

# PUBLIC

## THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS, MET IN COMMITTEE ROOM 1, PARLIAMENT HOUSE, HOBART ON MONDAY, 26 JUNE 2023

### CAMBRIDGE PRIMARY MAJOR REDEVELOPMENT

**The Committee met at 1.30 p.m.**

**CHAIR** (Mr Valentine) - Welcome everybody to this the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works Committee to look at the Cambridge Primary Major Redevelopment reference. I welcome anyone who is viewing this online and thank you for your attendance. I welcome everybody here to the hearing. I will start by introducing the members who are on this side of the table: Simon Wood, Rob Valentine, Tania Rattray and John Tucker.

**MIN HARMAN, CAPITAL WORKS MANAGER, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE,** MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION, AND WAS EXAMINED.

**TODD WILLIAMS, DIRECTOR, FACILITY SERVICES, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE,** MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION, AND WAS EXAMINED.

**SOPHIE BENICE, ARCHITECT CONSULTANT, BENICE MULCAHY ARCHITECTURE,** MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION, AND WAS EXAMINED.

**COURTNEY HOWARD, PRINCIPAL, CAMBRIDGE PRIMARY SCHOOL,** MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION, AND WAS EXAMINED.

**CHAIR** - We are pleased to hear your evidence today. First, we thank you for providing the tour this morning through the site, especially the students. If you could take our formal thanks back to the students - we really do appreciate the fact that students get involved in these things. It is an important aspect. Obviously, at the end of the day, it is for them.

I want to inform you of some of the important aspects of committee proceedings. A committee such as this is a proceeding in parliament. That means it receives the protection of parliamentary privilege. That 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 proceedings here today.

It is a public hearing. Members of the public and journalists may be present or watching online. This means that your evidence may be reported.

Do you understand?

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**Mr HOWARD, Ms BENCE, Mr WILLIAMS, Ms HARMAN** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - Thank you. We offer the opportunity for you to make an opening statement.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - Thank you for the opportunity to formally present and discuss the \$15.1 million Cambridge Primary redevelopment project, an exciting project that has been many years in the making to reach this point. Perhaps we might touch on some of that background today.

The two key elements to the \$15.1 million project are additional contemporary learning space for the school, which is under capacity pressure and, in addition to that, some redevelopment works to modernise some areas of the school. The other component is a \$7 million partnership with Clarence City Council to provide a gymnasium, and traffic and car parking improvements. Both elements that we are presenting and talking about today have been through extensive consultation, both our own as the department but also council in forming their master plan. I welcome an opportunity to talk about that consultation today.

**CHAIR** - Thank you. As you would know, Todd, we work our way through the submission page by page to make sure that we don't miss anything in particular. So I go to page 3 and ask members whether there are any questions on that page.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I would like to add my thanks to the school for hosting this morning. It does make a significant difference when you are able to see the facilities first hand, so thank you to all involved.

My question is around the timeline referred to on page 3 around the total cost of the project. When it says that the \$7 million is allocated in the 2023-24 Budget, I am interested in whether that timeline will be met, given that we are half way through 2023 and there is quite a bit of work to be done with tenders and the like. Also given that we know there are some challenges around the building industry and finding an appropriate contractor, and all of those things.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - I would start by saying our cash flows and our cash flow projections are always a challenge because the project is alive and continuing to evolve. Our target is to release a tender later this year, at which time we will have more understanding of precise cash flows. It is a work in progress and your observation is relevant, depending upon a program that we get from a construction company as well. We have been getting some good tender results lately.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Post-Brighton High School?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - Yes, and continually. There is an element of unknown in that. We did talk today about the partnership with council. There is still some unknown in the \$7 million component because that is the money that the state Government has available to do the gym and the car parking improvements. Council's master plan they have released is larger than just that work, so the council component is still a little unknown. We know that council support the master plan, they support the school plan and they're keen to progress those works, but it hasn't been finalised and agreed yet. There are still some unknowns in the cash flows.

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**Ms RATTRAY** - At the Cambridge Primary School site this morning I did ask the question of principal Courtney Howard in regard to that particular arrangement and negotiations with Clarence City Council, and you have touched on that. I am interested in having on the public record that the master plan that council has put forward may well be the Rolls Royce model but there may well be, from the school's perspective, more of the Toyota model, something not quite at that elevated level. Is that how the department sees it?

**Mr WOOD** - Putting down Toyotas.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I am not putting them down but they are not Rolls-Royces.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - Definitely not a Rolls-Royce. When you're designing master plans, as we do, we are always looking to present the best that we can. As you work through the detail of your design, you bring more clarity to that. I haven't seen all the details around council's master plan, those negotiations are hopefully starting soon, but an element of that will come through - the reality of the funding that's available and what you can deliver with that funding.

It's no different to any project that we work on. The relationship with Clarence council is important to the school. I'll let Courtney explain that a bit more. We're very restrained with our land. Council's ovals and facilities are very important to us. We've been working with council for eight years on our arrangement to use and improve both the school and the amenity. That's involved public forums and consultation. Through that process the priorities you see in the plan that were presented today came through from the community - not just the school community but the broader community.

Is there anything you wanted to add to that, Courtney?

**Mr HOWARD** - The plan we're presenting today has significantly shifted from where we were six years ago in taking on board that feedback.

**CHAIR** - We have the Clarence City Council submission, from the chief executive officer indeed, Ian Nelson. What are the mechanics of your communication with them? Do you have a regular committee that meets and discusses the issues and timelines and expectations from each party? It's not just a phone call, I'm presuming. If you can, for the record, describe that.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - We meet together regularly, that is me and my staff and council officers -

**CHAIR** - Regular being monthly, fortnightly?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - As required. While we've put the two projects as two separate stages they are obviously related and it's important that the two come together. The car parking is a good example of that. It's more formalised through myself and Ian as the chief executive and council staff as required. The project team has been collaborating and there's regular interaction between the school association, council and councillors about the project and the importance of the project.

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It's been a close relationship. We've tried not to make it all formal. We are focusing on getting the outcomes that both parties want to achieve.

**CHAIR** - Can you describe the development application side of it? Is that something you have had to do? What the progress is in regard to that?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - The development application for stage 1 has been lodged. In the lead-up to lodging that we were having discussion with council officers. That's now with them to consider. Anything you would like to add, Sophie?

**CHAIR** - Because planning approval was supposed to be delivered in May.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - We lodged it in May. That was the timeline.

**Ms BENCE** - It was lodged this month, in June,. It has been lodged.

**CHAIR** - Any feedback on that? Has anything come up that is of concern to the elected members, or is it going to a full council meeting? Is it something that will receive approval, no discretions involved?

**Ms BENCE** - Yes, we've done a lot of work with council in the lead-up to the submission because there are some technicalities with this site. As you saw today it's very constrained in its footprint. It's in an area which does not necessarily have the right zoning for school purposes. In the lead-up to the preparation of the DA we have worked with council to work out strategies to put forward the relevant documentation that they would need, and so they could put that to the GM. The project needs council's general manager consent to proceed. That's all in hand with council. We have been working back and forth.

**CHAIR** - What rezoning is required?

**Ms BENCE** - It will not be rezoned but there is a discretion on the fact that part of the building falls over another zone and will need to be -

**Ms RATTRAY** - From school in to recreation.

**Ms BENCE** - Exactly, yes.

**CHAIR** - There are no riparian zones or anything like that involved?

**Ms BENCE** - There are a number of overlays. There's the zone but there are overlays to that - coastal and waterway protection, bushfire and flood.

**Ms RATTRAY** - There's no issue from council on the redevelopment of the site?

**Ms HARMAN** - The planning overlays had a fairly significant influence on what areas were proposed to be redeveloped, particularly the bushfire and the flood issues. They have informed the masterplan that we've put forward. It's those elements. We were working with the council prior to lodgement of the development application, which took a bit longer than we expected it to, hence we did not quite make the May date.

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**CHAIR** - Do you have any concerns with the flood overlay? Were adjustments to the design needed as a result of that?

**Ms BENCE** - No. We had to interrogate floor levels to make sure they are above flood levels. The construction will need to be designed to mitigate any flood impact should the rivulet flood. Ultimately the design responds to those issues.

**CHAIR** - Has there been any flooding, Mr Principal, in your time?

**Mr HOWARD** - No.

**CHAIR** - It may be a one-in-100-year arrangement.

**Ms BENCE** - That's probably what the flood modelling takes into account.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - We worked closely with council's planning in terms of the modelling they've done as well as the modelling we've done. We put the two together so everyone's on the same page.

