still a few years away before we see students onsite.

Ms ABLITT - We have had ongoing community consultation. The reference group meets quarterly. We also have had workshops with students and teachers as I mentioned earlier. We have connected them with the architects so that they could have their input into what the design might look like. Our intention is to maintain community consultation throughout.

Ms SALTER - As we have outlined in the report, there was further broader community consultation on the master plan in October 2021. At the broad level, the consultation was positive. As I understand it, we just haven't consolidated it into a report form like the two previous consultation stages that you have in front of you.

Incorporating Aboriginal Landscape Values

4.6 The Committee understands that the project intends to engage with local Aboriginal groups to develop strategies to integrate local Aboriginal history and

values into the landscape spaces.³ The project also hopes to develop learning opportunities in Aboriginal land management and facilitate healing of country.⁴ Witnesses commented on how the Aboriginal culture may be incorporated:

Mr MACKINTOSH -... .. We had our first group meeting with our own Aboriginal consultants, the Tasmanian Education Aboriginal Unit, and the art facilitators. We are working up the brief. Aboriginal culture is high on the agenda for those works. What they might be, we do not know. I think that is exciting. We are focusing in three areas: welcome to country, which will be at the front of the school; meeting place in the learning street; and potentially, something on the rise.

School Site Expansion Potential

- 4.7 The site selected for the school allows for the possibility of expansion of the school in the future as well as space for the potential co-location of a new primary school should it be required.⁵ The Committee questioned the witnesses on the potential for expansion on the site:

Mr ELLIS - Mr Salter, I was wondering about any future potential expansion on the site. I know you identified a strip of land there. What is the maximum the school size could get to do you think?

Mr SALTER - I might have to take some advice on that question unless you know the answer, Neal?

Mr MACKINTOSH - On the proposed site master plan we have shown the area to the south of the proposed buildings which is roughly equivalent to another half of a learning community so two classrooms and some more collaboration space but there is a reasonable amount of land. Until we know what we are dealing with it is a bit hard to say how much we need but certainly some thought has been given to that as well as the primary school which we have spoken about.

CHAIR - The primary school itself couldn't it be 400 or so plus 600 for the high school. It could be 1000 people.

Mr MACKINTOSH - Yes, could be.

- 4.8 The Committee questioned what level of population might necessitate the school expanding further:

Mr ELLIS - Do we have a sense of what the projected population would need to be before we started talking about expansion? Do we need an extra 10 000 people in the area before the school is probably at its capacity and we're talking about building on to the high school?

Mr SALTER - It is challenging to be specific on that answer in terms of the demographics and what the breakup of those demographics are. Importantly, we tried to provide flexibility for that into the future so that if it is required we can be responsive.

Ms RATTRAY - Does the department intend to hold onto all the 10 hectares?

Mr SALTER - Yes.

³ *Ibid*, p 11.

⁴ *Ibid*.

⁵ *Ibid*, pp 5. & 7.

Ms RATTRAY - Well into the future? They're not looking to sell off some for affordable housing into the future?

Mr SALTER - No. In terms of the other land, it provides important learning options and community options into the future so, no, that is not on the radar at all.

4.9 The Committee sought further information on the potential co-location of the Brighton primary school:

Ms BUTLER - Can you run through what long-term strategy there might be for a relocation of the Brighton Primary School to the back of the new Brighton High School?

Mr SALTER - At this stage, that land is merely there as an option for that future use. There's no decision on moving that to a primary school at this stage, but it's important when we purchase a piece of land that you think well into the future. That's what we've done on this occasion.

Ms BUTLER - The Brighton Primary School is very much running out of space. It's such a great primary school but it's full, isn't it?

Mr SALTER - Yes, so there's provision with that but no strategy at this point around moving the school or parts of the school.

The “Derwent Collective”

4.10 The intention of the project is for the new school to work closely with neighbouring schools in an effort to increase learning opportunities for students in the region.⁶ The Brighton High School will be a part of the “Derwent Collective” of the Department of Education schools administrative structure. The Committee sought to clarify the meaning of a collective:

Ms RATTRAY - ... I'm interested in the 'cluster and collective' discussion we had this morning around who is going to be feeding into the new Brighton school into the future. So, if you could pop that on the public record that would be very much appreciated. Thanks, Sam.

