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THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS MET AT ST MARYS DISTRICT SCHOOL, 13 GRAY ROAD, ST MARYS, ON WEDNESDAY, 26 JULY 2017.

ST MARYS DISTRICT SCHOOL REDEVELOPMENT

Mr TODD WILLIAMS, ACTING DIRECTOR, FACILITY SERVICES, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, **Ms ROS SMITH**, ACTING PRINCIPAL ST MARYS DISTRICT SCHOOL, **Mr DAVID GILLIES**, ARCHITECT 6ty°, AND **Mr NICK WARDLAW**, MUSIC TEACHER ST MARYS DISTRICT SCHOOL, WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

CHAIR (Mrs Rylah) - Good afternoon, everyone. I declare the meeting of the Public Works Committee open. I thank the student leaders who have been with us today; we appreciate your attendance and your hospitality.

We have apologies from Mr Shelton; there have been no other apologies.

Members, as we are in receipt of one submission, I ask for a member to move a motion that this submission be received, taken into evidence and published. The submission is for the St Marys District School and we all have a copy.

Thank you for appearing before the committee today. The committee is pleased to hear your evidence. Just before we begin giving your evidence I will inform you of some of the important aspects of the committee proceedings. The committee hearing is a proceeding in parliament. This means it receives the protection of parliamentary privilege. This is an important legal protection that allows individuals giving evidence to a parliamentary committee to speak with complete freedom without the fear of being sued or questioned in any court or place outside parliament. It applies to ensure that parliament receives the very best information when conducting its inquiries. It is important to be aware that this protection is not accorded to you if statements that may be defamatory are repeated or referred to by you outside the confines of the parliamentary proceedings. This is a public hearing and members of the public and journalists may be present. This means your evidence may be reported. Do you understand this?

Mr WILLIAMS - Yes.

Ms SMITH - Yes.

Mr GILLIES - Yes.

Mr WARDLAW - Yes.

CHAIR - Thank you very much. Would you like to make an opening statement, Todd?

Mr WILLIAMS - Yes, thank you. I suppose we are in the committee's hands as to how you wish to handle the questioning, but we have the basis of our detailed submission, which

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you have. If I first may just name a couple of extra apologies: Bruce Campbell as the Principal is luckily on leave but unfortunately not with us today. Bruce has invested considerable time and effort in first forming the submission and then working with the department to progress the submission, and also through the detailed planning phase. I acknowledge Bruce's contribution. There is also an apology from Rob Williams, the Deputy Secretary of Corporate and Business Services, who wished to be here today but unfortunately was called away. Rob sends his apologies and also his support for the submission.

CHAIR - Thank you very much. Would you like to make an opening statement?

Mr WILLIAMS - Yes. Thank you to the committee for making the time to tour the school today. That is very important to get a real feel. Whilst we can always read submissions and documents, as you have experienced today, the real-life feel is very important. As you would have seen this morning, the school is doing its best to work within the facilities it has. Unfortunately those facilities are very dated, are not of the contemporary nature, and don't provide the modern, flexible facilities that schools should have to undertake their education. It is very valuable for you to have seen that first-hand.

The state government has allocated \$5 million to provide contemporary learning environments with a focus on the music and performing arts and the support areas, which have been lacking, and staff areas, and also the amenities of the school and the administration.

The department has worked closely with the support of 6ty°, the consulting firm, to engage with the school and the school community over the last 12 months to develop the plans you see in front of you today. There have been a number of discussions and consultation through that process which has engaged with the staff, the students and the school community to reach this point.

There is broad support throughout the community for this submission and we welcome your consideration.

CHAIR - Thank you very much.

Ms SMITH - St Marys District School has a long history in this community of providing secondary education to students from a very wide geographical basis, incorporating Upper Esk, Mathinna, Fingal, St Marys, Bicheno, Seymour, Coles Bay, Scamander, Beaumaris, St Helens, Four Mile Creek and Falmouth. With the closure of the Mathinna Primary School and the amalgamation of the Fingal Primary School in 2011, we also provide primary education for students from throughout the Fingal Valley.

Our school is an integral part of our rural and isolated community and the facilities are frequently accessed by various members of our community. As we move forward with providing additional services to a range of students from this geographically increasing region, our facilities need to be substantially developed to meet the demands of providing a twenty-first century education and access to the digital age. It is essential that we are able to provide our students with a range of opportunities which will support them in achieving educational outcomes which are not hindered but enhanced by our rural, isolated and very strong community.