**CHAIR** - Quite often it is the inability of water to get out of the site. It might not be necessarily low-lying but simply the drainage away from the site is not satisfactory. You can do things to fix that. There won't need to be any major works done to mitigate that overlay problem?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - The spill over from the rivulet showed that it came around and down and off -

**CHAIR** - It can pool around.

**Mr TUCKER** - I would like to come back to the council. You have allocated \$7.4 million in 2024-25 in the budget. Council elections will come up again. When we were out there this morning, you said the council in the earlier period weren't as keen as this council is. What happens if we get a different council in 2026 and they decide they're not going to go ahead with the masterplan, and things change again? Do you have something to tie them in, so that they can't get away?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - That is a work in progress. Council has recently endorsed their masterplan. We'll soon have deliberations around what can be delivered and how far the \$7 million contribution from the state Government under the Cambridge Primary School project goes. There are differences between a school gym and a community council gym. There are differences between school parking and council parking.

So, there is negotiation to be done. What I would say is I know that both parties are very keen to get those negotiations under way. We had hoped we would be at a more progressed point to be able to put that agreement on the table. That agreement will be a document and there will be commitments from both parties, but we are not quite there yet. We did not want to delay the important part of the project, being the school classrooms and additional space that were under pressure.

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So, there is work to be done. Both parties are acting in good faith for the community and we know from the community, through the consultation, that a gymnasium came out as the number one requirement from community to develop. That was not only in our consultation; that was in the consultation the council undertook as well.

**Mr TUCKER** - Given the present economic climate where we are headed with the master plan, you are saying yes, this council could endorse it. But the next council could dis-endorse it and say, 'Well, we don't have the funds and we are not doing it'. If we are going to get rid of the gymnasium, the courts and everything there in the school grounds with this first stage, we need something more concrete that we are going to get the second stage up, because if you do not have the gymnasium and you do not have the courts, they have no sporting facilities. This is a major issue with this project, would I be correct?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - I am confident that we can deliver our commitments, being a gymnasium, traffic improvements and car parking improvements within the \$7 million. I can't deliver a full council master plan -

**CHAIR** - I think what Mr Tucker is saying is a formal acknowledgement from council in writing that is signed off by both parties, a binding agreement if you like. Is that something that you will eventually get to with the council before you put a spade in the ground?

**Mr TUCKER** - Before you get rid of the gymnasium, before you get rid of the courts, we want to know that the Clarence council is committed to this project by signing on the dotted line: 'Yes, we still have negotiations to go ahead but we are committed and we will make this happen.' That is what I am saying to you because I don't want to be committing this school to losing their gymnasium and sporting facilities with nothing there.

**Mr HOWARD** - What do you mean by 'remove' our gymnasium?

**Mr TUCKER** - My understanding is you are building a new gymnasium. If you are going to build a new gymnasium, the old one, what is going to happen with that?

**Mr HOWARD** - It stays.

**Mr TUCKER** - Won't that be utilised for something else?

**Mr HOWARD** - No.

**Mr TUCKER** - So you are still going to have the school gymnasium there with the new gymnasium?

**Mr HOWARD** - Just an MPH [multipurpose hall], yes, so it will become a flexible learning space for us. It will be most likely more adaptive for arts and music. We talked today about having an art teacher and a music teacher, and giving her a space. We have a pretty big woodwind program as well, with the Southern Primary Schools Band program. We also run percussion. Being able to make a space, a multipurpose facility, that will still stay there for this time.

**Ms RATTRAY** - So, you do not have to pack up every time.

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**Mr HOWARD** - Exactly right. Having said that, if we need to for a few years we can all fit in there and run assembly, and that will be that. But it will be much better to get that gym, without a doubt.

**Mr TUCKER** - I agree with you. That is what I am trying to say.

**Mr HOWARD** - We will try to get that gym but we will be able to run the school - even with increased enrolments, we will be able to run the school with this budget.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - Perhaps it's a language thing. The school does not currently have a gymnasium. They have a multipurpose hall that does a lot of things. We are not taking the multipurpose hall away. We are wanting to build a gymnasium for the school and community as well. So, there is no loss to the school. It is all an addition.

As I said, we had hoped to be at this point with an agreement with council. However, they wanted to take a bit longer on their master plan and consult further. So, we haven't got into the thrust of negotiation yet but that is going to happen soon. Absolutely, there would be an agreement on how that \$7 million is spent. I am comfortable that will provide a school gymnasium, and traffic and car parking improvements to the school.

**CHAIR** - It sounds like you know the school could operate without that, albeit in a restricted way.

**Mr HOWARD** - Most certainly. There is no doubt about that. That is why we are here today.

**CHAIR** - Okay. Your total project is two-thirds away down page 3: for the total project, \$100 000 made available in 2021-22. Was that preliminary design work?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - Preliminary assessment work, yes.

**CHAIR** - Okay, then \$500 000 for this current 2022-23 financial year. Was that mostly design work?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - Yes, and assessments.

**CHAIR** - I did ask the question with regard to insurance cover and those sorts of things over the site, because you have two different parties - one local government and the other state, and how that is handled and, with the new development, how that will be handled?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - There is a lease agreement for the use of the council land that we have which articulates both parties' responsibility, and both parties will certainly have their own insurance arrangements. The operation of the gym would be on the basis that the school gets use during school hours. Outside of school hours is community use and that would be managed by council. Again, the detail of that has not been worked through. However, we do have other agreements with Clarence Council and other councils around shared use of facilities. There is a process that we use and a format that we use to talk about roles and responsibility and clarity, which are all then articulated in formal agreements drafted by the Crown Solicitor.

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**CHAIR** - I am keen to know that it will be addressed in some form of a lease agreement. But if you have a member of the community come in and play tennis on a court which happens to be across both council and Education department land and somebody injures themselves - brain injury whatever it is - who is it that is responsible for that? If it is after-hours what I am hearing is that it is the council; and if it is within hours, it is the school that would have to address that. I know it sounds gruesome to talk about those things but with such an arrangement we do need to know that it is covered.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - Absolutely, and that is the basis of the agreement. An example of that would be Clarence High School where the oval and amenities building are leased to Clarence Council from the department. That has a similar arrangement, talking about roles and responsibilities. The general premise is school hours, school use, school responsibility. Outside of school hours, council responsibility and council use and managed.

**CHAIR** - Okay. Next page. Interesting statement, page 4: 'Our staff work together multiple times every week to guarantee the curriculum has been taught across classes, grades and the wider school.' Is this something that is not general in other schools? Could you describe that?

**Mr HOWARD** - We are just really specific and deliberate about it. It is deliberate targeted time where we, as a leadership team, structure and timetable for people to be able to collaborate together multiple times regularly. Between teaching teams, they will have two morning meetings. We structure a timetable to have two other blocks during the middle of the day, when specialist blocks are on, two of those a week and then they have one afternoon as well. So it is five deliberate times a week where they are working together to plan, assess, moderate and reflect on pedagogy.

**Ms RATTRAY** - How does that work when you have a high number of your staff who work part-time.

**Mr HOWARD** - It is a lot of effort to pull it off, to be frank. It is a lot of effort in looking where people's work patterns are, having people in the right roles and providing that flexibility. Some of the part-time people might not be able to get to all of them but maybe they can get to three, four, whatever might work.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Does that put additional pressure on the school resources, having a higher number of part-time teachers for school load?

**Mr HOWARD** - Good question. It is a bit of both probably. Additional pressure on the resources.

**Mr HOWARD** - Additional pressure on the resources -

**Ms RATTRAY** - Possibly yours doing a timetable.

**Mr HOWARD** - Exactly. Definitely myself and the APs doing the timetable and trying to support that. Sometimes your part-time staff, when you add them up together, might equal more than 1.0, particularly when you are working with teachers and their jobs are much more than just a job, it's a vocation. They put so much energy and effort in. Sometimes you can get some good, positive outcomes there.



**CHAIR** - At the moment there must be hot-desking?

**Mr HOWARD** - That's exactly what we're doing. It is quite challenging for some people. One example is a support teacher who's on class three days, comes off to do support work two days and is trying to find a hidey hole. They might be having confidential conversations with families or trying to ring doctors. Having a space, it doesn't need to be big, where you can shut the door and have a quiet conversation is really important.

**CHAIR** - The extra professional spaces are an important aspect of the development. Often in schools you have children with special needs. Some might be autistic and get triggered. Are there spaces for them to be able to go to to quieten down?

**Mr HOWARD** - That's a great question. There are two spaces in this that we have looked at. We have one sensory room. We are looking to have two of those spaces.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I think we walked that room.