Ms ABLITT - Cluster and collective are interchangeable terms that we use. So, a cluster or a collective is, I guess, a group of schools that work together. So, for the cluster of schools that - or collective that -

Ms RATTRAY - We're happy for you to use collective now.

Ms ABLITT - Okay. The collective that Brighton High School would be part of would include the primary schools and the Jordan River Senior School, and they will form part of that group of schools that will work together. Basically what the schools do, whichever group they work with, is look for opportunities to work together for the betterment of all the students in their collective schools. So, Brighton will be no different and as I mentioned this morning, it will be what it is that Brighton High School will be able to offer the schools in the collective and what those schools will be able to offer the students at Brighton. So, whilst the school will be built with certain aspects in it, there will be certain things that it won't have because that will be on offer at the other schools, such as the Trade Training Centre that might be at Jordan River -

Ms RATTRAY - And the school farm.

⁶ Ibid, p 5.

Ms ABLITT - And the school farm, absolutely. But there will be other things at Brighton High School that will complement what is happening at, say, the school farm, that perhaps those students from both high schools will be able to come back to Brighton High School and be able to participate in. So it might be something that they do, say at the school farm, that they perhaps will be able to come back to in what we're calling the DATS building, which is the Design, Arts and Technology building, and be able to then extend that learning in whatever it is - whether it's something to do with technology, something to do with science, something to do in the arts - and then be able to extend that learning. Or it might be something those students then take back to Jordan River Senior School. So, we're expecting that once the staff comes on board, they will be able to work together to develop units of learning at both sites.

4.11 The Committee sought further information on how the new Brighton High School might work with the Jordan River Learning Federation Senior School to increase offerings to students:

CHAIR - In terms of working in with Jordan River Learning Federation Senior School, what are you expecting to do there? Are you expecting to offer certain subjects that they might participate in? Can you just explain that a little?

Ms ABLITT - Yes, absolutely. I would envisage that the principal of Brighton High School and the principal of Jordan River Learning Federation will work together and look at what both facilities offer, the skills the staff at both sites will have, and then work together around what learning packages they will be able to develop. They will assess the needs and the interests of the students against what they will be able to offer and then develop learning packages around that.

CHAIR - It might be equipment at different schools.

Ms ABLITT - Yes, absolutely. It is all based on equipment, what the learning needs of the students are, what they are interested in and working together with industry; about what the industry needs are, what job opportunities there are. It is mainly based on what the students want and then developing around that.

CHAIR - Do you have any vision of this school providing VET-style training? Sorell School for instance has some onsite TAFE, I think.

Ms ABLITT - Yes. We've talked about that. Our department developed some Packages of Learning, such as advanced manufacturing, which is around developing things in electronics.

CHAIR - CNC machines and things like that?

Ms ABLITT - Yes, or architecture and building.

Mr SALTER - The principal of the Jordan River Learning Federation is on the community reference group at the moment. That engagement has been there from day one, is there now and will continue to be there.

We want to maximise the use of resources through not duplicating facilities, for example the trade training centre at the Jordan River Learning Federation. We are not looking to duplicate that same facility at the Brighton High School. We want to maximise flexibility for students but not duplicate resources at multiple schools in a collective.

Ms ABLITT - In those really expensive areas.

- 4.12 The Committee noted that this sharing of facilities may mean students are required to travel between schools to facilitate different subject delivery. The Committee questioned how this was likely to be managed:

Ms BUTLER - If you are sharing resources, and I know this is completely hypothetical, do you expect that you would have some form of shuttle bus for students between the two campuses? I think it is only about four kilometres between them. Do you envision that that would be part of that model? I know schools such as GYC use cross-campus buses.

Mr SALTER - It is certainly ... part of the 11-12 extension schools program. Transport is one of the aspects that gets looked at to enable that flexibility of learning at the different sites. I'd expect that to be part of the implementation model for Brighton High School and the surrounding schools.

Enrolment Projections and School Capacity

- 4.13 The Brighton Local Government Area (LGA) has been identified as the fastest growing Tasmanian LGA.⁷ The increased improvements to transport links between Hobart and the northern suburbs will continue to support this migration of the population to the Brighton area.⁸ Such an increase in population necessitates a local school to minimise travel times for students. The Committee sought to understand the enrolment capacity for the new school:

Ms RATTRAY -... Kane in his opening statement talked about the 600 capacity. I would appreciate you putting on the public record your thoughts about the initial enrolment and where you believe those students will come from and how you see that increase from around the 300 predicted initial enrolments to the 600 and what time frame that might take.

