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THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS MET AT THE CRADLE COAST AUTHORITY FUNCTION ROOM, BURNIE, ON WEDNESDAY 1 JULY 2026.

NORTH WEST SUPPORT SCHOOL BURNIE

The committee met at 2.01 p.m.

CHAIR (Ms Butler) - Welcome, everyone. Before we commence the hearing, I will introduce the members of the committee. To my right I have Helen Burnet, our Deputy Chair, Tania Rattray, Casey Hiscutt. We have our secretary, Georgia, our other secretary, Scott Hennessy. We also have Mark Shelton, who is with us, and also Roey on Hansard. There are no apologies for the hearing today. Secretary, would you please read out the message from Her Excellency, the Governor in Council, referring the project to the committee for inquiry.

SECRETARY - Pursuant to section 16(2) of the *Public Works Committee Act 1914*, the Governor refers the undermentioned proposed public works to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works to consider and report thereon: North West Support School Burnie upgrade. Pursuant to section 16(3) of the act, the estimated cost of such works when completed is \$12.65 million.

CHAIR - The witnesses giving evidence to the committee today are appearing on behalf of the proponent, the Department for Education, Children and Young People. Could I ask each of you to state your name, your position and organisation and then make the statutory declaration?

Mr KANE SALTER, DEPUTY SECRETARY, BUSINESS OPERATIONS AND SUPPORT, **Mr TODD WILLIAMS**, DIRECTOR, FACILITY SERVICES, **Ms SARAH JANE MURPHY**, PRINCIPAL, NORTH WEST SUPPORT SCHOOL, DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE, AND **Mr DAVID GILLIES**, DIRECTOR, 6TY° ARCHITECTS, WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

CHAIR - Thank you for appearing before the committee. The committee is pleased to hear your evidence today. Just before you begin giving your evidence, I would like to inform you of some important aspects of committee proceedings. A committee hearing is a proceeding in parliament. This means it receives the protection of parliamentary privilege. This is an important legal protection that allows individuals giving evidence to a parliamentary committee to speak with complete freedom without the fear of being sued or questioned in any court or place out of parliament. It applies to ensure that parliament receives the very best information when conducting its inquiries.

It is important to be aware that this protection is not accorded to you if statements that may be defamatory are repeated or referred to by you outside the confines of the parliamentary proceedings. This is a public hearing. Members of the public and journalists may be present and this means your evidence may be reported. Do you understand?

WITNESSES - Yes.

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CHAIR - Wonderful. Mr Salter, would you or one of your colleagues like to make an opening statement?

Mr SALTER - Thank you. I'll give a quick overview statement. Firstly, thank you to the committee for the opportunity today. As we said before, this is always an important step in key projects, and none more key than the projects we're looking at today and tomorrow. I think you will have seen from the site visit the important investment in time from Sarah Jane and her leadership team in collaboration with the architects, the collaboration with the facility services team. I thank them up-front for the significant effort that has got the project to this point, great outcomes to be achieved by the continuation of this project and we look forward again to this part of the process today.

If it's okay with the Chair, we do have some additional documents to table, three documents. The first is some additional detailed drawings to those that were provided before the committee hearing. We've got the community engagement report, which included the Penguin consideration. We've also got the most recent consultation project at the site you were at today. If we can table those, please.

CHAIR - Thank you. Mr Salter, may I ask if you have finished with your introduction at this stage?

Mr SALTER - Yes.

CHAIR - What we will move to do is we will accept the tabled documents and then we will move to suspend this committee for 10 minutes whilst the committee purviews those documents. Thank you.

The committee suspended from 2.06 p.m. to 2.18 p.m.

CHAIR - Thank you for that introduction and also for the tabling of the documents. How we usually work through our committee is to try to maintain a chronological order of sorts, so we're not jumping to different sections of the report, so we will try to maintain that as much as possible today. As an opening question, I will start off on page 3, just in relation to the \$62.15 million allocated to construct a purpose-built NWSS on a new site in Devonport and deliver significant upgrades to the Burnie campus. The particular site that we are looking at in this hearing is the Burnie site. I was wondering if you could confirm whether any Commonwealth funding has been allocated to the North West Support School Burnie campus redevelopment?

Mr SALTER - No. There's no Commonwealth funds for this project.

CHAIR - Okay. Also, if you can provide a breakdown of Commonwealth funding received under the National School Funding Agreement that has been allocated to the North West Support School Burnie campus over the past four financial years. Would you have that information?

Mr SALTER - In terms of the operational funding for the school?

CHAIR - That includes base funding, disability loadings, school size loadings and any other Commonwealth-supported programs.

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Mr SALTER - Unfortunately, no, I don't have that information with me today because I understood we were here about the capital submission, not the operating costs of the school.

CHAIR - Okay. Would you be able - I'd be interested to see how much of that - whether there has been any grant funding allocated, because that can be used for capital programs as well.

Mr SALTER - In a fairly limited manner. Is the question specific to has there been any of the recurrent funds used for capital works in the last four years?

CHAIR - Yes.

Mr SALTER - I think the answer is no, but we can get you that information.

CHAIR - I could take that on notice. That would be really helpful. Given the Australian Government Schools Funding Report shows Tasmania received around \$250.7 million in Commonwealth funding for government schools in 2024, including \$26.3 million through the students with disability loading, do you know if any of that Commonwealth funding was directed to the North West Support School and specifically to the Burnie campus? I'm interested in how the funding works.

Mr SALTER - Again, the 'better schools funding agreement' is recurrent funding for the schools in each calendar year. It would be a small percentage that is used for which I would call minor works, not capital works of the magnitude that we're talking about here. The North West Support School, like all schools, gets a distribution of that funding, both the state and the Commonwealth funding; but I would say again that that is completely separate to the capital funding that's made through a different stream, via the state government. The Australian Government generally doesn't provide capital funding for government schools. At times they will have -

CHAIR - Grants.

Mr SALTER - ad hoc programs and grants, but the state government is, essentially, the funder of major capital works for government schools.

CHAIR - I think what I'm interested in is whether grant funding has been provided to the state government for capital upgrades but it's funnelled through the state. That's what I'm interested in.

Mr SALTER - Again, there would be two sources: there would be ad hoc programs, and Todd might talk to one of the recent programs, but they will have specific criteria around how projects are selected for that. I would emphasise again or reiterate again that for the general recurrent funds they go to, in the main - the vast main - to running schools within a year. It's not funding that goes into the capital program that the state government funds. Todd might want to talk about one of the recent Commonwealth programs.

Mr WILLIAMS - We absolutely welcome Commonwealth funding, and we're wrapping up a 6.5, approximately, funding program for the Commonwealth schools upgrade fund. We're

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concluding those projects at the moment, and I don't have the specifics, but there are a number of schools that benefited from minor works associated with that program.

CHAIR - Yes, because \$26.3 million through the students with disability loading, my information is - so I'm interested in how much of that has gone into the North West Support Schools and specifically to the Burnie campus.

Mr SALTER - Again, we can get that information on notice. We haven't got that today, because it's a separate stream of funding to the capital project. The loading that you refer to would be a loading for all students with disability across all schools. I'm more than happy to provide information on how the North West Support School is funded through that, but it's not related to the capital submission in front of us.

CHAIR - Ms Burnet?

Ms BURNET - Yes, thank you Chair. Thank you very much to the principal and staff and students today for showing us around. You obviously have a lot of pride in your school community. I note that there's \$400,000 of school contribution; that seems like a significant amount for a school to contribute. How is that sourced?

Ms MURPHY - We've been working with Todd and the team at facilities, and over the past three years we've been able to put funds into trust from our school resource package, knowing that we had the project happening, that we felt there was greater impact by having that funding held to contribute to this project as opposed to doing small, incidental upgrades; because this project was still to be finalised, we didn't want to invest money into something that may then actually need to be removed. We have continued to maintain the sites to a high level, and I'm sure you would agree when walking around today, we take pride in our school; but we have worked really closely with the facilities team around looking at ways that we can have that fund in trust to be able to support this project.

