



PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

Kings Meadows High School Major Refurbishment and Prospect High School Major Refurbishment

Brought up by Mr Brooks and ordered by the House of Assembly to be printed.

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1 INTRODUCTION

The Committee has the honour to report to the House of Assembly in accordance with the provisions of the *Public Works Committee Act 1914* on the -

Kings Meadows High School Major Refurbishment and Prospect High School Major Refurbishment

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Kings Meadows High School Major Refurbishment and Prospect High School Major Refurbishment are part of the State Government's *Reinvigorating Tasmanian High Schools* program. This program has a funding commitment of \$68 million over four years to upgrade facilities at a number of high schools to provide flexible and contemporary learning spaces, with the aim of promoting 21st Century learning and teaching practices.

Kings Meadows High School Major Refurbishment

- 2.2 This reference recommended the Committee approve works for major refurbishment of existing learning areas at Kings Meadows High School to provide contemporary learning environments.
- 2.3 The main building facilities were constructed in 1960 and are mostly in original configuration. In general, very little of the school has been replaced or refurbished other than regular maintenance, minor refurbishment and fit-out alterations. Since the school was constructed, education and student needs have changed and the learning areas are no longer conducive to 21st century learning and teaching practices.
- 2.4 The existing classrooms within the school are of a cellular type design that do not support 21st century teaching and learning practices. Whilst the proposed works will maintain the existing buildings, which were designed for teaching methodologies of the past, the design of the new general learning areas will create a flexible environment that will promote collaborative learning through increased student interaction.
- 2.5 The proposed works include:
- Redevelopment of the first floor of B Block (Building 2A) to house new learning areas for grades 9 and 10;
 - Redevelopment of the current library (Building 5) to house new learning areas for grade 8;
 - Relocation of the library and ICT area to the southern end of C Block (Building 4A);
 - Refurbishment of the grade 7 and 8 toilets located at the southern end of C Block (Building 4A); and

- Minor refurbishment of the Art and MDT (Materials, Design and Technology) areas located in D Block (Building 3B).

2.6 The advantages of the proposed works are that they will:

- Provide a range of spaces, such as clusters of classrooms, which are responsive to future changes, including ICT developments;
- Provide open, social spaces and informal study areas to maximise the use of circulation while avoiding long, narrow corridors;
- Utilise the existing building fabric and site infrastructure;
- Reinforce the flow of year groups through the school;
- Create and identify year level learning precincts within the structure of the campus;
- Cluster all year groups around the centre of the school;
- Maintain the functioning grade 7 classrooms, drama, administration and gymnasium;
- Reinforce the links between year groups and the supporting functions;
- Locate the library for easy access by parent and community groups off the existing car park;
- Maintain music, dance and drama within existing established facilities;
- Maintain existing access, bus and car parking areas; and
- Provide scope for increased enrolments.

Prospect High School Major Refurbishment

2.7 This reference recommended the Committee approve works for major refurbishment and redevelopment of existing learning areas at Prospect High School to provide contemporary and flexible learning environments and support facilities.

2.8 The main building facilities were constructed in 1965 and since then some areas have been redeveloped. Since the school was constructed, education and student needs have changed and although well maintained, the learning areas are no longer conducive to 21st century learning and teaching practices.

2.9 The proposed works are designed to overcome a number of issues identified within the school including:

- Building 2 and Building 5 have had little or no work done on them since they were constructed, apart from routine and emergency maintenance, and the current classrooms do not provide the flexibility required to support contemporary, collaborative learning;
- The art and drama spaces are inflexible and poorly laid-out from a functional perspective, and the art store is not located within the art rooms;
- The school does not currently have a main entry foyer;
- Existing change rooms are isolated from the rest of the school, in particular, the gymnasium;

- The weights area in the gymnasium is located on a mezzanine level, creating access and monitoring issues;
- Existing roof sheeting and windows have not been replaced in 50 years; and
- There are a number of non-compliance issues with regards to access and services.

