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PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

Major Redevelopment of Devonport High School

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

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

Legislative Council	House of Assembly
Mr *Valentine (Chair)*	Ms *Butler*
Ms *Rattray*	Mrs *Petrusma*
	Mrs *Rylah*

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1 INTRODUCTION

To Her Excellency Professor the Honourable Kate Warner AC, Governor in and over the State of Tasmania and its Dependencies in the Commonwealth of Australia.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY

The Committee has investigated the following proposal:-

Major Redevelopment of Devonport High School

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

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 This reference recommended the Committee approve works to undertake a major redevelopment of Devonport High School to provide contemporary learning environments, support spaces, administration facilities, a new school entrance and car parking improvements.

2.2 Devonport High School currently provides co-educational secondary and senior secondary education services to just over 500 students. While the school has a capacity of 750 FTE students, the current learning spaces are not conducive to or compatible with the contemporary pedagogical approach of collaborative learning.

2.3 Collaborative teaching practice is one of the key objectives for the teaching staff at Devonport High School. The school's ability to deliver contemporary collaborative teaching practice has not been limited by commitment of staff or professional learning, but by the physical teaching spaces that are available.

2.4 Devonport High School is over 100 years old, with large sections, including Blocks A, B, and C, constructed following a major fire in 1964. Since then, only minimal refurbishment has taken place in these blocks, meaning the school is still using twentieth century concepts for teaching and learning spaces. The small, dark and outdated general learning areas are not fit for contemporary quality teaching and learning.

2.5 The outdated floorplan and corridor configurations force large numbers of students, teachers and visitors through the learning areas. The wide corridors waste a great deal of space, and with an improved layout, this space could be taken up into learning areas. Furthermore, the undersized classroom and configurations have resulted in the dysfunctional allocation of spaces for learning and the dislocation of year groups and course disciplines.

2.6 The administration area located within Block B is not readily apparent to school visitors as it is accessed via the entrance off Best Street, requiring visitors to traverse a student learning zone prior to sign in. These areas have not been refurbished since 1964, are outdated and do not meet the needs of the school.

2.7 Parking for the school is also sub-optimal. There are two parking locations. One location is across the street from the entrance to the school on the corner of Best and Kempling Streets, has a boom gate and is used for staff parking. The other location is at the back of the school near the gym, accessed off William Street and is not obvious to visitors who are unfamiliar with Devonport High School. Neither is friendly to visitors to the school. The result is that there is nowhere for visitors to the school to easily park near the entrance to the school. On street parking is metered. Visitors parking near the gym often have difficulty finding the entrance to the school and the school office.

2.8 Energy use is also high with outdated windows, floor heating and poor natural lighting and no capacity with the current facilities to reduce energy use.

2.9 The proposed redevelopment focuses on the most outdated and dysfunctional areas of the school and will not alter its capacity or the existing fully enclosed covered area (FECA). Rather, it will deliver a significant reconfiguration, providing a contemporary, efficient and cohesive floor plan catering for the future needs of the school.

2.10 The school has also consulted widely to determine a program of works that reflects the needs and priorities of its students, teachers and the broader school community. This has resulted in a work program with the following elements:

- Development of a new highly visible entrance to the school with a consolidated car parking area in front of the entrance, accessed off William Street. The new car park will have sufficient capacity for the whole of the school community and include student drop off zones;
- Creation of high quality, contemporary learning environments through careful planning and redevelopment of the existing B Block. Levels 1 and 2 will be redeveloped to provide 16 general learning areas and multiple flexible collaborative learning hub zones;
- The ground floor of B Block will be completely redeveloped to provide a new, highly visible school entrance. An administration zone, 3 general learning areas, senior and support staff offices, accommodation and amenities will also be provided on the ground floor;
- The development of a new library and visual arts precinct on the ground floor of B Block presents an opportunity to extend curriculum options in technology fields which are currently not available at Devonport High School. The new library will provide an attractive and appealing student collaboration and learning space coupled with a multi-media lab and mini-auditorium for presentations and study;
- The atrium is to be opened up to become a landscaped accessible space for students and staff with connectivity to the student lounge area and the library, but it will not be roofed in this development due to cost which is beyond this funding envelope;
- Staff accommodation will be distributed strategically throughout learning zones to provide easy access for students to staff members, improved visibility and passive supervision of general learning areas;

- A new lift will address current vertical transportation issues at the school for people with disability and address Work Health and Safety (WH&S) issues associated with the existing unreliable lifts;
- New amenities will be distributed throughout the core of the campus to address compliance and safety issues and reduce student and staff travel distance issues;
- A redeveloped, contemporary Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) laboratory is to be provided in Level 1 of Building 1 to consolidate science facilities into a cohesive department with staff accommodation, meeting and resource room and to address compliance issues;
- The existing hall will have a minor refurbishment and the introduction of space heating and cooling to create an appealing space to teach drama and dance. Retractable seating is to be installed to aide presentations and performances; and
- Energy efficiency of the campus will be improved by utilising efficient fixtures and fittings and the inclusion of contemporary heating and cooling throughout the redeveloped areas.

