

# PUBLIC

**THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS MET IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING ROOM, HENTY HOUSE, LAUNCESTON, ON TUESDAY, 7 MARCH 2023**

## **MAJOR REDEVELOPMENT OF EXETER HIGH SCHOOL**

**Ms MIN HARMAN**, MANAGER, CAPITAL WORKS, DEPARTMENT OF STATE GROWTH; **Mr BEN FRERK**, PRINCIPAL, EXETER HIGH SCHOOL; **Mr JAMES MORRISON**, ARCHITECT CONSULTANT, MORRISON & BREYTENBACH ARCHITECTS; and **Mr TODD WILLIAMS**, DIRECTOR FACILITY SERVICES, DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

**CHAIR (Mr Valentine)** - Welcome, everybody, to the Public Works Committee hearing on the major development of Exeter High School. We have apologies from Jen Butler, who is unable to be with us here today. Members of the committee are: to my left, Simon Wood; me, Rob Valentine; Tania Rattray; John Tucker. We also have James Reynolds from Hansard and Scott Hennessey, secretary of the committee.

Thank you for coming today to provide evidence. It is important for us when we're considering matters such as this. Thank you also for providing the conducted tour, and can you please take our thanks formally back to the students who assisted us today? It was good that they were there. They were able to answer questions, give their opinions and we really appreciate that. It helps us to understand it from their perspective as much as from those who are seeking to move it from the department's perspective.

I need to read a statement to you so that you are aware that today you are giving evidence, and there are some important aspects of committee proceedings. It is a hearing, a proceeding in parliament in fact, and this means it receives the protection of parliamentary privilege. It 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 questions in any court or any 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. It is a public hearing. Members of the public and journalists may be present and this means your evidence may be reported. Do you understand? I need a clear 'yes' from each of you.

**WITNESSES** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - The opportunity is there to make an opening statement. Would you like to make an opening statement on this particular development?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - Thank you, Chair. I would like to lead on briefly. You have the detail in our submission, but perhaps a quick summary. The \$11 million major redevelopment of Exeter High School is an exciting project for the school and the community. The focus of that project is providing contemporary learning environments. Thank you for making the time to have the tour today. I hope it was useful in gaining an understanding of the school operations.

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**CHAIR** - It is always useful to gain an understanding of the school's operations. Submissions can only make so many things clear, and when you see it on the ground it is important to us.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - Absolutely agree. We have the plans and are happy to take your questions and get into the detail of the submission.

**CHAIR** - What we normally do is work through page by page on a submission to make sure we don't miss anything. A lot of questions were posed during the visit and these questions may be revisited as we go through today. The reason for that, is that we need it on the record. If we don't have those answers on the record, then we can't use it in our reporting back - so you will forgive us if we cover some ground that we would have covered this morning.

Clearly, this particular development is something that has been a while coming. Can you talk to the fact that this is the second submission and you might tell us why that is the case, for the record? We realise that this did come forward in November. Is that correct?

**Ms HARMAN** - That is correct.

**CHAIR** - If you can cover why there has been that hiatus and the reasoning that was behind that.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - The Exeter High School Redevelopment Project was announced in 2021 through the state budget, and we have been working ever since that announcement to reach this point. We always endeavour to progress a project as quickly as we can whilst trying to ensure we get a quality outcome, and there is a balance to that. Through that process late last year and following further advice from our quantity surveyor, it highlighted a little concern that we had in fulfilling the plans we wanted to deliver. We needed to consider that advice and we also needed to consult through the school association and the community. We didn't want to rush and provide something to the committee that wasn't quite right. We wanted to make sure that our messaging was right and, importantly, we wanted to engage with the community on that, so we took that time to postpone. Thank you for allowing us to do that and to do that consultation through November, December and January. February was a return to work, return to school focus and we are now in March and here.

**CHAIR** - Clearly, for us to have gone forward and not provided that opportunity back, it wouldn't have served anyone well. The member to my right may wish to make a statement.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I am interested in a summary of that additional community consultation because my understanding is that this is exactly the same in version 2 as what we had in version 1. I am interested in what those issues were, or if there was nothing from the community input, for the reason for holding it over?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - Absolutely. The community consultation report that you have in the submission was that initial community consultation that we undertake as part of a lead into any of our capital development projects, and that is to engage, listen and feed that information into the project. The discussion that we wanted to have - and what we did have - was what we could not have hoped to originally provide. We had to reduce slightly. There were some elements that we needed to reduce, and they were the works to the library area, the scope of works to the

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kitchen area and a toilet amenity that - based on the latest quantity surveyor advice at that time - we could not produce. So, we needed to pause to have that discussion with the school, with the school association, and then we also released that amended works plan to the community for feedback during January. The feedback we received was supportive, however limited.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I suggest that January is not an ideal time to seek community feedback. I'm not saying that the Exeter community is not a very engaged community - I dare not say that - but, people are often away on holidays. Are you absolutely satisfied that the community is on board with this revised plan that has been put forward, because there are a couple of significant areas of redevelopment that have been wiped, from what we see?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - I certainly am, and Ben might like to contribute as well.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I hope he does.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - He lives and works in that community. To respond, I agree that January isn't an appropriate time. However, I also tried to progress the project to get the benefits for the students. We are almost two years into the project and we want to keep moving, so I acknowledge that; but also trying to keep moving to deliver positive outcomes is challenging.

Having met with the school and the school association to have these open, frank conversations, those conversations were about ensuring we focus on the priority areas - which we continue to do; and that's around the learning environment. Acknowledging the timing wasn't quite right; but also, I believe that the message had got out widely through the community and the discussions we had were positive and accepting about delivering the key outcomes of the learning areas.

**Mr FRERK** - I agree with what Todd's saying. The bulk of that work and communicating was done in 2022, towards the last term of the year. I'm all about transparency, and I want the community to be involved and to understand the decisions that we have had to make to ensure that we are providing the kids with the best possible educational facilities - not only now, but for the next 25 years.

**CHAIR** - You're satisfied that the community has a very good understanding as to what's trying to be achieved?

**Mr FRERK** - Totally satisfied. It's given me some very positive feedback. I got some positive feedback during the advertisements that went public during January and that has proceeded into this year as well. So, very happy.

**Ms RATTRAY** - We will probably talk a bit more about that when we get to proposed works.

**CHAIR** - That's exactly right. Unless anyone has anything on the introduction, which gives an overview of the project, \$11 million of it.

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Moving to page 4. You talk about the school has collectively developed a 'Teacher Learning Community', based upon high expectations and created conditions for teachers to understand their own impact on student outcomes, et cetera. Do you want to expand on that?