2.10 The proposed works include:

- Refurbishment and redevelopment of Buildings 2 and 5 to provide new flexible and contemporary learning areas for grades 8, 9 and 10, improved staff support facilities and more functional and flexible spaces for art and drama;
- Construction of a new main entry next to the administration building to clearly provide a better level of engagement with visitors and the wider school community;
- Construction of new change room facilities attached to the gymnasium;
- Removal of the mezzanine level in the gymnasium, and relocation of the weights area on ground level in a new extension off the gymnasium, which will also include storage for gym equipment and a portable stage for school assemblies and events;
- Removal of asbestos and roof and window replacement to all areas being redeveloped;
- Upgrades to non-compliant services; and
- Improving access through the completion of covered walkways and raised paved areas around entries to buildings where required.

2.11 The advantages of the proposed works are that they will:

- Maximise use of the existing buildings;
- Group general learning areas to form identifiable year groups;
- Arrange general learning areas for future flexibility and teaching options;
- Use existing internal circulation spaces for general learning areas and breakout spaces;
- Improve communal areas to allow for additional breakout and learning areas;
- Improve building elements to provide a better community and school interface; and
- Provide scope for increased enrolments.

3 PROJECT COSTS

Kings Meadows High School Major Refurbishment

3.1 Pursuant to the Message from Her Excellency the Governor-in-Council, the estimated cost of the work is \$7.15 million.

The following table details the cost estimates for the project:

Description	Budget Component (\$'000)
Construction	5,185
Furniture and equipment	600
Upfront expenses including consultant's fees	600
Art in Public Buildings	80
Contingency including design and construction contingency, post-occupancy works	685
Total	7,150

Prospect High School Major Refurbishment

3.2 Pursuant to the Message from Her Excellency the Governor-in-Council, the estimated cost of the work is \$8.5 million.

The following table details the cost estimates for the project:

Description	Budget Component (\$'000)
Construction	6,120
Escalation to tender allowance	60
Furniture and equipment	725
Upfront expenses including consultant's fees	807
Art in Public Buildings	80
Contingency including design and construction contingency, post-occupancy works	708
Total	8,500

4 EVIDENCE

4.1 The Committee commenced its inquiry on Friday, 30 October last with an inspection of the sites of the proposed works. The Committee then returned to the Conference Room, Henty House, Launceston, whereupon the following witnesses appeared, made the Statutory Declaration and were examined by the Committee in public:-

- Robert Williams, Deputy Secretary Department Services, Department of Education;
- Tony Luttrell, Chief Financial Officer, Department of Education;
- Lee Barker, Principal, Kings Meadows High School;
- David Gillies, Architect and Director, 6ty° Pty Ltd (for the Kings Meadows High School project);
- Cary Stocks, Principal, Prospect High School; and
- Paul Cockburn, Architect and Director, Carroll & Cockburn Architects (for the Prospect High School project).

Overview and Need for the Proposed Works - Kings Meadows High School Major Refurbishment

4.2 Mr Gillies provided the following over view of the proposed works at Kings Meadows High School:

Mr GILLIES - The design group on this project commenced work many months ago. Prior to the school receiving increased funding, we were working to an original \$2 million budget. We were looking at a reduced scope of works. Once we heard we had an additional sum of money, we started a master planning process to make sure we were going to spend the money in the areas that were requiring money to be spent on them.

.....In effect, we were focusing the money on upstairs of B block, recreating spaces for grade 8, and to spend a small amount of money on the southern end of C block, which were areas that had not had money spent on them for some time, primarily around the common room for grade 7 and 8, the toilets, as we saw this morning.

We redesigned the building upstairs in B block, maintaining the access points into the building. We accommodated 11 classrooms, along with staff areas, staff rooms, toilets. There are plans there, if you want to have a look at them. If you scroll through to A009, and we did have a look at it this morning, you can see the two stairs, one at each end. At the northern end of the building we have a lift. We have complied with the access and disability code to allow students, teachers, and the public to get up to that level.