Mr WILLIAMS - That's an established process we have when we're working with schools over a number of years and when schools wish to contribute, we work with them to support them with that to maximise the investment that we make in that opportunity.

CHAIR - Any more questions on page 3?

Mr SHELTON - Just a quick one: that is, as an introduction, I'm an ex-TAFE teacher and we went through an upgrade at Alanvale automotive back in the day - before you were there, I would imagine, Todd, back in '88 - there was significant amount of work done and I was a teacher at the time and was involved in it. My question is to Ms Murphy: are you happy with the consultation and the work and the collaboration that you've seen coming through this whole process with the Department and with the architects? As long as everybody has been communicated with and all the staff has had an input, then I don't have too many questions at all. They do a fantastic job there. As I mentioned, I have a Down syndrome grandchild, and their attention span is somewhat limited, and they can be distracted very easily, and what you do there is fantastic. So, congratulations on what you do. As long as the staff and everybody - and as long as you can say to me, I'm very happy with the process and everything has gone well, then I don't have too many more questions other than that.

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Ms MURPHY - Thank you for that positive feedback. That's really lovely to hear because we think we have a pretty amazing school. I would actually say the consultation has probably been more extensive than what I even imagined that it would be. We have our project working groups. We've then had multiple workshops that all of our staff have been involved in over a period of time. Our school association's been involved in workshopping. We've had our Devonport team having input to Burnie, our Burnie team having input to Devonport. So, I would actually say we've probably had more extensive input than what I even thought we would have the opportunity to do.

We've been really fortunate with 6ty in that everything that's come to the table has then transpired into the next lot of plans, even down to really small details about where we want labels placed on student bag lockers and all of those things. I think every time we come back to consult, we add more information. That gets taken away and it comes back in to be representative in the plans. And I think in the document that Todd shared on the most recent consultation, there was quite a bit of staff input towards the consultation as well. We're really happy with the opportunities we've been given to have a voice in this project.

Mr SHELTON - I don't know what we'd do if you said no, I'm not happy.

Ms RATTRAY - I want to acknowledge the additional information that we've received. I think that's very helpful, so thank you.

I want to ask around that overarching question: it says in the executive summary of the Community Engagement Outcomes Report - North West Support School that in 2021, there was a commitment to provide upgrades to the Devonport campus and the Burnie campus, but there was also advice received to consider another option to deliver this commitment consolidating two campuses. So, can we have, for the public record, some information relating to how we've arrived back to the two campuses and not proceeded with the one campus for a north-west community, similar to what other communities, like a northern community and a southern community, already have?

Mr SALTER - I'm happy to go first. I'm not sure if we should be just doing a direct comparison with north and south. I mean, there are two existing sites at the moment. As you referred to, the government had an election commitment for a new site at Devonport and to upgrade Burnie. As can occur with projects as they're progressed, if there are other options to consider, then -

Ms RATTRAY - 'Received advice', it says here. What sort of advice did that look like?

Mr SALTER - Well, when there was advice to consider that we had a new school at Penguin and whether there was merit in considering one site compared to the election commitment, importantly, the government and the Department, as we go through these, place heavy emphasis on community consultation. So that process was undertaken to get the voice of the community, rather than simply assume the option that was being considered was a better option than others, per the report. And I think I've read those stats, again, but there wasn't overwhelming support to go to one site, so taking on board the election commitment and the community voice, that wasn't proceeded with. Hence, we're now here at the committee with the Burnie site today and the Devonport site tomorrow.

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Ms RATTRAY - The figures that have been provided are: 47 per cent of respondents of the 136 unique submissions were opposed to the Penguin site, and 39 per cent of the submissions were in favour of the Penguin option. Not a lot of difference there. Is that your assessment, or am I looking at it somewhat differently?

Mr SALTER - I'll go to Sarah Jane in a second, but when you have one-in-two saying that they're not in support, I would say that is a significant number of families. So, you know, families being part of the responses, it needed overwhelming support to be able to take that option further. That overwhelming support was not there, so we took on the voice of community to proceed with the election commitment and the two sites. Sarah Jane will -

Ms RATTRAY - I'm just interested in the overwhelming support. When it was 47 per cent no to Penguin and 39 per cent yes to Penguin, I don't see that as overwhelming, but I'm happy to have it explained.

Mr SALTER - For clarification, I said there wasn't overwhelming support to go to one site. If the response had come back with something like, you know, 90 per cent of respondents wanted to progress consideration of the one site, then I would say that was overwhelming. When you've got 50 per cent who do not support the option, I would say that is a very significant voice from community; that you'd be, you know, going against the voice of one in two to proceed to one site.

Ms RATTRAY - Would it be fair to say that there was some emphasis placed on the fact that it was a 2021 Tasmanian government election commitment? Would that have factored into the assessment as well?

Ms MURPHY - For Devonport families, the election commitment came as a new school for Devonport, and at the time of that, we had 67 families at the school. So, if you look at those statistics around the families that were present at the school, we need to fulfil what the election commitment was - and it was a new school for us at Devonport.

Mr HISCUTT - Just to follow up on that a little bit more, do you have a breakdown of those 136 submissions - those that came from staff for and against the move, those that came from the community for and against? Sorry if I've missed it in this document we've just received. I think it doesn't make that differentiation. It does in the new one that you sent through, the one that was just in response to the concept plan. It actually differentiates those responses - but not for the move to Penguin documentation. Or if you don't, could you provide that?

Mr SALTER - If we can just take a second to re-look at the document, because normally we do have a range of breakdowns.

CHAIR - We are happy to take that question on notice as well.

Mr SALTER - Yes.

Ms RATTRAY - There's a number of reasons provided, but that doesn't give -

Mr HISCUTT - It says how many were from each people, but not in each -

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Mr SALTER - Yes, so as you say, on page 6, we've got a breakdown of who the responses came from. You're seeking a breakdown of -

Mr HISCUTT - I guess I'm wondering whether - Because that doesn't give you a breakdown of those 80 responses that were parents community. That might have been 90 per cent supported it and 10 didn't, but then all the others might be different. Not that I suspect that is the case, but if we could get a breakdown.

Mr SALTER - So a breakdown in terms of in favour and not in favour?

Mr HISCUTT - Yes, by each of those cohorts.

CHAIR - And the cohorts.

Mr SALTER - Yes. If we could take that on notice.

Mr HISCUTT - Thank you very much.

CHAIR - Can I just - as a follow-up question to both Ms Rattray and Mr Hiscutt, it states in the document, on page 3, the government received advice that it could consider another option to deliver this commitment, consolidating the two campuses into a new single support school on the former Penguin Primary School site. Who was that advice from?

Mr SALTER - That advice was from the Department.

CHAIR - From the Department of Education?

Mr SALTER - Yes.

CHAIR - Could that advice be tabled? Or could we ask for that advice on notice?

Mr SALTER - We'll seek to provide it on notice, yep.

CHAIR - Do you know anything about that advice from a Department perspective? Do you know why that advice was given and what the foundation was behind that advice?

Mr SALTER - I can say - at the summary summary level, and again Sarah Jane or Todd to add - there was a vacant or unused site at Penguin which had potential to be repurposed in the same way that we're redoing the Burnie site, the location had some potential in terms of being located relatively close to the two school sites. Hence that was put to government as an option should community support that as an option. Sarah Jane will say better than me. Being on one site can have benefits. But I just emphasise that we put it to community and community responded.

Mr WILLIAMS - If I may add, too, whilst we receive government funding to deliver commitments, our role is to assess how we best get that outcome. It's appropriate for us not just to be tunnel-visioned in delivering an outcome. It is appropriate to open up and assess options and consider those options, and that's what we did in this instance.

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CHAIR - I agree. Do we know what ballpark figure the cost would have been, instead of doing the two sites? What the economies of scale would have been for consolidating those two into the one greenfield? Was there ever any costing done of that one site, the Penguin site?