2.11 The proposed works will have the following advantages and benefits:

- utilises the existing building fabric and site infrastructure wherever possible;
- creates a new highly visible main entrance to the school paired with administration function;
- creates and identifies learning precincts within the structure of the campus;
- provides many opportunities for students to occupy and interact within outdoor courtyard areas;
- relocates the library to a more central, accessible location;
- provides upgraded facilities in the Assembly Hall for drama teaching, assembly and potentially hire for community use;
- consideration of prevailing winds and solar access to all learning areas and outdoor spaces whilst maintaining views and vistas;
- maintains existing vehicle access whilst consolidating whole of school parking to one location and provides drop off areas for people with disability;
- provides a landscaped courtyard with ground level access and good visual perspective from all levels; and
- identifies future strategic opportunities for investment and development at Devonport High School.

3 PROJECT COSTS

3.1 Pursuant to the Message from Her Excellency the Governor-in-Council, the estimated cost of the work is $10.5 million.

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

Construction Budget Including construction contingency	**Cost Estimate ($'000)**
Building works to Block A	$346
Building works to Block B including new entrance	$6,297
Internal building works to Block C	$458
External works including car parking	$880
Options included as per quantity surveyor's report summary	$415
Total Construction Budget	$8,396

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

Description	**Budget Component ($'000)**
Construction (including a design and construction contingency sum of $923.5K)	$8,396
Additional scope not in current Quantity Surveyor Report: New windows to Block B, refurbished student amenities (student lounge), shelters at drop off/pick up zone, sports courts resurfacing	$540
Up-front expenses including consultants' fees and statutory authority fees	$800
Furniture and Equipment including IT equipment	$600
Project Post-Occupancy and Contingency	$184
Art Work	$80
Project Management and School Administration	$270
Total	**$10,870**

4 EVIDENCE

4.1 The Committee commenced its inquiry on Tuesday 31 March last via videoconference, whereupon the following witnesses appeared, made the Statutory Declaration and were examined by the Committee in public:

- Rob Williams, Deputy Secretary Corporate and Business Services, Department of Education;
- Peter Bird, Principal, Devonport High School;
- Heath Clayton, Artas Architects.

Overview

4.2 Mr Williams and Mr Bird provided an overview of the current issues with the school's facilities and the proposed works:

> ***Mr WILLIAMS*** *- ……It is very exciting to see this as the first of a number of major redevelopments over the $10 million mark that will be coming through over the coming years. This project was announced in the 2018-19 Budget and as $5.2 million in the 2020-21 financial year and $5.25 million in the 2021-22 financial year. This is timely because the money will become available in the next financial year in time to start the project if we get the go-ahead from the committee.*
>
> *Those of you who have not been to Devonport High School recently would be lucky if you could find the front door because it is on the side of the building and it is quite hard to locate if you have not been there before. A lot needs improving at Devonport High School. The orientation and the entrance to the school are just the first part of the issues the school faces with ageing facilities that have not really been touched since the 1960s. It provides a difficulty for the school's operation, not only in terms of aged classroom facilities but also of difficult-to-function school community spaces.*
>
> *This school is in desperate need of this update. One of the things we have done in the last couple of years is to broaden our community consultations so that the package we have put forward in our submission reflects a significant amount of community consultation, including public engagement through our 'get involved' campaign.*
>
> *……Community consultation has been a really important part of a big project like this and we think this package represents the best representation of what the school community wants. Page 11 of the document sets out quite clearly what we think will be achieved within the budget that we have.*
>
> ***Mr BIRD*** *- ……I would like to reiterate what Mr Williams has said about our school. Built in the 1960s, there have been some modifications along the way dependent upon small amounts of government funding, but many of those things wouldn't necessarily be the way we would do it if we were able to plan from scratch - including that constant trouble of people not being able to find the school entrance. When they can't find our administration area, they enter our school and we don't know they're there.*
>
> *There are issues around entrance, but to me the biggest issues are about the teaching and learning aspects. Many of our classrooms are in the old format of 49 square metres, which is pretty tiny in the modern school. We have managed to make some classrooms bigger by taking out storerooms and things like that to acquire space, but that hasn't really given us our best opportunity for collaborative teaching and learning, which is one of the things we would really like to be able to achieve in our school.*
>
> *It's nothing about our staff and our students. They have the energy for that but our layout isn't helping us because it's a layout designed and built in the 1960s, and that's really where we see the work for us in the future.*

Influence of Pedagogy on the Design

4.3 The Committee noted that the school's layout and facilities placed limitations on the ability to implement the preferred collaborative teaching and learning approach. The Committee was interested to understand how this teaching model had influenced the design of the works and how this would help to overcome these limitations:

> ***CHAIR*** *- ……perhaps explain how the methodology affected the design of the spaces being renovated or redeveloped. Is that something that can possibly be addressed by the architect?*
>
> ***Mr WILLIAMS*** *- Mr Bird would be best placed to explain the philosophy behind the teaching practices that led to the design.*
>
> ***Mr BIRD*** *- ……As far as our school improvement plan, we are working very closely with our teaching staff on changes to our teaching philosophy around collaborative teaching and collaborative learning practices. Although our staff have the enthusiasm for that, our physical spaces don't really lend themselves to that so well.*
>
> ***CHAIR*** *- ……Is it possible to explain on page 5 the benefit of the collective approach and how this may have influenced the design? You talk about the Devonport collective and the Mersey-Leven collective. How has that affected the design of the refurbishment?*
>
> ***Mr BIRD -*** *The Devonport collective is our collective of schools in the Devonport region. We work closely with professional learning and professional discussions with Reece High School, and Devonport, Nixon Street, Spreyton, Devonport, Wilmot and Miandetta Primary Schools where we design our professional learning around modern collaborative teaching practices. We want our teaching spaces to complement that philosophy for our teaching and learning.*
>
> *The Mersey-Leven collective is a collective of high schools along with Don College, so working on year 11 and 12 curriculum design and delivery at what will be appropriate between those high schools and our associated college.*
>
> ***Mrs RYLAH*** *- ……What is the definition of 'visible learning' on the fourth line of that page?*
>
> ***Mr BIRD -*** *……It is about children really being involved in their learning as opposed to it just being quantitative knowledge and spreading the students. It is about the students being involved in the planning and the design of their learning along with their teachers.*
>
> ***Mrs RYLAH*** *- How has that impacted on the design you are proposing?*
>
> ***Mr BIRD -*** *We were trying to design flexible learning spaces so students can work collaboratively with others. The small spaces we have at the moment do not really allow for this. Currently, we do not have any breakout spaces where smaller groups of children can work in a supervised way. We want to try to modernise to complement our modern way of teaching and learning.*
>
> ***Mr WILLIAMS -*** *……One of the things this sort of design does, which Peter touched on in terms of breakout spaces, is we have a much stronger sense of the individual needs of each student. With two classes in one area, you have two teachers. One teacher can take the broad group following along with the general path and the other teacher might be able to pay attention to the kids with individual learning needs. This gives us an opportunity you cannot have in a small class space without any breakout room, because the teacher has no opportunity to focus on the individual learning needs of the student.*
>
> *This creates capacity for hands-on teaching, so teachers learn from each other. It also creates the opportunity for one teacher to be able to see across a large number of students and keep control while the other is dealing with individual student needs. That is really important because we are focusing on the individual needs of students - it is not just everyone is a sheep which you put in the sheep dip and they come out the other end. We are recognising some kids have really special needs.*

CHAIR *- …. …With respect to page 19 and talking about design not meeting requirements for contemporary pedagogy, has there been an opportunity to glean any learnings from more recent school construction projects? I imagine you may well do that with every project you put in place where you look at other areas. It is not a standalone project, is it in that sense? You do actually look at the learnings?*

Mr WILLIAMS *- We do and very much the pedagogy is pretty clear, and Peter knows that. He has been on quite a number of our major projects in recent years so that, combined with our constant facilities building development team, gives us a pretty good handle on what is required for a modern school and modern classroom.*

Mr CLAYTON *- We also took the full working group through a number of tours of recently redeveloped sites so the school had an opportunity to see what works and what has not worked in other schools so that they have been able to pick the best bits. I think Peter can answer this but everyone is quite well informed over how things are being done around the state and then within the context of the specifics of Devonport and what Devonport needs.*

How Community Consultation has Influenced the Design

4.4 The Committee noted the other main factor influencing the design of the works was consultation undertaken through the Department of Education's 'Get Involved' campaign. The 'Get Involved' campaign was designed to give the school community and broader community an opportunity to provide input into the school's redevelopment program.

4.5 The Committee sought further information on the consultation process and how this had influenced the design:

Ms RATTRAY *- I have a question regarding school community consultation. You received 170 surveys back from the surveys sent out. Can we have an overview of what the main concerns were there?.....Obviously you have a community consultation process and 172 of the surveys were returned from the same community. I thought it would be useful to have on the public record copies of what we have received and what people in the school families felt was lacking in their school.*

Mr WILLIAMS *- If we have a quick look at the executive summary on page 3 of the Get Involved engagement phase 1, I guess this was the high level summary …. …. They wanted updated science, music and art rooms, lockers removed from corridors and updated, a common room and study lounge, water stations and a school office relocated to the front entrance of the school, which led to a whole lot of conversations about the entrance to the school.*

In reflecting on my opening statement, this document reflects the fact that we think we have the design within the budget to best meet the requirements of the community. On page 9 you can see what we learned - that there is absolute community support for this development. People want flexible, functional, multipurpose learning spaces, the things I'd already mentioned.