**Mr FRERK** - That basically means that we've worked really hard on developing the preconditions for schools. Those preconditions are paramount to successful learning and successful teaching. There are certain things that need to happen for teachers to be able to teach and students to be able to learn, and that's what we have worked hard on. We've worked hard on building the capacity in teachers to make sure they can provide opportunities, but we've also really built on those cultural aspects within our kids that they come to school with the attitude that they want to learn. That metacognition in regard to understanding themselves as learners and understanding how certain ways to behave, so those sorts of things can happen.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Could you also put on the public record the initiative that you have at your school around the longer lesson times and the value that you believe that creates for students and teacher relationships?

**Mr FRERK** - Yes. Exeter High School is structured a lot differently to traditional high schools. Our timetable consists of three 100-minute blocks. So, our students operate in a core classroom. They do their English, maths, history, science and health all in one group with a smaller class, so they develop those direct connections with minimal teachers and they're not transitioning across the school - that maximises the time they're actually engaged in learning.

The benefits from this are that the school is extremely calm, which allows students that have an array of learning disabilities, anxiety and those sorts of things, to come to school and to function and to make the most of the opportunities that we provide.

**CHAIR** - Do you have special needs children? How does that help?

**Mr FRERK** - Yes. With the special needs, the way that our school is set up is that the less transition, the less movement, the calmer the school, the easier it is for them to function. It works really well.

**CHAIR** - Those students with Asperger's and those sorts of circumstances, can function better in that environment?

**Mr FRERK** - Those sorts of stimulations of movement and chaotic areas in the school, if you can minimise those sorts of things, it allows kids to concentrate on what they are able to do. One of the things that we pride ourselves on is that kids can come to school and just be themselves. That's something we have worked really hard on.

**CHAIR** - Some schools that we've looked at in the past have had changes specifically made to cater for some of those children. We've heard of teachers having to get under a desk with a student to calm the student down and give them that enclosed environment where they feel comfortable. Do you cater for that in your school, or is that something that isn't necessary at this point in time?

**Mr FRERK** - I think it's always necessary. The bottom line is that every day is different and you never know what you're going to get. So, you always have to best equip your teachers and best equip your environments to cope with being a human being. If we have an

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environment where it is calm and it's collected and where people feel safe, then, what's the product from that? It's learning.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - From a building perspective, the buildings from the past did not easily provide those areas. So, in part of the proposal we are talking about those additional spaces to support individuals, which is a key focus of today and future learning.

**CHAIR** - So, you have an area, for instance, where you could pull the blinds down and reduce the stimuli for a child who is really stressed and needs a more enclosed space to be able to cope?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - Yes. A key part of the design that we have for this school and a key part of contemporary learning are those flexible differing size spaces that you can adapt and meet the needs of the students.

**CHAIR** - I'm not suggesting that students there have that, but that's a certain functionality.

**Mr FRERK** - Inclusion is such an important aspect.

**CHAIR** - Equal access. This redevelopment takes that into account quite well? There aren't any major hurdles?

**Mr MORRISON** - All spaces will be designed to be accessible. We walked into those blocks and those little entrance ways are no longer fit for purpose, they are too narrow for wheel chair access, so, we will have to widen those. The front door is the first thing we did in last week's block. Certainly, every space within the school is accessible.

**Ms HARMAN** - That we are refurbishing.

**Mr MORRISON** - Yes.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - That's all part of our planning approval, compliance with the Building Code of Australia et cetera.

**Ms RATTRAY** - My question is about construction in 1985. The information says that:

The physical teaching spaces are dated, and many have not been updated since the construction of the school in 1985.

Are they the ones that are not being addressed in this proposed upgrade? I am interested. We didn't have time to get a look at the whole school.

**Mr FRERK** - The areas that we visited are the areas that will be upgraded.

**Ms RATTRAY** - They haven't had any upgrade since 1985?

**Mr FRERK** - Superficial.

**Ms RATTRAY** - So the lime green Laminex in the kitchen?

**Mr FRERK** - Has had no upgrade.

**Ms RATTRAY** - No upgrade; yet, I would have thought it was from the 70s. There you go.

**CHAIR** - They still thought it was de rigueur in 1985.

**Mr TUCKER** - What are you trying to say about Exeter?

**CHAIR** - Looking at further down, the second last paragraph, page 4:

The school's *Food and Fibre* program is a unique program with a combination of practical and academic learning for all students..

What is so unique about the program at Exeter as opposed to other schools?

**Ms RATTRAY** - It's the colour scheme, I think.

**CHAIR** - The lime green.

**Mr FRERK** - That's is a direct reference to our 11/12 program, as Food and Fibre is our vocational education course. While we were at school, I mentioned the 7-10 curriculum content regarding agriculture directly links into our years 11 and 12 vocational and Food and Fibre.

**CHAIR** - Paddock to plate?

**Mr FRERK** - Paddock to plate. What makes it so unique about how we structure it is how we make it so flexible, depending on the learners that we have each year, and how we manipulate what they need and the direction they want to go.

**CHAIR** - Okay. Any further questions on page 4? No. Page 5?

**Ms RATTRAY** - What about the relationship with TasTAFE?

**Mr FRERK** - TasTAFE - that's our quadbikes, those sorts of things, that we think are fundamentally important for kids to learn. They can go off on site and drive tractors and things like that because that is what industry demands and that is what we believe we have to give.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Forklift licence and the like?

**Mr FRERK** - Not forklift, but quadbikes, side-by-sides, tractors.

**CHAIR** - Normal safety aspects of that, because they are probably doing it at home.

**Mr FRERK** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - So, they are getting an opportunity to be properly schooled in that and it reduces accidents, at the end of the day. That's good to know.

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**Mr TUCKER** - What's the capacity of the school at the moment? How many students could it hold?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - Its current capacity is 525.

**Mr TUCKER** - And it has enrolments of 311, so it has twice the capacity of what it is already holding and you are forecasting an increase of 24 - six a year - over the next four years. Is that correct?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - That's the forecast.

**Mr TUCKER** - With years 11 and 12, are you expecting any increase going further forward?

**Mr FRERK** - We are continually trying to promote the course that we run. In this regard we're working with the Northern Urban Collective as well. So, that involves us with all town high schools and the colleges to make sure we can provide directions for every single kid, whether that be that they come to us and do Food and Fibre and what we can support, or go to the colleges. It is all individually based.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - It is a challenge to project, particularly when the years 11 and 12 initiative is about student choice and how students choose to do their years 11 and 12, whether it is at Exeter or whether it is at a college.

**Mr FRERK** - True.

**CHAIR** - What percentage of students from Exeter would end up going through years 11 and 12 in Launceston, in colleges?

**Mr FRERK** - About 85 to 90 per cent of our kids transition from Exeter into colleges.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Do you think that's mainly because of the lack of distance from the city centre, unlike St Marys or even perhaps Scottsdale or Campbell Town?

**Mr FRERK** - A lot of factors influence that decision. It might be traditional ones. It might be their parents went to those specific colleges. However, as education is continually changing, kids are more open about what is available to them and what specific direction they want to take because there are more opportunities available now than there ever have been.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - It's interesting that we have had some very successful years 11 and 12 in areas such as Ulverstone, as an example.