... ..

Mr SALTER - As you say, the capacity is built for 600 enrolments. The first step in that process that you've outlined is to finalise the feeder schools and that's expected to happen by mid-next year. Then in terms of what the commencement of the school looks like for 2025, we think that it is important to continue to engage with those feeder schools, the community reference group and the community more broadly around whether, for example, it's years 7 and 8 to commence or some variation on that. When it would grow to 600 would be dependent on the right implementation model as consulted with the community.

Ms RATTRAY - So, you are not expecting that in 2025 that you are going to have a full contingent of years 7 through to 12?

Mr SALTER - The operational model for commencement has not been decided. It could be the full 7 to 12, it could be that with the community it makes more sense that it is perhaps a years 7 and 8 commencement.

Ms RATTRAY - That is going to take a whole school staffing. I don't just mean the teaching staff; I mean the admin, ground and cleaning staff for a school where you might only have a cohort of two years.

Mr SALTER - The teacher staffing would link to the size of the expected enrolments there.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*

Ms RATTRAY - That's probably not an issue. But I mean for cleaning and admin and all the other aspects that go with a school, then that's not quite so simple I suspect.

Ms ABLITT - I was the principal at Port Sorell Primary School.

Ms RATTRAY - Then you know what it is like to start a new school.

Ms ABLITT - Yes. In the very first year when we started Port Sorell Primary School, we didn't have very many in grades 4, 5 and 6. Talking to the parents of students in those grades, it's quite unsettling for children who have been through a particular school in those early years to then shift all of a sudden. We wouldn't necessarily expect that if they have been at a particular school for years 7, 8 and 9 that they necessarily all of a sudden go to a different school. You would probably expect that it would be the same coming to Brighton. If they have gone to a particular school for years 7, 8 and 9, they are not necessarily going to come to Brighton for years 10, 11 and 12.

It might not necessarily be that ... they are going to shift to Brighton for years 10, 11 and 12 - although it might. We don't know. We expect that we will probably see what the community says about it but we would definitely be open to the suggestion. We are not saying that we are not going to be open. The school will be built and will be ready but we have to wait and see as to what we will get in terms of enrolment. If we look at Port Sorell, I only had 12 grade 6s.

Ms RATTRAY - But you had a fairly full school in the bottom section, in the kinder and prep and grades 1 and 2.

Ms ABLITT - Yes, but that's different because there are eight grades in a primary school. There are only going to be years 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12. Usually there are not that many years 11 and 12 in a high school, so it just depends. It will be 20 to 25; we might end up with more.

Ms RATTRAY - So the scenario of, say, you have 10 students who decide that they want to go to this whiz-bang new school in year 9, do you say, 'Yes we will take you' or do you say, 'No, stay at the other school that you are already at?' How do you choose your numbers to make a viable class?

Mr SALTER - Again, through community consultation and getting more granular detail on what the enrolments look like. There could also be other options as to whether it's subject based rather than year based. We want to maximise the opportunities for the students and families who want their children to attend the school.

Community Access to School Facilities

4.14 The Committee was aware the Department of Education actively encouraged the community to make use of school facilities in their area, with schools playing a large part in building a community. The Committee questioned the witnesses on what access the community would have to the school facilities:

Ms RATTRAY - - we asked the question this morning about what access the community would have to the facilities. I would appreciate having that on the public record as well, thank you.

Mr SALTER - The design principles are certainly made with the community use in mind and that drives some of the facilities that are on the road, or accessible directly from the road. That is important, as you outlined.

Regarding the sports field, which is up the back, whilst we look at the community use, our first priority is teaching and learning. Combined with the land being the flatter area, that meant that was considered the most appropriate place for the sports field, along with knowing that the council has invested heavily in other community sports facilities up at Pontville, et cetera. We don't want to duplicate those facilities and we also want to ensure that those facilities are highly used by the community and school members. Combining those factors together, is what has determined the location of the sports field.

Ms RATTRAY - I particularly liked Sam's response when I asked the question on site this morning, that one would be worth putting back on, about the students being seen in the community.

Ms ABLITT - That's behind one of the design principles that we have, which is that we didn't want to replicate everything on our school site. We wanted to make sure that our students are seen in the community. One of the reasons why we have a sports field here and not a football oval, is so that our students are walking up to use the facilities in the community - so that our students are seen in the community and the community does see our students. They will see them walk in the community; and that is going to and from the sporting facilities as well as the other community facilities that are there.