As we are with all of these redevelopments, we have a focus on the community use of the asset as well as the school use. We see that as a really important part of the focus. So, generally speaking, we try to make the things, the areas, the community might use accessible rather than difficult to access from car parks and things like that.

The feedback also provided a sense of what culture people wanted in the school and how the physical layout could help with that in terms of removing lockers, which are a congregation area and often in dark corners where there is often a bit of argy-bargy going on and things like that. Removing some of those antisocial areas and creating pro-social spaces with easy supervision by parents so that we design the spaces to help us do things like eliminating

bullying, which happens around locker areas. It might sound minor, but it's really important to a lot of kids that we design the spaces to allow them to feel safe.

Measures to Address Issues Raised by Students

4.6 The Committee also noted that students had raised specific concerns with respect to heating, cooling and ventilation during the consultation process. The Committee was interested to understand if these concerns would be addressed through the redevelopment:

> ***Mrs PETRUSMA*** *- ……The students indicated air-conditioning, heating, cooling, ventilation, and lighting were all very important. Could you outline for the report just how you have managed to improve those and also any energy use savings?*
>
> ***Mr BIRD*** *- We invited all class captains from our school - so at the time, at Devonport High School - then we invited school leaders from our two main feeder schools, from Devonport Primary, Nixon Street Primary and Wilmot, because, in a sense, the school is being designed for them. The students who are here right now, because they will be here when the work is on. The students who are currently in grade 6 or grade 7, and so on, as they will be here when the work is on and complete.*
>
> *We wanted to have a good cross-section, not just of our own students, but of students who come here in the future, and the discussion was led around a lot of the things they would really like to see.*
>
> ***Mrs PETRUSMA*** *- Thank you. I would like to know how it is being addressed. The most important concern is how this $10.5 million will address their major concerns of air-conditioning, heating, cooling, ventilation and also decrease energy use and any climate emissions.*
>
> ***Mr CLAYTON*** *- I can probably deal with the specifics on this. As we do not have an opportunity to walk around, some of the teaching spaces still have the original little blower fans in the top left-hand corners of the rooms as you walk in. That is its sole heating. Some of the windows do not open because of standard square metre rooms. As part of this redevelopment, we are providing new efficient heating and cooling systems that will be installed through all three levels of Building 2 of Block B.*
>
> *……There is on the ground floor some ducted air-conditioning for efficiencies that will largely provide all Block B with climate-controlled heating and cooling. There will also be the addition of fresh air being put in to some of the internal spaces so air quality is up to required levels. We are also looking at utilising LED lighting throughout and bringing the energy consumption in the building down. Through those two measures alone largely we will have a significant impact on the building's energy consumption.*
>
> *The mechanical system will be zoned according to the associated solar gain. Obviously rooms on the southern side will not need as much demand in summer as those on the northern side so we zone mechanically to reduce systems working harder or not needing to work accordingly and it is appropriately zoned to suit those circumstances.*

4.7 The Committee was also aware that students had some concerns relating to lack of meeting and gathering spaces, and sought an assurance that the redevelopment would address this:

> ***Ms RATTRAY*** *- In the video we received yesterday - and thank you also to the multimedia teacher, Mr Robert Spencer for that - the students, Grace, Henry and Asha talked about the fact that they had nowhere to have a meeting. One of the issues from the students was there is only a space for 12 people and it is not easy to locate.*
>
> ***Mr BIRD -*** *The room they highlighted is one of their very small classrooms and that is set up with a boardroom-type arrangement. That is where our student leaders meet and those types*

of meetings might go on. I have held in that space business meetings, ……so part of the design plan was for a facility like that, and that is on the bottom floor near what will be our new administration building, just inside the entrance. A new boardroom facility for that type of conferencing.

***Ms RATTRAY** - So their issues or their concerns will be addressed with that new room in that location?*

***Mr BIRD -** Yes.*

***Mr CLAYTON -** We have probably built further on that in the fact that we have given, not only the boardroom, right at the front entry, but there is a smaller meeting room adjacent to it so if it is just a one-on-one with someone or it is a bigger meeting. If we are talking about student access to rooms, the library has been zoned up so we can have small groups that meet together. We have created what we are calling a 'forum space', which is like a lecture theatre-style room where we can have larger groups of students gather.*

Also, on each level as we go up there are eating-type spaces, meeting rooms and small hubs where people can meet and gather if it is not as private as needing a closed door. We have taken that initial thought about needing a meeting room and expanded it not only to being a formal meeting room but also lots of spaces for informal meetings and group gatherings as needs be.