**Ms RATTRAY** - In some, we've had a couple of students.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - It's hard, as I said, to predict what the numbers are going to be, based on the student choice. I understand travel is a factor but then there are examples that suggest it isn't.

**Mr TUCKER** - There is a lot of capacity in the school to take on extra students.

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**Mr WILLIAMS** - There is capacity.

**Mr TUCKER** - You said the capacity of the school is 525, so about 50 per cent capacity is where we're at.

**Ms RATTRAY** - In the future, do you see Legana Primary School students for grade 7 going to Exeter High school, or do you see them coming into Riverside or somewhere else?

**Mr FRERK** - That's a hard one to predict.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I didn't say I was going to ask easy questions.

**Mr FRERK** - To be honest, I am worried about 2023 and 2024, and we will wait and see what 2025 and 2026 brings.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Just thought I would check. Thanks for trying.

**CHAIR** - I asked this on site, and I'm interested to know whether any of the work that is being done here will help facilitate the 11 and 12s and their program going forward, or is it specifically for 7 and 8 and 9 and 10?

**Mr FRERK** - It's specifically for 7, 8, 9 and 10 because the 11 and 12 facility has been completed. I refer back to a comment that I made, that this facility supports that 7-10; and 7-10 is so integral for those kids leaving Exeter and transitioning into 11 and 12; so I think it complements both.

**CHAIR** - Helps them make that critical decision.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - There are some areas being done that are around the courtyard area and the amenities area, so perhaps not direct learning benefit. As you say, the works have been done on the farm and on the school site to support years 11 and 12.

**CHAIR** - Okay, anything else on 5? No. Page 6 - we've covered a bit of that and covered the consultation. Page 7?

**Ms RATTRAY** - I would like to talk about the proposed work and put on the record the items that have been listed for this proposal and the ones that were left off. The library hub - I presume that's part of the one that was left off?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - Correct, yes.

**Ms RATTRAY** - And the antiquated toilet block - there is an upgrade, but not a complete upgrade. Can we have that on the record?

**Mr MORRISON** - There were two and now we will be doing one.

**Ms RATTRAY** - What about the external improvements, including access ramp, covered outdoor space? Do they get a guernsey?



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**Mr MORRISON** - Those are still in. We're only partially changing the access ways, those barrel vaulted things that aren't really effective.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Those polycarbonates - hard to clean?

**Mr MORRISON** - Yes, and they direct the water on to you as you walk underneath them.

**CHAIR** - Pretty friendly if you are a plant.

**Mr MORRISON** - We are not replacing all of them as we were hoping to do in the beginning. We are replacing the ones around the main courtyard.

**Ms RATTRAY** - But they won't be in the same type of material as what's already there?

**Mr MORRISON** - No. We're keeping the metal structure, because we can reuse it. We're taking off the plastic and putting some purlins on top of that and then some roof sheeting on top of that, so it becomes more like a traditional verandah and is a much wider shelter area.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Will that be clear, or will it be Colorbond?

**Mr MORRISON** - No, we will probably go for clear because it is in front of a lot of the windows, and it will have a gutter so it takes the water away and doesn't spill down on top of you.

**CHAIR** - Are you doing anything with that water?

**Ms RATTRAY** - That's a very good question, Chair.

**CHAIR** - Were you going to ask that question?

**Ms RATTRAY** - That was my next question.

**CHAIR** - Sorry.

**Ms RATTRAY** - No, as long as we get it on the record.

**Mr MORRISON** - We were hoping to do something with the water but again budgetary concerns, it is going to go straight into the stormwater system.

**Ms RATTRAY** - You can't put in some tanks to use for some reuse water for the landscaping aspect?

**Mr MORRISON** - It all costs money. We're concentrating on the learning areas.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - We certainly try to be sustainable wherever we can. Experiences from the past, where we have done exactly what you've asked, at times we've found that those tanks are unused and they overflow, and they create other problems. We try to focus our efforts on other sustainable aspects; but certainly where we can on projects where there is benefit, yes, we do.

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**Ms RATTRAY** - It is a pity - to shut down two tank building businesses.

**CHAIR** - If there's a garden that can utilise it. As you say, providing the infrastructure, it is all a balance. It's good to reduce the TasWater costs, one would think.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I have a question around the good old catch-all on the bottom there:

Other minor improvements are subject to a favourable tender outcome including the development of a meeting room within the existing Administration block.

What do we call that? Pie in the sky?

**Mr MORRISON** - No. The tendering climate at the moment is very difficult to get it right, so we build in a bit of flexibility. If you notice, we had our meeting today in the library. It means you have to walk all the way through the school. That's not ideal for Ben wanting to meet visitors, and so forth. The one small project within the bigger project is creating a meeting room with admin area. I know that's not an absolute must, because it has a meeting room in the library - but it's not ideal. If there's additional money left over, we will put it in a tender package as a separate item and if it comes in over budget, we will take it out; or if we are lucky and we get a little tender price, we can leave it in.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - At this stage it is within the estimates that we are being provided and it is within the plans that are there. But it is, as you say, a catch-all because we are still a little while away from going to tender and finding out from the market what their tender prices are.

**Mr TUCKER** - Just so I'm clear, that meeting room is the only thing that is going to be a separate tender within the tender? Or are there going to be other tenders within the tender that we could end up with being cut out if we don't get a favourable tender? That's a bit of a mouthful, isn't it?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - There are lots of tenders in all that. I am not sure if James can answer the specifics about the components or separate proportions that we put in the tender, the separate packages of work that we are asking them to do, but that one certainly is, James.

**Mr MORRISON** - Certainly, the project will be phased because the school has to be able to shuffle things around to continue working. The tender will come back in at least four stages, so, if necessary we can knock out an end stage if we have to. I am hopeful we're not because we have done this to death.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - Perhaps it's best if I give a little more information. The estimates that we have now are based on a quantity survey in November/December last year. Before we go to tender, we'll also be checking in as the plans progress and we get more detailed plans, so there is more detail for the quantity surveyor to estimate. We'll do that again before we go to tender. That's a check for us that we are still on track and moving. The final check is the actual tender themselves when they come in. So, there is no certainty in that, because it is a movement. What we are seeing in the market at the moment from the tender results that we are receiving - and we receive tender results weekly, fortnightly because we have a variety of packages - they have stabilised. That is in there because there is an element that is unknown.

**Mr TUCKER** - The next question is around this tendering; how much work is in the pipeline? Are we targeting this tendering process at the moment, with this school, so that there is capacity within our construction industry to do this work? We want continuity of work but I get the feeling that we might be overloading our construction industry. Do we need to - ?