**Mr HOWARD** - We did. It would have been a dark room with some fancy lights on in there. That gets quite a bit of use at the moment. With a few more enrolments that's going to get more use. Additional to that, we have those other professional support spaces where the senior teachers or the assistant principal might be. Other spaces they can branch out into. We saw there was a puzzle in one of the media rooms we have been to today.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Gets the library back.

**Mr HOWARD** - Yes, exactly right. Getting those spaces back would give us more flexibility to use those spaces.

**Ms RATTRAY** - We heard this morning that the library is a classroom for two classes.

**Mr HOWARD** - Yes, the current one is.

**Mr WOOD** - The bathroom facilities for the staff are quite light on. Is that being addressed?

**Mr HOWARD** - We're going to double it.

**Ms BENCE** - We would be providing a number of new staff bathrooms. Individual bathrooms with the toilet and hand basin in each room. One of those is a disabled.

**CHAIR** - How many staff are there?

**Mr HOWARD** - Per head? About 62. It varies term by term, sickness by sickness, maternity leave by maternity leave.

**CHAIR** - FTEs?

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**Mr HOWARD** - That is a bit tricky. FTE, I have 19.75 teachers allocated. We have TAs on top that we determine, plus admin, plus others. We have about 38 or 39 FTA, including admin, cleaners and TAs.

**CHAIR** - Their toilet facilities are only two.

**Mr HOWARD** - We use the disabled toilets up in the other blocks at times. That's also not great for a variety of reasons.

**CHAIR** - Sounds like it would be much more appropriate to have that expanded. Moving over to page 5.

**Ms RATTRAY** - We heard today on site that there are challenges around the green space because it has a number of services running through it. That could be a positive and a negative, because you get to keep some grass. It limits the opportunity to expand some of the buildings. We saw some of those big cement covers around the school today that look after storm water, water and the like.

**Mr HOWARD** - We have major infrastructure running underground that we cannot obviously build over, or build over easily. In many cases we were not permitted to do so. Perhaps you might share that.

**Ms BENCE** - Yes, there are some major water mains running through the site from east to west. You can see the patterns of buildings on the site that have been built to avoid them.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Nice shapes, I thought.

**Ms BENCE** - There's a substantial easement on either side of those mains that we can't build within.

**Ms RATTRAY** - So you're limited in what you can build and extend to the current facilities?

**Ms BENCE** - That's correct.

**CHAIR** - It's an interesting site, the topography and the way it funnels in a bit.

**Ms RATTRAY** - We walked past the canteen and I wanted to stop and get the top off the freshly cooked bread, but I wasn't allowed to. The canteen will be part of the redevelopment, because it looked like it was only about 1.5 metres wide?

**Mr HOWARD** - It goes back a bit. You saw the server area. You were focused on the bread.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I was. It was a long time from breakfast.

**Mr HOWARD** - It steps back a bit but we need to have more prep space in the middle. It will extend out about another 1.5 to 2 metres on the plan.

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**Ms RATTRAY** - We also heard the number of meals that were provided. That would be useful to have on the record.

**Mr HOWARD** - Australia is the only OECD country in the world that doesn't feed their kids lunch. Arguably over the last 20 years we've been the richest. We have a lot of very busy families who are pushing themselves hard to make sure their kids have healthy lunches. We thought we could put the economy of scale together and provide it at a break-even cost. On average we feed students for about \$4.50 to \$5 per day. You get your recess. You get your lunch: butter chicken, sausage rolls. What did you come for the other day: sausage roll and butter chicken day. That was a good day, wasn't it?

**Ms BENCE** - We had the mushroom mac and cheese.

**Mr HOWARD** - Mushroom mac and cheese, with butter chicken on the side. There is some good food coming out. That is a core difference for our school. We are proud of it. A lot of students are involved in collecting it, producing it, serving it and cleaning up. It creates a lot of harmony within our school. It's great.

**Ms RATTRAY** - And a bread maker in every class.

**Mr HOWARD** - Yes, hot bread going in every class.

**CHAIR** - It teaches them certain skills and responsibilities.

**Mr HOWARD** - Eating together is an important thing. That concept of slowing down, stopping and eating from a bowl with a fork and taking your time. I have noticed, even with our kindergarten students, they progress in terms of being able to eat and share and have that communal sitting together. A lot of European countries do it well. It's a good component for our school from social and health outcomes. There are people in our community who need a bit of sustenance. It's easy for us to fold them into that resource, rather than create a stand-alone resource for them.

**Mr TUCKER** - Do you have a big percentage of people like that?

**Mr HOWARD** - No, but a surprising amount.

**CHAIR** - Making it a bit more general means that others are coming together with them and they're not standing out as being different.

**Mr HOWARD** - It's a big thing for us. It's equity around the right to learn well. We notice we have a significant decrease in behavioural issues after lunch because we're not having the sugar spike. We're assuming, we're making a lot of inferences here. We are getting good, low-GI food into our students which is filling their tummies and keeping them sustained. We are not getting the sugar spikes during the day. No matter how healthy you want to be, if it comes in a wrapper, it has sugar or salt in it.

**CHAIR** - For those parents who may not be able to afford, there is assistance through the school association?

**Mr HOWARD** - We have a generous school association.

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**Mr VALENTINE** - You mention here on page 5, 'Creation of the home-like deinstitutionalised environment to support individual comfort and uphold inclusive practices and inclusive/trauma informed design'. Can you explain how the design of this meets that? They're words easily used.

**Mr HOWARD** - I was pretty big on this from the first day we met. The briefing for all the architects that wanted to submit or consultants.

We, and it is together as a school - also a strong point for me is, I have a problem in that I have four-year-olds who walk from their home and they walk into something that is more like a hospital than a school. And we wonder why they have separation anxiety and why they might struggle to integrate into school. It's really big fluoro lighting and really hard floors, and it's a different environment. If we can keep students feeling safe, secure and supported through good design, that is going to enable better transition and better learning straight from day dot.

It is really simple things like we are trying to remove the amount of big broad floodlights that are inside a room. I don't know about your house but not a lot of lights are on at my house at midday. So why have we got all these lights on at school? It is a bit funny. So, we are trying to put dimmers in and different lights. We have actually had one classroom where we have trialled a lot of this and it is significantly better impact when you turn the lights down for the kids to have their rest time, if it is in the kindergarten. You can turn them up for spotlighting on zones. We also talked about having good heating; really good heat pumps in every room. We have talked about trying to use ambient natural light as much as possible.

We have also talked about trying to have the right amount of flooring and combination of internal fit-out and fixture, where there might be couches or seats or corners, or whatever it might be. So, those sort of things in general.

Also with trauma-informed practice, we are talking about students being able to have a space that they can go to if they need to. Those things about lights, there are no sensory triggers or reduced amount of sensory triggers, which is important to us.

**CHAIR** - Thank you, very well described. Over the page, you mention the kindergarten is not fenced in the traditional sense 'to afford our students much greater room and freedom for playing'. Is that part of where older and younger students mix? A lot of schools don't do that because of the possibility of younger ones getting hurt but, clearly, you are saying that is not necessary.

**Mr HOWARD** - There was no fence when I got there. My office is glorious. I have that nice little view to look out and many a person has commented that we have free-range kindergarteners. They sort of free-range out and they come back a bit.

**Ms RATTRAY** - They free-ranged through the front door while we were there today.

**Mr HOWARD** - Straight through it, didn't they. They come out, they go but that is okay, we can all keep an eye -

**Ms RATTRAY** - About this high.

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**Mr HOWARD** - They have a lot of confidence though, don't they? And you will notice them on the bikes; they do riding on a concrete path. They are going wide and it's a few layers there. Number one, we have a fence around the entire site so we -

**Ms RATTRAY** - You can't lose them.

**CHAIR** - Especially with a creek next door.

**Mr HOWARD** - Exactly right, we can't lose them. We have a very good fence around the entire site.

Number two, our kindergarteners' timetable, they are usually outside when other students aren't as much, so confining them to a fenced-in area, particularly when you have that access to this great big broad space, why not let them out into the wide? They will cross the grass to enter the dry creek beds. There is a sandpit play area there. There is a one about 15-minute window at lunch when they are together. We also notice that it enables them to transition through to prep a lot easier because then, when they are in prep, they are often going back to the play spaces they were at in kindergarten, or can access them. So, they can have a familiar play space when they are back out -

**CHAIR** - Those play spaces they have generally would not be used by older kids anyway?

**Mr HOWARD** - No, they use the older kids' one. They will go over to the sandpit but they are not there at the same time as much. Whereas, then we are saying that at least they are comfortable in the space so that when they are in prep and grade 1, they can go back.