4.8 Students had also raised the issue of poor network connectivity within the school. The Committee sought further information on what would be done to improve this situation:

***Ms RATTRAY** - With regard to the IT connections, I noted from the video the students talked about poor computer connection. Is that included? Will it at least help the issue students identified, Peter?*

***Mr WILLIAMS** - We will put in some new infrastructure, as Pete said. All the IT cabling - as a standard practice we go through and put in the latest wi-fi distribution points when we are doing this sort of thing. The school has quite good connectivity to the network. Most of our schools in metro areas have high speed bandwidth.*

***Ms RATTRAY -** In a couple of cases the students talked about slow computer connections.*

***Mr BIRD** - As I said, we are going to renew all that network. In a school like this, in a building of this age when equipment is retrofitted - as it has obviously been in all of this building - some places have better access than others for wireless network because of the nature of the architecture. Not having been able to design that properly from the very beginning, we will make sure those problems are addressed.*

***Ms RATTRAY** - You might pass that on to the students then for me.*

***Mr CLAYTON** - We are also providing more outlets throughout the building, rather than just being in the library or in designated computer labs. There will be hardwired wall outlets in all classrooms, and the breakout areas that would then be used to supplement with the wi-fi available through the whole school.*

***CHAIR** - Heath, are they also charging points?*

***Mr CLAYTON** - Yes, the most valuable thing in a student's life these days is the charging point.*

Improving Accessibility

4.9 The Committee noted there were some accessibility issues within the school, both in a broader sense and also specifically for people with disability. The Committee sought to understand how the redevelopment works would improve the identified access issues:

CHAIR *- ..... Issues of disability access were raised - wanting to have improved or integrated access for people with disabilities. There were a number of dot points, if I can put it that way, during the community workshop that were put down.*

Did students with disability have a particular input into design or was it just simply Building Code of Australia compliance?

Mr BIRD *- ..... There are a couple of main issues about disability access. Obviously, with buildings built in the 1960s, there was little, if any, consideration for disability access and the building we have focused on has difficult access getting into it for people with disabilities. Then once you're inside, it has very tricky access because it's all about stairs and it's on three different levels.*

CHAIR *- There is a lift though, isn't there?*

Mr BIRD *- There is a lift, but we're not confident about the lift because occasionally it has stopped working with people inside it. That's been a challenge for us. That's one of the things we've talked with the architects about - whether we fix the lift, change the lift or whatever. Also, we want to change some of the approaches to the doorways, which are all about stairs, so that we can have some appropriate access particularly into the main entrance to the school. That will be a major opportunity for people with disabilities. It's also the reason that, in the car parking area, we want to have closer drop-off and pick-up zones - so that people who are disabled have a good opportunity to get from the car park to the main entrance to the school.*

Mr CLAYTON *- It's a good point around not only the disabled access but also the whole access in and around the site, something that was highlighted very early in our information gathering. One of our challenges was that you could not find the front door. When you did find the front door, there were stairs; you went up those stairs, you went down a corridor, and there was another set of stairs and then you were in the middle of the school where you found the school administration area.*

One of things you are very conscious of was readdressing Williams Street as the front entry to the school. By doing that and locating the car parking where the entry will be, it has actually not only given the school's physical address but we have also located the administration right at the new front door, which then allows visitors to come and go to that point.

As Peter alluded to earlier, there is a lift. I have not seen it work so nobody has been game enough to hop in it when I have been onsite. One of the philosophies we have done is to provide a new lift basically in the new public foyer, which is at the front of the school. This works so anyone coming in the front door can easily access the lift in a central location to a three-storey building so that allows students to move around. Once you are up the first level, there is a link from Building 2 to Building 1 which is level, and you can find your way around.

On the ground level there is another set of stairs where we have a step lifter. It takes you up and down about six or seven steps; that is the second device that we need to use. Everywhere else can be accessed without lifts.

Also around community access, one of the things we are activating is the existing hall. By relocating the lift to the front door, we are actually enabling public access into what we are calling the multipurpose area, so that it can be used after hours by the public, and can be used for assemblies. Now we do not have to take the public all the way through the school to actually get to public areas. It was a reasonably big ticket item to include, but when you weigh it all up, it is an important consideration to make the buildings function properly.

CHAIR *- Thank you very much for that. Perhaps Peter might give us some sort of understanding of the number of students who may be there who have a disability and will certainly be relying on that area of design to function correctly.*

Mr BIRD - *At the moment we have only two students who need to access the lift to go up and down in that main building block. We always make them do that with a partner just in case there is a problem with the lifts. We have had students in wheelchairs and one with a mobility scooter. It has been a really important asset to have at our school just because of the physical*

layout of the three levels in that main building and being able to get across with the stair lift to Building 1 as well.

