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THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS MET IN COMMITTEE ROOM 1, PARLIAMENT HOUSE, HOBART ON WEDNESDAY 22 MARCH 2017.

AUSTINS FERRY PRIMARY SCHOOL REDEVELOPMENT

Mr ROBERT WILLIAMS, DEPUTY SECRETARY, DEPARTMENT SERVICES, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION; **Ms ANNE DOUGLAS**, PRINCIPAL, AUSTINS FERRY PRIMARY SCHOOL; AND **Mr ALEX NEWMAN**, ARCHITECT, X SQUARED ARCHITECTS, WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

CHAIR (Mrs Rylah) - Thank you for appearing before the committee today. The committee is pleased to hear your evidence. A 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 out of parliament. It applies to ensure parliament receives the very best information when conducting its inquiries. It is important to be aware that this protection is not accorded to if statements that may be defamatory are repeated or referred to by you outside the confines of the parliamentary proceeding. This is a public hearing. Members of the public and journalists may be present and this means your evidence may be reported.

I acknowledge the wonderful welcome we had today at Austins Ferry and the student leaders, Ella and Charlie, for being very welcoming and willing to chat. I acknowledge the parents who were there, Linda and Christie, and the two little boys, Jamie and Cooper.

Would you like to make an opening statement, Rob?

Mr WILLIAMS - I would like to present the committee with some updated drawings to the ones contained in the submission you have received. They are substantially the same; there are no significant changes, but more detail has been worked through in the documents.

This project was brought on by a capacity growth in the area. As we heard this morning, eight primary schools have come together to form two new primary schools and the growth in those schools is extremely pleasing. The schools are being seen as good places for children to go. In one sense, it is a good problem to have, that you are running out of room in a school. In our submission - and I do not intend to go through it unless you ask questions specifically about issues in the submission - you can see the enrolment demand in both schools, certainly at Austins Ferry, is intended to increase. As we saw today, already the school has had to make significant adjustments using areas designed as non-classrooms for classrooms, such as the multipurpose hall. That is not ideal as it means we have taken away some of the recreation area, especially for winter. We got a cold chill coming down the mountain while we were out there this morning and this is of great concern.

CHAIR - The cold chill or the growth in the school?

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Mr WILLIAMS - The growth in the school is a great thing and reflects well, both on the infrastructure of the school and the teachers and staff who work in the school that people want to send their children there. Parents vote with their feet on a school's reputation.

We had a tour of all the facilities and had a look at the site where the new preschool and kindergarten will go, which will create an early learning precinct slightly separate from the school. That is something we quite like. We like the kinder and preschool parents to be able to come to a separate entrance. The kids have different needs and the buildings will have different needs to the general learning areas we have in other parts of the school. We need toileting facilities and feeding facilities that are different; different areas for learning - a different style of learning. The department has been working very hard to make sure we are bringing all our early learning preschools and kinders up to the standards required in the future.

In 2020, the Government has committed we will work towards having our early years areas meeting the National Quality Framework. The National Quality Framework is something against which all early childhood areas will be metered. As we build new kindergartens and preschools, we will be making sure we not only meet, but exceed the requirements where we can. These are specifically requirements for inside areas as well as outside areas, with a very strong focus on play-based learning, natural environments, natural gardens, making sure the outside play areas are as important as the inside play areas.

We think we have met that brief with the design we have here. We are very fortunate both at Austins Ferry and Windermere to have the land and two slightly different, but nonetheless both beautiful locations and when we look at the aspect of where this new building will be we will be looking out onto the garden then at the Mona 24 Carrot Garden, it will be looking at a wooded hill. It will be looking at some open fields and will be a truly delightful place for kids to learn.

Having said that, probably best to pass over to Anne to talk about the schools needs and her vision for the new pre-school and kindergarten areas.

Ms DOUGLAS - We are very excited at Austins Ferry to have a new building and not just the new building for the general part of the school. To have a facility for pre-kinder and kindergarten children able to offer what is current thinking of play based learning. There is an expectation this is where our kinder learning is going and to be able to offer this to parents and to families is fantastic. It also complements the Learning in Families Together and the Launch into Learning programs the Government has been promoting and we have kept that very much in mind when thinking about what this building will look like. Our school is very strong in those areas and we are moving forward in parent and community engagement. This building will be very welcoming and in keeping with our vision for our school as far as community engagement. It will complement that very important aspect of the department's vision.

Our parents are very excited and they feel very good about the school we already have. To have this as well to offer families is very special. Our staff are very supportive of the project in that they will be able to move forward with their own vision of what pre-kinder and kinder looks like in a school. I am hoping we will be an example to other schools because we are a school that welcomes ideas and also welcomes visitors to our school. It is great to be able to showcase what you have and I am hoping other schools will be able to learn from what we can offer at Austins Ferry.

CHAIR - Very good, thank you, Anne.

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Mr NEWMAN - I think I covered some of the design reasons when we were on site, but obviously the site has a few givings. We have the drop across the site. We have the TasWater easement.

CHAIR - If I can interrupt, just to clarify anything we have said on the site visit that is important we need to resay on the record. If you could just go over that again so we have it on the record. Just a brief summary would be lovely.

Mr NEWMAN - The location proposed is slightly disconnected from the existing school and part of the reason is a 20 metre TasWater easement that bisects the site. We are not allowed to build over this so that has been one of the drivers of the location. We also have some old infrastructure and connected to the old Roseneath Primary School that was on the site, so using the car park for that is being another driver.

Connecting the two sides of the site is an area that was in the master plan, because at the moment the Roseneath side of the site does not have a vehicle connection through to the new side where Austins Ferry school. Part of the work is proposed to have a runway section, additional car parking spaces and drop off to improve the circulation of traffic through the site, whilst at the same time having it distanced from where the actual children will be.

The design of the layout of the building has been done to follow the contours of the site to make the building as cost effective as possible whilst providing all of the GLAs the opportunity to break out onto that northern side that we have been discussing. All of the GLAs will open out onto that playground and down at the lower level there is a Discovery Learning room which is connected to the MONA garden. That is to cover some of the things that you discussed previously.