The School Library

4.15 The Committee were particularly interested in the school's library. The library is seen as a hub to the school with wide flexibility in how it can be used:

Ms BUTLER - Tell me a little bit about the library. I'm very passionate about libraries.

Ms ABLITT - The library space being a resource hub as well, we wanted the library to be very much at the centre of the school. It's in the admin building so that it was easily accessible from the two learning communities. It's in the learning street ... it's as central as we can get it. It's a place where students and staff will be able to come and it's also quite flexible - it can open up into that staff working lounge as well, and become bigger.

CHAIR - Under what circumstance would that happen, out of interest?

Ms ABLITT - A bigger workspace if we wanted, if we had a bigger working group working in there for -

CHAIR - Students, you mean?

Ms ABLITT - Yes.

Ms RATTRAY - Where do you put the staff when that happens?

Ms ABLITT - That wouldn't necessarily be at the same time. You might have a working group working in there.

CHAIR - There are only tables and chairs?

Ms ABLITT - Yes. There's also a lecture theatre off to the side there. We've also got a meeting room off to the side and then there's the technology spaces. We've got access to screens and so on.

Ms RATTRAY - You've got a conference room as well. Wouldn't one have done, like a conference/meeting room?

Ms ABLITT - Yes, so the conference room on this side is for the principal and counsellors and senior staff to be able to meet with parents and staff. It's not as big as that lecture theatre. That's quite a small meeting room there. We're calling it a conference room, but it's more like a meeting room. It's not very big.

....

Mr MACKINTOSH - ... The library space can work in the opposite way. The staff can have a larger meeting and they move into the library space if required to. Flexibility is key to all these buildings.

CHAIR - When you were doing your scan nationally and internationally, were there any concepts that you picked up on, in terms of libraries developing? Libraries are very much about books and I suppose, more one on one environments, aren't they sometimes, with the librarian and the student? Given the fact that we're working continually or more increasingly in a digital environment, access to digital resources, are these rooms going to end up being enough? For small group one and small group two; is that what they might be used for, for digital access to resources?

Ms ABLITT - Because we're becoming as a society more insular, I think we need to ensure that we give our students the opportunity not to.

CHAIR - To engage with books rather than digital?

Ms ABLITT - Yes. From the reading and the research that I've done, it's about not losing our library.

CHAIR - I understand the reason behind that, I'm not advocating away from it.

Ms ABLITT - Our library becomes very much the centre of our school. And there's some that would say that the library should be the heart of our school; but it's actually students that are the heart of our school. I am very deliberate to say that the library is the centre of our school.

The small group rooms that are off to the side, are only there for some students who might find distraction to be an issue, and so we need to have some opportunity for that. On the whole, there are other places, and you can see some little desks there with just two people at them. There are opportunities for smaller group work. But, on the whole, it is about giving opportunity for as much interaction as we possibly can because we do live in a world where we are increasingly being isolated.

CHAIR - Increasingly on line and you just want to get that engagement with books.

Ms ABLITT - And we do need to create in our schools, opportunities for teamwork, collaboration and building those soft skills, because that's what our market demands.

4.16 The Committee sought to understand how the space may accommodate students with learning difficulties or students with more complex needs:

Ms BUTLER - Are there dedicated spaces within the school and certainly within this library area where children with dyslexia or severe learning difficulties or learning difficulties that are doing more one-on-one instruction with teachers, where they can have privacy for those students who require that?

Ms ABLITT - Yes, that's the small group of rooms off to the side there have; and then in the learning communities we have the small areas. There is space in every building for that.

CHAIR - Kids that have sensory issues?

Ms ABLITT - Not just for them; but any student that might need some de-escalation time or some de-sensory time, there are some smaller meeting rooms that close right off, so they can go into those rooms.

Ms BUTLER - I was going to ask about that, because I know one of the most challenging aspects for educators can be how to deal with dysfunctional students. I am not sure of the politically safe way to say naughty. Challenging or spirited. How does the design cater for those students?

Ms ABLITT - There's a number of different options in terms of spaces. At the same time, it is also an inclusive environment. It is not a separate building and it's not a separate, isolated, labelled space. I think the key is that it is an inclusive space and there's a variety of different

options. It is also acoustically treated; it minimises distractibility so that students aren't easily distracted by what's going on in the space beside them.