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Our community, both extended and within the school, set high standards for our young people and we aim to provide them with every opportunity to be successful within our community and set them up for success beyond their time at St Marys District School and promote a culture of lifelong learning.

The whole school and extended community are excited about the opportunity to upgrade our 1950s facilities and to accommodate students who will be our leaders into the future. We are excited to offer them the opportunity to work in an environment they can have pride in and which will accommodate all aspects of their learning.

Our school has a focus, through our school improvement plan, of developing student thinking. We have a two-year emphasis on teaching problem-solving approaches to support our students in leaving and succeeding in an ever-changing world. We believe the development of the general learning areas will provide our teaching staff with flexible learning spaces to use a variety of teaching and learning approaches to support this emphasis on problem solving.

Our staff are also several years into a planning approach where we work together as part of collaborative planning teams. The planned learning environments and shared teaching staff studies and senior staff offices will support this important work.

The maintaining of the current Art Deco facade of building 1 is an extremely important aspect for our school community and we are excited this has been included into the establishment of a dedicated performing arts space. As a school we have a long history of collaboration between our music, visual arts and drama departments, which has culminated in an annual Arts on Tour, which has been an AEU award-winning program of excellence. Our senior drama and music students have toured schools in Tasmania with the show supported by our local musicians and the backdrops have been produced by our talented art students. There are many past students who now work professionally within the music industry and who continue to provide mentoring and support to our current students.

These outstanding outcomes are a credit to our team of talented and dedicated teachers. We are excited that plans will allow them to work in a dedicated space where collaboration and cross-subject connections can be supported. The previous housing of these two subjects in sub-standard separate buildings has been a challenge. The discovery of asbestos in the music room has resulted in a loss of necessary storage. Development of this area has also been restricted. We have also had issues with timetabling in a district high school to allow both primary and secondary music and drama. Primary music is taught by a different teacher from the secondary classes. We have had to timetable them in on different days so that we have the facilities for more than one group to work at a time. The new facilities will make this timetabling and transition between the primary and secondary programs for music and drama seamless for staff and students.

This space will also address another long-term issue we have had with space. There has only been one indoor space large enough for all of our students in our district school to meet together, which has been the gymnasium. If students are in this space on the floor, it is cold, there is no stage, and the acoustics are very poor. Our current school hall has been too small to comfortably fit all the students. Even if we can squeeze them all in, we are unable to fit any parents or community members into the space. The new performing arts space with the removable walls will suit the dual purpose of having a space that can be divided into separate

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rooms to enable group practice while still being suitable to open up for our whole community to enjoy school events and successes.

The addition of the canteen into this space and the break-out student common room will make this space suitable for a variety of community events, connecting facilities into one location. Currently all catering occurs in our kitchen on the other side of the school and we do not have the ability to cater successfully in this area. In addition, the current canteen is small and difficult for staff to supervise.

We live in a very cold part of Tasmania. The students currently go to places such as the library, the canteen, the gym and an older classroom at lunchtimes to keep warm during the cold months. This spread of students over a variety of areas has created supervision difficulties for staff as these spaces are not designed as dedicated spaces for students and visual access to some of the spaces is limited. The open but dedicated space of the common room, which is close to the canteen and toilet facilities, and a central location within our school, is something that students have been requesting for a long time.

Disabled access to each of our learning spaces has been addressed by these plans. Currently there is no disabled access to the classrooms in block 3. The access to the toilet facilities attached to each of the learning spaces will result in the reduction of lost learning time. Our current secondary toilets are quite a distance away from some classrooms and are in need of major refurbishment. Much learning time is lost with students moving to and from the toilets, sometimes in very inclement weather. Staff supervision of these students who need to go to the toilet during teaching/learning times has been difficult.

The changes to our administration area will provide for a more welcoming and efficient processing of any requests and inquiries. The very small individual spaces currently available have made it difficult for our talented administration team to work as a cohesive team. The new administration area has also been designed to accommodate our support team - the speech therapist and school chaplain, school psychologist and social worker. These staff members, whose role within our school requires a high level of confidentiality and privacy by nature, have been housed in office spaces throughout the school. Some of these office spaces have had issues with soundproofing. All these office spaces have been visible to other students and staff, compromising the ability of the support team to meet the students and guarantee that the student body will not know that students are accessing these services. The design of the new space will allow students to access these services and support without fear of exposure to the general student body.