CHAIR - Very good, thank you very much.

Mr FARRELL - The school was opened about six years ago. There has been growth in enrolments. What do you think is behind that growth? Do you think the current plans are going to cater for any future growth? Do you come to a point then where you look to build a new school? What happens when you reach your optimum enrolment number?

Mr WILLIAMS - We have been given the enrolment numbers here, as far as we know them. I think we had a conversation with the principal of Windermere about the birth rate in the area.

CHAIR - At least 200, as I recall.

Mr WILLIAMS - Yes. We are planning for the future in building these classrooms. It is a five-year projection at this stage. That changes quite quickly. It is a growth area. There are areas out in the northern suburbs that are very popular with young families because it is more affordable housing. The design and the number of classrooms we are building, in this build, will take us well into the future. We have not pre-empted any other changes such as whether the early starting years will come in. The projects we are talking about today are based on projected demand, but also trying to make sure we don't have to come back a second time if they continue to grow over the years, as they probably will because of the way the growth corridor is out through the northern suburbs.

Mr FARRELL - Further to that, do you think that because the facilities are pretty good, the classrooms are great, there are some really good facilities as far as GP halls and the wet areas being

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used for classrooms. Do you think the fact that the quality of the school build was so good that has encouraged more people to enrol?

Ms DOUGLAS - Most definitely. I think your facilities, then topping that with quality teachers and a good school vision and culture - those things will really promote the school into the future. I am sure those things are sustainable. I cannot imagine we would have any issues around future enrolment.

Mr WILLIAMS - The optimum size of the school, 500 and a bit above that, is really good because, on your staffing formulas you have more senior staff, you do more maintenance, you tend to be able to do more and offer more. As you become smaller, into the 100 zone it becomes more difficult. People like small schools. We don't have any policy to do anything to smaller schools. This is a conglomeration of eight schools which have really served the community well. They have two fantastic schools with two fantastic sets of staff. They probably have a better outcome for the learning for their kids in that area.

Mr VALENTINE - On that same topic, I notice the total at the moment is 470.

CHAIR - FTEs.

Mr VALENTINE - FTEs, yes. The design capacity is 450. You say it is likely to go out to 500 by 2021. What will this add in terms of FTEs? It does not say what its design capacity will be once these are finished.

Mr NEWMAN - It should take it up to 600.

Mr VALENTINE - It will take 600.

Mr NEWMAN - Four hundred and fifty, which the -

Mr VALENTINE - I did not see that in the notes, unless it is in there and I just missed it. It is 600, okay. That should well and truly cater, if this Education Act is completed.

Mr NEWMAN - It is on page 9 of the submission.

Mr VALENTINE - You are right. I have a note next to it.

Mr WILLIAMS - To answer your question, we have to do a proper assessment once we know whether the earlier starting age is going to happen or not.

Mr VALENTINE - That could be a significant number, couldn't it?

Mr WILLIAMS - It could, but we think this will help, that school will cope if that does happen.

Mr VALENTINE - I suppose there is plenty of space to add other buildings, if you need to do that in future?

Mr WILLIAMS - As I said, we have built in capacity to grow, but we have not been able to formally factor in the Education Act at this time.

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Mr VALENTINE - Of course you cannot, that is understandable. You talk about easements going through the site and that you cannot build over those. There are roads over those easements, aren't there?

Mr NEWMAN - Yes.

Mr VALENTINE - Is that a problem for the council?

Mr NEWMAN - One of the reasons we did the investigations, we have had to use a vacuum to suck up the soil above the pipe work to find out how high it is. If we increase the road to be at 1.2 metres above those pipes we can build across under civil construction. If we wanted it to be below that height we would basically have to build a bridge, even though it is underground - over the pipe work. We have gone with the option of lifting it very slightly. We are going to be that much higher than the existing ground level, so we can use the simpler form of construction to build over that.

CHAIR - Could I come back to the school numbers? Between the schools, can you tell me whether the classes for early learning will cope with the 200 per annum birth rate? Is there sufficient space between the two schools?

Mr WILLIAMS - I believe so. Not all of the people will go to these schools. I do not know whether Anne has another dimension to that.

Ms DOUGLAS - No, I would agree with that, on our current figures.

Mr FARRELL - Currently, because of your space shortage, you are using the GP hall as a classroom. It makes quite a nice classroom. How important is it for a school to have an area for a full school assembly? If the school is bigger and you have more students, are you going to then need to increase the size of the GP hall at some stage? How do you manage that?

Ms DOUGLAS - At present we cannot have our whole school assembly. We have half school assemblies. At the end of the year we have only parents in our assembly and the children come in and out. There are ways of managing that. You would have to have an enormous hall to cope with parents and children all together. We think of ways of getting around that. The way we are doing it parents and families are very happy with that. That is how we manage it.

Mr FARRELL - I suppose there is always the opportunity to use another large venue. There are probably not a lot out that end of the woods.

Ms DOUGLAS - No, there are not a lot of alternatives. However, we can always use Montrose Bay's lovely auditorium if we need to. We can share. That is the way it has been working at the moment. We could cater for more children if we split our assemblies and have half the school at a time.

Mr VALENTINE - Can you explain the consultation process? You talk about, on page 6, 'The school is undertaking extensive consultation with the community about the planned development.' I am always interested when I see that word 'consultation' and wonder exactly what that means. Whether it means you tell them, or you seek feedback? I would be interested to know the nature of it and how broad that consultation is.

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Ms DOUGLAS - Our consultation has been mainly with our school association, as well as through newsletters and requesting feedback. That has been our main consultation with families. We do not have a huge school association; that is something we are continuing to work on. The people in our school association are very vocal members of our school community. They were able to get out and talk to people about it. There has been quite a lot of interest. I often go round during LIFT programs and things like that, and talk to people about our building. There was a lot of concern. People particularly were interested in our building when their children needed to use the hall as a classroom and we were not going to have assembly. That was the thing that created the most interest as far as parents were concerned.