**Mr TUCKER** - Going on to page 7, I want to check the facts here. The sportsground changeroom-toilets facilities used by the school are on adjacent land owned by the council. With that comment, are you saying that all the toilet facilities are on that ground? There are no toilets or anything on the school for the students at all?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - The school has its own toilet facilities. When we did the site inspection today, we were standing in that car park and I am looking at the oval and to my left there was old grey -

**Mr TUCKER** - Where you were going to put the gymnasium?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - Yes. That is the council current toilets. They are public toilets. I think there is also a cricket change room.

**Mr HOWARD** - There is. There is a change room there. There is a minor club room and a canteen facility.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - On page 7, where it is referenced there, that is what we are referencing, those old Besser block council-owned amenities.

**Mr TUCKER** - But you do have adequate toilet facilities at the school?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - A lot. Correct.

**Mr TUCKER** - With that master plan with the gymnasium and everything like that going forward, there would be adequate change rooms and toilets there for the community to use as well as the school?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - Yes. There's still scale and agreement to be worked on about that. But, certainly, from a school perspective, we need the amenities to support the gymnasium, amenities being toilets, change rooms, et cetera. As I said, the primary school kids are a bit little and community adults are bigger. There is a scale to that which is part of the discussion. But from a school perspective, absolutely.

The last gymnasium we did, at Snug Primary School, had those amenities. That is what we are saying. That is what we bring to the table. That is what we want to build. If the community needs more and larger, that is part of that conversation, discussion, negotiation that we will have.

**Ms RATTRAY** - But you wouldn't expect that the students using a new gymnasium would need to go outside to public toilets. There would be a set of toilet facilities attached inside.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - A part of the gymnasium, absolutely. Like the Snug Primary School gymnasium we built, it is part of that. All I am saying there is that there is a scale difference between a school and a community facility, and that's part of that discussion. It is part of a gymnasium, it is the amenities that support that.

**CHAIR** - Before we leave this double page entirely, given the cooked lunch program you have, obviously you would have a heck of a lot more in the way of scraps and other waste. What are your provisions for that so that kids aren't -

**Ms RATTRAY** - A well-fed dog, I reckon.

**Mr HOWARD** - Number one, the dog has put on more weight in the last three years than she had on before that. Aside from that, it is a really good question. I spent a lot of time initially when we scaled up our cooked lunch program, I spent many a night with the football on in the middle of winter scrolling through commercial industrial compost solutions and trying to find answers. Then, as with most good inventions, the solution was right in front of us. It is extremely cheap and free. All the staff have chicken and geese, or whatever, at home, and everyone just takes buckets home.

There's a variety of criteria to our cooked lunch. One of them was sustainability. There is just no waste on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, nobody is bringing a wrapper, nobody is wrapping things up in Gladwrap. For a few hundred people, it is a much more sustainable program. All the scraps go home.

**Mr TUCKER** - Especially with the way the price of eggs is going. It is very good.

**Mr HOWARD** - There are a couple of people with larger properties who have a couple of dozen fowls of various sorts.

**CHAIR** - You don't have room for a school garden?

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**Mr HOWARD** - We do have a garden just around the back of the canteen there. We have a couple of really good, quite productive fruit trees. The kindergarten do a lunch program as well and the kindergarteners go up and garden in there on a Tuesday, and most of the cherry tomatoes, herbs, things that come out go to the kindergarten program, just to try to keep a line of sight as best as possible.

**CHAIR** - Not a huge affair to require compost facilities on-site?

**Mr HOWARD** - Not quite that much. But we actually have little ground traps all throughout our gardens, just PVC pipes with different holes in them. We put some compost in all of that. Part of it certainly goes into that. We have worm farms going around.

**Mr TUCKER** - Just before we move on, you have here the bushfire hazard management plan indicating potential risks associated with bushfire. That is obviously coming down that northern slope.

**Mr HOWARD** - West, north-west up the hill. Yes, absolutely.

**Mr TUCKER** - Bushfires are slow going up and they get very quick coming down. You said the planned development addressing those risks - what have you done to address the risk of the bushfire coming down that hill?

**Ms BENCE** - The risks have mainly been identified to that building that is on the rivulet, the building that is already there.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Kindergarten.

**Mr TUCKER** - Where the gunboats were?

**Ms BENCE** - Next to the creek. The school's property runs right to the rivulet. The bank of the rivulet will be cleared and managed and the existing kindergarten building will undergo some upgrades. All windows will be replaced with upgraded glazing. Some areas of roof material will be replaced. The new building will obviously meet all the current standards for bushfire. We have had a bushfire hazard management plan prepared as part of the design, which started at the initial stages of the process, as we were developing the master plan. A bushfire consultant has been on board assisting with the development of that.

**Mr TUCKER** - Todd's probably going to go crook at me asking this question. You talked about clearing vegetation. Do you have a forest practices plan with the species that you're dealing with there?

**Ms BENCE** - We've had a natural value assessment undertaken as part of the initial design phases for the areas we need to clear. Most of the existing vegetation in that area is weeds. Clearing that will improve the bank.

**Mr TUCKER** - What about the trees?

**Ms BENCE** - Trees can remain in that area. The trees can stay. It's the undergrowth which is to be managed.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - Our bushfire planning evacuation is a system-wide consideration that we do across the whole department. Every school has its bushfire plan and management arrangement. On other sites, where necessary, we do ongoing mitigation works to make sure we're meeting our requirements and do the best we can to prepare for bushfires.

**Mr TUCKER** - Also the risk for snakes coming in on that rivulet with the kids. Have you ever seen snakes coming in along there?

**Mr HOWARD** - Yes, we do.

**Mr TUCKER** - How do you manage that risk?

**Mr HOWARD** - You see a snake, you call a person, you get it removed. We run our bush school program right down on the creek. The students don't turn up down there until 9.15 a.m. The two TAs that set the site up, part of their risk assessment process every day is to get the carts and go all the way down there. They have a checklist they run through. One check is to walk around the entire area stomping, looking for snakes, or anything else.

There are other practical components. At the start of the school year, when snakes are going to be more aggressive, February through to April, we are not as close to the waterway area as we could be. We step a little bit back from that. I can't help it if a snake is going to crawl up onto the middle of the green grass.

**CHAIR** - It's good that you have that thinking in place.

**Mr HOWARD** - Yes, our groundsman's there from around five in the morning. Part of his job is to do a full playground inspection every morning, looking at those things.

**Mr TUCKER** - So he bags a snake up and gets rid of it?

**Mr HOWARD** - Oh no, we call someone else for it. Lawrence might look like he can deal with it. He's actually the biggest teddy bear in the world. I think we'd be calling someone else.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - We did have a copperhead crawling through the corridors of the building that we operate out of up at Hobart College. A lot of those sites border bush. There are always messages. 'Snake in carpark one'. We call the professionals to remove them.

**Mr TUCKER** - We have the odd snake in parliament, too.

**CHAIR** - I think there are members on this side who prefer not to think of snakes.

Page 9, unless anyone has something from page 8?

**Ms RATTRAY** - I am not sure if it is here. I asked about the 4-metre-wide veranda sections that are going to be added onto the school. I said they'd give protection and shelter, but they'll also take away the light into your rooms. The response was to add skylights to the existing buildings. Can you provide that detail for the committee?



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**Ms BENCE** - One of the things that is key to this project is about building the new terraces beyond the classroom, so each classroom can open up to those outdoor spaces for outdoor learning opportunities and for eating lunch.

We have tried to make those as generous as possible so that the class groups can meet in those spaces and run activities. They are looking at about 4 metres wide. We have worked to try to ensure that the roof lines, which are solid so that they keep the rain out, are as shallow as possible so that they're not dipping down too low and still letting daylight. On the backsides of these classrooms we're looking at having natural daylight coming in from above with skylights.

That is for the existing building one. For the kinder building there will be a range of windows on the reverse side of the building and skylights, roof lights. For the building which we have been nicknaming Cambridge Up, which is the two story building along Cambridge Road, there will be windows and roof lights on that reverse side.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I am not sure if you've experienced a lot of skylights. I have and it's seldom that they don't leak. Is that something you have a significant focus on? Leaks in schools can be very challenging.

**Ms BENCE** - In the detail phase we'll have to look at how we can do that in a way that is as water-tight as possible.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I've finally found somebody who can put some in. I can give you their name.

**Mr HOWARD** - On a practical sense, in those rooms on that front area, for all but about two to three months of the year the staff have to run on air conditioning because the rooms get so hot. There is so much window at the moment and it is pulling in so much heat that they are just too hot. It's a great problem to have in Tasmania and it's most of the year.