I have personally worked in this wonderful community for 20 years, both as a teacher and as a local business owner. We have a vibrant and supportive parent community and excellent staff who are all dedicated to the development of outstanding young people who will lead our community into the future. The proposed redevelopment is an exciting time for us all. We believe these works will support our school in providing 21st century educational outcomes in revamped and revitalised buildings, complementing the stunning natural environment we work in every day. We ask you to support the plans for the redevelopment of St Marys District School.

CHAIR - Thank you very much, Ros, and thank you, Todd.

Are we in building 5 at the moment just so that I have got the orientation of the plan?

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Mr GILLIES - Yes, that is correct.

Mr VALENTINE - One of the biggest problems with a development involving a lot of the school buildings is that the project management side of it must be quite tight and significant. How is that being handled? Are you doing the project management in conjunction with the principal or acting principal?

Mr GILLIES - We will go through as part of our documentation process and come up with how the project is to be staged. It won't be all done at once. We will do building by building and that allows the school to relocate those facilities into other parts of the school and keep operating during that period.

Mr VALENTINE - Obviously, that has complexities. Are you explaining about students with disabilities and how you have to move certain activities around to cater for them? Are you happy that you will be able to do that effectively?

Ms SMITH - Yes, we will.

Mr VALENTINE - It's not an easy task. I don't envy you.

Mr WILLIAMS - It is always a challenge when you are continuing to operate a school and undertaking major construction. It is part of regular business for the department in upgrading our school facilities. We currently have a fairly large capital program, which is very welcome. The utmost priority is ensuring the safety of staff and students while continuing to operate. With the guidance of 6ty° and working with the school, 6ty° will work out the best plan to stage it to ensure everyone is safe.

Mr VALENTINE - I notice that most of it is within existing buildings as opposed to greenfield sites. That is why I asked the question about the extra complexity, trying to have a working school at the same time as doing development.

Mr LLEWELLYN - Obviously you need to work out an evaluation review chart of some sort to analyse how you go about doing it. Have you started to do that?

Mr GILLIES - We have started thinking about it. We have not formally locked in any stages for the project as yet. It will be a case of working with the school to work out what spaces are available at the moment so we can move functions into and still operate the school.

Mr WILLIAMS - We are still going through our planning and approvals. We are respectful of the Public Works Committee and seek its support. We have lodged a development application for the plans. We attach those plans that have been lodged with council for consideration. We are working our way through and, hopefully, in the not too distant future we will be opening up tenders to local construction firms. As we get closer to that point we will start to get our planning and our logistics in place as well.

Mr LLEWELLYN - I am sorry, I should not have dismissed the role of the Public Works Committee in making the approval first before work is actually undertaken.

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Mr FARRELL - This is probably in your area, Mr Wardlaw. I believe arts in the form of music and drama are really important in schools. A large part of the redevelopment here substantially expands the music area. The school has a great reputation for music so far and you have done very well with the existing facilities. How do you see this major expansion of the music area affecting the school, the students and the broader community in general? I know you do have interaction with the community.

Mr WARDLAW - At the moment we do not have a purpose-built primary music classroom. Classroom sizes are generally on the increase. At the current facility we are unable to teach primary music. We have had to make use of a temporary space in the primary school.

This new development will allow us to further encourage the community to use these facilities. At the moment, we have itinerate music teachers coming in to take specialist lessons for guitar, vocal tutoring and drums. With this construction it will allow us to encourage more of that type of extra tuition which we require. As well as that I can see this facility also being used for community input, events and functions with a purpose-built stage. We are seriously lacking for venues on the east coast for performing arts. A state-of-the-art facility like this with lighting and capacity to hold a seated crowd would certainly be welcomed by the community to be used, apart from the teaching role it would facilitate.

Mr FARRELL - What are the current issues you have with teaching and the facilities you have? Is there a restriction to the number of classes you have?