.....When it is developed, we will split the building in half - grade 9 at one end, grade 10 at the other end, five classrooms for each and a flexible learning space in the middle. There is a bubble of one year group coming through at the moment, so that essential space will be used for that bubble. When that bubble is not there, that is supposed to be opened as a common room for grade 8, grade 9, and grade 10.

.....We have tried to eliminate corridors, which are circulation space, put them back into areas that the student can actually use. The classrooms will break out into that flexible space. As we saw this morning, the classrooms have been paired. They can open and close to single classrooms, or operate as a pair of classrooms. We have two staff rooms, one at each end, one for grade 9 and one for grade 10. We have toilets on that level, and office space for the senior staff.

The grade 10 end is at the southern end. We have introduced a kitchenette into that to give them more ownership of that space and provide them with a little bit more responsibility. They can have access to an area that they can make coffee, heat up lunches with microwaves and toasters, and that sort of thing.

.....downstairs of the double-storey block, we are redoing the boys' and girls' toilets. The toilets that are upstairs will be removed. We are building a new toilet block downstairs. at the northern end, in the top right-hand corner we are recreating the boys' and girls' toilets that we are displacing from upstairs.

.....The next building we looked at was the existing library, that we saw this morning. We have converted that into the grade 8 group.The requirement for this building was to

provide five separate classrooms that could also open into each other. We have also provided a flexible learning area that we have later put on the plan, that these classrooms can break out into. We have sliding doors on the front of these classrooms. Effectively, they are going from a 75-square metre footprint, which is what all these classrooms are required to have as a minimum - if we open up those bi-fold doors, they can break out into that flexible learning area.

Central to that is a staff workroom, where all the teachers are able to go, have quiet time, and prepare their lessons. In addition to that, the staff room has glass across the front, both front and back, so they can supervise what is going on in the classroom, and out in that forecourt.

....The other area that we are looking at is the library, and that grade 7 common room we looked at this morning.The common area we walked into this morning is on the left-hand side of the page. Straight above that is remodelled toilets for boys and girls. One thing we did not mention this morning is each of those toilet cubicles is a self-contained cubicle. We have toilet pans and basins within them

4.3 Ms Barker provided the following overview of the school and the need for the proposed works:

.....The current classrooms that you observed this morning on the tour of the first floor of B block are a traditional series of individual, under-resourced, and small classrooms separated by a central passageway. The floors, wall finishes, and ceilings are worn and require replacement. The size and layout of the classrooms restrict the way teachers can effectively deliver the curriculum. The space between equipment is limited, creating safety issues. There is little room to move for students and those with disabilities. In general, catering for students with disabilities is an issue at our school, as I can attest.

Toilets are located close to learning spaces, and really too close to learning spaces. Staff rooms are cramped, and corridors crowded with lockers, which pose a safety risk. Areas contain old windows, unable to be safely opened, with cracked putty, hence, they leak. Whilst grade 7 has a section of the school as a home base, grades 8, 9 and 10 do not. Consultation with the broader Kings Meadows High School community, which included teaching and non-teaching staff, students and parents, our architects and business representatives, considered the priorities to cater for the 21st century learning. These included: flexible and collaborative learning spaces, transparent and open classrooms that can interconnect, each grade to have a home base, staff rooms to be central to the learning spaces, each learning plaza to have a social space where students and staff can mingle, lockers integrated, all learning spaces equipped with up-to-date technology. The students spoke about a couple of those this morning.