**Ms RATTRAY** - So, you might not need skylights on the other side?

**Mr HOWARD** - Maybe for the light. Cutting out some direct light to reduce the heat coming in could be quite advantageous .

**CHAIR** - Is there any other way of spilling air if you don't want to open up the new doors in this building?

**Ms BENCE** - There'll be the option of natural ventilation if you wanted to open the doors and windows. There'll also be mechanical ventilation. There'll be a heat recovery ventilation system. That brings air into the building, flushes through fresh air, but it tempers the air to be a similar temperature to the room temperature, so it's comfortable.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I have a question on disability access to the Cambridge Up building. Can you just explain where that is?

**Ms BENCE** - It's a two-storey building. The upper level can be accessed by a lift.

**Ms RATTRAY** - There's a lift in it?

**Ms BENCE** - Yes.

**Mr HOWARD** - It's right here on page 20.

**Ms BENCE** - That's in the undercover area outside that accesses the ground level terrace, and then you pop out on the deck above undercover.

**CHAIR** - Is that lift enclosed or is it glass?

**Ms BENCE** - It's enclosed.

**CHAIR** - Community consultation was quite significant by the looks of this. You've taken into account a lot of the feedback, especially from kids. Describe some of the things the children wanted and what they are getting in that regard.

**Mr HOWARD** - Well, they didn't get their swimming pool. I will have to be honest with you, every consultation I have done with students for school starts off with a pool and goes backwards from there. Starting with Todd's team, we ran a generous process a while ago now, about 18 months ago nearly.

**Ms BENCE** - The beginning of 2022.

**Mr HOWARD** - We ran a series of student workshops initially to get their viewpoint on the variety of things they would like to see, prioritising that. We have also done it with our parents, as well as our staff. We provided a series of precedents: here's a photo of this or this, which do you prefer and which don't you prefer? We tried to get an idea of scope of area they liked. Do they like something more modern, do they like something more natural, do they like timber, do they like bright colours? Whatever it might be, to get that feedback on board.

Then, more recently with our students, we have been consistently going back to them with draft designs, with other precedents from the landscape or anything else, getting their feedback on what they like and what they don't like, tallying that up and continuing to refine our process based on their feedback.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - There were probably three things that came through which was more classrooms, outdoor learning and the gymnasium. That was across the consultation we undertook.

**CHAIR** - The gymnasium would probably have been number one.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - Yes, for the community. I am not sure so much for the children.

**Mr HOWARD** - They really want a connection to outside. They want to be able to do their learning outside, have X tasks to be able to do. They want to be able to leave their space and sit somewhere where there is more fresh air and more light, and off they go.

**CHAIR** - For the record, could you describe the catchment of the school?

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**Mr HOWARD** - It is a large catchment visually when you look on the eastern seaboard, particularly when you are looking at other catchments nearby. We stretch from our school in Cambridge and all the Cambridge area, the village of Cambridge. We then stretch through Acton roughly halfway to Lauderdale Primary through that area. We include all of Seven Mile Beach all the way through to Pittwater, just before where Barilla Bay et cetera is. We go all the way out through the Coal River Valley, out to and including Dulcot, so just past Dulcot, between Dulcot and Richmond. Then we come back from there, all of Mt Rumney and from Mt Rumney we go a little bit up the Pass Road, just past Houson Drive at the moment, and back around. That is our lap.

**CHAIR** - That is a pretty big area.

**Mr HOWARD** - Yes, it is.

**Ms RATTRAY** - A growing area.

**Mr HOWARD** - A lot of big blocks that are being highlighted and pushed into subdividing. There is a lot of subdivision going on in that area.

**CHAIR** - Looking at the contingencies, \$2.294 million, 15.19 per cent, and you have the construction contingency, the general project contingency and the post-occupancy contingency. There is no escalation level in there. Quite a few projects of late -

**Ms RATTRAY** - I might have already touched on one.

**CHAIR** - Yes, Brighton. It has just gone \$40 million over, when it was \$30 million. Is there a reason for not having an escalation in there or do you think the contingencies are enough to cover the escalation?

**Ms HARMAN** - We usually show the escalation within the construction allowance of the project rather than as a contingency. The general project contingency has substantial allowance, too, for things to move into the construction phase and other elements.

**CHAIR** - We are looking at 7.5 per cent on that particular dot point and post-occupancy is about 1.99 per cent. But we have seen some very significant changes.

**Ms HARMAN** - There is a market loading and escalation elements. The market loading is 6.7 per cent within the quantity surveyor's estimate but there is also an escalation that gives us the increasing cost to get to the midpoint of construction allowed for within the quantity surveyor's estimate.

**Mr TUCKER** - It is the same quantity surveyor expert that we have for Brighton?

**Ms HARMAN** - It is a very challenging industry at the moment, I would say.

**Ms RATTRAY** - We have nowhere to go once these leave us and it would be very frustrating.

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**CHAIR** - We recommend a project of X amount of dollars and we come back and find it has doubled, and you think if you had have known it would double, maybe we might have had some thoughts. But you can only tell us what you know and I suppose we understand that.

Looking at page 11:

New covered outdoor spaces will be constructed of concrete and brick terraces, with roofs, verandahs, stairs and balustrades being more fine-grained in sheet metal and steel. Ancillary elements will be lightweight, slender and could be more playful.

Lightweight for a reason? Reduced costs? Is it going to be heavy enough to handle the purpose for which it has been built? I was wondering why the lightweight? Is it an aesthetic thing?

**Ms BENCE** - I think it is an aesthetic term, really. We are in the middle of designing these buildings and we are looking at continuing the tradition on site to use brick veneer construction methodology and materials where possible. They are domestic in nature and students are familiar with that kind of materiality. But they are also - particularly Cambridge Up is going to be a big building, it is two storeys. The rest of the buildings on campus, apart from the MP hall, are all quite small in scale, particularly in height. So, I suppose there is a design agenda there that anything that is ancillary to the building volume themselves, to the building envelopes, is expressed in a more lightweight manner. We are thinking there of the stair, for example, and the number of columns that will be needed to hold up those verandahs, and how they might be designed so they are more domestic and more slender.

**CHAIR** - My reason for asking is in terms of durability and long-term maintenance. Sometimes you see a modern building and they put something on it and it's lightweight, and you think that is not going to work 20 years in.

**Ms BENCE** - It needs to be structural and durable.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - I prefer the word robust, because we know schools have to be robust. And I can hear Courtney now, going - 'Todd, you're not going to do that to me, you are not going to leave me a maintenance nightmare', so we absolutely knocked that front and centre in our design considerations.

**Mr TUCKER** - They do not make Rolls Royces like they used to, Mr Chair.

**CHAIR** - No they don't.

**Ms RATTRAY** - That is the first time I have read 'simplicity and domesticity' in a project. That will be interesting to come and check out.

**CHAIR** - Just out of interest, what is the oldest building on site? The school has been there a long time. Are there any original elements of the school?

**Mr HOWARD** - No. In the foyer the original foundation stone is in a glass cabinet. In fact, when you walked in that front blue gate, there are some big rocks there all stacked up. They are bricks and rocks from the original schoolhouse. That was demolished in the 1960s,

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I believe. The original entrance used to be where the fish and chip shop is there, you used to drive straight through that.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I knew there weren't any original buildings because there is nothing that looked like some of my schools.

**CHAIR** - Are you making a point there?

**Ms RATTRAY** - I am making a point.

**Mr TUCKER** - 'A tea-tree grove will form a buffer to Richmond Road, transforming a bog area to an educational rain garden'. Can you explain to me what an 'educational rain garden' is? I'm confused because I thought that Cambridge was a low-rain area. What do you mean by 'rain garden'?

**Mr HOWARD** - There's one area where we walked there towards the end. It was up around the canteen area with the patio where we stood. That lawn out there can get in the dark in winter.

**Mr TUCKER** - It can go mossy.

**Mr HOWARD** - It just gets a bit damp and boggy underfoot. You throw 40 kids out there with a footy twice a day -

**Mr TUCKER** - You can fit 40 kids with a footy on there?

**Mr HOWARD** - They'll keep going. That's the area. In this design we proposed changing that area of the school into a more reflective zone. There might be a celebration of the area for its current waterway. You wanted to remove the fence for instance and have a throughline because the creek's right there.

We'd take down that solid fence and put a pool fence up. There'd be the tea tree on the other side on the riparian area, on the creek side. We'd have a sitting, reflective area where if water is going to be contained there that it might be able to move through a variety of plants.