Mr SALTER - Given it's been a while ago, I would have to go back and check whether we got any reliable figure for the site. I would suggest that any figure would have been extremely high level. But I'd have to go back and check the advice at that time.

CHAIR - That'd be great. Thank you.

Ms MURPHY - I don't believe there were costings done at the time. My understanding was it was purely a geographical discussion.

CHAIR - Okay.

Mr HISCUTT - I guess if you are going to have a look to see if there are some, was there any consideration given on operational costing as well as capital costing? If you don't have it, that's fine. But if you're going to have a quick look for it, then just to see what that saving may have been.

CHAIR - Should we move on to page 4? Just if you could provide us with a little bit of background, for the record, around the scope of the support school, i.e. the year groups and cohort that would be able to utilise the school?

Ms MURPHY - Yes, absolutely. At North West Support School, we cater for students from kinder through to year 12. All students who come into a support school need to go through a nomination process with a committee. Families can choose to nominate their young person for a place in a support school. There are a set of criteria around entry into a support school, being a severe intellectual disability, and that may include other disabilities, like physical disabilities or autism.

At the Burnie campus, we've got 67 students who are enrolled in our school. We currently have 10 classrooms that we are running at the school. We had eight classes when we moved to the site in 2017, and we've got an additional two spaces for classes in the new build. Obviously, there is a commitment to 12 GLAs (general learning areas) which will allow us to spread some of our class groupings.

We have 23 teachers that work at the Burnie campus, 53 teacher assistants and then we have about 15 specialists who work across both sites, including occupational therapy, speech and language pathologists, psychologists, social workers, school health nurses, ed support specialists, vision services.

All of our students in our school have an individual education program. They are delivered by the teachers who support setting up planning documentation to allow our young people to access the Australian curriculum, with a big focus on supporting independence and building communication.

CHAIR - Okay. In follow-up to that, around your enrolment demand: you have 67 students currently. Has that increased or decreased over the last four years? And do you have any idea of the expected demand in the future?

Ms MURPHY - It's stayed fairly stable over those four years because we actually, when the nomination process happens, they go to a committee. At the committee, all of the applications are gone through by committee members who then ascertain whether or not those young people meet the criteria for placement in a support school. There is then subsequent conversation around space and capacity within the support school to be able to accommodate for any of those students.

CHAIR - Okay.

Ms RATTRAY - What is the make-up of the committee? How is that committee formed?

Ms MURPHY - It has a senior speech and language pathologist from the Department, a senior Department psychologist, myself, a representative from Inclusion and Diversity and also a representative from the Inclusive Practices team.

Mr HISCUTT - In that section that talks about students' fundamental right to communicate, ensuring access to a preferred communication, it says, 'Communication access is embedded across all learning contexts'. Is that just the inclusion of internet cables? What does communication access look like?

Ms MURPHY - Communication and access is for our young people that are non-speaking communicators. You may have seen in the classrooms when we did the walk-around today that up on the whiteboard you would have seen Grid 3, which is a communication system with board maker symbols. Every child in our school has the right to communicate in whatever form that looks like. That might be through the use of a pod-based system, a paper-based system. It might be through an iPad Grid system that has a communication system on it. All of our classrooms run Grid on our interactive whiteboards. Key Word Sign is used throughout our school, Braille is used. In terms of communication in this space, it means students being able to have access to their voice.

Ms BURNET - Getting back to the Chair's question around capacity, what do you see as the largest number of students likely in the new model?

Ms MURPHY - It's hard to put a number on it because it's so dependent on the cohort of students. If you were to average our classrooms out, currently on average you would have six students per classroom. Depending on individual student's needs, you may have a few more, you may have a few less, but our average is around about six in the space.

Ms BURNET - Is that dependent on their physical disability for the most part or autism? How does it work?

Ms MURPHY - Yeah, that can - it depends, based around their disability. I shared this morning that about 65 per cent of the student population at North West Support School have an autism spectrum disorder and then about 12 per cent have a physical disability. So, depending on what their needs are, will depend upon which spaces that they're working with and how we configure our class groups.

Ms BURNET - Where do you draw from for best practice in the model of care or model of education?

Ms MURPHY - We're very heavily driven by a therapy-based model, and we utilise the Floortime principles to support active engagement for our young people. We have what we call our 'team around the child' model, so all of our therapists and families work for their child to create an individualised learning program that is based around the principles of active engagement for all of our students.

Ms RATTRAY - I heard you say this morning that you have NDIS service agreements. Is that for each of the students? They all have their individual service agreement. You also said that you're not accepting any new service agreements at the moment. Can you just give us some explanation around that?

Ms MURPHY - Yes, across all schools in Tasmania, any child who accesses the NDIS, there can be an establishment of a service agreement with an NDIS provider. That details all of the qualifications of the NDIS providers, what goals they will be working on, what the agreed ways of working are, and those service providers will often come into school because that is a really safe place for our young people to access therapy, and it means that it is not an additional transition out of the school for families as well.

However, at our Burnie campus, where you have 67 students, if everyone wanted a service agreement established for therapists coming on site, at the moment we only have three therapy spaces that are available to us to access and, as you can imagine, trying to rotate that and make that serviceable - in the new model with breakout and therapy spaces, we move from three to 17, so that will allow a greater opportunity for us to have those external NDIS providers coming in to complement our program, because our NDIS providers are also part of our team around the child, so it's really important that we can have those relationships.

Ms RATTRAY - Do you see any of those arrangements changing if this is successful and passes and is established, given that it is expected to be a number of changes to the NDIS delivery model across Australia, given some of the issues that have been raised. Do you see any impediment there?

Ms MURPHY - I can't talk for the changes to the NDIS model, but I can reiterate that all of the young people in our school have severe or profound levels of disability and we will continue to access the NDIS. As for the provision, I'm not sure what the provision will look like with the NDIS cutbacks.

Ms RATTRAY - I think it's the providers, not the cohort themselves. It's more around the requirements for the providers to have a level of accreditation and registration and the like, but you can't really foresee any issues around that?

Ms MURPHY - In order to have a service agreement with DECYP, you have to be a registered provider, and have accreditation, and you also need to provide all of your insurance documentation.

Ms RATTRAY - So, there shouldn't be any impact on this facility.

Ms MURPHY - There shouldn't be any - not that I can foresee with what I know.

Ms RATTRAY - Thank you.

Mr WILLIAMS - And, of course, the additional support spaces are there to support the students, and having an increased number is what we're after with this development.

Mr SHELTON - A quick question about the capacity: you mentioned that there's an extra couple of GLAs in the building, and you've talked about half a dozen per room. Initially, I would imagine that if you used all the space with the cohort you have there, it would make it easier, but it is about building capacity for the future and having that space to be able to deal with what might be coming your way. My question is really: most schools have an idea of what's happening within their community about the need coming forward. Has there been any work done in that area? I understand the committee does the dealing and that sort of thing, but do you have an idea of where it's heading in the future?

Ms MURPHY - It's actually really difficult to ascertain that, because parents get to choose where their child is educated. The support school is one option. Even if we looked at the statistics of disability and the rate of disability on the north-west coast, we can't ascertain where parents will actually choose to have their young people. For the majority, if you consider Northern Support School, Southern and North West Support School, we only have 400 students between us, roughly, that are accessing support schools. I'm sure Kane might be able to give you the numbers on how many students are in schools in Tasmania. Our portion of young people with disabilities, the majority of them are in their local area school. It is hard to get a statistic on how many will come into the support school, but if we look at the averages, our numbers have stayed fairly stable, based on the environment that we have, because we don't have provision for additional.

CHAIR - Is everyone okay to move on to page 7? We may as well bring up the hydrotherapy pool. It is noted on page 7, first dot point, section 7: a new accessible hydrotherapy pool and associated change in toilet facilities with internal access. Would you be able to talk us through the current - well, I suppose it's a spa arrangement, and what a new hydrotherapy pool would provide, insofar as therapeutic care for the students.