.....Kings Meadows High School has been part of a global inquiry investigating new teaching strategies and conditions that ensure students have the necessary skills for the 21st century. Last term - and I spoke of this as we were touring - all grade 7 and 8 students participated in a new learning program, where over a series of weeks, students learnt these twenty-first century skills of collaboration and problem solving, and conducted investigations on solving real-world problems. Subjects of English, science, social science, and mathematics were integrated. Students from a number of classes worked together and work was conducted across a number of learning areas. It was powerful learning with great education outcomes and engagement for students, as well as extending the repertoire of skills of teachers. However, flexible classrooms that could be opened, like what you saw today in the new grade 7 block, CO4 and CO6, supported this flexible learning. Hence, the redevelopment of the new grade 8 plaza will enable this type of learning, and other exciting twenty-first century learning, to take place.

.....The redevelopment has been planned carefully, and designed with these examples I have mentioned of new learning in mind. We have seen that the current separate block for grade 7, with staff room that is central, has assisted with ownership and pride, and the development of quality relationships between staff and student. That is why, in the

redevelopment, there will be separate learning spaces, or blocks, or plazas, for grade 8, 9, and 10, with each having their own social space.

Redeveloping the library into the grade 8 block has taken a large, under-utilised building - beautiful as it is, and it is lovely - but it has transformed it into an exciting 21st learning space to address the learning outcomes. The new library, however, has been positioned in an area that was also under-utilised. This will become an accessible new media centre, closely linked to ICT resources, which is more in line with 21st century education.

Finally, the proposed plans will enable team teaching to occur. This is beneficial for students as well as teacher practice, where teachers can learn from one another. The new learning spaces contain a sense of openness and transparency. This enables students who are good role models with their learning and behaviour to be visible, and also enables teacher practice to be de-privatised. The advantage of this is better teaching, learning, and outcomes.

- 4.4 The Committee noted that two Kings Meadows High School students were given the opportunity to accompany the Committee during the site visit, and were most impressed with their vision for the school. The Chair, Mr Brooks, made the following comments during the hearing:

.....I first acknowledge Claire Coleman and Myra Stanley. They were sensational representatives at the school, very interesting young Tasmanians. They were exemplary of not only their interest in the project, but were happy to talk about their thoughts and opinions. It was different to have students attend a Public Works Committee site inspection. It was excellent.

- 4.5 The Committee questioned the witnesses further on the need for the proposed works at Kings Meadows High School and whether it delivered value to the community:

CHAIR - You feel it is necessary to do this work?

Ms BARKER - Yes.

CHAIR - The department feels it is necessary?

Mr WILLIAMS - Absolutely.

CHAIR - Does it give present and prospective value to the public? Is it value for money? Is it worth it?

Mr WILLIAMS - We believe it is value for money. As we talked about earlier, we are not making any statements. We have gone for learning spaces as the priority, not extracurricular things.

Mr LUTTRELL - It is a fifty-year old building, and there is a range of facilities beyond their life. It comes down to necessity, as much as needs.

CHAIR - Ms Barker is the principal and a taxpayer. Do you feel it delivers value for taxpayers?

Ms BARKER - Yes, I do. I have been very impressed through the design. Every option that has been put forward to us is really thoughtful and not overstated, so, very pleased.

Mrs RYLAH - Are we rectifying all the weaknesses to building, to structure, to design that have been identified as high priority issues for the long term future of the school buildings, and the education that takes place there?

Mr LUTTRELL - Yes. We are correcting the infrastructure of the build we are doing. That would cover, as we said the roofs, the electrical, asbestos, and the like.

Overview and Need for the Proposed Works - Prospect High School Major refurbishment

4.6 Mr Stocks provided the following overview of the school and the need for the proposed works:

As you will have seen from the site visit, the school is 50 years old. Whilst there has been some investment in the school over that time, large parts of it are still what I call an industrial model of education, with the long corridors and fairly small classrooms. As we move into the 21st century, we need improved learning spaces for our students. They need to be much more flexible than they are now. As you will notice from the plans, a number of the classrooms, or general learning areas as they are called, provide teachers with the opportunity to create two spaces out of one, and one space out of two. That is with a view to enabling teachers to teach in a variety of ways, and have a greater amount of flexibility over those spaces. At the moment, we do not have that flexibility. They tend to be boxes. Whilst that might be appropriate for instruction in certain times, it certainly does not create an environment that allows flexible teaching and learning opportunities. That is one of the key aspects of the project. Currently, there are a lot of parts of the school that are in a reasonably poor state of repair and require urgent upgrade to make them modern, contemporary, safe, and comfortable environments for staff and students.