STEM Learning Facility

4.10 The Committee understood two of the existing science learning areas would be upgraded to provide a STEM learning facility. The Committee sought further information on the nature of this facility, and whether it would be configured as a traditional science lab or present a different science learning opportunity for students:

> ***CHAIR*** *- … … Just with respect to the laboratory space - this is on page 13 where it talks about the STEM laboratory - is there anything particularly special about the configuration of services in that room or is it a standard science laboratory? What sort of configuration of services is in there that might be out of the ordinary, if anything?*
>
> ***Mr CLAYTON*** *- It is probably the opposite to that in the fact that the school has four existing science laboratories set up with gas and fume cupboards and things like that. We have to do a little bit of work in one of those.*
>
> *This room is to replace a room done in a previous redevelopment, which is actually located in the middle of the school. It is quite disjointed completely from any other science program. It has general teaching areas around it and it did not really hold any connection to the science staff. What we are looking at doing is just providing them with, and we have called it STEM, but it is a flexible space that does not really require gases and necessarily the wet experiments of science. There are things like robotics, there are lots of other things like that that we are looking to incorporate in here. We have located it next to an existing science laboratory, an opening and we have cut in a very large door so this space could be an expansion of an existing science laboratory or it could be shut down to be a standalone flexible area.*
>
> *Not everything you do in science requires a Bunsen burner or the like. Lots of other things are happening in the science program now. We have incorporated some large cupboards so if they are doing project work, the students can put their projects away and then get them back out when they need them on the bench, but it is really a flexible area to be able to offer something that is non-laboratory-type.*

Energy Management and Efficiency Measures

4.11 The Committee noted that there are issues with the comfort of the school's internal environment and poor energy efficiency, due to outdated facilities and poor configuration. The Committee sought further information on what measures would be taken to improve these areas:

> ***CHAIR*** *- … … On page 14, the last dot point there: employ energy saving devices such as low energy efficient appliances and equipment; and building energy management systems and use renewable energy sources where possible. Can you just give us a precis on what is being employed? Are solar panels going in place; are batteries going in place, electronics - what sort of energy management devices and systems are we talking about here?*
>
> ***Mr WILLIAMS*** *- Heath, you would be best focused to answer this. I do not think it has solar panels.*
>
> ***Mr CLAYTON*** *- No, it does not. It is more around, well, our Hydro is a renewable source so in some ways it is how that is being used. But the focus on this is around the appliances and the light fittings we are using being as energy efficient as we can get. Given that some of the lighting and especially the heating is original, there will be considerable gains from an energy efficiency point of view.*

CHAIR *- It talks about 'building energy management systems'. That is what sparked my interest.*

Mr CLAYTON *- So that is a simple system around control - and I can give you an example. It is probably the best way to do it. For example, we generally have the heating and cooling system connected to the security system. So when security gets armed, everything turns off. So people cannot leave the air-conditioners on overnight, for example. So we use basic management systems to help control the use of the building services. We also try to lock down manual use of some of the systems, so we give local control. So plus or minus 2 degrees on the heating and cooling, but we do not allow one room to have it heating at 28 degrees and the other one at 18 degrees, so they do not fight each other. The management system talks about how we interlock that.*

Community Access to School Facilities

4.12 The Committee was aware that the Department of Education actively encouraged community use of school facilities, particularly when planning school redevelopments, recognising that schools play an important role in building community. The Committee sought further information on what school facilities may be accessible by the local community after the redevelopment:

Mr WILLIAMS *- As we are with all of these redevelopments, we have a focus on the community use of the asset as well as the school use. We see that as a really important part of the focus. So, generally speaking, we try to make the things, the areas, the community might use accessible rather than difficult to access from car parks and things like that.*

Ms BUTLER *- … … How would community hire of the hall operate?*

Mr BIRD *- At the moment, we have groups using our gym. That is pretty popular but our hall is largely underutilised and one of the things we talked about in the design phase was about how we could activate that hall to a better and more used space. My understanding is we have the biggest stage area on the north-west coast but no-one ever uses it. By making it more attractive, improving the seating and access, we hope we can activate the community better than it is now, because certainly it is not used by the community much at the moment.*

Ms BUTLER *- Is it my understanding the community has raised a large amount of funds for the retractable seating et cetera, for that hall? Is that correct?*

Mr BIRD *- Assuming they can make some sort of contribution to the retractable seating then rather than as an assembly hall, we have a chance to have a look at that as an auditorium-type of feel so that if there is a performance there or something of that nature it will have a better audience experience.*

Ms BUTLER *- With maintenance costs and so forth and insurance for that hall if it is being used for public use, do you have a whole procedure and policy in relation to this?*

Mr WILLIAMS *- We do. We actively encourage community use of our assets in the Penguin redevelopment where we have given land to the Dial sports region. We really want people. The more people who come and use our facilities, the better and safer in terms of it being owned by the community, so less vandalism, but it is a great lot of assets we have sitting there all weekend.*

Potential Impacts of Coronavirus on the Redevelopment

4.13 The Committee noted that the impact of, and response to, the current coronavirus pandemic was having significant community and economic impacts. The Committee sought to understand how these impacts may flow through and effect

the redevelopment project, in terms of project costs, the capacity to source labour and materials and the ability to secure competitive tenders:

CHAIR *- On page 16, and looking at the figures there, are there any expected changes to the major amounts listed there given service disruptions that we may experience as a result of what is happening at the moment? Are there any areas you feel might be likely to change as a result of our circumstances, or is it just wait and see?*

Mr WILLIAMS *- I think probably it is a bit of wait and see. There are indications that some costs might go up because social distancing on work sites changes the way people work. We have heard some anecdotes of things taking longer because people are doing things in a different way to the way they have done them before in close quarters, carrying things et cetera. We are really not sure about what is going to happen here. Obviously, the Government also announced a $50 million stimulus package over this financial year and into the next financial year for public buildings. Some of that will go to schools. Our intent is to keep offering these projects up to the market. Hopefully we can work with them within budget, but there is an unknown with coronavirus. China is ramping up. Some of this sort of stuff was a bit flaky before because a lot of materials are either shipped from Australia and more technical stuff comes from China. We are hearing that most of our contractors are able to deliver what they need for these sorts of things at the moment. I do not know whether you have any industry advice, Heath.*

Mr CLAYTON *- Not specific, Rob. A couple of the bigger contractors I have had a conversation with have assured me that their suppliers have adequate supplies of timber and the main resources. So freight is still coming into the state; it just might be taking longer and things like that. I have not heard of any specific delays. But, as we said, this thing is changing on a daily basis. I did hear something coming out of New Zealand was nearly impossible to get. That was more in an agricultural sense more than a construction industry sense, but other than that I have not really heard of too many things. There is a reasonable amount of stock in Tasmania or within Australia that can get here.*

CHAIR *- It mentions a 6 per cent construction contingency. Is there a reason to be revisiting that, do you think? That $923 500 is a fair old whack, but given the construction budget of $8.3 million, do you think that contingency is a fair contingency to be considering under our current circumstances?*

Mr CLAYTON - *That contingency is made up of a 6 per cent design contingency and 6 per cent construction. We have been relatively conservative with this - the general rule is probably around 10, so we are trying to be a little more conservative. At this stage, there are a lot of unknowns, but I see this as being sufficient at this point.*

Ms BUTLER *- … … It is very hard at the moment in view of what is going on with the virus, but do you think even beforehand the project could have gone over budget? Do you think there is a good chance it will?*

Mr CLAYTON - *We would like to think we work pretty closely with our quantity surveyors and our other consultant teams that deliver what we can afford. This redevelopment is largely about an internal reorganisation of space. We are not talking about large amounts of new build, so when we talk about contingencies, there is not a lot of in-ground works where things go wrong. Part of this is replacing and upgrading all the power supply; everything going in to those areas is going to be new, so we are trying to minimise the areas we do not have access to where things might get away from us. We are comfortable our current budget is a true reflection of what the works will cost.*

Mr WILLIAMS *- Further on this, a number of private jobs are going to be on hold which may mean the Government keeping the industries going in some sense as people take less risk in the private sector. The Government has said we are going to put more money into*

construction because we need to keep those small trades as well as the bigger companies working flat out because they all spend it around in the economy. We have had, in the past, Taroona High where the tenders came in much higher than expected and they had to go back and revisit them but we are not expecting that in this case. It is a bit of a crystal ball, but I think probably people are going to be really reliant on government work over the next six to 12 months. Hopefully we will get reasonable returns on our tenders; that is our guess, but it is hard to know.

***CHAIR** - … … Is there any risk in putting tenders out at the moment that you might be aware of in particular? I suppose we have covered a little bit of that ground, but do you foresee any major issues with people possibly putting in higher contingencies or whatever for their work?*

***Mr WILLIAMS** - We are not seeing that; we just do not know at this stage, Chair. It is really crystal ball gazing. We are hoping that as there are some private projects, that will probably be on hold until we will pick up that capacity as a government to fill in the gaps and that would give us a reasonable chance of getting good tender results. I think people want to take the risk of taking on these projects rather than rejecting them this time; I think that is where we will end up.*

4.14 The Committee also sought to understand if the witnesses anticipated any delays in the proposed works program:

***Ms BUTLER** - I wanted to talk through project timeline especially in light of current events, and I know that builders are lobbying to ensure building construction is viewed as an essential service.*

There will be sequencing requirements to conduct with tradespeople so they are not coming into close proximity of one another. That will probably go for quite some time.

Is there any merit in changing or reforecasting the project time line in light of the construction completion date?

***Mr WILIAMS** - Heath, are you best placed to answer that particular one?*

***Mr CLAYTON** - Again, anything on this subject is really tough to answer. The sites I have seen firsthand are being managed extremely well from that perspective. It is a credit to them.*

The other side of this is that contractors are still saying they want to be pricing work and they are looking forward until when this situation is over.