Ms MURPHY - Previously, prior to COVID, we were able to have the hydrotherapy pool at the hospital and then we would take a core group of students who had active hydrotherapy programs to the hospital. After COVID, that facility closed and we have the small hydrotherapy spa that you saw this morning in your walk-around. That is timetabled back-to-back for each of our young participants. So, if you can envisage, there's changing, there's hoisting, there's into the spa, undertaking the program, hoisting, changing. Each of those sessions takes about an hour, and if you look at how many hours we have in a school day, with taking out our breaks, we're not able to get - we can get five students through in a day into that spa.

Hydrotherapy and access to a pool is absolutely beneficial for all of our young people, particularly those with physical disabilities, but it can also be fabulous for regulation and for young people that need access to water as part of their regulation. The hydrotherapy spa will allow, instead of having one person in the water, we can have all of those five young people that would have - we can have them in at once into the pool, allowing more students over the course of the week to have access to hydrotherapy than what we can offer now. We really have to prioritise the timetabling of the hydrotherapy spa.

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CHAIR - Just to unpick it a little bit more: the proposed hydrotherapy pool would be 15 metres long, five metres wide; that was information that we learnt this morning from our witness tour. What's the current dimension of the spa, just for the record, as a comparison point? Also -

Mr WILLIAMS - I was going to say two-and-a-half by two-and-a-half, something like that.

Ms MUPRHY - Two-and-a-half by two-and-a-half, roughly.

Ms RATTRAY - It was more oblong than square.

Ms BURNET - Two-and-a-half by three at most.

CHAIR - Do you have an understanding of what the running cost is of that spa annually, and what the running costs would be - proposed running costs - anticipated running costs of the hydrotherapy pool would be?

Ms MURPHY - No. I don't have those figures with me.

CHAIR - As a comparison. So, that work hasn't been done at this stage?

Mr WILLIAMS - No, it hasn't been done.

CHAIR - So, you don't have any understanding of what it costs to run the spa at the moment?

Mr WILLIAMS - We'd have to - yes, we operate a hydrotherapy pool with the north and the south, we'd have to -

Ms RATTRAY - Similar size to what's proposed?

Mr WILLIAMS - Yes, the one in Burnie is modelled on the one that we built in the north probably about five or six years ago; but I'd have to - power is obviously a major consideration. I don't believe there's a separate meter to check and track the cost.

Ms MURPHY - No.

Mr WILLIAMS - It's an overall school operational cost.

Ms MURPHY - Our power is - because we're a co-joined site, we have a power allocation for the Acton site, and then we contribute power to that based on our FECA (fully enclosed covered area) which is our space size.

CHAIR - It's not just power, though. I'm interested in the ongoing maintenance, so it would be a person who looks after the pool, it'd be the chemicals, it'd be the infrastructure.

Ms MURPHY - Our grounds person currently does the chemical testing and then we obviously have to pay for the water quality testing that comes through Burnie City Council, who come in to undertake that.

CHAIR - Before, when we were going through our witness statement, I asked a question around who will be responsible, whether it be the Department of Health, the Department of Education, for the ongoing costs and maintenance of the hydrotherapy pool. Would you be able to speak to that conversation that we had, and the uncertainty still around whether an MOU has been established, or who will have responsibility around that hydrotherapy pool?

Mr WILLIAMS - The overall responsibility for the asset rests with DECYP as the asset owner. The commitment that has been made is that the community will have access to the pool outside of school hours so they're not interfering with school activity. That will be done through the leadership of the Department of Health. And we'll have an agreement with the Department of Health that will look to how we manage the arrangements, including cost of that use as well, the details of which, we've only just started a conversation because we're a couple of years away from becoming operational. But the underlying approach that we have for community use, because we do encourage community use of our assets, is that it's on a basis that it doesn't impact on the school and it's on a cost-recovery basis.

CHAIR - Okay. There was some criticism in the consultation that the design of the hydrotherapy pool may be keeping the community in mind and it may have led to there being additional costs for the hydrotherapy pool because the design may not just be for the students; it may also be for the community. Can you speak to that criticism?

Mr WILLIAMS - Absolutely. In considering community use, we had to put it in the location that allows for community use, and that is so that it doesn't impact on school and is easily accessible. Having a hydrotherapy pool in the heart of a school is not the best place to have community use. Yes, we have considered that location on the edges of the school so that it can be more accessible for community.

CHAIR - Will the cost of the pool be more expensive because it will also be catering to community use outside of school hours?

Mr WILLIAMS - Yes, it would be.

Ms RATTRAY - A supplementary on the pool. Given that this whole project is pretty much predicated on community input, I note that from the 18 submissions received, 10 were submissions from parents and carers or community members opposing the use of the hydrotherapy pool. If my maths is correct, that's over 50 per cent. What's going to happen when they say, 'We don't want the community in the pool'?

Ms MURPHY - The community access to the pool was a government election commitment.

Ms RATTRAY - So it won't make any difference if there's not community support for accessing the pool outside of school hours?

Mr SALTER - What we're seeking to do to mitigate those concerns is, (a), that it's outside of school hours; that, as Todd has outlined, we enter into an agreement on cost recovery and maintenance so that as much as possible we mitigate something that happens that means the facility isn't available for school the next day, knowing that equipment can have issues at any point in time. It's not seeking to ignore those concerns but mitigate those in a robust MOU

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with the Department of Health so that there's no impact on Sarah Jane and the team in their day-to-day responsibilities.

Ms BURNET - Following on from some of this discussion, I note that there's a ramp going into the pool so it's completely accessible, which is fabulous. I also note the very out-of-date spa arrangement. You've said that a hoist had to be used because there were stairs and we were warned about the floors that are wet by nature of that space. I've also read the comments and there were concerns about the hygiene associated with various members of the public using the pool and the time when the pool would be available outside of school hours for the general public. My understanding, from what I'm hearing, is that you can mitigate all of those risks that were associated and brought up through public comment?

Ms MURPHY - We'll need to work with the Department of Health around that.

Mr WILLIAMS - We're hoping to. Outside of a major catastrophe that happens - and we can't pre-empt those, but we're mindful of having responsibility to ensure we can keep using the school for school support and school needs. We've got to work through that with the Department of Health. That'll include cleaning and maintenance and the responsibilities that are associated with those.

Ms BURNET - We note that there are a lot of publicly accessible pools across Tasmania which have come to the end of their lives and are inaccessible or closing. Presumably, this would be quite an asset for this area around Acton?

Ms MURPHY - I believe that it's for the Burnie community, not just Acton, as there isn't an accessible hydrotherapy pool. There are other pool facilities available within Burnie. However, I believe part of the government commitment in stating that the pools in the schools would be accessible was to provide a facility for the broader community.

Mr WILLIAMS - If I just might add, you do have older young people at the school that are in years 10, 11, and 12 and in another five years, accessing a hydrotherapy pool on their old school site would be a very positive thing for them, I would think.

Mr SHELTON - A quick question about the cost: I would have thought if the pool could be used after school hours and of the weekend for those in genuine need of a therapy pool - because when we say 'public access', we're talking about people with genuine need for a hydrotherapy pool -

Ms RATTRAY - Is that like a knee-replacement person?

Mr SHELTON - Yeah, seniors or rehab from the hospital. If the Health Department's got hold of it, then they could manage that. If it has to be heated through the winter time and of a weekend, if you've got somebody using it, it would be a benefit to the school to have that extra income from that to offset the costs.

Mr SALTER - I might just quickly answer that. It's being undertaken on a basis of need, not seeking any sort of profit from the utilities around cost recovery. If I could just clarify the question around the cost of the pool - and anyone correct me if I'm getting this wrong, in terms of the functionality and size of the pool, that's determined by the needs of the school. For example, it's not being made bigger for community use. The location of the hydrotherapy pool

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on the site has a relatively small cost in the overall budget, which isn't taking away from the core priorities of the school. I just wanted to clarify that.

Ms RATTRAY - Is the other hydrotherapy pool connected to the other two, the north and the southern site, they'll have public access as well?

Ms MURPHY - No, they don't.