**Ms RATTRAY** - Then they put the price up.

**CHAIR** - Because they don't want the job, because they have too much on.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - I regularly participate in forums with Infrastructure Tasmania and we share our pipeline with them. They regularly release the 10-year plan and I understand there are forums with industry on those. Every one of the projects that Min and her team are progressing at the moment is in the *Future Opportunities* website so contractors are aware of what is coming up and when they are coming up. We're certainly still receiving tenders, so it's an indication to us that they are still wanting to do our work.

**Mr TUCKER** - That leads to another question. I've seen this with some of the roads, where you don't receive a tender at all or you receive one tender. How many tenders are we getting on jobs at the moment and how many are you envisaging for this school project?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - We are certainly getting fewer than we did five years ago. Min is probably able to talk about this as well. There is an element of the unknown. The information we are getting at the moment is the market has capacity to respond to this tender. Our team is regularly engaged with industry. We regularly work with them as well.

**Ms HARMAN** - We probably have four or five contractors in the Launceston region who we can reach out to, pre-tender. The other thing we've recently done in busy times is be reasonably open-ended on a completion date. We're saying that we will review and assess the tenders that we get; we're not saying we have to have it by the 2025 school year. Of course, we would love that, or half way through that school year, but we know that it will put some tenderers off.

**Mr TUCKER** - So you're envisaging four building contractors coming forward?

**Ms HARMAN** - It is hard to see but there are a few mid-range builders in the Launceston region who could be interested in this.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Have there been any attempts to try to broaden how many of those businesses are available, those construction companies? They have to reach a fairly high bar. I'm not saying lower the bar, but sometimes a business might need some support to meet the bar. Has there been any work in that area so there are more tenders available?

**CHAIR** - Or even making them more aware, perhaps, that there are jobs?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - I understand through Infrastructure Tasmania and through Treasury as well there have been connections with industry and workshops about how we can support industry, how we can make sure material availability is suitable for the projects that we are doing. There have been discussions for at least the last 24 months about an acknowledgment of the state of the industry and how we work together to deliver the outcomes. It is a challenge.

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There's no doubt about that. The key part for us is that we are still receiving our tenders and we are still connecting with industry. We haven't, that I can recall, had any submissions where we haven't received submissions. It's an indication to us that industry wants to work with us.

**Ms RATTRAY** - We've already talked a bit about the Brighton School development, and even though it's hard to talk about, it is real. That has gone almost 50 per cent over budget. It's alright to have those conversations but if it is going to blow out the price, then what we look at as a committee on behalf of the Tasmanian community is nowhere near what is going to happen in reality. How do we marry that up? We all want to see new infrastructure, but we also understand that we don't have an endless pit of money. Those contractor conversations - I'm not sure what you have had with the Brighton developer? I expect it's a pretty hard one, but they've won and the state hasn't.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - They are independent tender assessments that go through all the appropriate government procurement rules. The key part with Exeter is that the \$11 million will make a significant improvement to the learning environment. It's certainly been challenging to have to reduce scope; however, the priority remains, and I am comfortable we will deliver significant improvement for learning. The market is challenging, unprecedented. However, with regard to Exeter, I'm comfortable that we can deliver some significant benefit.

**CHAIR** - Some of those questions we can put during Estimates, maybe, with Treasury in front of us.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I have a question about the materials. Do you want me to wait for those?

**CHAIR** - Wait until we get to that area.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Thank you.

**Mr TUCKER** - I will follow on with this. You mentioned that there were four phases to the tendering. Is that correct, James?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - We have to work that through. It depends on four stages of work in regards to the works package. We have to stage the work to keep the school safe and operational. Whatever package that we come up with based on the tendered result, we will deliver; we won't be reducing stages. It's how we manage that works package to keep operating a school.

**Mr TUCKER** - What happens if the first stage tender comes in, like the Brighton High School tender, at a lot higher rate than what we're expecting? And then, the budget is \$11 million, what will happen to the other three stages?

**Mr MORRISON** - No. All the stages are tendered at once, and then one contractor will do all the stages but they will happen sequentially.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - If we get a tender result that is above what we expect it to be, then we have to reassess.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Back to Treasury, or back to the minister, or both?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - Yes; or back to the department. They are the three options that we have, in consultation with the school, considering what the result looks like and the extent of that. I'm hopeful that we are well positioned because the advice we have is the current advice, and we've made those decisions along the way.

Brighton has been more challenging because you can't half build a school or three quarters build a school; you have to build a school.

There are two ways to define a scope of a project - an outcome that you want or a fixed amount of money that you want.

**Mr TUCKER** - Looking at our job here today, we have to look at value for money for the Tasmanian people. I'm sure Tania, the Chair and Simon will be of the same opinion as me. If this blows out from an \$11 million job to a \$16 million to \$18 million job, that's a significant increase. That's where I am trying to come from with this, in the present economic climate.

**CHAIR** - Once we recommend it, that's like saying this is a valuable project and it's worth proceeding with. Then we read in the press that it comes in at such and such value and we think to ourselves, 'if we had known that, maybe it wouldn't have been worth progressing'. If you like, we are the eyes of parliament on this. I think we can have that discussion at Estimates. It's a broader question and largely outside of the control of the department, and we need to have those discussions in another place. They're points well taken. The last point you made, makes it very difficult for us when we see that sort of thing happening.

Apart from the pricing side of it, just look at some of the aspects of this. We heard today from the students, the external paved areas of the school. We pointed out the trees that are growing in the courtyard space - how are you going to cope with that? Are you going to take the trees out? You're repaving and you're going to somehow improve the circumstance where the roots are almost coming up through the paving. Can you just cover how that's going to be addressed in this development?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - The outcome there will be to ensure that there is a safe environment for the students to enjoy the outdoor courtyard. At the moment there are some hazards that have to be managed on a regular basis.

**Ms RATTRAY** - The trees are going to get bigger.

**Mr MORRISON** - The trees are a good asset to that space, so you wouldn't want to be taking those out. It's quite a big courtyard so we can give the trees a bigger berth with the paving and still have a decent sized courtyard.

**CHAIR** - You will need seating under those trees, too?

**Mr MORRISON** - Yes, and you would want to integrate some seating with it as well. The landscape architect will work on that. One thing about the courtyard, it does have planting around the edges and that does tend to separate the courtyard from the buildings. We will probably be taking out some of that planting around the edges - so, there is going to be plenty of space. We are not short of space.

## PUBLIC

**CHAIR** - And re-use of the old aggregate tiles?

**Mr MORRISON** - Yes, as I say, the landscape architect has an idea about using them in gabion walls and making seats out of them.

**Ms RATTRAY** - They'll be comfortable, Ben. I can see a lot of people sitting on those.

**Mr MORRISON** - The tops to them of course.

**CHAIR** - The tops wouldn't be cyclone wire or whatever it is.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - As much as the school would be grateful to see them gone, they might live on.

**Mr MORRISON** - We're trying to hang on to them.

**CHAIR** - At least you're looking at re -use. which is good.

**Ms RATTRAY** - That's always encouraging, Chair, from our perspective - to not waste products that are reasonable and could be re-used. That's something dear to my heart. I like old stuff.