**Ms BENCE** - I think this is really the expertise of a landscape architect.

**Mr HOWARD** - I am working through it. Miriam's talked about it and you've talked to Miriam. That's their area.

**Ms BENCE** - It's a way in the design of the landscape to be able to harness the water that's already and make it a more reflective area. Not an active playing area but more of a reflective area.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - I am not sure the children will be sitting outside in the rain reflecting.

**Mr HOWARD** - No, they will not.

**CHAIR** - So, what will you do with the captured water?

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**Ms BENCE** - Just for the landscape.

**CHAIR** - Using it as irrigation?

**Ms BENCE** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - Do you have a pump system?

**Ms BENCE** - There will be a rainwater tank for water collection off the back of the kinder building.

**Ms RATTRAY** - How big? Unless you get a decent sized one they are useless.

**Ms BENCE** - I think, from memory it is 2000 litres.

**Ms HARMAN** - It is also about the education principle of engaging with the students. It's more an education basis rather than being able to irrigate the whole space.

**CHAIR** - The kindergarten area has a series of elements they can use to improve their opportunity for play and learning?

**Mr HOWARD** - Correct.

**CHAIR** - One at Bowen Road Primary worked quite well. I'm imagining it's something like that where you have water courses going through.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - A little pump where you can manually pump some water -

**CHAIR** - Those sorts of things, is that what it is?

**Ms HARMAN** - Have little sort of dams and -

**CHAIR** - Make some mud pies.

**Mr HOWARD** - Huonville Primary has a good one.

**Ms RATTRAY** - You can tell you're not teaching in the classroom if you're going to have those sorts of -

**CHAIR** - Well, that is the classroom you see.

**Mr HOWARD** - Our school is entirely messy. With the bush school program, we hose off the children some days when they come back, from waist down. Everyone's in overalls, everyone's in gum boots. The community's really on board with it. Everyone packs a spare set of clothes and that's the way it is. When your children are coming home happy and your children are coming home tired and thoroughly enjoying what they're doing then if they're a bit messy and dirty and have a little bit more washing, that's okay.

**CHAIR** - Keeps them engaged, which is important.

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**Mr TUCKER** - You talk about the wind barriers created with landscaping walls. Do you have a wind problem with the school? Looking at it I wouldn't have thought that you would have.

**Mr HOWARD** - Just one little tunnelled area. We walked through it today with that internal courtyard. Working with the landscape architect we noted that a quick wall here, a quick wall there and a couple of trees there and we should be able to sort that out.

**CHAIR** - Thank you, turning over. Anything on page 12?

**Ms RATTRAY** - I'd like to ask about energy efficiency. It's a big issue for any school. Courtney, you already talked about having warm learning spaces. Is there any solar as part of this project?

**Ms BENCE** - There is the provision for future solar. The intention is that in the future all of the roof areas could be used for solar. All the electrical infrastructure that is going in as part of this project, such as switchboards, is being upgraded to accommodate that in the future.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Does the school have any solar now?

**Mr HOWARD** - Not at this stage. You have another project, Todd?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - Yes, there is a Solar In School program that the state Government is funding with a \$5 million commitment. Through that process we will be capturing the savings that are generated and rolling out more solar in schools through the years. There is an initial fund and investment. In time every school will have solar.

**CHAIR** - It's something we ask regularly.

**Ms RATTRAY** - It seems ridiculous to me that if you're putting a new building in you don't facilitate that up front and have it at the backend, where schools have to apply. When is the department going to start really considering those energy-efficiency options upfront rather than at the back-end?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - We are doing that. Solar is an important part of our plans.

**Ms RATTRAY** - But not at the front end, at the back end.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - We'll be ensuring that a lot of lead work is done with the switchboards to make sure the infrastructure is in place to do that.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Why not bang a few panels on while you are going, in that fancy new Cambridge Up?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - It's all part of the money considerations. All schools will have solar as we roll through that, from the investment that is being created from the initial fund of \$5 million from the state Government. We are our second year into that. As we get further into that, we will be able to.

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**Ms RATTRAY** - It is very kind of you to try to answer my question, but I don't think you did.

**CHAIR** - Staff or school cars might be electric vehicles. Are you putting in charging stations in this development?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - Not as part of this specific project, but we are working with RecFIT, which is doing an assessment across the state for government buildings and charging stations. We have put forward that schools are part of our workplace. Many of our staff who are in government vehicles visit them on a daily basis and we need to have that amenity to be able to charge along the way. We are progressing it from a whole-of-government perspective, but not part of this project. We are focusing our effort on direct benefit to the school and the learners.

**CHAIR** - We talk about switchboards being solar-capable or friendly, they also need to have the capacity to be able to run a charging station. It's a different set of electrics in terms of the amount of power needed. Will the base electrical grid going in be able to handle electric charging stations, rather than retrofit it?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - It's certainly part of our considerations in our electrical infrastructure. We are doing a lot of work in that space and we are upgrading a lot of switchboards and being prepared. There is a lot in that, the charging capability, as there is in solar as well when you get into all the detail of what that means, particularly when you are starting to put in larger systems.

**CHAIR** - It is not just the school either. It is the network that is to provide it.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - Absolutely, it is the surrounding network that is vitally important, as well as our capacity to provide through our school as well. We are involved in that. We have an energy consultant as part of our broader facilities team that is giving us advice on solar and our switchboards and our preparation for what we know is coming. We are gathering information and the things that you talk about are important.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Is there any input into this reference from that person?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - Not specifically for this project, although through the consulting team there would be an electrical consultant that is assessing what is required as part of the school.

**Ms RATTRAY** - But there is nothing, to the Chair's question?

**Ms BENCE** - No.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - Not in terms of charging capability, no.

**CHAIR** - There might be some talk with the contractor about leaving a conduit open specifically for fitting in the circuitry needed for that to happen.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - We are assessing all the switchboards and considering the future requirements, and upgrading all our switchboards in preparation. There are elements that have been considered.



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**CHAIR** - Perhaps it is a recommendation we can make in our report so it gets some consideration.

**Ms RATTRAY** - My favourite, the Tasmanian Government Art Site Scheme. I know I always get told, 'Oh, we are getting to that', but I am interested in what preliminary discussions have been had with probably the school association, staff and some of the community leaders around that. If you don't make it useful and you have a significant piece of art already at the front of the school -

**CHAIR** - Structural element.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Yes, so what are you thinking?

**Mr HOWARD** - At this stage we have commissioned a smaller subgroup to work on the brief and the brief will go out soon. We have \$80 000. The maximum.

**Ms RATTRAY** - You don't have to spend it all. You could put it into some solar.

**Mr HOWARD** - I don't know about that. With all due respect, we are looking forward to that, to be honest with you. We have a small group, a wonderful arts teacher we told you about. She is super-excited about it. The first step for us is to get student consultation. At the very start of next term -

**Ms RATTRAY** - There will be a hundred ideas, though.

**Mr HOWARD** - There will be but that's okay. It is really important to us if we have a significant piece of artwork at the school like that, that the students get a good say on what sort of thing they would like in the brief.

**CHAIR** - They need to respect it at the end of the day.

**Mr HOWARD** - We have that piece of art out there already and I will touch all the wood, but nothing has ever happened to it because the students helped build it. Having a consultative process where the students have a lot of say and have a lot of input, it is going to take some time. We are starting that next term. There are a variety of options and ideas that different people have but that is where the process is sitting.

**CHAIR** - Perhaps that is where the train could come in.

**Ms RATTRAY** - There is nothing that you could share with the committee at all?

**Mr HOWARD** - No, we haven't created a brief yet. We have talked about what is working. We have a significant pedagogical process going on at the moment where we are redesigning the outputs of our curriculum and we are developing what is called our Eagles framework. Our school sits right in the middle of two breeding pairs of wedge-tailed eagles. There is one out at Dulcot way and there is another one on Mt Rumney. They often meet right by the school.

**CHAIR** - Is that right?

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**Mr HOWARD** - Yes, we regularly see wedge-tailed eagles. It is really cool, particularly when you see the little kids are sitting there having lunch and they are like, oh. We have had some interstate consultants in and they are like, that is pretty special. Eagles are important to us so whether that becomes something of the brief we don't know, but it is an idea we have put forward.

We have also put forward the fact that we are close to a creek and from Teresa Sainty, from the work we have done with our Aboriginal heritage consultants, the idea of the path and the creek and the meeting spot. They were the things put forward to start forming our brief at this stage.

**CHAIR** - Things kids can connect to.

**Mr HOWARD** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - It is good to hear. Project management, page 13, any questions there?