Now we have the plans out there that has been a really powerful way to get parents talking about it and giving feedback. I have also been very vigilant around staff. Staff have been involved right from the word go with the planning, particularly teachers in the early years, also as a whole staff. We have had lots of staff meetings, consultation around plans and needs.

Mr VALENTINE - One of the parents was talking about parking and the ease of getting her twins out of the car. Were there opportunities for those people to have an input over those things and be heard?

Ms DOUGLAS - Yes, most definitely. Our car parking situation is an ongoing issue at our school and has been ever since I started there and prior to me being principal. People are very vocal about the car parking and other things. They certainly have been able to have their say around that.

Mr VALENTINE - Are they pretty satisfied with what the result is going to be?

Ms DOUGLAS - They are very satisfied in that there will be an improvement. We have faced very difficult situations as far as our car parking goes. They are very thrilled to look at something and think this will be an improvement on what we have already.

Mr VALENTINE - Perhaps the neighbours might be a bit more satisfied as well.

Ms DOUGLAS - Yes, I think so. A lot of our parking has been out on Brodie Street, which has made it very dangerous. We have had to call council and police on many occasions through children being put in danger.

CHAIR - Could I get some understanding of how many car parks there are to the FTE numbers in this school? How does that relate to the number of car parks in this school to any other school in the state? Is there a ratio of car parks to FTEs in the school?

Mr NEWMAN - I do not have that information to hand. I know there is an increase of around 17 to 19 spaces in the proposed works.

Mr WILLIAMS - Building codes and planning schemes dictate the ratio of parking in new sites. When it is a new build like this, we have to meet the standards. A lot of schools do not have sufficient parking on site because they were built before they were required to comply with some of these building codes and planning codes. If you looked at Windermere, it has an abundance of car parking. From my visitation around schools, Austins Ferry is tight. It will be much better after this. It will be better than a number of schools around the place.

Ms DOUGLAS - It will be much improved.

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CHAIR - Do most of your students come by private transport, by car?

Mr NEWMAN - Yes.

CHAIR - I presume some would walk or ride a bike or something.

Ms DOUGLAS - Not very many. Many of our children come from quite a long way away. It is not really a community as such where there is lots of housing around close by with young people in them. A lot of our children come from a distance, so their parents will drop them off.

CHAIR - There is no other space on the site for additional parking?

Mr WILLIAMS - I think we have space. If we were minded to do so, we could put more parking in there if we needed to. Certainly on the plans, if you are looking to the west, this area here could be more car parking if we needed to.

CHAIR - Informal car parking, as opposed to asphalt, for special occasions, school fairs.

Mr WILLIAMS - Most of the time the council planning requirements now require bitumen surfaces and OH&S required bitumen and guttering and things. It can be quite expensive to do. We certainly have land there. Over time, if we need to do it, it is a project you could do in a minor works area.

Mr VALENTINE - You mentioned kids that come from quite a distance. How many out-of-area kids would you have?

Ms DOUGLAS - I am not sure of the exact numbers. What has happened when the school was first built, there were out-of-area children in the other schools that amalgamated. At the moment I am trying very hard not to take out-of-area children unless there are exceptional circumstances. There are a lot of brothers and sisters. I certainly cannot say no to a brother or sister who wants to come from out of area. As far as out of area goes that is our dilemma at the moment.

Mr VALENTINE - You are not sure what percentage that it may be.

Ms DOUGLAS - No, I am not. I can certainly find out, but I do not have the figures.

Mr VALENTINE - It is just inquisitive. In terms of the growth numbers, you are taking a tighter approach. The Education department might be taking a tighter approach, whether that is likely to impact your projections.

Ms DOUGLAS - I do not think so. From our figures we have - and I do not have them with me - our business manager did some research through the Glenorchy City Council. It seems there still will be growth because of new housing.

Mr VALENTINE - And moving through the -

Mr WILLIAMS - Some of our school boundary home areas are a bit dated. Under the Education Act they will be reviewed and renewed. Some of them do not take into account the growth corridors in West Tamar or Prospect or Kingston. We have some work to do to rejig those.

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In terms of the Austins Ferry and Windermere they are pretty settled. It is two schools in that area, their boundaries are more certain than a lot of others.

Mr FARRELL - Back to the traffic for a second, this development will give the opportunity to get a better drop off system going.

Mr NEWMAN - Absolutely. At the moment, for safety reasons, the gates at Brodie Street are being locked at drop off and pick up times. Parents are coming in off the old Roseneath site. They are coming back out that direction. You have two sides of the school where parents are parking. My proposal is have a one-way section through the site. People will come in by the Roseneath site and leave by the Brodie exit.

We also have a number of drop-off points along the side of that new connection roadway. The older kids will be able to be dropped off, whereas at the moment, parents parking the car in Brodie Street perhaps would not feel confident to let their kid walk up the street. We would envisage there would be more drop off happening than parking.

CHAIR - Very good. I would like to now turn to the natural play area, the style play area and ask some questions about that. I am a kindergarten trained teacher myself, so I love natural play areas. I did hear some concern about sticks. Often the concern of parents with very young children, still thinking of them as a toddler and not moving into the early teaching, more mature child. Can you describe to me what you mean about the natural play areas - what does that encompass? I am keen on the description of what is that going to be?

Ms DOUGLAS - We had Playstreet Urban Design come in and talk to us about the type of natural play area we would be having. As far as I can see from what will be on offer, there will be no dangerous items there. Alex has the drawing there and I am very satisfied.

Mr NEWMAN - I have the drawing here. It is an attachment to be tabled, I believe, today. This is the space. Here is the main GLA building along here, this is the northerly aspect. It is rolling down the hill, we have about a two-and-a-half metre drop. We have 1:20 compliant ramps through that space. Then you have these little areas, nooks along the way, which have different equipment that will be installed, very much nature based. We are working with Playstreet landscape architects who have done a lot of school work. They have been very careful to make sure there is no -

Ms DOUGLAS - It is very compliant to safety, I feel very confident.

Mr VALENTINE - Lower numbers of trip points and those things?

Ms DOUGLAS - Yes.

Mr VALENTINE - Kids moving through the site.