**CHAIR** - You did mention the year 9 additions that will assist with the management of the year 9s in the proposed works.

**Ms RATTRAY** - They felt a little bit outcast at times.

**CHAIR** - I think they may have. Perhaps you can, for the record, tell us what that is about and how it's going to improve their lot?

**Mr FRERK** - Basically, the current layout at school doesn't allow for four learning hubs. It only allows for three and, unfortunately, the year 9s are that group that their classrooms are a bit scattered around the school so they feel disconnected as a group. They are a bit disconnected from their teachers. As you saw when we were walking around the school, in the rest of the school the classes are situated around each other. They have access to a breakout area and then access to their teachers. That's why it is paramount that we allow those kids that facility so they feel connected and part of the school.

**CHAIR** - Year 9 is a pretty important year when they are first starting to probably seriously think about what they're going to do in their career. The last thing you want them to do is to be thinking, I am not going there, it is not very welcoming, and I'll go and get a job somewhere. No-one would want that. So, you are going to create a space that is specifically for them to congregate and to enjoy each other's company and interact?

**Mr FRERK** - Yes. The new 9 and 10 hub will basically connect them together, but it will also connect them with the year 10s as well, allowing them that continued space to operate in, to conduct their learning, which is going to be supportive of them developing as a person.

## PUBLIC

**CHAIR** - And the MDT space? Clearly, it's a significant space. No doubt there are lots of things you might wish for in terms of the tools and amenity that a space like that might have, but how do you see it improving their lot?

**Mr FRERK** - It's disappointing that those sorts of things can't all be done but those sorts of facilities are still adequate to support the options that students choose, and we clearly and carefully design our teaching and learning programs around those option facilities. The priority area for me is to provide the best possible facilities that we can for our kids, that 100 per cent of our kids utilise every day.

**CHAIR** - However, it's a partial reorganisation - so, can you describe exactly what that's going to achieve?

**Mr MORRISON** - We're taking the visual arts out of the block where the 11 and 12s are, so it gives them more space; and then they are co-locating with the MDT and the culinary cooking area.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Didn't we say that is only 12 months old, though?

**Mr MORRISON** - There are two spaces. There's a space that is dedicated to the 11s and 12s on the high school site, but there's also a specific built-for-purpose space on the school farm.

**Ms RATTRAY** - So, they are not moving a 12- month old building?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - No, we're moving the visual arts function up to be with MDT.

**Mr MORRISON** - We are freeing up a bit more space in that block. Ben and the school have expressed their desire to have visual arts and MDT coming together because there's some interplay between the two.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - And have an exhibition area to display the works, as well as making the entrance compliant and the like.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I have a question about the bus shelter off Glen Ard Mohr Road. Is that a school-owned facility?

**Mr MORRISON** - There is no bus shelter at the moment; it is at the entrance. There's a bus turning area, which is on the school grounds, but the students have to stand in the rain in winter and wait for the bus. It is a very simple structure, but basically it's a shelter. In the blazing heat in the summer or the rain in winter, it's just a simple bus shelter.

**Ms RATTRAY** - But it's an education department facility?

**Mr MORRISON** - Yes.

**Ms RATTRAY** - You're not building on council ground?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - No. Not unless we have council's agreement.

## PUBLIC

**Ms RATTRAY** - I'd suggest that council needs to build it, if it is on council ground.

**Mr MORRISON** - It's not for general buses, it is for school buses.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - That came through in our school engagement with the students - 'can you please build us a bus shelter?'.  
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**CHAIR** - In terms of the numbers using that shelter, are we talking about a third of the student population that would go through that?

**Mr FRERK** - We are probably talking about 98 per cent.

**Ms RATTRAY** - You'll be building another room, then.

**Mr FRERK** - They congregate up the top of the school.

**CHAIR** - Parents aren't coming and picking their kids up?

**Mr FRERK** - No.

**Ms RATTRAY** - How are we going to fit 98 per cent of the students under one bus shelter?

**Mr FRERK** - The buses come in pretty quickly, so we can get some of the kids onto the buses and then they stay there for 20 minutes until 3.20. The rest of the kids congregate.

**Ms RATTRAY** - So the bus that is going that way - 'you're first'.

**CHAIR** - And the kids know that routine and it makes it easier. Page 8 - 'student, staff and visitor safety, in accordance with the "safe and secure" design principle'.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Can I have some idea about what meets that design,?

**Mr MORRISON** - Which one are we talking about?

**CHAIR** - The fourth dot point on page 8.

**Mr MORRISON** - Foster community?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - *The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses into Child Sexual Abuse - Practical Guidance for Implementing the Child Safe Standards*. There are a couple of elements to that. We have a built environment guide that captures all the lessons from the past and how we want to make sure the facilities are built for the future. Through that, and through the outcomes of royal commissions, we have worked closely with our other policy areas and child safe areas of the department.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Hence, open spaces.

**Mr MORRISON** - It's about visual span and space, basically.



## PUBLIC

**CHAIR** - Okay. Principle 1 - Contemporary learning for global citizens - pathways to tertiary education. How do you work in with tertiary education providers on this? Does it fit their requirements?

New and adapted learning environments that support the schools' approach to contemporary teaching and learning for pathways to tertiary education and industry links for vocational opportunities.

How does the school work in with these providers to make sure that the way you're preparing them fits with their needs and requirements?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - A key principle there is the student choice approach. Certainly, some of the comments that we've had about the redevelopments and providing contemporary learning have been 'these are university-like spaces'. That's about having that choice and flexible spaces - not the standard 50 square metre front and centre 'chalk and talk', as they used to call it. Is that a fair comment?

**Mr FRERK** - That's a fair comment.

**Mr MORRISON** - It also has more specific applications like, for instance, upgrading the kitchens. The kitchens that are there are very much orientated towards domestic science in the old days - teaching females to become good wives. We are now talking about teaching for the catering industry, basically.

**Mr TUCKER** - Career orientation.

**Mr MORRISON** - Yes, career orientated. It's a pathway to the catering industry. When you are trying to teach that in a domestic kitchen, it doesn't quite match up.

**CHAIR** - When you look back at how things used to be, sometimes you wonder, don't you? Now, with the benefit of hindsight and the way we think as a community -

**Ms RATTRAY** - I don't think it was that bad in the past. Sometimes people are a bit hard on the past.

**CHAIR** - Some might disagree. You have here:

Place-based design for a distinctive identity

An engaging enjoyable environment expressing the school values, culture and context that students, staff, parents/carers and the community wish to inhabit.

Then you have 'Sustainability and a healthy learning environment'.

These are all general principles that you try to address in every development that you have under your purview, is that right?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - Yes.

## PUBLIC

**CHAIR** - Not specific to Exeter?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - I think they have come through the Exeter Working Group, so they've taken our overarching *Built Environment Guide* and then enhanced it to be Exeter-focused; but they are key components of what we do.