Mr WARDLAW - At the moment we can't house an upper primary class in there of 25 students. We can get them seated in that area but if we are using larger instruments, like xylophones and marimbas, percussion instruments, we can't get them in there. I have to look to use a different space if there is one available and a timetabling issue comes in there. I also have a duty of care problem with the facility I have, which is a house, so it has small rooms. If I am based in the main room and I have six groups of other students working in other rooms, behind closed doors, the duty of care is obvious that I can't physically see every person at any one given time. This facility addresses that, with the use of windows. If I am in the central location I will be able to see what is going on.

Mr FARRELL - Are you happy with the level of consultation you have had through this process?

Mr WARDLAW - Yes. I have been actively involved in this process from the start and the whole project developed from issues we had in the music department. It has needed to be redeveloped for a number of years. I have been teaching here for 27 years and I have been shunted around the school, to use a better word, and I have made my home where I am now. To meet the demands of the current learning environment a new facility is unquestionably needed at the moment.

CHAIR - In regard to your current space, Nick, and I raised this before, we know it is a building that has asbestos in it. I see in this submission there is no provision for demolition of that building. Can you outline for the committee what is going to happen there, please?

Mr WILLIAMS - The plans we have do look at demolishing some buildings on the site. We don't have a plan yet for the vacant music room at this stage. It was more focusing on the development and what the development becomes. If there is a need in the future to remove

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that building, because it is unwanted or unneeded, then we will do that. The noting of asbestos is a concern. However, we always ensure safety of staff and students and if that asbestos needed to be removed, we would. That is making sure the environment is safe. If, in the future, we need to remove that because it is unneeded or unwanted in the community, we would do that.

CHAIR - I note the population projections are not growing. The school is at a constant level of population over the next five years. With this redevelopment, is it a zero sum gain in that are we demolishing some buildings or some rooms and gaining more teaching space? What is happening here? I see the FECA is increasing, but what is happening with teaching spaces?

Mr WILLIAMS - The FECA is the fully enclosed covered area. It is a measurement we use to measure the size of the buildings which comes into play from a resource allocation point of view for cleaning and maintenance.

The focus of the redevelopment - and I might hand over to people with a bit more expertise in that area - is around providing flexible learning environments. The school has capacity for a larger number of people. However, it is not working very well. We are focused on improving the size of the classrooms because, as you saw today, a number of them are very constrained and do not provide flexibility. The plans are all around that flexibility.

Whilst the projections at this stage are not showing considerable growth, we want to make sure that should that change, we have the flexibility to accommodate that. We have marked on the plans future development areas in regard to years 11 and 12, which has been well received. The potential growth in that area is not reflected in the projections we have presented in that submission. I am not sure if Ros or David want to add anything?

Ms SMITH - Probably the only other aspect which could influence the number of students we have here is that we are currently a feeder school for Bicheno and we would currently probably get about 50 per cent of those students. Fifty per cent go to Hobart and access schools in Hobart and about 50 per cent come to this school. We would like to be in a position where we would have everybody who had children at Bicheno feeling comfortable to send their children to these facilities and not be thinking that they had to choose whether their children left home when they were in grade 6 to access better educational facilities in Hobart. Regardless of their circumstances, they would be thinking that they can send their children to school here. That could influence how many children we have because at the moment it would be around the 50 per cent mark who are choosing either direction.

CHAIR - Are we getting more teaching spaces or is it a constant number?

Ms SMITH - We would be picking up additional teaching spaces for our performing arts area. There are going to be three teaching spaces there where we currently only have one and the space is flexible enough to then be used for its current purpose as well.

CHAIR - No other additional classroom places in the redevelopment? It was hard to try to work that out.

Ms SMITH - No, it is the same number of spaces.

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Mr GILLIES - In terms of the classrooms, there are six now that they have currently. In the redevelopment there will also be six classrooms but they are going to be more efficient. They are going to be larger and more flexible.

Mr VALENTINE - On that, we were talking about years 11 and 12. If perchance you did get those extra students from Bicheno or wherever they come from, you are confident that you can provide the space needed to be able to satisfy the need for those college years, if I could put it that way?

Ms SMITH - Yes. On the plans there is a space which would currently be the art room which will be a dedicated space for years 11 and 12. We currently use it because we have a dry lab in the science building that is used for the science lessons that we teach. And there is a classroom currently attached to our trade training centre.

Mr GILLIES - If art is displaced out of the space it is in at the moment it will move into the MDT components. All the arts sections will be together.

Mr VALENTINE - On those numbers that you were talking about, Todd, how do you calculate these? Do you use ABS and then do some sort of an extrapolation forward on what you know to be development that is happening in the area?