Our school's mission statement is, 'Preparing students for the world of their time.' Whilst our teachers and other support staff do that really well, it is hard to truly achieve that if you do not have modern facilities.

You might drive around the Prospect community and get a feel for what that community is like, but the reality is 80 per cent of our families come from disadvantage; 80 per cent of our families are in the lower half of the index of disadvantage measure as reported in My School. The reason why I mention that is, if we are truly committed to redressing disadvantage in education and providing the best opportunities for kids, part of that is providing them with contemporary learning facilities which they are proud of. I am proud of the way our students and staff maintain our facilities, but there is only so long you can do that without the need for the upgrade. It is certainly needed and welcomed by our school community, so I thank you.

4.7 The Committee questioned the witnesses further on the need for the proposed works at Prospect High School and whether it would deliver value to the community:

CHAIR - Does it meet the stated purpose we need it to?

Mr WILLIAMS - Yes, I believe it does. It gives us a twenty-first-century school, teaching spaces.

CHAIR - Cary, is it necessary?

Mr STOCKS - Yes, most definitely.

CHAIR - Do you think it delivers value to the taxpayer, the Government, and to the people of Tasmania?

Mr STOCKS - Yes, I do. One of our catchphrases has been quality over quantity. While the project is quite expansive, we have tried to deal with the good bones of the school already there, rather than adding floor space or knocking down and rebuilding. That does deliver value for money.

The Reinvigorating Tasmanian High Schools program

4.8 The Committee questioned the witnesses on the Reinvigorating Tasmanian High Schools program, including the aim of the program and how schools were prioritised for upgrade works. Mr Williams noted that the aim of the upgrades was to provide contemporary and flexible learning spaces. Mr Williams also noted

that the schools being upgraded under the program had been identified as the highest priorities:

Mr WILLIAMS - This is the first project from this year's budget, \$95 million of education building projects over the next four years. The aim in all of these projects, and the two we are considering today, is to make sure we fully focus our resources into contemporary learning spaces. That is our prime objective with all of these projects.

CHAIR -Is this a priority project, or are there other things that you would rather be spending your money on?

Mr WILLIAMS - No. This came off the list we prepared from a previous list of priorities, several years ago. All of these new budget initiatives were from the high-priority category...All of these were the high priority off the list. We are currently going through a complete review of all the school's needs. They are all able to put in a submission for what they see as their needs. We will assess those according to safety issues, design issues, demand issues. They have come up with a new list, but these were all the high-priority list ones.

Project Budgets

- 4.9 The Committee noted the difference in budget for each project, with the Kings Meadows High School allocated \$7.15 million and Prospect High School allocated \$8.5 million. The Committee also noted that the schools were both constructed in the 1960's and that Kings Meadows High School accommodated more students than Prospect High School. The Committee sought an explanation from the witnesses on the factors that had determined the budgets for each project:

Mrs RYLAH - I would like to turn to looking at the budget issues. When I compare the two school projects we are looking at today, I have done some numbers. The previous school project is a \$7.1 million project for 500 students. That is \$14,300 per student. When we look at this one it is \$8.5 million for 400 students, or \$21,500. This, per student, is a third more expensive than the previous project. However, this is on a flat site. Could you give us some justification for the increase in cost, the differential between the two projects, please?

Mr WILLIAMS -The allocation was made based on the perceived need. The infrastructure at Kings Meadows, while it is a similar age, is a more solid infrastructure in terms of the way it was built. It is not a calculation made on a cost per student. It was what was needed in the facility.