**CHAIR** - And principle 4, 'Foster community'. I asked this question during the tour - space usage outside of school hours. Can you expand a little on which groups are using the school's spaces?

**Mr FRERK** - A number of local sporting facilities use our gymnasium and use our current courts, and that's been ongoing for a number of years. It's something we want to continue because those community connections are pivotal for a school to be successful.

**CHAIR** - That doesn't bring with it too many liabilities? How do you handle that side, out of interest?

**Mr FRERK** - To be honest, I am transparent around my expectations and it is all about respect. We treat the facilities with respect and that is translated straight into the community. They are privileged to be able to use the facility, and we are privileged to be able to offer them the facility. As you walked around the school you haven't seen any signs of damage and that is what the perception of the school and the perception of the community has of the school. That relationship is definitely there and is something that's only going to strengthen in the future.

**CHAIR** - And the insurance side of things in terms of safety and people falling over and injuring themselves?

**Mr FRERK** - They all have to have public liability and the proper processes that the department has in place, and we make sure all those sorts of things happen. They are the legalities of life these days.

**CHAIR** - It is clear to them and they know what the expectation is?

**Ms RATTRAY** - And they support the chocolate fundraiser.

**Mr FRERK** - Yes, they support the chocolate fundraiser.

**CHAIR** - Which is very important, as we were hearing from the students.

**Mr FRERK** - Yes, a very core part of the year ten unit.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - And adding to that, the department does have a community use policy which encourages community use of our assets.

**Mr FRERK** - Provided it doesn't interfere with the school.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - With that, we do have our own community insurance for those parties that don't have their own public liability insurance as well, plus we support the schools with casual hire agreements or leases to help manage those relationships.

**CHAIR** - You mention on page 8 the open buildings and connected courtyards, and we were talking about the way some of the new spaces will work. Teachers will have a greater opportunity for passive observance or surveillance as we might call it -but it sounds a bit harsh - of the student body. Could you describe a little more how that is going to change from what is there now?

**Ms RATTRAY** - Supervision?

**CHAIR** - Supervision is the word.

**Mr FRERK** - Supervision is just one aspect. It's giving students the opportunity to learn in different ways, because learning has developed so rapidly over the past five years and over the past 20 years. One of the things we need to do as a school is to complement the continued advancement in education. That's why we have worked hard on our teaching expertise and that's why they are at the level now where the current facilities are outdated in how we want to approach learning to make sure we are maximising the learning opportunities for kids.

**CHAIR** - Certainly, as we walked through we could see the age of the school and some of the signs of the work needed to be done, so I can understand that.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - If I may just add there, the internal courtyards at the moment aren't used and we want to bring that in as a space for learning, and then also connect with the outdoors. Classrooms can't do that at the moment. Yes, there are options inside the building but there is also a courtyard and external area to use as well.

**Mr MORRISON** - As I was saying, I call them 'blind courtyards', because you can't see into the buildings. We are opening it up so you can see into the buildings and the buildings can see into the courtyards. It's part of that whole idea of passive surveillance but it's also about creating community. If you can see other people, you feel like you are part of a community. And that helps create that sense of community.

**CHAIR** - There was that observation when we were talking at the school about how that might work two ways. It might work as a distraction for students, if they can see out more. You said that's not a particular problem. Do you want to explain that a little?

**Mr FRERK** - As I mentioned before, if you put those preconditions in place and those expectations on learning, and students understand why they're coming to school and why learning is so important, those sorts of things negate themselves.

As I said, when we were walking around the school, the kids are constantly used to people coming in and out of the classroom and we want to know what they're doing. We want to know what the teachers are doing. It's something that is just part of the way of being.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - And the environment we create is important. We think about all that concrete and Besser Block that we saw when we walked through the school; personally speaking, it would be much nicer to have some more windows or doors and those things from an environmental perspective.

**CHAIR** - A more pleasant place to be.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I don't know. They served us pretty well, those Besser Blocks.

**Mr TUCKER** - I was going to say the same.

**Ms RATTRAY** - You'd think we were the same generation, over here.

**Mr TUCKER** - I was going to talk about the carbon neutrality on page 9, which is coming from principle 3 - Sustainability and healthy learning environment.

Do you want to run through what we're doing there providing energy efficient buildings by means of high level of insulation and energy efficiency? Most of the stuff has just been recycled, we haven't updated any of it.

**Mr MORRISON** - No. We are doing a fair bit. First of all, there is no insulation in the ceilings. We are putting decent insulation throughout where we are doing any work. Secondly, we are replacing all the windows with double glazing. Likewise, where we are putting in new walls, they will be properly insulated. That saves on energy throughout the life of the building, so there is an impact on carbon.

The other impact is that we are recycling a lot of the existing building. We are not knocking them down, we are re-using them and there is a lot of energy in those buildings and we are re-using them. You could argue that they have expended their carbon footprints. And so, we are re-using as much as we can.

All of those things go to reducing the carbon footprint.

**Mr TUCKER** - Those older heating/cooling systems, air conditioning systems and everything, sometimes you are better to replace something because it costs more.

**Mr MORRISON** - Ben is a mechanical engineer.

**Mr TUCKER** - I thought he was a principal.

**Mr FRERK** - I have experience in this area. When I first took over this school we didn't have any heat pumping system, they were all those rail heaters. You need to do manage that because they are things that are in use every day, and they need to be constantly monitored and replaced. Over the last eight years, I've been on top of that, to make sure those sorts of things aren't a massive cost to the school and also bringing energy costs down for the school, which allows me to spend more money on teaching and learning. That's just smart.

**Mr TUCKER** - I would agree with you there. It's something that we probably need to have you look at across all of our schools, would you agree?

**Ms RATTRAY** - He is going to be the most sought-after principal in the entire education department when we finish.

**Mr TUCKER** - Looking at those maintenance issues and doing those upgrades when they are needed - because you are not spending that money on the old infrastructure, you are better off to buy new and to replace it and to upgrade at a certain point in time.

**Mr FRERK** - Yes, that is something that we have consistently considered in regards to the longevity of the buildings and what we have to do as a school to maintain them. We have been careful in the forefront of our thinking around that as well.

**Mr TUCKER** - You can also probably say that the Besser Blocks around the buildings have stood the school in good stead, compared to some other buildings.

**Mr FRERK** - That is a fair point, but are they stimulating? My question would be are they a stimulating thing for a kid to look at?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - They will last longer than plaster.

**CHAIR** - Might be suitable for a dairy but not for a school. Landscaping, on page 9 - 'A staged approach will provide guidance on how to implement the plan over time'. Some schools we have looked at in more recent times have included an Indigenous element. I'm not sure whether that has entered into the scheme of things with this. Is that something that was considered to be worth exploring, or did you decide not to go - ?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - I am not sure where our 'arts at work' component is at and whether you have any other developments in regards to landscaping.