Mr NEWMAN - There is a sand pit proposed in the middle of the development. We were hoping to get some sort of water feature running through it.

CHAIR - Excellent, I love water and kids.

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Ms DOUGLAS - Kids love water and mud and things like that. A lot of that type of play, tactile play, but nothing sharp or sticks lying around.

Mr NEWMAN - As a father of a kid that is in kinder, she has mud day today. Mud day at this school is going to be a great place to be.

Mr FARRELL - We have that at parliament, too.

Laughter.

Ms DOUGLAS - Playstreet has also been very vigilant about the size of trees and trees being trimmed from the bottom up so children cannot hide underneath trees. There are lots of considerations being made to the safety aspect of the play area.

CHAIR - You would still maintain good visual -

Ms DOUGLAS - Yes, that has been a feature of the design.

Mr NEWMAN - It is a long playground. Making sure that it can be surveyed by one teacher at break time has been considered.

Mr FARRELL - With the importance of play-based learning, at the moment it seems a little bit of a challenge with the small room and a heap of little ones running around. How much will that space increase by, in percentage terms?

Ms DOUGLAS - I think it is going up to 110 from 90. Also, I think, Alex was pointing out when we visited the classroom that the acoustics too are not very good. I think it will be great in the new classrooms.

CHAIR - How are you getting round that? What is the difference?

Mr NEWMAN - In the existing pod design, the pods were designed for all ages. They have glass walls between all the classrooms so they could be opened out. It would be great if you had older kids, but the age that we are dealing with here, you do not want to get 50 of them together. Those pods are basically glass on four sides. The acoustics in that space are such that you can barely hear yourself concentrate. We have two GLAs, we have the open glass front to the playground, then we have at least two walls that are going to be plasterboards.

CHAIR - Insulated?

Mr NEWMAN - Yes. Then we will have pinboard material on the face of that, so it going to absorb the sound, but also allow the teachers and the kids to put their artwork up on the board. What you saw today was that they were sticking pictures over windows, glass, it is not ideal.

Mr VALENTINE - On page 8 you talk about building materials. One of the dot points there, vertical Tasmanian timber on the playground side to age and grey off over time. Coming from local government land, I am pretty conscious that any time you get a blank wall it is an invitation for graffiti. I wonder whether this might end up being the same situation. If you have blank walls of timber, people might come along and write graffiti on it. Do you have any comment on that?

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Mr NEWMAN - We have considered it during the design process. The feedback we have had is that not too much vandalism happens. The timber is very similar to the Chigwell family centre, if you have seen that building. The other material we are using is cement sheet, which is unpainted. We were proposing to put a vandal-proof paint finish on that.

CHAIR - Is this bare stones?

Mr NEWMAN - Yes. What we are trying to do here is have materials which do not need to be painted so the ongoing maintenance cost to the school is reduced. The selection of materials has been considered, if the timber was tagged, there would be real timber. You could clean it or sand it back, you could do those things.

Mr VALENTINE - What is the nature of the cladding? Is it a flat sheet?

Mr NEWMAN - What we are looking at the moment is a macrocarpa timber, it is vertical timber.

Mr VALENTINE - Overlapping.

Mr NEWMAN - Overlapping vertically. We are sourcing that from Deloraine.

Mr VALENTINE - Macrocarpa is very durable.

Ms DOUGLAS - It is, incredibly durable.

Mr WILLIAMS - I think that is what we used at Dunalley Primary School, if you have seen the new Dunalley Primary School.

Ms DOUGLAS - The community really value our school. There is very little vandalism, which is fantastic. We have had a little bit of vandalism with our MONA 24 Carrot Garden, but not a lot. That is a real target. It is easily vandalised if people would like to vandalise. It will be in a similar area. We also have lots of housing around that area. We do a lot of promoting with those families who are living around that area, to keep an eye on things.

Mr VALENTINE - That is good to hear.

CHAIR - In the section on the sustainable design, I would like an explanation of the sentence that says, 'The rainwater capture, storage and re-use will be fully legible, so it is architectural treatment.' What does legible mean in that context?

Mr NEWMAN - We really wanted the sustainable principles in this building to be legible. at the moment, I was about a month into this project when I heard the existing buildings harvest the rainwater but you cannot see it, there is no way to know that is happening. What we are trying to do is capture the rainwater. I want, on a rainy day, the kids can come to the windows and see the water coming off the roof, dropping into the ground. The water tanks will be visible. They will be able to see that they are re-using it in the MONA garden, and hopefully use it to flush the toilet. It is not hidden away. You will be able to see the whole process, if that makes sense.

Mr VALENTINE - Education. On that dot point, on that same sustainable design paragraph, you are talking about high quality daylight and day lighting to all teaching spaces will also reduce

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artificial lighting requirements. We did touch on this during our tour, usually when you get light it also means heat, or it means cooling in winter. How are they being addressed? Do you have double glazing? Can you explain?

Mr NEWMAN - We have double glazing throughout. This is a diagram of a technical GLA classroom here. There is a covered way, which is -

CHAIR - Is this the north we are looking at?

Mr NEWMAN - This is the north. The sun will be coming in this way. In summer that covered way will be protecting that glass, and overheating. One of the features of a good teaching space is also to get good balance. It is not all about having the light from the north. We have high level windows, which are a bit of a feature on the entrance side, that are getting high level south light into these classrooms.

CHAIR - Doesn't that make the room cold, having any south-facing windows?

Mr NEWMAN - They are double-glazed windows. They are not huge. We have to comply with the building code. They will comply. The other thing that we are trying to do here is get good natural ventilation. That is one of the other dot points. The GLAs will nearly all have a sliding door, but on the other side they will have windows that can be opened so you can get ventilation through.

Mr VALENTINE - You can get through-flow ventilation if you want it.

Mr NEWMAN - Yes.

CHAIR - Do our double-glazed windows have thermal breaks?

Mr NEWMAN - Not in this situation, at the moment.

CHAIR - You lose most of your heat between the two. I presume they are metal. You put a break in there so that the heat or cold cannot transmit.

Mr NEWMAN - This is the animation here. You can see the extent of the windows. It is not huge onto that side, just a little bit of soft light.