Mr WILLIAMS - Unfortunately not as sophisticated as that. We don't tap into ABS although we do have plans to use that more. Basically, we use the information that the department has available through the feeder schools and look at the trends through there and then maintaining those trends through the high school years.

Ms SMITH - We also have Launching into Learning and LIFT programs running so we get reasonable figures through those programs as well as this coming in through our early childhood.

Mr LLEWELLYN - The year 11-12 program should increase the number somewhat as well. I guess that will have to be accommodated within that? From my observation quite obviously the main part of it is in the early 1950s mode. I am very familiar with it from that point of view having been in the classrooms up until grade 5 or 6. I cannot see other than the great need there is to restore particularly in the area of providing different additional services, toilets and canteen facilities and those sort of areas, it is sadly lacking really in regard to that at the moment.

I see that as important and also the involvement of the community perhaps in some of the facilities. It was not as accommodating in more recent years but with the new facilities that are mooted there may be an increase in community involvement which can only be good from the point of view of teaching as well. If you get parents involved in the school itself it adds to the depth of learning, the students' ability to learn and so on. Well done.

If we were to have another couple of million dollars, where would you next look to improve the school over and above what is there?

Mr WARDLAW - I believe in our early discussions on the plans we were looking at a covered area between block 5, I guess it is block 4, as an undercover area for the students to

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use in inclement weather. At the moment it is very limited for them. It would be a space they could have. There were some plans drawn up.

Mr GILLIES - Yes, back in the early days when we started working on this project we developed three master plans. One of the first options was to connect buildings 4 and 5 together and create a communal space in between the two buildings which would provide the students with more indoor space.

Mr LLEWELLYN - Is that possible now with the existing drawings?

Mr GILLIES - It certainly is an opportunity down the track to put that in but it might mean some modifications to either building to make it work.

Mr VALENTINE - There is pretty inclement weather here in winter.

Mr GILLIES - That is why we went down that path. When we received the prices back on it, it was a little bit too far to stretch the funds, so we looked at a couple of different options to scale it back.

CHAIR - In terms of the external cladding that has been priced, I see most of the building of the school is weatherboard. What are we doing? I understand we are insulating walls and ceilings.

Mr GILLIES - We are, yes. The idea is to take the weatherboards off those buildings - they certainly are maintenance-hungry finishes - and to replace them with a combination of - on that building anyway - a light-weight fibre cement cladding. On building 1, which is the performing arts building, we will introduce some brick over there which is more of a long-term, low maintenance material. There will be more modern, up-to-date materials with less maintenance.

Mr VALENTINE - Are you having double glazing for the most part?

Mr GILLIES - We are, yes.

Mr VALENTINE - Perhaps on that score, can you give us a bit of an overview on how you are improving the solar gain at all, or the environmental performance of the building?

Mr GILLIES - The beauty with that building in particular is that we are taking off all the cladding so we can then address floors, walls and ceilings to improve the thermal insulation of it. The idea also is to take the windows out of the building and reinstate them with double-glazed units. Then we have a fully insulated envelope for the building.

Mr VALENTINE - And heating, how is that going to be achieved?

Mr GILLIES - Each room will be heated and cooled, more than likely with heat pumps in each classroom. They are the most cost-effective units to put in.

Mr VALENTINE - You are not using geothermal in-ground heat exchange?

Mr GILLIES - No, it is an expensive system to use.

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Mr VALENTINE - Is it?

Mr GILLIES - And sometimes fraught with danger if it is not put in properly. Modern-day geothermal solutions are more effective but it is an expensive proposition.

Mr VALENTINE - Even though long-term you spend less on energy?

Mr GILLIES - You gain it back. That is right but as we only have limited funds to build the building in the first place or to do the renovations, certain things get struck off the list.

Mr VALENTINE - Chicken and egg.

Mr GILLIES - Yes, that is right.

Mr LLEWELLYN - I noticed there is a high build-up of moss on some of the galvanised roofing.

Mr GILLIES - Yes.

CHAIR - So all the roofing is coming off and we are using Klip-Lok, is that right?

Mr GILLIES - No, no. The Colorbond roofing is staying. I think building 1 has been changed to tin. The tiles are still on that building, aren't they? So we will take the tiles off and reinstate Colorbond to that building roof.