Considerations around Remote Learning and Covid-19 Concerns

- 4.17 The Committee questioned the witnesses on how the new school design might consider the need for remote learning in the school as a result of Covid-19:

CHAIR - The only remaining question I had with regard to that was in relation to the delivery of courses and, given the fact that we are in a COVID-19 environment and there is a fair bit of uncertainty around that, did you give it any consideration to teachers being able to attend the school and deliver courses over the web with their being able to be in their own work environment but delivering it recorded, as indeed we are being recorded today, for instance?

Ms ABLITT - Yes. It is also important to recognise that teaching and learning, even without COVID-19 is changing, and that concept of 'anytime, anywhere, anyhow, any place' learning, is really important. That is certainly the curriculum for years 9 to 12. That's the way the curriculum is going and it's certainly being factored into the way that the design has been and the design that you will see at Brighton will show you that in regard to the collaborative spaces and the break-out spaces that you can see. In relation to the IT that we are looking at building into the classroom spaces, you will see that and you will see what we are terming mountain-top areas, which are presentation spaces.

CHAIR - So smaller groups.

Ms ABLITT - Yes, but through to medium and larger groups, but also places for individual work, where they can access smaller places for one-on-one learning. So you will see in the plans where there are 'cave' set-ups. That's all based on the work of a lady named Rosan Bosch. You can look her up online. I think she is from Scandinavia. She is Danish, I think.

Ms RATTRAY - Finland's the leading education country, isn't it?

Ms ABLITT - Yes, but she's an education architect lead and is designing schools in those Scandinavian countries.

In terms of allowing for education opportunities for students and in terms of the COVID-19 there is certainly lots of flow and opportunity in terms of ventilation and being able to spread out and there is certainly opportunity for teachers to be able to come into the place and then be able to beam out to students, should the need arise that students can't come on site.

Off-site Infrastructure Costs

- 4.18 The Committee understood that given the project would be a new build, there would be some off-site infrastructure costs. The Committee questioned the witnesses on the costings for this off-site infrastructure:

Ms RATTRAY - The site works that need to be undertaken for this project - I am talking about the roundabout, moving overhead power lines and also there is some significant street work to be undertaken to make it safe access for students' toing and froing from the school facilities. Can you talk us through that particular part, and you might like to identify whatever costings have been put on, particularly the roundabout and how much the council is going to be required to pay, as well, for their part of the upgrade to infrastructure?

Mr SALTER - Importantly, those required works are being done in consultation with the council and, it is fair to say, even more close consultation than might be the standard required under a normal situation.

Ms RATTRAY - Which are often redeveloped areas, and so they have done their bit.

Mr SALTER - Yes, they are certainly active partners in that planning and also, extending on that, involved in their southern master plan process, so not just what works for the school initially but for the council's broader plans into the future. With regard to the costs for some of those facilities as they relate to the school, we have indicated that the -

Ms RATTRAY - Page 13 gives us a bit of an idea about the costs and it says 'offsite infrastructure and land purchase \$6.901 million', but we don't even know what the cost of the land is yet. I am not sure how that figure has been arrived at.

Mr SALTER - That would be an estimate of the land purchase, along with an estimate of the infrastructure costs, which as outlined, includes the roundabout, some footpaths, et cetera.

Ms RATTRAY - Sewer? It says new sewer network.

Mr SALTER - That certainly is an aspect that would have contributions from industry or developers as well, as part of the council's broader plans for residential in that area, so that won't be a cost that the department meets on its own.

4.19 The Committee was concerned as to how the off-site infrastructure would accommodate keeping students safe on their way to school:

Ms BUTLER - I want to talk about the outside of the school infrastructure. You've got the main road of Brighton and Elderslie; but some students will have to cross over the Brighton Main Road. Can you run through any strategies about how to keep them safe?

Mr MACKINTOSH - Our project is only within the boundaries. We're consulting with Brighton Council to work out where those places should be and that's a work in progress at the moment.

Ms BUTLER - It's going to be busy along that main road.

Mr SALTER - Part of the design is with the council and includes those road crossings along with the speed zones of 40 kilometres an hour. Certainly, we are front and centre with the planning outside the school with the council.

CHAIR - And mainly on Elderslie Road, I think, rather than the main road but I hear what you're saying.