Mr VALENTINE - Is there a star rating on the building, or is that something difficult to achieve?

Mr NEWMAN - We are having to comply with the Building Code of Australia, so we are doing part J compliance.

Mr VALENTINE - Part J compliance. Can you explain that to us?

Mr NEWMAN - It is energy rating. We have had to calculate the areas in each area of the glass and make it compliant.

CHAIR - And it does comply?

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Mr NEWMAN - Yes.

CHAIR - I would like to turn to the issue of storage space. We saw the containers sitting on the easement. Can you tell us about how much storage space is sufficient? What are the issues for this school?

Mr NEWMAN - Fairly early on we worked through sizes with the school and between the GLAs there is a standard arrangement where you have the amenities which sit between them but then also store rooms. From memory these are about 18 square metres per GLA so we have those spaces which are accessible off each. In addition to that there is an outdoor store so all those bikes, trikes and items like that could be stored here.

CHAIR - But the containers do have to remain on the easement?

Ms DOUGLAS - I cannot see another way in the immediate future of changing that. But they are things like furniture storage and storage of barbeques and things like that. We have a lot of things in those containers and that was just to alleviate issues of storage around the school. This building is catering for storage very well, but I do not think we can change that in the immediate future.

CHAIR - You believe it is secure containing the gear inside? It is safe and not deteriorating?

Ms DOUGLAS - Yes.

CHAIR - It is safe and not deteriorating?

Ms DOUGLAS - No.

Mr WILLIAMS - A lot of schools have shipping containers to make more space in the buildings they have.

Mr VALENTINE - Are those containers ventilated containers?

Ms DOUGLAS - No. We are very careful what we put in there.

CHAIR - I would presume they are insulated now and not just the metal.

Ms DOUGLAS - Yes.

Mr WILLIAMS - Apparently to drop new containers in we would have to put ventilation in those.

CHAIR - Okay, so we have to be very sure no children get inside them or get locked inside.

Ms DOUGLAS - No, children are not using the containers. They are all locked and secured.

Mr VALENTINE - With the capital costs associated with the project, is it likely to turn out to be vastly different to other similar developments with a similar style? Presumably there nothing about this site going to hugely add to the construction cost?

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Mr WILLIAMS - Building on a slope always adds something.

CHAIR - We heard out on the site visit you have done some drilling work to test for rock.

Mr NEWMAN - We were concerned by the design that potentially there was a risk there and if the contractor when he prices doesn't know what the ground conditions are like. So we have done excavations and also a map which we will be giving to the builders when they tender the work.

Mr VALENTINE - You have a 10 per cent contingency.

CHAIR - From what I can see here you submitted your development application in February?

Mr NEWMAN - That is correct.

CHAIR - Can you tell the committee what the progress is?

Mr NEWMAN - They are still with council. We are currently working through a few Request for Information questions. It has been referred to TasWater. They wanted the construction deals for open areas, for that sort of information so that is in the process of being supplied.

CHAIR - Are you expecting it will go through in a normal time frame?

Mr NEWMAN - We are hoping it may, yes.

CHAIR - Anne and Robert, do you believe this building being proposed is fit for purpose?

Ms DOUGLAS - Absolutely.

Mr WILLIAMS - Absolutely. We are fortunate to have a good budget for this build. We will get an outstanding pre-school/kindergarten area for this school. We have not had to scrimp and save and cut corners as we often do in builds. That is just the world. We are able to reveal we are planning for an early-years area, a kindergarten and pre-school that will be probably one of our flagship areas, as it will be at Windermere, with a similar budget. We are going to not only get good value for money out of this, but we are going to end up with a really great area for early-years teaching.

Mr VALENTINE - One other very quick question about solar panels. Was there ever a consideration of putting solar panels on the roof of these buildings?

Mr NEWMAN - That was something discussed early on. We see it in some locations at other schools. It was something we were minded not to do here.

Mr VALENTINE - Okay, thanks.

CHAIR - We have completed our inquiries into this. We will now deliberate when we have concluded our hearings. I thank you very much for your attendance today, although I understand you are staying for the next one. Thank you, Anne, thank you, Alex. Before you leave, as I advised you at the commencement of your 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

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attach to comments you may make to anyone, including the media, even if you are just repeating what you have said to us. Do you understand that?

Messrs NEWMAN, WILLIAMS, Ms DOUGLAS - Yes.

CHAIR - Thank you very much.

THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.

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Mr ROBERT WILLIAMS, DEPUTY SECRETARY DEPARTMENT SERVICES, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, WAS CALLED AND EXAMINED, AND **Mr DUNCAN GROVES**, PRINCIPAL WINDERMERE PRIMARY SCHOOL, AND **Mr DAVID MENZIES**, PRINCIPAL ARCHITECT, M2a ARCHITECTS, WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

WINDERMERE PRIMARY SCHOOL REDEVELOPMENT

CHAIR - Thank you. I need to explain the procedures of the committee. Thank you for appearing before the committee. The committee is pleased to hear your evidence today. Before you begin, I would like to inform you about some of the important aspects of the committee proceeding. A 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 out of 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 proceeding.

This is a public hearing, members of the public and journalists may be present and this means your evidence may be reported. Do you understand?

Messrs MENZIES, WILLIAMS and GROVES - Yes.

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

Mr WILLIAMS - Yes, thank you, Madam Chair. As in the previous hearing, we have some updated documents we would like to tender for the committee.

CHAIR - Thank you.

Mr WILLIAMS - In terms of being efficient, would you like me to repeat what we walked about earlier in the day, which still applies to this school?

CHAIR - You do not need to repeat the overarching statements you made, simply what specifically applies to the hearing.

Mr WILLIAMS - Once again, the product of the combining of eight schools, Windermere, is a modern school with capacity issues. We believe what we have proposed here will deal with the capacity now and into the foreseeable future. It would cope with the Education Act if it was to bring in an earlier starting age. It is very hard to know more than a couple of years in advance what is going to happen. We are satisfied this provides for the needs of the school for the foreseeable future. I do not have anything more to add than I did in the previous one, if that is alright. I am happy to take questions.