To build a new school for the same number of kids at Prospect, you would be increasing the cost even more. It depends on the age and state of the facilities. If you look at the plans, the money being spent at Prospect will turn it into a really good school. There is nothing luxurious about what we are proposing. These are basic things - changing rooms attached to the gym, reconfiguring the drama spaces to be usable, rather than the dark, low-ceiling space it is. It is where you start from in terms of the fabric of the building, rather than any sort of consideration of the cost per student.

Mrs RYLAH - When I look at the plans, is it correct to say at Prospect we are altering a lot more buildings than we are at Kings Meadows?

Mr WILLIAMS - Yes. There is a greater space covered in this plan. The basic infrastructure is failing in Prospect, whereas at Kings Meadows, those buildings are pretty solid. We are replacing windows as we go through that particular process. That is good thing, because we can have better heating efficiency and things like that. This one has more infrastructure failures. There are leaking roofs at Kings Meadows as well. It is the starting point of the infrastructure. When we do these plans, one of the things we try to do is look at the demand, to make sure we are not increasing or maintaining a footprint not warranted into the future. The basic answer is, it depends on the fabric of the buildings we started with.

Mr LUTTRELL -In terms of the Prospect school, mechanical, electrical, and fire security services - around \$1.3 million, which is a significant component of the build. It reflects previous comments we have made around the age of the buildings, being 50 years old.

... .. Another example - with Prospect, the roof replacement is over \$500 000. With Kings Meadows, it is around \$100 000. There are variations.

Mrs TAYLOR - Supplementary to that. You have a comparison of upfront expenses, including consultant fees of \$207 000 more for this one, than for the previous one.

Mr WILLIAMS - Yes. That reflects the breadth of the work needed, and the amount of work the contractors and architects are having to do over more buildings.

- 4.10 The Committee also questioned the witnesses on the furniture and equipment budget for the Kings Meadows High School project. Of particular interest to the Committee was whether this had been fully costed and if it would be adequate:

Mrs TAYLOR - There is \$600 000 for furniture and equipment. There is going to be a lot of new equipment needed within the buildings. Is it enough? You have costed this? Is this an amount you have been given, or do you have a list of what you think you need, and that is what it has added up to?

Ms BARKER - We have not done a list of what we need and what it would add up to. We are concerned it is probably not going to be enough. We do want them looking 'schmick', because the infrastructure will look really good. That is something we do have questions about. We will make it go as far as we can. We are hoping it will, but we are unsure if it will cover everything we need.

Mrs TAYLOR - Does that cover floor coverings as well?

Mr LUTTRELL - If I may, it covers ICT. The \$600 000 covers the IT, as well as the furniture. The floor coverings are covered in construction cost.

These are actual amounts, which have been budgeted. That is not to say if other things come in under, we cannot realign the components across the whole project. There is flexibility within total funding. We do need to have some form of indication about what the components are. As to construction, as time goes on we will have better feel around what we can and cannot do.

Tender Process

- 4.11 The Committee questioned the witnesses on the timing of the tender process for all upcoming school upgrades. The witnesses provided the following details on how the tender process would be conducted and the level of ongoing engagement the Department had with local contractors regarding upcoming projects:

CHAIR - There are a lot of school projects coming up, as we have said. I think it was \$90 million of government funding as part of the government's investment in rebuilding our high schools and the education system. What consideration have you given to staging or staggering those tenders, so they are not all released at the same time? The reason is, if they are all released at once, smaller contractors and businesses do not have the resources to allocate. They are concerned about the timing of being able to submit tenders in as many projects as they can.

Mr WILLIAMS - That has been an absolute concern of ours. We have talked with the Treasurer about this to make sure that we have the right approach. We will stagger these. Some of it is really just the natural course of events, as to when they are coming out. Maybe

I will let Tony talk - he has formed a relationship with the Master Builders Association to deal with this sort of issue, to make sure we do not cause them grief.