CHAIR - I thought it said in here they were using Klip-Lok. I might have misread that.

Mr LLEWELLYN - That is the external services generally.

Mr GILLIES - You are saying there is Klip-Lok currently there?

CHAIR - No, I thought I had read that in here.

Mr GILLIES - There would be sections of building 1 that would have Klip-Lok on it because they are a flatter roof profile. The idea is just to take the tiles off and put the sheeting up on top of it.

CHAIR - Ros, as we entered the school from the music room you raised the importance of keeping the Art Deco front area that the community raised. How has that been preserved and what are you doing? It has old windows. What is happening in that space to keep its integrity?

Mr GILLIES - The idea would be to take the windows out and put back a profile or a look that is exactly the same as what is there at the moment, putting in aluminium window frames with double-glazed units in them. Essentially the building will look the same but just with modern materials in it. As you drive up the drive, you will still see the round room on the front. There will be a small addition beside that for the stage and practice rooms, but the facade facing the car park will look the same. It will present itself as it does at the moment. Then we will create a new entrance two-thirds of the way down that facade into the new administration

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wing. Whilst it will still be visible, it will be an understated entry. It is not going to take away from the current architecture.

Mr WILLIAMS - The current entry becomes the community entry into the performing arts area.

CHAIR - This is the student entry down here then, is that what you are saying there?

Mr WILLIAMS - I suppose the school entry and parent entry is through the new entry that we are talking about. The existing entry, when appropriate, is opened up as a community entry to the presentations and performances.

Mr LLEWELLYN - That is a lovely photograph of the various groups on the steps there. One in particular is associated with a school senior choir that toured Tasmania.

Mr VALENTINE - He just wants to put that up and put a ring around David Llewellyn.

Mr LLEWELLYN - I wasn't in it.

Mr WILLIAMS - The entrance will be maintained so should the choir come back and do a performance, they are more than welcome to.

CHAIR - Todd, could you explain to me the relevance of isolation allowance in the costings here, please?

Mr WILLIAMS - With any project we look at all the risks associated with that project. In regional areas it is appropriate to make an allowance for the extra distance contractors are required to travel. We only really find out the true cost when we go to tender to see what the market is prepared to enter into a contract to construct, but in our planning we make that allowance.

CHAIR - So it's a provision?

Mr WILLIAMS - It's a provision, that's right, as we allow contingencies for unforeseen things that come to light as well.

Mr LLEWELLYN - I was just going to finish off on the point I was making before with regard to the prospective or further submission that you might make regarding the covering of that particular area. If it is at all possible and if that is an urgent issue that will be required some time in the future, we really need to make sure that what we do now doesn't hinder that into the future.

Mr WILLIAMS - If I may add, we take a conservative approach in framing our projects and our budgets. We do have the contingency allowances in there which are necessary to have. With any project, as you progress you are going to find things that come to light. Should we progress well through that project, should we get a good tender result, then we certainly would consider using any funds that become available to tackle the next raft of priorities for the school as well.

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Also, the department has an annual capital works process. Through this planning, it has brought to light the next raft of submissions that the school can put forward that have been well considered and scoped. We are absolutely mindful of setting the school up for the future and making sure it is clear where those next priorities are.

Mr VALENTINE - You mentioned in here that many students believe they have outgrown the bright colours and playful space of primary school, et cetera. I suppose there is a way of looking at these things but can you explain how you have engaged the students in this redesign? Has there been a process through the project that brings the students in to their thinking into it?

Ms SMITH - Classroom teachers were asked to ask the students what they wanted and they were involved throughout the process. Our student leaders have been involved as well. They have been feeding back information from other students. I believe the student leaders were at some of the planning meetings. As much as possible that information has been fed back.

Mr VALENTINE - It seems reasonably well resolved. I was in the public service for about 42 years prior to this job. You can walk through many buildings and you see fluorescent lights and things and you wonder what on earth made them do that. I am assuming that it is not the holy dollar that is necessarily driving this but good design. Would that be right? If I am asking the architect, he is going to say, 'Yes'. We are not going to look back on this in years to come and think 'why on earth did we do that'. I am interested in the design philosophy. I have read some of what you have said. I hope it's the case that we can look back on this in 15 or 20 years and say that it was a good decision.