Ms BUTLER - They've got to cross onto the other side of the road from over the main road in Brighton.

CHAIR - To get to Elderslie.

Ms BUTLER - To get to Elderslie, because there is a substantial number of residents that live on the opposite side. An underpass may be a viable option because that will be a busy road, especially at school drop-off and pickup times. There will be a crossing, I believe, on Elderslie but I'm thinking more about the main road of Brighton and having to cross, especially into the future.

Mr SALTER - I'm advised that at the roundabout the design principles are being put in for crossings across there, so that there is safe pedestrian access.

CHAIR - It's not the main road anymore, which is good.

Ms BUTLER - But there will be potentially a few hundred students doing that at pickup and drop-off time. I'm just concerned about whether an underpass or some other form of crossing might be considered. It could be appropriate, especially considering what Brighton will probably look like in another 20 to 40 years' time. We're building a high school for the future, because that area is going to grow.

Mr SALTER - The traffic engineers are involved in that process and providing advice and guidance. That is council property, but we'll continue to work closely with them to make sure that access is as safe as possible for students.

Disability Access

- 4.20 All areas of the school are designed to be fully accessible. As the proposed works site is moderately sloping, the floor levels have been set to allow for an easy transition between buildings via the 'Learning Street.'⁹ Additionally, the buildings are all one storey and use gently sloping ramps to facilitate level changes between the buildings.¹⁰ The Committee confirmed with the witnesses that the design was access compliant:

Ms RATTRAY - Will it be disability access compliant?

Mr MACKINTOSH - Absolutely. The whole campus is built on three tiers as it steps down the site and there will be external ramps connecting all those.

Bus Access

- 4.21 The Committee sought to understand how the traffic in and out of the school would be managed, particularly in relation to student buses:

Ms BUTLER - How will the students who are travelling by bus be able to enter and exit the school? ... can you give us a visual path through that, if that is okay?

A lot of parents and a lot of children who will be attending that high school will be travelling to the school via bus.

Mr MACKINTOSH - The main vehicular entrance into the school is approximately 100 metres up from the intersection of Elderslie and Brighton roads. It is a one-way path. In front of the administration and the gym buildings there is a bus drop-off area for quite a number of buses, probably six buses, so that is a safe place for children to get out on the left-hand side to enter the school directly from there, without having to cross any roads or anything.

Ms BUTLER - The bus stop itself for the school will be on the school grounds in a safe designated area?

Mr MACKINTOSH - Yes.

Project Management

- 4.22 The Committee sought further information on the project management of the proposed works:

CHAIR - With respect to the project manager-side of it, we talk about these sorts of issues arising. Do you have a formal project management framework that you are working to, and do you have project-risk registers, and those sorts of things?

⁹ *Ibid*, p 10.

¹⁰ *Ibid*.

Mr MACKINTOSH - The project working group meets on a fortnightly basis, where we cover off design and costs, and we cover off on the risks that we think are relevant for the time.

CHAIR - Who is part of that?

Mr MACKINTOSH - The architects, DoE project manager, Sam forms part of that. We cover education, building and general DoE project management. Community consultation is included in those.

CHAIR - The project sponsor is?

Mr SALTER - The department has an asset strategy steering committee, as well as the executive group which get reports back on these projects on a monthly basis. So any material risks that are coming through the project working group would come up through the facility services team and the capital project manager. These are under constant review.

Building Costs and Contingency

- 4.23 The Committee understood the Department budget estimates contained contingencies for escalation of costs. The Committee questioned the variation of contingencies for this project compared to other similar projects:

Mr TUCKER - On the contingency, you have here that the budget estimate allows for an escalation of 4 per cent per annum. We also have the Legana School, and that has 6 per cent. I'm wondering how you have come to the 4 per cent figure when they've come to a 6 per cent figure. I would have thought that it would have been [the] same across the board and I was wondering why there's a difference.

Mr SALTER - The major difference for Legana is due to the market in the north, taking account of the university and the work that's going there at the moment. That drives a higher rate for Legana compared to the Brighton project.

- 4.24 The Committee sought to understand how the project might handle potential rises in construction costs given the projects starting time frame of 2023:

Ms BUTLER - What is the contingency if this does go to tender and the build is going to be a lot more expensive outside of what you've allowed for already? What will happen to the project? It's still two years before the turning of the first sod. If it's going to go well over the budget, including what contingency that you've already factored in, what is the contingency? Will there be potentially a minimising of the design? Or would the project not go ahead at all?