**Mr TUCKER** - This one is for Todd. Are you going to guarantee me that this \$15.1 million isn't going to turn into \$50 million?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - Yes. We will work within the budget allocation we have of \$15.1 million.

**Mr TUCKER** - Taking into account that Brighton went from \$30 million to \$74 million?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - You have mentioned Brighton a couple of times. The difference is that we are committed to doing a redevelopment. With Cambridge, I am comfortable that we can deliver the scope that we are committed to, which is the additional spaces and the redeveloped spaces. The difference with Brighton was it was a specific number of students which determined the size. That was the difference, because you were committed to delivering that outcome. Whereas we have a budget of \$15.1 million that I am comfortable we can deliver our outcomes for.

**Ms RATTRAY** - What about surprises when you are redeveloping? That is why most of us were stunned about Brighton - and I know we keep coming back to that because it is a greenfield site. This is a redevelopment and, whether you like it or not, there are often surprises when you start doing refurb.

**CHAIR** - A lot more asbestos maybe than originally thought and those sorts of things.

**Ms RATTRAY** - The buildings are not that old, Chair.

**CHAIR** - No, 1960s. They are.

**Mr HOWARD** - We have an asbestos register and we know where it is.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - They have been well maintained. But, absolutely, there will always be surprises. Hence our contingency. The plan we have is a very good plan and we are working through that plan as we get ready to go to tender. A lot of that becomes clearer and then when you start pulling things apart, it is right in your face.

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**Ms BENCE** - We have already had a lot of surprises and we have been working through them right from the beginning of the project, working through with site investigations and uncovering things.

**CHAIR** - No concrete cancer? It is a 1960s building.

**Ms BENCE** - There is not a huge amount of concrete in the building that we are looking to significantly redevelop, which is the building No. 1. A lot of that is lightweight construction.

**CHAIR** - That is good to know.

**Ms BENCE** - There has been site investigation. We have uncovered the bushfire issues, the flood issues and one thing I didn't mention before. It does also come under a natural values area, so we have had that assessed. We have been actively investigating, uncovering and working towards finding a solution that achieves what the school needs from a functional point of view that deals with the issues or risks present.

**CHAIR** - Going to the natural values assessment, usually that is something we see in a report but we don't seem to have a lot in here on that. Do you want to expand a little bit on that, on whether there was anything of significance in things you have discovered in your assessments on that site?

**Ms BENCE** - The rivulet was the area in question that we needed to investigate. No threatened species, flora or fauna, were found on site but the habitat is there to support them so there needs to be some care taken when that bank is cleared so that the existing eucalyptus and blackwoods along the riverbank can be retained.

**CHAIR** - Silting - you are putting in plans for stopping the siltation of the rivulet?

**Ms BENCE** - There will need to be an appropriate approach taken during construction to manage that.

**CHAIR** - Okay. IT equipment - \$214 000 does not seem like a lot of money. In stage 2 you have \$200 000 there, and a total of \$14 000. How good is the IT network in the current school? Does it need a lot of upgrading? Would you be relying on wifi installation?

**Mr HOWARD** - It's significantly better than when I got there. The department's done an amazing job over the last eight years of significantly increasing capacity. That's through a lot of things you don't see, all the hardware behind the scenes.

We're fortunate. We have wireless access points in every classroom and every room, and a variety of other places. The kindergarten will be able to patch into what's already there. Cambridge Up will need its own switch and connection, but the rest of the school is in good nick.

**Ms HARMAN** - A lot of the IT elements are included in the construction budget, so, the IT is more equipment that you do see.

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**CHAIR** - The use of electronics and digital equipment can only grow. This is going to provide the capacity you can see in the future.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I am interested in the statutory fees for the stage 2, given that it will be on council land. Surely they can forgo their own fees. Are you are having a discussion about that?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - It still has to meet the planning scheme arrangement and it has to be assessed. To be honest, I hadn't considered that.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I suggest that you ask them where the discount is on their own fees.

**CHAIR** - It might be building surveyor costs, which aren't council.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - I believe so, it would be part of the assessment fees from council.

**Ms HARMAN** - And, that's allowance at the moment, but it would be great if did get some discount.

**Ms RATTRAY** - It's worth asking the question.

**CHAIR** - Any other questions on that page? Flipping over. Timeline. Planning Approval.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I'd like to go to identified risks. On page 15 we have some significant identified risks. I go back to the question asked by Mr Tucker on the budget overrun. It's identified as a risk, top of the list. There is also one for the budget overrun due to an unidentified infrastructure issue. They're obviously front of mind. Can we marry up what you said, '\$15.1 million, no more', yet, they are being put forward as identified risk?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - We identify all the risks that we see as we work through. They're common across all projects. I'm comfortable with the budget we have.

**CHAIR** - Is contingency going to cover these?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - I believe so. The challenge is, as we get ready to tender and we have detailed documentation and more up-to-date information, what is that telling us? That's every project we work through. Hopefully we don't get too many surprises and everything is okay.

What can happen is, we then have to look at the priorities and have conversations with Courtney.

**Ms RATTRAY** - That was my next question. What are you prepared to give up? Under the tender packaging, identified risk, prioritisation of works to ensure a budget fit. So, that's the big question.

**Mr HOWARD** - I've learnt a new phrase in the last couple of months, it is called 'value management'. It's a good phrase. We're clear we need five new classrooms. We go back to our priorities and the work we have done with consultation with community and particularly

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the work with the students. We know we need five rooms. We know the gym's there. We want indoor-outdoor connection.

**Ms RATTRAY** - It could be the carpark.

**Mr HOWARD** - The carpark, or it might be around the scope of some of the refurb somewhere. Maybe the 4-metre thing might have to come into 3.5 metres. It will depend on when you get a cost estimate back as to how much saving we have to make. We're pretty clear that five classrooms are what we need.

**Ms RATTRAY** - That everything that's been put forward is expectation and there's nothing aspirational about that? That is the expectation?

**Mr HOWARD** - Sorry, are you asking me a question?

**Ms RATTRAY** - I am saying, you are not prepared to compromise on what's been put forward here?

**Mr HOWARD** - I am going to have to compromise. If they come back and tell me it's \$22 million then I am going to have to compromise something, aren't I?

**Ms RATTRAY** - But, if it is five GLA areas, if it's the gymnasium, I don't know that half a metre on a veranda is going to be the saving if it's significant. What are you prepared to let go of, or nothing at all?

**Mr HOWARD** - At this stage, the last cost estimate associated with this came back that we are on track. For us to have a blowout, what would the size of that be? I don't know, but I am assuming it is not going to a \$15 million blowout. It is not my job. I teach kids to read. I get staff on board.

**Ms RATTRAY** - And we want to congratulate you for that.

**Mr HOWARD** - Thank you. That's my gig. We will need five GLAs. For \$8 million we still think, even if things get high, we can still give five GLAs. Maybe we don't get a lot of refurb on that middle block we walked through, those older classrooms. Maybe we don't get as much refurb as we wanted. We still think we can get indoor-outdoor connection on that side. Maybe the canteen doesn't go quite as big. I don't know what it comes back at.

**Mr TUCKER** - Don't let them train you up too much with these new words.

**Mr HOWARD** - I am staying right out of it, don't you worry about that. I will keep with reading comprehension. That will be my thing.

**Mr TUCKER** - Going on with the identified risks, it is on the next page. The council risk and the strategy there is:

Stage 2 projects start to be developed as a stand-alone package if council funding is not available, with ongoing consultation with council.

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If council changes its master plan it might say it doesn't want any of this at all. What are we going to do then? You say that if council funding is not available you do a stand-alone package. What if councils says it wants something totally different?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - That's why we've identified it as a risk. We've had positive discussions with council about this. Council recently approved its master plan with the gymnasium. The community has been very clear with their feedback on what their expectation is. The priority for them was a gymnasium. If council cannot deliver its whole master plan, I believe that the \$7 million we've allocated can provide a gymnasium, carparking and traffic management improvements. I require council's approval for that because it's their land. While there's a risk that it won't, it's bringing significant benefit to the community, and the community is saying that is what they want.

**Mr TUCKER** - Coming back to the discussion before about the gymnasium for the school or a gymnasium for the community, with your stand-alone package is that going to be a gymnasium for the community or a gymnasium for the school?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - It would be a gymnasium for the school that the community could use outside of school hours.

**Ms RATTRAY** - At a cost?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - You're talking my negotiation language again. There comes a cost to run a gymnasium, that's right. That's all part of the discussion.

**CHAIR** - You would have to do it if it was on your site anyway.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - Yes, we would.