CHAIR - Duncan, do you wish to make an opening statement?

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Mr GROVES - Yes, to support what Robert said. The school is a modern school, which was built in 2011. It has a capacity of 450 students. Currently, in 2017, it has a total person enrolment of 530 students. The way that has impacted upon the educational programming of the school is that we are currently utilising three of our discovery rooms, which are open-plan learning areas. We are also using our music room as a classroom, which impacts on our delivery of the creative arts, in that we don't offer music, unfortunately, this year.

CHAIR - Very good. I commend Bryce and Leah, your student leaders, for being so welcoming when we arrived at the school and so grown up, at all of 12 years of age. It was a delight and our pleasure to be at your school. Thank you very much.

CHAIR - David, would you like to make an opening statement?

Mr MENZIES - Our approach to this project has been to design an early learning environment that will provide an up-to-date, open situation, where the children can learn from nature, learn from their own inquiries, and react together in an enlarged playground. Our approach to the siting of the project has been to utilise the gentle contours to provide a convenient access from the turning circle. In context with the rest of the school it needs to be a little bit separate to cope with the different needs of parents dropping off children for early learning education.

We have located it on the north-western corner of the site, provided a car park that will allow slightly longer stays, but at a convenient point to avoid children having to cross roads and get them into school safely. We have utilised the orientation to try to get the best effect from the sun and from the sunlight into the building. We have looked at using natural ventilation principles and have also looked at using or creating a thermally efficient building package as well.

I am happy to answer any detailed questions you might have but that gives you an overview of where we are at.

CHAIR - Thank you, David. Over to the committee.

Mr VALENTINE - Consultation is a very important part of anything like this. Can you outline the sort of consultation you have undertaken? You have told us during the tour but how much input have parents, students and the like had?

Mr GROVES - Sure. We consulted initially with our school association. Our representative from our families who come - we have a school association meeting once every six weeks - have gone through all of the stages of the drawings as they have developed over the last few months. We were also part of the process of the application for capital works back some time around June 2016.

We have also worked through the drawings with our student representative body. We have 10 students on that committee, which includes the house captains and schools captains you met today. They have gone through the drawings and the MP3 videos, et cetera. We will now, from next week, start in a process of two per meeting to come and sit in on our design meetings on a Tuesday.

To broaden that a little bit deeper, we have also shared some of our designs on social media - it has a much bigger and broader audience than a school newsletter - and provided up-to-date drawings in the foyer and a little feedback mechanism whereby they can come in and basically stick posted notes on the drawings around things they want to question or things they are interested in.

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Mr VALENTINE - They are taken into account and not simply lip service?

Mr GROVES - Yes, absolutely. Particularly from students, but also families, they have been around things like colour, around how the playgrounds integrate together as opposed to being a separate building. Families were very concerned that it would be something that would be isolated from the other three buildings in the school. They wanted very much for it to be in keeping with the entire school as opposed to a building outside of it. Some of the students have enjoyed being part of that process. Little things like playgrounds are the things the students are the most interested in.

Mr VALENTINE - I wanted to know it wasn't lip service; it was true consultation and not only telling them what was going to be done.

Mr GROVES - An example of the way that we have done that is that we have allowed students to nominate an amount of money we are going to spend on that playground and then we allowed the students to select that equipment. We did that on the current site up to a value of \$100 000.

Mr FARRELL - Duncan, it would seem from our visit and speaking to parent representatives today that your school has a sizeable number of children with special needs. From all accounts, it seems you are doing a really good job catering for those students. What extra challenges does that present to you, as a school, and what has been considered in the design work to allow for that?

Mr GROVES - David has been fantastic in having those conversations. We currently have 27 in our school on the autism spectrum, in varying degrees. One classic example is something like children with sensory issues, particularly with things such as colour, which many of us may not consider. Colour is something that is really important to children who have sensory issues because a colour, for example, red, for a child with a sensory issue can be quite iridescent and - it sounds strange - quite painful to them.

The biggest thing in this building is the fact that we have two sensory rooms - two quiet spaces - in which we can control things like lighting within that space; glass - a lack thereof, as little glass as we can in that space. We have children in our community who have sensory issues or autism spectrum disorder, and we have a number of children in our community who have unfortunately suffered some form of trauma in their lives. Being trauma sensitive or trauma aware, having sensory rooms is a great example to be able to enable children to regulate through desensitising from stimulus.

Mr VALENTINE - Time out rooms, are they?

Mr GROVES - No, they are more like smaller rooms whereby you can control the light. It might be something like weighted lap blankets. Children who have sensory issues quite often like really small-type spaces, tiny little pop-up tents for example. We currently have a sensory room in our administration building, which was an office that we converted to a sensory room. Things like rice, things like sand, things like sensory putty, music, mood lighting, not necessarily harsh fluorescent lighting, but even something like a lava lamp can have a soothing effect on a child, to regulate or de-escalate their behaviour. That is a really important part of a child who may have levels of trauma or may have levels of sensory issues to be able to desensitise from whatever that stimulus has been.

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CHAIR - You said that you have two rooms, is one a quiet room? Could you show us the other one on your design?

Mr MENZIES - We have a quiet room here and a quiet room over here. There is one in the centre and there is one on the edge here. They are basically related to the library hub, fairly central in the main space.

CHAIR - How do you supervise that?

Mr GROVES - We have some children who use sensory spaces now. The room we have at the moment is very close to our social worker, psychologist, chaplain, support staff, in that area of the school. In this particular example it is very close as well as to the classrooms. Both of these sensory spaces, quiet room 1 can be accessed from the open area, and it can be accessed from classroom 2. Quiet room 2 can be accessed from classrooms 6 and 7. We would locate children who have sensory issues and children on the spectrum in either of those three rooms.

The biggest thing is being able to control the environment. We have a wonderful building, as you know, you have seen. At the moment I cannot turn the light off because they are automatic. You walk into a room, the heat pumps and the lights go. For some of our children, they need to have a quiet, dark space.

CHAIR - Can they enter these places voluntarily?