**Mr FRERK** - That's a conversation with the arts later on down this process, but that is something that we will consider. In regards to the landscaping, one of the biggest bits of feedback we get in regards how we manage that through this, but also manage that as a school, is what do our kids want? That's the big question I ask. What do they find that is something that is going to stimulate them or excite them to be at school and also to come to school?

**Ms HARMAN** - The Aboriginal Education Service has been involved quite heavily in some of our recent capital projects. As a refurbishment, there's been less opportunity within this project.

**CHAIR** - Anything else on page 9?

**Ms RATTRAY** - Yes, I am interested. There's a significant increase in the cost of the external works, including the landscaping. I know we are going to get to that later. You talked about 'a staged approach will provide guidance on how to implement the plan over time'. You have an estimated cost, increased from the first iteration to the second, so I am interested in how you can have a staged approach to costings when you already have a budget set down? I am interested in how that might unfold.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - The conversation we had around the master plan today, and then for the works project, and then focusing on what is deliverable under the works with the funding availability; it's a similar comment. We have developed a master plan for landscaping, and then it is 'what do we achieve with the budget that we have', and how do we set the school up to continue to enhance that environment?

**Mr MORRISON** - The crux of it is that the landscape plan is not all funded by the budget, but it can be implemented slowly by the school over time. Basically, we are giving them something which they can do over 10 years but we can only fund the first little bit.

## PUBLIC

**Mr WILLIAMS** - I am sure they have the right structure and they have the vision and progressively - whichever way.

**Ms RATTRAY** - So you are expecting Ben to be able to make provisions in the future for ongoing landscaping costs, out of his allocation?

**Mr MORRISON** - We're doing the important things.

**Ms RATTRAY** - But removing those pavers?

**Mr MORRISON** - The basic infrastructure, the important bits are there; but we are talking about the things that are ongoing, things like extra landscape planting and that type of thing which you can do as a school.

**Ms HARMAN** - The more manageable elements of the landscape master plan.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - Schools are generally always aware and looking for opportunities to partner, to access grant funding, to do projects and the like. Is that a fair comment, Ben? Then there is opportunity for them to do it.

**Ms RATTRAY** - No wonder they burn out. You expect a lot of them.

**CHAIR** - So, 'aim for carbon neutrality'. You have here, 'use materials that are carbon negative'. Interesting term.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I expect that also means 'expensive'. Expensive to look after. You are going to expect Ben and his maintenance budget to look after that fancy timber. We're in Tasmania. Seriously.

**Mr MORRISON** - It's all studwork inside the wall. You can have a metal stud wall or you can have a timber stud wall. Metal stud walls have a huge carbon footprint and timber stud walls have a negative carbon footprint.

**Ms RATTRAY** - There's no timber on the outside?

**Mr MORRISON** - Not on this building.

**CHAIR** - 'Carbon negative' meaning not adding to carbon emissions.

**Mr MORRISON** - It helps you make choices about materials and that sort of thing, with that principle behind it.

**CHAIR** - It's just that term - 'carbon negative'. It threw me a bit. Do they mean carbon neutral? Do they mean no emissions?

**Mr MORRISON** - Timber is a holding carbon. Timber is a carbon sink which makes it carbon negative. That's the terminology, anyway.

**CHAIR** - It's interesting.

## PUBLIC

**Ms RATTRAY** - Let's hope we keep having some trees planted, or we won't have any.

**CHAIR** - Moving over, page 10. I'm sure the member to my right will have a question on the Tasmanian Government Art Site Scheme

**Ms RATTRAY** - We've just had a little talk on that. Obviously, you haven't come to any decision about what that might look like, at this point in time. It's just that I always suggest that you try to source local. It means a lot to the people who live and are part of a community, and have something that relates to the community and the surrounds. No disrespect to the south of the state, but they don't have the same connection as the north, simple.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Is that a yes?

**Mr FRERK** - Absolutely.

**CHAIR** - Any other observations on page 10? No. Looking at the project management list here - it adds up, which is always a positive.

**Ms RATTRAY** - The Chair always adds it up. We have found a few issues in the past.

**CHAIR** - We have found a few issues in the past.

The construction and design contingency, we talked about this a little at our visit, it's a 11.4 per cent, I think. Roughly 5 per cent for design and roughly 5 per cent for construction. The observations were made about the likes of Brighton School and how that's blown out. You did go into a little bit about that and we talked about the process of tendering. I don't know if there is much more to be gained by going through it, but if members have a question?

**Ms RATTRAY** - A question about that general contingency and post occupancy allowance. It was \$131 000 in the last one, and yet it's down to \$68 000.

**CHAIR** - It's not a total rebuild.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Why was it \$131 000?

**CHAIR** - Sorry, you're saying between the two versions?

**Ms RATTRAY** - Yes, between the two versions. I am just interested.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - I think minor adjustments as we progress.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Minor?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - In the context of an \$11 million project.

**Ms RATTRAY** - But it was \$11 million here in the original one

**CHAIR** - In that original one, it was what figure?

## PUBLIC

**Ms RATTRAY** - \$131 000.

**Mr TUCKER** - If you also take the other construction design contingency, it's gone from \$1 million to \$855 000; it's even greater. We've already spent \$145 000 of it.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - The latest information we have is based on the quantity surveyor information we have and we are always reviewing our budgets as we progress. I share the concerns about the market and the \$7.5 million estimate that we have there includes our escalation allowance and market rating as well.

**Ms HARMAN** - When that core construction estimate changes, we make some adjustments as we go through the project design phase of the other elements we have. There have been changes to a number of those line items in the course of that four to six months between these two reports.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I expect it wouldn't have taken half. You have cut that by half.

**CHAIR** - That's the general contingency and post occupancy allowance.

**Ms RATTRAY** - That is right, whereas nothing else has been -

**Mr TUCKER** - Furniture has been cut by \$250 000.

**Ms HARMAN** - Yes.

**Mr TUCKER** - We're pruning.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I thought it was a significant decrease, all to meet the \$11 million.

**Ms HARMAN** - It's trying to maximise the spend on that construction. We have \$11 million that we have to fit to budget, and it is a reflection of the increase in the core construction. There are only so many rungs you can cut it from.

**Ms RATTRAY** - That's right. You can't take it from some of the others, so you take it out of here get the \$11 million. If that is what you have done, it is fine. It needs an explanation, that is all.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - We've been open about the delay that we took to make sure that we consulted and that we were comfortable. The figures you are seeing are the latest figures that we have and it is reflective of the process we have gone through.

**Mr TUCKER** - It would be fair to say that phase 4 of the tender process mightn't get up?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - There will be packages of work that we tender that will be separate portions and when we get the tender results we will then make decisions on what that means. I am hopeful that we get a good tender result and we can do more.