**CHAIR** - It is an interesting question, it being in the risk register. You have to always contemplate these things.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - To re-emphasise, the gymnasium provides benefit to the school, but also the community said to us and to council when we talked about the development generally. Number one was they wanted to have a gymnasium because there aren't those amenities in the area that they can use. This commitment allows for that to be delivered. Negotiation to play out. We would certainly be delivering a strong community benefit.

**CHAIR** - That would be part of the lease area, that gymnasium, or not?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - Yes. We would need to lease the land to build that gymnasium on.

**CHAIR** - Is there likely to be significant lease cost associated with this? Is that taken into account in your budget?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - Generally when we are leasing land to construct a building on that we would own, there isn't a cost to lease because there's mutual benefit. We do pay a nominal fee for use of the oval.

**Mr HOWARD** - Yes. We pay roughly \$4000 a year to the Clarence City Council.

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**Ms RATTRAY** - That is not insignificant.

**Mr HOWARD** - No, but somebody else is out there mowing it, fertilising it, watering it, managing it.

**CHAIR** - They do that?

**Mr HOWARD** - All of it. If you think of the fees that the department would be paying for a full-time groundsperson and the lawnmower, it is a pretty good win.

**CHAIR** - It is a small cost compared.

**Mr TUCKER** - Coming back to what Tania was talking about with budget overruns and tender packaging, and prioritising of works to ensure the budgets fit, if we get a budget overrun or tender package that runs over and comes in at \$15 million to do stage 1, will stage 2 be left to fund stage 1, or where will that take us?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - Very good question.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Go back to the department cap in hand?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - We have separated the two packages to focus on school and school benefit, and to focus on community benefit and our partnership with council. I could not see that we would be taking money from the council partnership approach to fund the school approach. It would be work with the school on the priorities and what we could deliver within that funding.

**Mr HARMAN** - The tender will have itemised elements. It will have the new build cost, whether it is Cambridge Up and the kindergarten. Not sure yet. But then the price of the refurbishment in the existing building. So there will be elements within the tender package that can be assessed once costs are known and work is potentially prioritised.

**Mr TUCKER** - What you are saying to us if it goes out to \$15 million, it will still put the \$7 million to the council-owned area, or the gymnasium, everything like that. But you will cut it back to 50 per cent on stage one with the learning areas with the five classrooms.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - We would not take the council partnership money that has been part of many years of discussion and agreement to get to that point to fund a budget overrun in the school works. We would work within the \$8.1 million to deliver a good outcome for the school with the \$8.1 million.

**CHAIR** - Another aspect in the identified risks is the continuity of learning during construction works. This is obviously going to be your headache, Mr Principal. You have worked through all of that? You understand how you are going to manage that?

**Mr HOWARD** - I understand it is going to be painful. It is a bit of short-term pain for long-term gain. I don't know if there is a way around it. There are some creative solutions we might be able to employ, there's good Gantt charts for project management and good negotiation with builders and discussion around when can happen and what. I daresay every

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classroom will be doing some sort of inquiry into noise or heavy digging or something. There is a way to take a threat and turn it into an opportunity.

We also know that, in essence, it is a fairly condensed building time frame for what the scope of the project is. Most of the big building will be done in one stage and then the other bits. Everyone will be impacted at a different time.

**CHAIR** - It looks like construction works will commence in November.

**Mr HOWARD** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - And be completed by April.

**Mr HOWARD** - I think it is more than April. There is 18 months. It is the April following.

**CHAIR** - I am sorry, of course.

**Ms BENCE** - And the intention is that within the tender package the works would be staged.

**Ms RATTRAY** - You do Cambridge Up first. Get that finished and you have got some significant GLA areas ready to go. That will free up some of the others.

**Mr HOWARD** - Yes, to work on the specifics of it, the new builds, the kindergarten and the Cambridge Up the hill first. Then once that is done, decamp, do that bit. Done.

**CHAIR** - Do you try to concentrate on the school holiday for activities, construction?

**Mr HOWARD** - Ideally. We will just see how it goes with the tender process and everything else, but most certainly.

**CHAIR** - I do not envy the task but it is obviously important to be able to do it properly.

The other aspect is, of course, the construction side of it - if the council does go ahead and does their construction activity as well, in terms of being able to coordinate that. I don't know if that is in here as part of an identified risk in terms of parents dropping off children trying to negotiate construction works happening in both directions.

**Ms HARMAN** - We have not talked in detail with them yet, have we? I think it will be a fairly discrete package particularly for the construction of the gym. Obviously, when there is civil works going, there will have to be other parking arrangements. It should be reasonably straightforward.

**Ms RATTRAY** - You won't be tearing up what is already there, will you? Is that the plan?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - The council will be.

**Ms HARMAN** - There will be changes to some of that car parking and the old toilets.



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**Mr WILLIAMS** - I suppose the safe and continued operation of the school is front and centre in what we do. We know that we have to provide better and we know the impact if we don't in terms of student learning, but also on people's lives as well. So that will be the front and centre of our discussions.

**CHAIR** - Any other questions from members?

**Ms RATTRAY** - I do have a question in regard to your consultation. I think I asked a question about Aussie Rules earlier and I was told that the council had decided that they did not need Aussie Rules goals on the oval. That is not what my kids are telling me here or the community. They said that they need some poles, footy goals on the oval. Is there any chance that the school association might be able to work with the council?

**Mr HOWARD** - Again, it is the council land.

**Ms RATTRAY** - That is why I asked about the school association.

**Mr HOWARD** - Unfortunately, it is just out of -

**Ms RATTRAY** - It is not a priority?

**Mr HOWARD** - No, they are just both out of my remit. The school association is a parent body. They are good at doing what they want to do and the council is -

**Ms RATTRAY** - They take a lot of notice of the principal in my experience.

**Mr HOWARD** - Yes, they do. We are fortunate to have a very active, very strong school association. They are the reason why we are all in this room here today together. If they want to work on that, they will.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I thought I might mention it. I met a Collingwood supporter earlier today -

**CHAIR** - Still getting over it, are you?

**Ms RATTRAY** - He was as keen as mustard, thank you very much.

**CHAIR** - The member to my right has had significant involvement with footy over the years.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I just love sport and kids being involved, and community sport is so important, particularly to the small communities I represent.

**CHAIR** - When we were there this morning having a look at the site, there is a significant amount of children's play area that one of the buildings is going to basically go over the top of. Can you tell us what your plans are in terms of replacing those sorts of elements for children so they are not left without places to play and the like?

**Ms RATTRAY** - The High Fort, wasn't it?

**Mr HOWARD** - Top Fort.

**Ms BENCE** - The Top Fort is up in the corner of the site where the new Cambridge Up building is going to be located. The Top Fort needs to come down to accommodate that. We are looking at a location in the far corner of the site, which is likely to be where the early to middle aged kids will be more closely located with classrooms. Something that has elevation that the children can climb up into, survey the site, see from, is really important. We are looking at a piece of play equipment for that area.

In the immediate area around Cambridge Up, where we're obviously going to be having the terrace area and the deck on the upper level, we will be taking out about four pieces of play equipment there and they will need to be replaced. There will be replacement of play equipment. The design of those hasn't happened yet -

**CHAIR** - But they can't be reused right? Because of the type of equipment they are.

**Ms BENCE** - The advice to date is that once taken apart they would not be put back together safely and meet current standards. We're looking forward to next term doing another round of consultation with the students. A focus of the consultation is what should go back there.

**CHAIR** - If there are no further questions, I would like to reiterate to you that 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 said to us. Do you understand?

There are five important questions that I ask. I need clear answers to these.

Does the proposed works meet an identified need or needs or solve a recognised problem?

**Mr HOWARD** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - The recognised problem being the school is just simply too small, is that right? It is at 90 per cent capacity today. You think it's going to grow to what figure in 10 years time?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - An additional 125. We have 500 students.

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

**Mr WILLIAMS** - Yes, I believe so. There is nothing Rolls-Royce about the construction type that we are proposing.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Simplistic and what was the other word?

**Mr HOWARD** - Domestic.

**Mr TUCKER** - So it is a Toyota then.

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**Ms HARMAN** - Very reliable.

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

**Mr HOWARD** - Yes, I believe so.

**CHAIR** - Do the proposed works provide value for money?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - Yes, I believe so.

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

**Mr WILLIAMS** - Yes, there is clear benefit for the school and there is clear benefit for the community.

**CHAIR** - Thank you very much for that. Thank you for attending today to give your evidence. As I always say we have nothing to be able to scrutinise properly without the fullest of evidence. You have helped us get that today. So, thank you.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - Thank you.

**Ms BENCE** - Thank you.

**THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.**

**The Committee adjourned at 3.24 p.m.**