Mr GROVES - Yes. Sometimes, for some of our children, that is exactly the way they want to enter it. Even, as I said, some of our children with trauma have experienced family violence. An example we have had in the last few weeks would be one child who had a very tumultuous evening in the family home. All he needed access to was a nice quiet space to sleep.

Mr FARRELL - This is really fantastic. I was a little unaware schools are going to these levels to integrate students. Generally, Rob, is this the path the Education department is looking at? Is this being modelled in other schools?

Mr WILLIAMS - Absolutely.

Mr FARRELL - Having the feedback I had from a parent about how well it has been done at this school shows that we are doing some things pretty well.

Mr WILLIAMS - As Duncan said - and he knows more about what they call trauma-informed practice in schools for kids with trauma, or dealing with kids on the autism spectrum - teachers these days understand that a lot better than I do. The design of the buildings makes a difference as to whether you can do that effectively, whether you can put kids in time-out spaces in the traditional classrooms in some of the older schools, it is a square box with a dark cloakroom and that is it. Really hard without making a spectacle of the kid to let them just disappear quietly, whereas this design does that.

The aim is to have as many children with disabilities in mainstream schools as possible. We have the Northern Support School, the Tasmania eschool and the Southern Support School for children who really will do better in a more specialised environment. But the aim is to try to keep reducing that number by thinking about these sorts of things Duncan and David have talked about.

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Mr FARRELL - It seems like an important part is the integration. The stories of how particular children have done so well and learnt to socialise because of the way it has been done is commendable.

Mr VALENTINE - Of course it has to be backed up by support too.

Mr WILLIAMS - That is why, for each of the 29 children Duncan has who are either at 55 to 70 IQ or severe disability or other need, he gets funding. Some of those on the severe disability, get a teacher assistant for each child. You have one of those children you get a teacher assistant, you have two, you get two teacher assistants. It stacks up like that so the experience in a school environment can be supported properly.

Mr FARRELL - It is so good to see it integrated within building design.

CHAIR - In the comments here it says there are some changes to the site roadway from the pedestrian path are anticipated. Can you explain that? I was not quite sure which bits of the pathways and roadways were going to be changed.

Mr MENZIES - We are looking at making minor changes to the turning head by creating an entry point and car park, which will utilise the existing parking area behind the fence you saw this morning. There will be one change there. The other potential change is to expand the car park - it is operating as a car park but informally off Falcon Road. We are looking at integrating that as part of the development.

CHAIR - That is Department of Education land?

Mr WILLIAMS - Yes. Otherwise there is not a lot of change to existing infrastructure. We are trying to minimise change to existing infrastructure.

CHAIR - You will need to create some car parking within the school for people to traverse from the early learning into the -

Mr MENZIES - I can explain that on another drawing. It is not showing very clearly at the moment, but what we are proposing to do is to link the new classroom building to the aqua pod with a fairly direct connection running down past the 24 carrot garden. It is not really showing correctly on the drawing, we have changed our thinking. On this earlier scheme we were wrapping it around. What we are planning to do now is to connect back down through here to the existing pod. We will utilise the existing playground paving to get a 1 to 20 gradient back through it.

CHAIR - Can you show us where we actually walked? Where did we come out?

Mr MENZIES - We came out behind there. It is behind the swings where little Holly who came up and said, 'I'm Holly', around about there.

Mr GROVES - It was out of Aqua.

Mr MENZIES - Yes, we came out of Aqua, we came into the playground, walked around the corner and then back up around here and then -

Mr GROVES - We came out that side fence.

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Mr MENZIES - Then back around the front. We were standing around about here and Matt was standing at the corner of the building and I was trying to explain how it connects.

CHAIR - We did not actually walk down where you are proposing the pathway.

Mr MENZIES - No, we walked past where we are proposing to link up. That enables those two buildings to be interconnected by a playground but also by that pathway. You have all of the children in the school from zero years of age to eight years of age utilising that playground but also being contained in terms of safety, particularly for the children on the spectrum.

Mr VALENTINE - In the site planning and school design, second last paragraph -

'The building form is single storey broad over hanging eaves for sun and weather protection and provide a covered outdoor play area including weather protected sand pit'.

I am presuming the sand pit is cat and dog protected as well.

Mr MENZIES - What we are aiming to do is to have a screened sand pit which can be opened up for easy access for the children, but then securely shut off to keep the animals, et cetera, out.

CHAIR - Particularly feral cats or vermin kept out of sand pits.

Mr MENZIES -Particularly cats.

Mr VALENTINE - The other question is when you get younger families coming through and depending what happens with the Education Act when they will be going to school - LIFT - so facilities for nappy changing and those sorts of things are available in that younger area. What about kids with disabilities in the other part of the school, do they have facilities like that and are they built in?

Mr GROVES - At the entrance of each pod there is a male and female disability toilet. Across the current school there are two in every pod, so six in the GLA area, there is one in the administrative area and an additional one near our current kindergarten which will have disability toilets as well as the one in the foyer. The building currently has change facilities, as will the one off the foyer in this building which is accessible via for adults in that there is an adult toilet, change area and shower. It also has very close access to the Launch into Learning room which has two children size toilets.

Mr VALENTINE - So kinder 1 and 2 or prep 1 and 2, they have access to similar facilities.

Mr GROVES - Yes.

Mr VALENTINE - Teacher assistance would be involved in that.

Mr GROVES - Absolutely.

CHAIR - And they are shared facilities like normal kindergarten toilets, are they?

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Mr GROVES - No, in our school they are all individual so every single toilet is an individual toilet so it has a toilet, a basin.

CHAIR - Yes, but it is not -

Mr GROVES - No.

Mr VALENTINE - Project-wise, is this any different to any other standard sort of development? Do you think it has any particular issues going to hike the cost?

Mr MENZIES - We have been working hard to make sure that it doesn't. We are keeping the structure relatively simple and low scale. We are using timber where we can to look for structural members and wall-framing, roof-framing and what have you.

CHAIR - Engineered timber I saw mentioned in there.