Ms RATTRAY - So, do you think it's realistic to say that there will be for this one, really?

Mr SALTER - The government policy is that there will be community use and, hence, we're engaging with Department of Health to achieve that.

Mr HISCUTT - Thank you. Just before I ask the question, you used, in context, that the spa is currently used for regulation. Can you define that, before I ask the rest of the question? Like, what that means in this context?

Ms MURPHY - Yes. So, for young people that have autism that find it difficult to regulate their sensory system, they often find water to be very calming and a really lovely space to actually regulate, ready to then engage in learning activities.

Mr HISCUTT - So, I just noted from some of the comments and observations of the plan that, you know, if you were in the new GLAs on the north of the site that there is a significant distance to get to that pool, as opposed to the central location now. Do you see that as a challenge to overcome? How is that being addressed?

Ms MURPHY - That has been a big part of our consultation process after we were advised that the pools would have public access, and we needed to look at making sure that they were in a location. Regardless of how we set the school up, someone is always going to have to transition at some point. I shared this morning that we've been really intentional in the way we're designing the classroom spaces, so we've got transition corridors that are really easy for young people to navigate, unlike what they are now, where it's making your way through a whole lot of equipment and the like. So, the environment that we're constructing in the build we believe will support smoother transitions for our young people.

Mr HISCUTT - Thank you for that answer.

CHAIR - Okay, so everybody move on to page 8. Mr Hiscutt?

Mr HISCUTT - I've got one. Well, a little bit has been answered by the updated plans that were tabled today - because as part of the accessibility, it says 'wider' than the standard doorways and corridors. I was going to ask how that is affected by the current existing structure, but looking at all the red pen on here, there won't be much existing structure left. That's probably how they've addressed that issue. So, I've probably answered my own question, but I just wanted to get that on record that that is the case.

CHAIR - Well, while we're here, as a follow-up to Mr Hiscutt's question, you could talk us through some of the design principles that have been included around accessibility. One of the questions that we spoke about this morning was the complexity of this design, because it is

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apparently a universal design. Could you provide, for the committee's benefit, some insight into that information? Thank you.

Mr GILLIES - I think, to get universal access through any building, we need to have level services. The challenge with this site is that there's a fair bit of slope on it, and getting to certain parts of the playground requires thinking around paths that people in wheelchairs and people with disabilities can navigate. So, we've purposely designed the outside play spaces so that there's great pathways so that they can access all parts of those playgrounds.

As part of that, we've also looked at door widths, types of doors that we've used, because there are challenges in the current school with sliding doors, and trying to keep control over students when doors are open, because they have an opportunity there to get out of the space that they're in while the door's open. So, door selection has been quite important in that process.

It's really giving them access to all parts of the school so they've got that equal opportunity to use any bit of the school that they need to, and then have the flexibility, once they get there, to perform the education processes that they need.

CHAIR - Thank you.

Mr WILLIAMS - I might just add a little bit, if I may. Just because we had that conversation today about the classrooms, and with those classrooms come all the associated support spaces, storage spaces, amenities, so they're all in the right location. And you would have seen today that the indoor-outdoor connection is not strong, yet that's been a focus in the design. So, the classroom has all the space and amenity and connection that it needs. And that's part of contemporary design for all schools that we try to - and it shines through here in the plans that we've got today. You saw that firsthand how it's not currently doing that in the constrained way that it is with the spaces as they currently work.

Ms BURNET - I was very interested to see today the use of space, particularly for the number of staff, and the very innovative, should I say, way that you've used some of that space. There seemed to be quite a lot of almost overcrowding, if you like, or spaces that might have been used for something else were used for staff. Can you just - following on about that connection to the outside - I think each GLA has that connection to the outside in their plans - but also more of a clarity in the wayfinding and how that is beneficial?

Ms MURPHY - In the new design, all classes will have access to be able to run that indoor/outdoor program as needed, and then that outdoor play space is then also immediately connected to the larger playground. So, we're reducing transitions through the school, internal transitions, because, as Todd said, each classroom has been designed so that it's its own hub. Students can seamlessly move from the classroom to the outdoor area, then into the beyond play space. And we have been really intentional. On the plan, you will see the corridor is fairly straight-through so that students can enter, follow through and then come to an exit point. Whereas at the moment, the way our school is designed, it's a little bit like a rabbit warren, and navigating to get from one space to the other can be quite confusing.

Ms BURNET - And that can be colour coded?

WITNESS - Yes.

Ms BURNET - If I may, if you could just explain the important connections for staff, as well, to collaborate.

Ms MURPHY - One of the things that we've looked at in the design, because obviously we are in a constrained space, so we've looked at opportunities to collaborate by having larger staff collaboration hubs, because we really wanted to prioritise getting those therapy spaces within the classroom spaces. So, through negotiation and our workshops and teachers, we've come to a point where we've created staff spaces that allow for open collaboration. Because, as it stands at the moment, we've got these small pockets of offices that exist throughout the school, and we've been able to bring all of our staff facilities into one area. That includes offices, it includes staff rooms, it includes their resource rooms, all of the workstations. Within each of those staff workstation spaces, you'll see at the end on the new plan, which is probably really tiny, there's actually some pods in there that allow for, if a staff member needs to work independently on a Teams call, those types of things. We've factored that into the staff workspaces as well. But the opportunity to collaborate as a full team has been really important.

CHAIR - Okay. Moving on to page 10 and 11. I think we've covered a fair bit of this already.

Ms RATTRAY - I've got a question, Chair, but I'm not sure where it fits.

CHAIR - Go for it.

Ms RATTRAY - I'll put it here. I'd just be interested to have on the public record how it's planned to deal with the disruption of the build, given that there are some sensitivities around the school as it works and as it functions now - if we can have some understanding of that on the public record. We talked a little bit about it this morning onsite, but those conversations are best put on this record.

Mr WILLIAMS - I might lead on and Sarah Jane and Dave might contribute. It is front and centre how we continue to operate and be safe in a school in doing redevelopment; it's a major focus of what we do.

Ms RATTRAY - It's probably a different scenario in this instance, if I might, than, you know, when we get to the Scottsdale High School redevelopment. That might be a completely different arrangement for you to consider, unlike this one here.

Mr WILLIAMS - Absolutely -

Ms RATTRAY - It still hasn't moved up the list, by the way.

Mr WILLIAMS - Vey true, very true. It is going to be a disruption. Our staging plan will be developed around keeping the school safe and operational. We will be looking at the opportunities that we have outside of school and term breaks to do that. Part of our procurement process when we go to tender is we ask the contractors to put in their program, what their program looks like and that will be part of our assessment as well. I'm not sure if Sarah Jane and David - we're starting to work through what that looks like, but I think those principles of being safe and continuing to be operational and working around the school where we have to, they will absolutely occur, and we've got to get into that to that detail; but it's front and centre.

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Ms MURPHY - And taking into account the learnings from Northern Support School and Southern Support School during their works and using that to inform the staging plan.

Mr GILLIES - So, we've started looking at a holistic staging plan of how the school might operate whilst various pieces of building work are happening, down to the point of the types of hoardings that we are going to use as well, just to provide materials that aren't going to injure students as they transition past these temporary walls. We've started thinking about spaces, materials that might be used in those sorts of situations.

Mr HISCUTT - We talked about that this morning, about, you know, doing some classrooms in some area and some back and forth, and that that would add an additional cost. Has the costing that we've been presented for this total project taken that into consideration, considering these are still being determined, how this staging is going to take place; have we determined how much extra that may cost and -

Mr GILLIES - It has incorporated a certain portion of that staging, but as we got into looking at the staging, the numbers increased slightly just to make sure that the school still operated. Now going through the process of reassessing that estimate. So, we'll be looking at it in a bit more detail.

Mr HISCUTT - When do you expect that to be available?

Mr WILLIAMS - Well, that's a continual, you know, focus and review as we get into the detail and work out the staging. That's continual, you know, concluding with a pretender estimate to ensure that what we're tendering, we're comfortable that we can deliver on. That's a requirement we have with any project that we deliver.