As far as the time frame, it is probably going to slide a lot. Like the tender date, we are probably looking at May, not April, early May. It will slide a little bit. Depending on where things go, we will still be proceeding subject to this committee's approval, through the tender process. We have to assess the situation at the time about how things start on site.

***Mr BIRD** - The other thing to mention, Heath, is the way we have planned to stage the work. Our planning had to be staged, because we are thinking about how we are going to move the students from one place to another, so learning is not compromised in any way. We have talked in detail about how we would stage the project, so it would be smaller works, like the work in the assembly hall. The work is staged as opposed to what would be more major work in Building 2 a bit later in our staging plan.*

***Mr CLAYTON** - The flip side is, as part of these works, we have a reasonably sized car park, that would become the builder's compound, so they can be completely segregated from the rest of the school and would have direct access into the three-storey building.*

As Peter said, we have two sections of reasonably small work that would not need a large number of contractors onsite. It would be done in a five- to six-week period, to have this sort of stuff done.

Even if we got onsite June-July or July-August, it is probably September or October before the site will ramp up to multiple contractors, and they would be self-contained. We are moving in the right direction by those sorts of dates.

4.15 The Committee was aware that some land surplus to the school's requirements would be sold, with the proceeds to go towards the project budget. The Committee sought to understand what impact any reduction in land values, and a potentially reduced sale price for the surplus land, would have on the redevelopment:

> ***Ms RATTRAY*** *- A question in regards to the land sold to help fund the project, if you like. It talks about the land value of $180 000 as per the submission. Are we in negotiations already or are we just hoping it is still worth $180 000?*
>
> ***Mr WILLIAMS*** *- With that, we would take the Valuer-General's value at the time we wanted to sell it. That is how we would arrive at a price. I do not know whether it has been revalued at this particular point in time.*
>
> ***Ms RATTRAY*** *- It is not likely. Will the proceeds of the sale of the land not reaching its estimated value impact on the project, and might that have to be reassessed?*
>
> ***Mr WILLIAMS*** *- That could be covered by the contingency, if necessary. It is just an estimate.*
>
> ***Ms RATTRAY*** *– …… It will not fall over.*
>
> ***Mr WILLIAMS*** *- No, not at all.*

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

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

> ***CHAIR*** *- Do the proposed works meet an identified need or needs, or solve a recognised problem?*
>
> ***Mr WILLIAMS*** *- The answer is absolutely, yes. As we work through a program of improving schools around Tasmania, every student in every location deserves to have good quality contemporary learning spaces. I think if you have had a chance to watch the video, or when you do watch it, you will see that this just does not measure up.*
>
> *This is not a capacity issue. This is a quality of the school, a quality of the teaching and learning spaces is the number one priority we focused on. It absolutely fixes our need for a contemporary school. It does not fix everything, but it goes a significant way to making the school much more contemporary and learning outcomes can only improve.*
>
> ***CHAIR*** *- Thank you, Rob. Are the proposed works the best solution to meet identified needs or solve a recognised problem within the allocated budget?*
>
> ***Mr WILLIAMS*** *- Peter, you are going to be living in it. What is your view?*
>
> ***Mr BIRD*** *- From our point of view, I know that the parent groups at our school association are a bit surprised at how much work we think we might be able to achieve within this allocated budget and they are really excited for the work to go forward.*
>
> ***CHAIR*** *- Thank you. Are the proposed works fit for purpose?*
>
> ***Mr BIRD*** *- Absolutely.*
>
> ***CHAIR*** *- Do the proposed works provide value for money?*

***Mr BIRD** - Yes, and I go back to the comment I made. People who come to visit and look at the work we have proposed, whether they have been part of the education staff, leaders or whether they have been members of the public in our community, as I said before, they are really surprised at the amount of work we think we can achieve in this budget. We are really keen to make that fit with the budget.*

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

***Mr WILLIAMS -** I cannot think of any better use of public funds than through education in Tasmania.*

***Mr BIRD -** I could not think of any better use of public funds in the Devonport area, Rob.*

5 DOCUMENTS TAKEN INTO EVIDENCE

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

- *Major Redevelopment of Devonport High School* - Submission to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, Department of Education, March 2020.

6 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

6.1 The Committee is satisfied that the need for the proposed works has been established. Once completed the proposed works will provide contemporary learning environments which will promote the school's approach to collaborative learning. The proposed works also include the provision of a new entrance, administration area, support facilities and car parking.

6.2 The Committee acknowledges that the proposed works will address many significant issues resulting from the school's age, current configuration and facilities, with benefits of a contemporary, efficient and cohesive environment to be enjoyed by students, staff and the broader school community into the future.

6.3 Accordingly, the Committee recommends the Major Redevelopment of Devonport High School, at an estimated cost of $10.87 million, in accordance with the documentation submitted.

Parliament House
Hobart
28 April 2020

Hon. Rob Valentine MLC
Chair