Mr SALTER - First, the Government is committed to building the new Brighton High School. Projects of this size will always have their risks to manage. At this stage, we are looking to provide reasonable contingencies and assumptions on market conditions. Ultimately, they will be tested when we go to tender.

For example, strategies would include looking at the building materials to be used that would suit industry when putting in their tenders. It's fair to say that for a build of a new school that we don't want to compromise on its scope. Ultimately, that will be subject to the ongoing project management and mitigations with government absolutely committed to building a new school at Brighton. If that hypothetical situation arises, then you are looking at it with that in mind.

Building Materials and Low Maintenance Design

- 4.25 Building materials for the proposed works have been chosen due to their appropriateness for a single storey educational facility, with an intention to try and

source these materials locally.¹¹ The Committee questioned the witnesses on how the school design would be low maintenance:

Ms RATTRAY - We were told this morning that the school is designed with low maintenance but also robust in nature with the materials being used. Could you give us a couple of examples of what you see in the design that meets those aspirations?

Mr MACKINTOSH - The buildings will primarily be using local bricks of different colours and tones. We are still developing up these ideas, but essentially working up to patterns based on some of the early thinking about the school as a meeting place [for] Aboriginal mobs and so reflecting those two landscapes of coastal and mountains. They're some of the ideas we are developing up and that will continue into the interior design as well.

There will be a lot of glass, especially onto the learning street, because they will be outdoor learning spaces. There will be a natural flow from the inside spaces into the learning street, it is just an extension of the learning areas.

In higher areas, there might be areas of low maintenance metal cladding, that won't need painting. That is the intention, we really don't have anything where you have to come through with a paint can.

Ms RATTRAY - What about any natural timber on the outside?

Mr MACKINTOSH - There will be small amounts of that. We are still having discussions about how much and where and whether we leave it to weather or have it stained. They are ongoing discussions with DOE that we are having.

Proposed Works Design Principles

4.26 The Department outlined the design principles considered in the plans:

Ms ABLITT - The more recent plans, I guess, are towards the back. That gives you further information around the watering holes that are the informal gathering spaces and that's where students can come together informally to bring their different learning together and they get ideas from one another. Whereas, the campfire spaces are where you come and listen to an expert. That's where the teacher or peer - it's more likely to be the teacher - does their explicit teaching. In the plans you will see the campfires is more where the home bases are. That's where the explicit teaching occurs.

The watering holes is more where the collaborative spaces are. The mountain top is where the presentations spaces are, where students are perhaps listening to an outside speaker. It might be that they hook up to a scientist in the USA or they watch a video or something like that.

The Cave is where they're doing individual learning. It might be they're doing some online learning or their reflecting reading. Hands On is where they're able to do some manipulative work. .

Storage and Solar Capabilities

4.27 The Committee were interested to know if storage facilities for e-vehicles and charging points would be available to students, particularly if there were any solar panel options considered:

CHAIR - A question with regard to part of the proposed works, I won't say there's an explosion but certainly there's considerable growth in e-scooter usage and e-bikes and all of those sorts of things. One imagines that some students might be coming to school with these forms of mobility. Have you factored in anything with regard to storage facilities for those and charging

¹¹ *Ibid*, p 9.

facilities if there are solar panels and they can be charging during the day? Can you talk us through any of that that you might envisage?

Mr MACKINTOSH - We're certainly factoring in storage facilities as we've moved through the design process. E-scooters can certainly be factored into that as well and we're looking to apply for a solar grant to install solar panels on buildings.

Mr SALTER - We would expect that the capacity to have the solar panels will be there and under the government's Solar Panel Program they would be put in place over time.

CHAIR - Are you talking about the federal government's program?

Mr SALTER - The state government's program in the last budget.

CHAIR - Okay.

Ms RATTRAY - The Department of Education will have to apply for a grant?

Mr SALTER - Under the government's initiative in the last budget, they are providing for solar panel installations and through the savings generated the intent that the program can continue for further solar panels.