Mr HISCUTT - I will ask more questions when we get to the budget. Thank you.

CHAIR - Okay. We will move on to page 14.

Ms RATTRAY - 12.

CHAIR - 12, Ms Rattray.

Ms RATTRAY - Okay, thank you. And this might well come a little bit further on with the budget on page 17, but around the landscaping - and we know from the plans that are presented that - virtually flipping the playground arrangements for the proposed new site. I'm interested in having a break-up of where that might fit, given playground equipment has such a high compliance for safety requirements and also too, it's super expensive; ask any local government area around the state, but, I mean, if that's something that the committee needs to take in confidence because I don't want to, you know, cause any issues around the tender process when this goes out; but I'm just interested in the landscaping budget for the project.

Mr WILLIAMS - Sure We're happy to share that, and if I may start with the emphasising the importance of the outdoor play areas, you know, in all our projects, it is important for children and young people to be outside and to be able to enjoy the outdoor environment and equally with the North West Support School. We have a preliminary allocation of \$490,000 for our landscaping budget, for the outdoor areas in the plan as per the green in the plan that was

attached to our document and, as I mentioned before, we continue to work on our plan and work on our detail, and that will become clearer and clearer; but that's where it sits at this stage.

CHAIR - Page 14. Any questions?

Mr HISCUTT - We just talked about energy on 9.3.1, appropriate overhangs and new insulation and incorporating double glazing into the redeveloped building, which we've established is quite a lot of it, and there were new roofs involved; has the consideration been given to solar panels at all?

Mr SALTER - We haven't had discussions on solar panels as yet.

Ms RATTRAY - Well, the Department has.

Mr WILLIAMS - Not for this project it has - we haven't had the consideration, not for this project we haven't.

Mr HISCUTT - So, not planning to?

Mr WILLIAMS - Not planning to, no.

Mr HISCUTT - Do you want to talk to that at all, why? I would have thought with new infrastructure that would have been a fairly cost effective way to keep future energy prices down or [inaudible] -

Mr WILLIAMS - Our focus has been delivering on the learning areas for the school, and acknowledging that there's a cost to the solar, an upfront cost. Yes, there is a repayment term, I understand that can vary from 10 to 15 years, but our focus with the budget that we have available is to deliver on the learning areas and the support areas.

Mr HISCUTT - So, there's not enough money in the budget to do it, would be the not-quite-as-polite way to say it? Moving on, thank you.

Ms BURNET - I want to follow up on that, because I think the energy component, the paragraph here in 9.3.1 says there's an opportunity to significantly reduce energy consumption, but could you just step us through how you're actually doing that, and can you also just talk, Todd, about is it always a retrofitting exercise to put solar panels on Education Department buildings?

Mr WILLIAMS - I might get David to talk more about the energy consumption of the building, then I'm happy to follow up and talk about retrofitting.

Mr GILLIES - Are we talking about the power usage of the building?

Ms BURNET - Energy efficiency in design.

Mr GILLIES - Well, as part of the NCC, we've got to provide a section J report, so the whole building will be assessed for its energy efficiency. That includes insulation, double glazing and those sorts of aspects, and we will certainly be doing that report and then incorporating those features into the building.

Ms BURNET - I'm sorry, but that kind of doesn't answer a significant issue around making - you know, like building in the energy efficiency. Like, is it through insulation, double glazing? What are the things that are going to make this building a lot more energy efficient?

Mr GILLIES - Well, the external fabric of the building will be treated to provide that energy efficiency- or the seal, if you like - to control the temperature within the building.

Ms BURNET - And what about lights?

Mr GILLIES - Lights and air conditioning and the power consumption, so, that will be assessed when the electrical engineer starts to have a look at the design for the operations of the building.

Mr WILLIAMS - I think all those principles that you mentioned about lighting - and Sarah Jane talked about lighting but, you know, the double glazing and insulation and building fabric are all the key points about how we aim to be more efficient. The more broader solar discussion: generally, it is retrofitting solar to schools and we have been doing some of that and, just to finish, it can be challenging because you are working with old infrastructure and fitting new componentry to it. So, yes, there's an assessment of the electrical capability of the site, the switchboard of the site, the roof of the site, you know, is it an appropriate time to put solar on it? So there is -

Ms RATTRAY - It's got a new roof, so yes.

Mr SALTER - Not over the whole school.

Ms BURNET - Is it just a different pot of money?

Mr WILLIAMS - It does sound easy, but retrofitting on aged infrastructure can be challenging.

Mr SALTER - I think there is mention of different programs. The government has had a separate allocation for investment in solar panels. That has had prioritisation on how those funds have been used. But at this point in time, as Todd just said, prioritising learning infrastructure has meant the solar panels aren't being put on at this point.

Mr SHELTON - Just tying the two together with your solar panels and energy efficiency and the pool, you know, I see that down the track, as you said, Kane, there are different grants every now and again, but if you're going to have an indoor pool, it's got to be heated 24/7. I presume the temperature that it's heated to for a therapy pool is about three degrees higher than what it is in most cases. There is a fair bit of energy use, and the pool will be somewhat of a drain on the - excuse the pun - energy the school uses. If solar, if it could be at all fitted in, you don't need a battery, the pool will take all the energy that solar can produce just to keep it to that temperature and then offset the cost to the school, of course. I'd tie that together.

Mr HISCUTT - With the conversation about insulation and double glazing, with the existing walls that are not being destroyed, are we coming back through and putting new windows in?

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Mr GILLIES - Budget permitting. We'll see how we go. When they do the section J assessment, they take all that into account, of it potentially not being replaced. They will work those into those calculations.

CHAIR - We move on to page 16.

Ms RATTRAY - I'm interested in the conversations that have taken place with our fantastic service providers in Tasmania, namely TasNetworks and TasWater. I'm just interested in what sort of conversations they have -

Mr SHELTON - No sarcasm allowed.

Members interjecting.

Ms RATTRAY - No, not at all. Has there been any assessment of what might be needed to be upgraded for any of these works to progress in a timely manner, given a lot of the sensitivities we've talked about today?

Mr GILLIES - We're planning over the next school holidays to bring contractors in to do a complete assessment of the school in terms of sewer, water, power, and locating and sizing up that infrastructure. We will then be able to talk to the authorities about what we need to do.

Ms RATTRAY - Wouldn't the local council have plans?

Mr GILLIES - No.

Ms RATTRAY - They don't have plans?

Mr GILLIES - Well, I'll qualify that -

Ms RATTRAY - The Burnie City Council don't have plans?

Mr GILLIES - The council do and DECYP do, but they're not fully resolved, if you know what I mean. They're not complete in their information. To come through now with contractors that are actually looking at the building, we can draw and locate services that are actually there and size them up. We're testing the drawings, if you like.

Ms RATTRAY - But there's no complete set of drawings somewhere that says that this is where this service is leading from into?

Mr GILLIES - No, because the school and the various tenancies on site have been altered over time.

Ms RATTRAY - But 2017 is when the last significant works took place?

Mr GILLIES - Correct. But they are not complete drawings.

Mr WILLIAMS - I might add too that, obviously, it's an operational site and has been an operational site, so we do have an understanding of the switchboards that are on the site and, you know, other key infrastructure from an operational perspective.

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CHAIR - I'll start at the top of the page and ask about the art site scheme.

Ms RATTRAY - You've taken my question, Chair.

CHAIR - I'll pass it back to you, Ms Rattray.

Ms RATTRAY - No, Mr Hiscutt wants to ask.

CHAIR - We've got some consistency here.

Ms RATTRAY - No, Mr Hiscutt wants to ask it.

CHAIR - I'll start it off and you can follow up. We recently looked at a site in Launceston. It was the Northern Recreational Sports Hub. It had one stage of that site with the \$80,000 art scheme, and then there was an add-on which was an attachment to that site. There were two separate projects and it was ruled that there didn't need to be two lots of \$80,000 allocation for those sites even though they were separate.