**Ms HARMAN** - Lately we have had a couple of more positive ones.

**Mr MORRISON** - It has improved a lot this year, compared to last year.



## PUBLIC

**Ms RATTRAY** - Can I ask what is being used on the outside, if it not timber.

**Mr MORRISON** - We are not doing anything on the outside.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Just replacing those walls with windows.

**Mr MORRISON** - Replacing doors and windows. There is a bit of an extension but they will be the same thing, a concrete block to match existing. Other than that, we are not doing anything.

**CHAIR** - I noticed in the courtyard there were quite a few streaks down the wall. I am presuming the guttering will be looked at?

**Mr MORRISON** - Yes, we will look at the guttering.

**CHAIR** - Thank you for that comfort. Moving over, page 12, time lines: major changes there anywhere?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - Time lines are always under pressure. There's an element of the unknown, as we talked about, when we tender and the industry respond on their capability to deliver.

**Ms HARMAN** - And we balance up the tender prices and the programs we are given.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - This is what we believe we are comfortable with; but again, there is the element of unknown.

**CHAIR** - Page 13, the risks and mitigation strategy, and the conclusion. Staging of classes during construction - is that a problem?

**Mr FRERK** - It is going to be a rigorous conversation that we have. It's one thing we will do and we will do it well to maintain learning and maintain student safety. There are plenty of people in the department, principals that have been in this situation before that I can talk to. That's something that we will work towards. Over the next couple of weeks, I have a conversation with my leadership team on how we will manage that, and then we will re-meet. There is a PWG group and we will say okay, this is what we're thinking we can manage at a school level, what is the feedback you can give us to say that this would be a good way to do it?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - It's important to say it is front and centre in everything we do, making sure there's a safe environment.

**CHAIR** - I was wondering whether there might be any particularly tricky circumstances that you have to cope with. It doesn't seem like it.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - I think because Exeter has a little bit of space, a bit of spare space.

**CHAIR** - You are not chock-a-block.

## PUBLIC

**Mr WILLIAMS** - Where you are at capacity, that is a challenge because you don't have anywhere to move to.

**Mr MORRISON** - You can get to the building from the back end in each case. It's always difficult when you have a dense school and you have to get through teaching areas to get to your building site. In this case you can go around the edges, so it makes it simple in that respect.

**CHAIR** - The drawings that we have always add elements of interest. Any particular issues there that members want to ask questions about? We had a fairly good run down during our tour with Todd. He gave us a look at the schematics of things. There was that one aspect that I thought was a new walkway going in, only to find that no, that wasn't the case. I thought that the students on the sketch master plan...no, sorry - it wasn't on the sketch master plan.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Here it is. It is on 5. You thought they might just scoot across there, and I think you are right.

**CHAIR** - I thought the students cut across the paddock.

**Ms RATTRAY** - What about using some of those pavers to put across there?

**Mr MORRISON** - It's interesting that exists, but there's no track across there.

**CHAIR** - There you go.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I just drew that.

**Mr MORRISON** - Yes, I know; but I am saying that the bus stop is there, and the school is where it is, and they don't cut across there now.

**CHAIR** - Because there is no track to show that they do.

**Mr TUCKER** - It reflects the behaviour of the Exeter High School students.

**CHAIR** - It must be something to do with the wonderful principal they have. Community engagement outcomes report - we have done a bit on that and we have covered most of it.

**Ms RATTRAY** - This one here, it shows more pavers.

**CHAIR** - Connectivity and porosity?

**Ms RATTRAY** - It shows pavers; but there are no pavers. I think I heard somebody say it would be -

**Mr MORRISON** - This is a high-level drawing; and this is the landscape architect's drawings, and they are just examples of that type of space.

**Ms RATTRAY** - We're not replacing pavers with pavers? That's the question.

**Mr MORRISON** - No.

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**CHAIR** - Survey - a total of 95 unique surveys were received. That is on page 6 of the consultation report. The number of parents who were engaged, I thought was low.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Busy people down Exeter way. Left all their confidence.

**CHAIR** - No, the community workshop, it is on page 6. Eleven individuals attended the community workshop on 22 September. Is that an indication that the interest is low, or that they are all satisfied that things are going swimmingly?

**Ms RATTRAY** - Happy with the leadership of the school, I would suggest.

**Mr FRERK** - I'd just go with that.

**CHAIR** - It was properly advertised?

**Mr FRERK** - Absolutely.

**CHAIR** - And it went out in the school newsletter and all that sort of stuff?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - Direct mailouts.

**CHAIR** - Well, you can't make them turn up, can you?

**Ms RATTRAY** - They are busy people.

**CHAIR** - Response summary - 32 per cent were students.

**Ms RATTRAY** - And that is what you would expect.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - The other part there is there is the online availability to get involved - a mailbox - so there are multiple avenues, apart from turning up.

**CHAIR** - I thought that was quite good - 32 per cent students, 41 per cent carers of students and parents. I think we are pretty well at the end.

**Ms RATTRAY** - You said you didn't have any lockers, and yet people wanted lockers when you had a look at the survey. Did you would think about getting some lockers, Ben?

**CHAIR** - Maybe you could expand on that.

**Mr FRERK** - I think it's an historical thinking of high schools - the kids actually generally love it there, I know.

**CHAIR** - So, you decided not to?

**Mr FRERK** - No, because when we first made the changes to the school we surveyed the kids and 96 per cent of the kids said they didn't want lockers because lockers were an area that they did not feel safe. That's why we have continued to maintain that philosophy and

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maintain every sort of thing we have around the school is in not creating those areas where those sorts of things can happen.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - In other redevelopments done we have taken the locker bays out for exactly that reason that Ben is talking about. The students don't feel safe in them.

**CHAIR** - Okay. That is interesting, isn't it?

**Ms RATTRAY** - There was one bigger order for the canteen, though.

**CHAIR** - So, they just lug their bags, keep them with them?

**Mr FRERK** - In the classroom, there is an allocated space where they put their bag.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - Not a locker as such.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Back to kinder, it's day care. When I pick up my little granddaughter, we have to go and pick up her bag off the hook.

**Mr FRERK** - Pretty similar to primary school.

**CHAIR** - With all inquiries like this, or examination of references, we ask the questions and I do need some acknowledgement on that.

The first being, does the proposed works meet an identified need or needs or solve a recognised problem?

**WITNESSES** - Yes.

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

**WITNESSES** - Yes. We believe we have gone through a thorough process to get to this point.

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

**WITNESSES** - Yes.

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

**WITNESSES** - Yes.

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

**WITNESSES** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - These are questions based on the provisions of the Public Works Committee Act 1914. They thought it was worthwhile back then; so, I think they are probably worthwhile today.

## **PUBLIC**

In closing, as we advised at the beginning of the hearing, what you have said to us here today is protected by parliamentary privilege, but once you leave the table you need to be aware that that privilege doesn't extend to comments you may make to anyone, including the media, even if you are just repeating what you said to us. Do you understand that?

**WITNESSES** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - Thank you.

**THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.**