Land Acquisition

4.28 The Committee were aware the compulsory acquisition value for the land was yet to be finalised. The Committee sought assurances this would not impact the time lines of the proposed work:

Ms BUTLER - It's my understanding that the compulsory acquisition value of the land for the proposed project has yet to be finalised. It's also my understanding that there is a dispute with the owners in relation to the value of the site and that the matter is currently with the Valuer-General. Could you update the committee on the expected time frames for that matter to be resolved, and whether or not that might have an impact on the overall cost of the project and the ability to meet the project's time frames?

Mr SALTER - Thank you for the question. You are correct, the land has been purchased through compulsory acquisition. Firstly, I would say that through that legislated process with the Valuer-General that it won't impact. The Government has taken ownership of the site and therefore it won't impact on time frames for delivery of the project, which is due for commencement of the school year in 2025.

I can't speculate on the time frames because the Value-General is in control of that process but it is going through the statutory process as per the legislation. The final cost, as you've outlined, will be subject to that Valuer-General process as well.

Again, it won't impact on the time frames for the project.

Ms BUTLER - As a supplementary to that, this project is due for commencement in 2023, I understand?

Mr SALTER - It's due for school to commence in the 2025 calendar year.

Ms BUTLER - I'm thinking without that being resolved with the Valuer-General, could it be a bit too early for this [to] come to the committee?

Mr SALTER - Again, I would say that it won't impact on the time frames for delivery of the project. I certainly don't expect that that process would be continuing to that point in time. The Government does have legal ownership of the land through that legislated process.

Project Location Drainage

4.29 The Committee were also interested in the drainage strategies that would be in place given surrounding areas such as the Jordan River are flood prone:

Ms BUTLER - We know that the 100-year floods are increasing in frequency and there is talk that the 100-year floods will become 50-year floods. The Jordan River is flood prone and sections near the school are flood prone. For the record, can you run through some of the drainage strategies or design strategies on how to protect the school from flooding?

Mr MACKINTOSH - The first principle is that the school is well above any flood line. The other principle that we have taken is that there is an overland flow path for water at the moment and we've built that into the design. We haven't tried to put it into culverts and pipes, we've treated it as a learning opportunity for the children. We have kept that overland flow path and there are small detention ponds down the bottom of the site. As I have said before, everything on the site, including the landscape, we are treating as a learning opportunity and that will be built into the curriculum as that pedagogy gets developed for the school.

Does the Project Meet Identified Needs and Provide Value for Money?

4.30 In assessing any proposed public work, the Committee seeks assurance that each project is a good use of public funds such that it meets identified needs and provides a public benefit. The Chair sought and received an assurance from the witnesses that the proposed works were addressing an identified need in a cost effective manner and were a good use of public funds:

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

Mr SALTER - We believe so, yes.

CHAIR - Are the proposed works fit-for-purpose?

Mr SALTER - Yes.

CHAIR - Do the proposed works provide value for money?

Mr SALTER - We believe so, yes.

CHAIR - Are the proposed works a good use of public funds?

Mr SALTER - Again, we believe so, yes.

5 DOCUMENTS TAKEN INTO EVIDENCE

5.1 The following documents were taken into evidence and considered by the Committee:

- *New Brighton High School*, submission to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public works, Department of Education, 6 December 2021;
- Brighton High School, Schematic Design;
- Landscape Concept Design;
- Community Engagement Report Phase 1;
- Community Engagement Report Phase 2;
- Department of Education Built Environment Guide; and
- Department of Education Pedagogical Framework.

6 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1 The Committee is satisfied that the need for the proposed works has been established. Once completed the works will provide much needed capacity for education in the rapidly growing local government area of Brighton. By providing space for up to 600 students through years 7 to 12, the school will reduce the number of students commuting from the local area to government high schools in the northern suburbs or to independent schools.
- 6.2 The proposed works will provide high quality co-educational services for the area, with significant community consultation, on-going, to ensure the works meet the needs of the community. The school will work with others in the “Derwent Collective” to ensure a wide range of learning opportunities are available to students. The school facilities will not only benefit the children that attend the school but also the local community, with design principles being utilised with the community in mind.
- 6.3 The proposed works also consider the future of the local government area, with provisions for expansion of the high school in the future, as well as space for the possible co-location of the Brighton Primary School if necessary. This planning contingency ensures that the site is appropriate for the future needs of the community.
- 6.4 Accordingly, the Committee recommends the New Brighton High School, at an estimated cost of \$50 million, in accordance with the documentation submitted.

**Parliament House
Hobart
24 January 2022**

**Hon Rob Valentine MLC
Chair**