Ms RATTRAY - We can show you that in writing if you like?

CHAIR - There was a precedent. I'm wondering whether or not this will be an \$80,000 art scheme over the two sites, or how you anticipate that funding? That may be put into solar, potentially, I'm thinking.

Ms RATTRAY - The committee is here to help.

Members interjecting.

CHAIR - We want to support our artists, but we understand that there are quite a few restrictions financially on our state at the moment.

Mr SALTER - We want to follow government policy. We also want, if there's any flexibility in that policy, then we're happy to take on board the information you've got and see whether it's a similar circumstance in this case.

Mr WILLIAMS - To answer the question, they're currently scoped as two separate projects, and with two separate arts at work allocations.

Ms RATTRAY - But they're not really.

Mr HISCUTT - Yeah, that's what I was going to ask.

Mr SHELTON - It's listed in our documentation as one project split into two.

Mr SALTER - As we say, you've got a good example and that's an example that we can follow.

CHAIR - The Northern Recreational Sports Hub, which is an amazing facility, is now having the second - I think third stage, actually? Isn't it? They were third stage. But they are

located quite close to each other, but they are very much the same project. So, you're happy to explore that?

Mr SALTER - Yes, I'm happy to explore that.

Mr HISCUTT - I was going to ask, I presume the drafting architecture was done through a competitive tender. Is that how these projects work?

Mr WILLIAMS - Correct. The engagement of the consulting team? Yes, following the government procurement process.

Mr HISCUTT - Nice. I assume that was the case. Thank you.

Ms RATTRAY - I think you might have asked this, Chair, so seeing you stole my art scheme question, I'll take yours. It's about the recycling of materials that may be used or reused, something that the committee always puts a focus on because we're all quite frugal here.

Unknown - Is that construction materials?

Ms RATTRAY - Anything. Has some assessment been made of how much might be involved? Or is that something you would need to work through with whoever won a tender down the track?

Mr GILLIES - If we're talking building materials, we normally put into our specification documentation what materials that are demolished need to be recycled. I think that's part of the government policy.

Ms RATTRAY - But recycled where? Into this project?

Mr GILLIES - Not necessarily.

Ms RATTRAY - Or down the road or to someone who just gets a bargain?

Mr GILLIES - No, I think it would be put into - it won't necessarily be recycled into the project, but it will certainly be taken off site and recycled. Steel is a good example, that'll be recycled.

Ms RATTRAY - I'm more interested in what can be recycled into the project itself.

Mr WILLIAMS - We certainly try to. Where there's value in an existing structure, we try to retain that structure. Absolutely. We value it because we work with our old buildings all the time. If we use the example of the good old Tassie hardwood timber that's robust and has longevity compared to plaster -

Ms RATTRAY - South George Town's primary school.

Mr WILLIAMS - We love it. We want to keep using it because it saves on maintenance, we know. Absolutely, we do where we can. Experience has also shown that there's a cost benefit to it is well. At times, it can be more expensive to recycle and we're mindful of that. We don't want to waste; we actually want to get benefits. So, it is part of our process.

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Ms RATTRAY - Albeit that this particular site is not as old as a lot of others. Would that be fair to say? There might not be a lot of that lovely Tassie oak timber? There's probably none.

Mr GILLIES - Not necessarily in this school, no.

Mr WILLIAMS - No, but there's good solid Besser block that is robust, and we saw some good steel in there and things like that. But, yes, not so much the Tassie hardwood as is in some of our other schools.

Ms RATTRAY - Thanks, Chair.

CHAIR - Mr Shelton.

Mr SHELTON - On the dollars, and we will talk about Devonport tomorrow, but how many students does Devonport have?

Ms MURPHY - About the same.

Mr SHELTON - About the same?

Ms MURPHY - Yes.

Mr SHELTON - Okay, and that's a greenfield site?

Ms MURPHY - So, we've got 67 at Burnie and 132 in total across North West Support School.

Mr SHELTON - Okay, so we can say that the efficiency of the spend of only \$14,000 is a fantastic end result -

Ms RATTRAY - 14 million.

Mr SHELTON - for the Burnie campus.

Ms RATTRAY - 14 million.

CHAIR - You forgot three zeros.

Mr SHELTON - 14 million. Sorry. Anyway, on the specifics: so, the quantity surveyor is saying - just to get this right, the quantity surveyor is saying at this point in time the construction cost is around 9.6, top line?

Mr WILLIAMS - Yes.

Mr SHELTON - So, 9.6, and so he's saying that in 18 months over the build time that there could be a possibility of escalation and market conditions that could cost another 20 per cent; is that what the quantity surveyor is saying?

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Mr WILLIAMS - Yes, that's the advice that we're getting from the quantity surveyor.

Mr SHELTON - Now putting my mate's - the Treasurer's hat on, what happens to that 2 mil if it's not spent?

Mr WILLIAMS - It will be spent. It will be part of the project. I'm sure Sarah Jane has a very long list of things that she'd like to do.

Mr SHELTON - So the project would expand to cater for the underspend; is that what you're saying?

Mr WILLIAMS - I'm saying that the project would work within the budget allocation to deliver an outcome for the North West Support School. Whilst costs have gone up and down over time -

Mr SHELTON - We expect them to go up.

Mr WILLIAMS - We do need to take the advice of the quantity surveyors, and people have differing views on quantity surveying expertise -

Mr SHELTON - I can accept that.

Mr WILLIAMS - but we do need it as protection.

Mr SHELTON - Yes.

Mr WILLIAMS - Because if it's taken away and reused somewhere else, in six months' time when we're getting tender results, we could be in trouble and then can't deliver an outcome that we need to deliver. So, it's deliberately in there as a buffer and what happens as we - because the quantity surveyor is basing it on a high level, you know, as the diagrams develop into the detail, there will be a shift from our contingencies into the construction value as we get closer, and in six months' time, there will be more information on the market as well.

Mr SHELTON - I understand that, but at this point in time there's - the quantity surveyor is saying it's just under 10 mil, 9.665 for the construction costs. There's 2.1 for market escalation and so, yes, if it goes up, you've got the money there to cater for that 10 mil spend -

Mr WILLIAMS - Based on the advice, yes.

Mr SHELTON - But then there's also a construction contingency of 1.1.

CHAIR - And a design contingency.

Mr SHELTON - So actually there's 33 per cent contingencies in this 9 mil; so, have we designed it to only spend 9 mil?

CHAIR - It's a very good question.

Mr HISCUTT - That's what it looks like, that's the information you provided, is that you're going to spend - if things don't go well, we'll spend more.

Mr SHELTON - So I take it - and what you're saying is that at the end of the day, the construction cost and the ability to spend the money, there will be \$15 million spent on the job. One more -

CHAIR - Kane had a response to that, and then we will go back to your next question, Mr Shelton.

Mr SALTER - So, as we go through this project and others and you go from concept to detailed design, the appropriate - from a project management perspective, you build in contingencies and then, as Todd said, as detail firms up, then costs might hold, or you might move some out of design contingency into the construction cost. As you're building, there might be unexpected things that can occur with infrastructure. So, you want to maintain those contingencies, as advised by experts, and that's just standard project management. It would be poor project management if we were going into the projects with no contingencies and that we had scoped work too high, and then some of these risks eventuated, and I think you might have used the words: would we be expanding the project; I wouldn't use those words. What would happen if some of those didn't realise, Sarah Jane and the team have worked really hard on the scope that's manageable within the allocation, with the contingencies as advised by the quantity surveyor. If, in a really positive outcome, some of those funds are available, there are existing priorities that they can go to which will add further value on top of what's already there for the school. It's not a case of, okay, we will start to come up with some new things. There's hard work that's gone into the prioritisation to date.

Mr WILLIAMS - I might just add in, we could put all those three top lines, construction market conditions and contingency - we could put them all under construction, and we've had a number of different iterations of trying to present the budget in a way to be open and transparent around what we're trying to do; but they could all be subcategories of construction, knowing that that's the budget and the figures as we currently stand as we continue to work through the detail.