Mr WILLIAMS - Certainly from a value-for-money consideration, we do consider ourselves fortunate. We have a healthy allocation to work with - \$5 million. We can do some well-planned, strategic work that sets the school up for the future focusing on the priority areas.

Mr VALENTINE - Not just corner cutting. Thanks for that.

CHAIR - There are no works that I could see that deal with the outside play/movement space, the alignment of it for disability access. Is that an issue or not? How does the school work?

Ms SMITH - I think it is an issue. I thought that from looking at some of the plans that it was part of the planning.

Ms GILLIES - It's the case that we are providing disabled access into each of the buildings that we are working on. We are making it all level out the back of building 1, the external courtyard and then connections up to each of the buildings that we are working on. We are providing disabled access.

CHAIR - That is all happening in this work. Excellent. I am pleased to hear that.

Mr VALENTINE - On page 13 you talk about the Tasmanian government art site scheme. How is it evaluated? I see certain public art works that exist in Hobart. There is one outside the Telstra building; it is eroded and degraded because of the elements. It has not stood the test of time in a lot of ways. Even the artist I think is embarrassed about it. How do we go? Can

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you explain how that happens? Are we to get something that is durable, especially in this colder environment?

Mr WILLIAMS - Absolutely. I have seen similar examples of past works of art that perhaps have not been maintained that well. In recent years we have seen a lot more connection with the Arts at Work and the artists. There is an open process. Once the school has formed its views of what they are looking for then there is an open submission process through Arts at Work and an evaluation process with the school involved. We have made a lot of connection with Arts at Work. The department has to ensure that the scope and our requirements are clear and that the longevity and the functionality is there.

In recent years we have been getting some very well-presented art that is being valued by the community as well; I have seen that. I have gone to some past schools where it has not been well maintained. The real connection there is ensuring the school has the lead in forming the scope and what its requirements are, and being involved through that whole assessment and evaluation process. I suppose part of that is creating ownership. Rather than something that is simply being provided, it is something that the school has created with the artist. That is important. I am not sure if you want to add anything.

Mr GILLIES - That is right. Generally these projects are put out for tender from various artists. Before it gets there, there is a consultation process with the school and the project team to come up with a project or piece of art suited to the school. It does not necessarily have to be outside; it could be something within the building.

Mr VALENTINE - I see. It is not always next to it.

Mr GILLIES - No. It could be a painting on the wall. We recently did an installation at Kings Meadows High School. That was an internal piece of work. It was some glass panels put into some bifold doors and the school felt very strongly about those elements. They were very proud of what they got.

Mr VALENTINE - Simplicity and ruggedness quite often is a good way to go.

Mr LLEWELLYN - The deciduous trees in the outside area all have to be removed in the process, I guess?

Mr GILLIES - Yes. They will be taken down but the feeling from the school is that they would like to see them go.

Ms SMITH - Yes. They have not been there for a huge amount of time. The roots are causing issues with mobility around the school and they have created some issues with drainage into the current hall.

Mr GILLIES - They also drop little nuts and leaves and things that tend to get thrown around.

Ms SMITH - The nuts are dangerous with ankles. That is year round.

Mr LLEWELLYN - You are not planning to replace some of those?

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Mr GILLIES - They will be taken down fully. We will be landscaping external courtyard as part of the project. We will come up with a design for how that is going to work.

Mr VALENTINE - Plant more sensible trees?

Ms SMITH - Yes. They were not supposed to grow that big apparently.

CHAIR - Ros, would you say this project we have before us fits the purpose for which the community and the school community want?

Ms SMITH - Yes, it would and it addresses the most urgent needs we have.

CHAIR - Todd, and I do not want to verbal you, do you think this is value for money from the Government's perspective?

Mr WILLIAMS - Yes, I do.

CHAIR - Thank you very much. Thank you for appearing before us today. Before you go, as I advised at the commencement of the evidence, what you have said to us here today is protected by parliamentary privilege. Once you leave the table you need to be aware that privilege does not attach to comments you may make to anyone, including the media, even if you are repeating what you have said to us. Do you understand that?

Messrs GILLIES, WILLIAMS, WARDLAW and Ms SMITH - Yes.

CHAIR - Before you go, I thank you very much for wonderful lunch and morning tea. It was a delight to be here, a very welcoming space. I thank the department and I thank the school and school leaders for being here.

Members - Hear, hear.

THE WITNESSES WITHDREW