Mr MENZIES - Yes. We have some fairly large spans in the classrooms and it is a really nice feature to have with engineered timber beam running through. We have done it successfully on a couple of other kindergarten projects with the department and, yes, we are looking at using wood. They will be big things, they are about 460mm by about 85mm. They are laminated and made up of smaller bits, all forestry FSC.

Mr VALENTINE - And star rating?

Mr MENZIES - We will do a star rating. We have not done that assessment yet. We will be complying with all of the building code requirements, and exceeding them where we can. We will be utilising double glazing, R-5.0 insulation in the roof, R-2.7 in the walls. We will be insulating slab edges, and as far under the slabs as we can fit within the budget, to ensure it is thermally efficient.

Mr VALENTINE - With through flow ventilation and all those things again?

Mr MENZIES - Yes. I did hear a little bit of the previous submission. We are using similar principles in that sense, most of our glazing is fronting the play area. The fronts of the classrooms will be fairly open. To get the cross flow we have a sloping roof, high level windows that will be chain runners, openable by the staff, which will allow the cross flow ventilation when needed and they will be shut when it is not. It will help maintain a comfortable environment without needing to put on heat pumps and so on.

We have looked at it fairly carefully. We have been pretty careful with the floor areas to ensure we have enough, but not too much. We are trying to put area into the classrooms rather than other spaces. Where we need to have circulation for access through the building - it is a fairly large floor plan - we are looking at making those spaces multi-purpose. One example is the library hub, it is in the centre of the plan and is accessible from all the classrooms.

As you saw this morning with the current pod design, that central hub area is quite important. Although we have a different form of building, we are still trying to get the same benefit and use out of that circulation space. It becomes a secondary learning area as well.

CHAIR - Your slab will be insulated on the sides?

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Mr MENZIES - On the sides and underneath, as far as we can afford to go. That is something we are still looking at. We are on budget at the moment, as far as our estimates are concerned. We are trying to manage that process and keep it right.

Mr VALENTINE - Consideration of solar? Was that a similar situation to the previous one?

Mr GROVES - We have solar in some of our buildings, particularly on the building labelled student services. That heats the water for hot water in that area. As we were saying, in terms of catchment from the roofs, it is currently being used for toilet flushing in all the buildings as well as irrigation. You have seen our site, it is still fairly green considering it is quite a large one. That is environmentally sustainable and it also means our energy costs are lower. I then have more money in my SRP to spend on my kids.

CHAIR - When you are using solar, are you using a solar hot water cylinder, or are you using evacuated tubes?

Mr GROVES - We have tubes on the roof. It goes into a big insulated hot water cylinder-looking thing in the cleaning storeroom.

CHAIR - Very good. The development application, what is the progress?

Mr MENZIES - We have lodged it. I believe the advertising period has closed without representations, as I understand it. I am waiting to see the outcome. We expect the permit to be issued around the first week in April. It is still a little bit vague. We are subject to council's determinations. We believe it is likely to be approved.

CHAIR - Very good. I was impressed, I have to say, with the MP3 visual presentation. Thank you, David, for the record. It showed me two things I meant to ask questions about. The big sliding doors, they look wonderful. How much power do you need to slide such a big door? I presume they are double-glazed doors.

Mr MENZIES - The internal ones will be single-glazed. We are in the process of looking at how we can make that as manageable as possible. We are looking at running it on a floor-mounted track. It takes a little bit of effort to get it moving but once it moves it is fairly smooth. The external doors will be slightly smaller than the bigger ones you saw on the interior. We are looking at those being double-glazed at the moment and there is a lot more weight in those doors.

We have used large doors on other buildings with reasonable success. The bigger challenge is how to close them slowly. We have used devices that arrest the door movement before it becomes a hazard for fingers. We want to keep the hands intact.

Mr GROVES - We worked with David on those doors and I had gone around schools that David had done previously to look at those doors. We have issues with our current doors, which are the normal, standard double-door opening and closing. An example is the one we tried to go into today, into a classroom where the door was damaged. Unfortunately, our site - although we caught it on a beautiful, sunny day today - but we are on a windy site, which comes from the direction we were in. That can play havoc with our doors. We have to instruct our teachers not to use external doors when it is windy for that very fear of a child losing a finger. That was one of the reasons we approached David about the doors he used on previous jobs.

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CHAIR - A sliding door is much easier to use in a very windy exposed area, with two doors coming together.

Mr GROVES - It is just that fear of the doors closing at will and getting a finger caught in the middle of it.

CHAIR - The second issue I saw and that you mentioned, Duncan, was the pop-out windows. Could you explain what that is, where it is and what it does?

Mr MENZIES - There are two types of special windows that we are looking at within the classrooms. The pop-out window is an example of one, which is like a window seat. We build the window with the glass out from the wall face a little bit to create a padded seat. This gives the children somewhere to sit to have a quiet space and do something on their own. It also helps break up the space a little bit too.

The other type of pop-out window we are proposing are like little dome windows, so circular, with a fairly wide ledge so the children can sit in the window. The dome outside allows them to pop their heads into the space. It is a different experience for the children.

CHAIR - That looks lovely. Gentlemen, do you believe the proposal you are putting for us is fit for purpose?

Mr GROVES - It is fit for purpose and I think it is going to be a model for best practice for our state.

CHAIR - Do you, excellent. Robert, is it value for money?

Mr WILLIAMS - Yes. I believe it is. We have good oversight and good architects giving us good advice. We did our early quantity surveying estimates to make sure we were going to come in. In terms of building schools, this one is being built in the same sort of manner, out of good quality materials, it will survive well and look after the student population for some time to come.

CHAIR - Thank you very much. Duncan, I would like you to please pass on the thanks of the committee, to Bryce, Mia, Eleanor and Rebecca. We really appreciate being able to hear from the parents because that gives us confidence that the quality consultation has taken place, because we get an opportunity to hear from those people we are representing. Thank you all very much for your time today.

As I advised you at the commencement of your 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 just repeating what you have said to us. Do you understand that?

Messrs MENZIES, WILLIAMS and GROVES - Yes.

CHAIR - Thank you very much and all the very best with this exciting build.

THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.