CHAIR - Mr Shelton, did you have a follow-up question to that?

Mr SHELTON - Only a statement to say that I don't get the top line, then. If that's a quantity surveyor, and they are the experts in the field, then they have said at today's cost this is what it would cost - if I was going to build a house, at the end of the day, I would like it to be closer than that. It's a 33 per cent contingency in this build and what happens afterwards, look, I'm not interested in giving the money back into the Treasury, but, and more into what Sarah Jane would like, as you've mentioned, Kane, in other issues that could be dealt with; but it's just the variation is huge. I know the market is pretty awful at the moment to try to guess, but that's what a quantity surveyor does. If that top figure is right, then -

Mr WILLIAMS - If you track building costs and construction costs over the last 10 years, particularly the last five years, there have been some dramatic increases.

Mr HISCUTT - That's what the role of the - I guess just following on from that, the definition of contingency is there only if you need it. It's not part of the construction cost and it feels like, from what we're hearing, that this is going to be built into the construction cost. I guess to answer the question, if we spend less than that, we're going to find things - to

prioritise things to do, which is okay; but the counterpoint to that is if the budget goes over, we're going to find elements to cut to bring it back to the budget.

Mr SALTER - If I can add to it in a general sense first: for all our projects, we need to manage those within the allocation that's provided. Often it will be in terms of looking through those priorities. If you have to draw on those contingencies and still have a shortfall, then we need to look at scope.

Mr HISCUTT - I guess the second question was: how confident are you with the price that's presented for this - the dollar value presented for this?

Mr SALTER - At this stage of the design process, between the architects and the quantity surveyor and with the contingencies, we're comfortable that the scope can be delivered. As we get to further design stages, we can continue to get QS updates, so that before we go to tender, we've got the latest information in front of us on what we expect.

Mr WILLIAMS - I think, absolutely we're confident with the figures that we've been provided. I think also, too, the point that we talked about with staging needs to come in too, there is a bit of an unknown element of cost in that. Whilst we've allowed for it, we've got to have that flexibility in our budget to do it, I suppose, as well.

Ms MURPHY - Particularly when we're - if that includes working after hours, working at different times around the project to fit this staging.

Mr HISCUTT - I guess that's hard for our role as judging whether this is good use of public money, when we don't really have knowledge of where that's going to be.

CHAIR - 33 per cent of the cost we're unsure about.

Ms BURNET - It's not so much about the budget, it's more about - I'm just wondering in relation to your staffing, what's the gender mix? Is it mainly women?

Ms MURPHY - Yes, it is.

Ms BURNET - Have they had input into design? I mean, how much has there been -

Ms MURPHY - All of our staff have been involved. Within our workshops, we've had teachers involved, teacher assistants, admin, our grounds people have been involved. Anyone that works in the school, we've had representation from all groups.

Ms BURNET - Probably just as an architectural question, how does that sort of sensitive design, how does that inform those spaces? We talked about light, but things like round windows or things that kind of soften spaces for children who may have special needs. How has that been informed? How has your design been informed?

Mr GILLIES - We teamed up with a mainland-based company who are experienced in neurodiverse design, Hames Sharley. They came down at the start of the project. They were very much involved in the briefing of the project, so they assist us in providing that sort of information.

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Ms BURNET - Okay, and what was their name?

Mr GILLIES - Hames Sharley.

Mr SHELTON - One more question: I congratulate the principal and the school for their work, because they're contributing \$400,000. Presumably, through the conversation today, that's work that could've been done that you've held back off so that you had some money to contribute?

Ms MURPHY - We didn't want to start a part of a project that then later we would be dismantling for the purpose of the reconfiguration. So, we've been really intentional around - any projects that we have done, we've been really intentional about the materials we've used. When you were talking before - our aluminium doors, they will be reused within the project. The large aluminium door that we first went through when you did the walkthrough this morning, that will become part of the project, because that was something that we had only recently invested in.

All of our fobs throughout the school, they will be reutilised again as well. So, we have undertaken projects, but we've been really considered around what we have done and what we haven't done, because we don't want to be wasting money.

Mr SHELTON - Well done. That wasn't the question - that's part of the question. My actual question is to Todd and Kane, and that's the DECYP project management. The \$369,000, the justification for that. Where's that come from? I mean, I would imagine that you two are paid full-time by DECYP, by the Department, so where does the \$369,000 come from? Only from the point that the school's done a really good job at \$400,000, and here the Department is taking basically that amount of money to manage the project when you're actually paid full-time to do it anyway. Isn't that double dipping?

I'm just curious about the explanation, Kane.

Mr WILLIAMS - We're on the record, aren't we?

Ms RATTRAY - You can ask to not be on the record; you can request that.

Mr SALTER - No. I mean, what I would absolutely say is there is no double-dipping, so absolutely rule that out. There's a component of the project management staff in the facilities team that their salary is supported by projects that we know are in the forward Estimates. So, therefore, part of the capital allocation is drawn down to support those project managers, because they're not funded through the recurrent appropriation. So, absolutely, there is no double-dipping.

Mr SHELTON - I'm glad I asked that question.

Mr SALTER - So, those costs there, that's not Todd's cost or my cost. It's the specific project managers that liaison with principal Sarah Jane, liaison with the architect, and are a key connection in delivery of the project from the beginning to the end, including post-construction being completed.

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Mr WILLIAMS - I'd also like to add that I acknowledge that it's a significant cost, and it is through, you know, the life of the project, which is a considerable amount of years. It is the support that we provide to the principal and the team acknowledging all the work that the principal has to do in a busy day-to-day running of a school as well as contributing to a significant project investment. So, we're very mindful, as a team, that we have to provide them the support for that. We're very grateful for the investment that the government's been making in our schools.

It doesn't come with an increase in recurrent funding for us to run the projects. It's not unusual in the private sector when they do an investment that they capitalise their project investment into it as well. So, it's a contemporary model of ensuring that we're getting good outcomes for our projects, and that includes the day-to-day on-the-ground support of working with the school staff.

Mr HISCUTT - I had a separate question, but just a bit of a follow-up on that. Are we not taking operational expense out of capital expense in that regard, to do that? Or you would argue that it's part of this capital project that they are -

Mr SALTER - Because it's part of the capital project.

Mr HISCUTT - So, the people doing that wouldn't be employed by DECYP if this job wasn't on the go?

Mr SALTER - If you took it to the nth degree and we had no capital program, we'd have a component of those project managers - we wouldn't have a funding source for them.

Mr HISCUTT - Yeah, okay.

Ms RATTRAY - Todd wouldn't have to put up with me.

Mr HISCUTT - The question - the consultant services there, how many different elements does that involve? How many different contractors? Is that just architect, or are there other consultants involved in that?

Mr GILLIES - There's a lot of other things in that.

Mr WILLIAMS - Yeah, that's the whole consultancy team. You know, the architectural consultancy -

Mr GILLIES - The engineers.

Mr WILLIAMS - Engineering consultancy.

Mr GILLIES - Acoustics.

Mr HISCUTT - Yeah, the full suite of the construction drawings comes out of that. I get it.

Mr GILLIES - Full suite of them. Yeah.

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Mr HISCUTT - Thank you, just to understand what that was all looking like. Thank you. That was my last question, Chair.

CHAIR - Thank you. Do we have any more questions from the committee?

Ms RATTRAY - No.

CHAIR - Wonderful. That concludes this section of our deliberations. Before you leave, I have a range of questions to run through with you, and if you can just answer with a yes or no.

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.

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 - As I advised you at the commencement of your evidence, what you have said to us here today is protected by parliamentary privilege. Once you leave the table, you need to be aware that privilege does not attach to comments you may make to anyone, including the media, even if you are just repeating what you said to us. Do you understand that?

WITNESSES - Yes.

CHAIR - Well, thank you for coming in. Also thank you for your time today and trying to navigate us through with your beautiful students and the remarkable job that you and your team do. We really appreciate it.

The committee adjourned at 3.57 p.m.