Mr LUTTRELL - I have met with Mr Kerschbaum twice in relation to this. I think the first one would be in the end of September and early October, and more recently, a couple of weeks ago. We continue to have engagement with him on this. We have provided him with schedules around what the likely tendering dates are. He has taken that to his board, and passed it by his board. I think around this week he has a meeting in Launceston with his subcontractors. He is going to share those projected timelines there now. They may change, but they are our best estimates at the moment. He is quite comfortable on the first version and the second. He has not expressed any concerns, but in fact, he did say - much the same as what you are raising - we need to be mindful of not having two or three coming up at the same time. He is reasonably comfortable with what we have provided him.

Mr WILLIAMS - ... We have compressed a lot of these timeframes to try and make sure we keep on track with the budget allocations. Yes, they are tight. Anything could happen along the way, such as a planning appeal or inclement weather. If everything goes smoothly, we think we can achieve some of these. Tony's conversation with the master builders has been around, 'We want to move these on quickly, can we talk to you about starting earlier in January than perhaps they were going to?' They are tight.

Mrs TAYLOR - There might be construction companies waiting for work at the minute, so they might be ready to start pretty quickly.

Mr LUTTRELL - In my conversations with Mr Kerschbaum, he has indicated in the north, north west particularly, they are keen for work. The fact we have gone to the MBA and highlighted it is coming - they have all prepared to start as soon as the tender is processed.

Mr WILLIAMS - I have spoken to one of the big companies in Tasmania. They indicated they had up to 30 workers from the north west based in the south, to keep them running until this sort of stuff starts.

There are other projects coming, such as the Devonport Living City, which is going to be a major piece of work. It will be a busy time. The profit margins will probably come up in the north over time. It will probably be pretty good down in the south because of the competition.

Mr LUTTRELL - In terms of the north and north-west, the advice from Mr Kerschbaum also has been that by going early with that advice the contractors here would not be transferring their staff to southern jobs. The fact they know it is coming, in terms of planning, they will retain the workforce here in anticipation of the work.

- 4.12 The Committee questioned the witnesses on the process for submitting tenders, and sought some clarification on whether it was no longer a requirement to hand deliver hard-copies of a tender application:

CHAIR - Can they submit their tenders electronically, or are they still required to deliver it to the box in Hobart?

Mr WILLIAMS - Yes, they can submit their tenders electronically. We have been working with Treasury to allow that to happen. There has been some problems in the past, but I believe that has now been overcome.... They have all these systems to make sure you cannot lodge it after the 'witching hour', when it is closed, and things like that. Provided the technology is working, yes, you can.

Mrs TAYLOR - The 'witching hour' is now midnight.

Mr WILLIAMS - That is right.

CHAIR - Mr Williams, the Education department has previously required the hand delivery of tenders to the box, on paper, in triplicate - or whatever it is - rather than an electronic submission. Is that no longer the requirement for all tenders?

Mr WILLIAMS - I think you can do it both ways.... Either way, it should be specified in the tender advertisement.

CHAIR - Okay. It is no longer a requirement of the Education department for it to be only submitted in hardcopy in Hobart?

Mr WILLIAMS - No. We follow the Government requirements through the Treasury.

Sourcing of Materials

- 4.13 The Committee sought information from the witnesses on the benefits that would flow to local businesses from these projects. The Committee was interested to note that the Department's expectation was that materials would all be sourced locally:

CHAIR - The tender is due to be out publicly tomorrow. Government policies include a local benefits test where possible. Do you see any issues around that policy?

Mr WILLIAMS - No.

Mrs RYLAH - Furniture and equipment?

Mr WILLIAMS - We run a local impact assessment on every contract. Almost all of our contracts I have seen this year have gone to local firms. I do not think we have had one for -

Mr LUTTRELL - It is a requirement that the tenderers put in information about the local engagement.

CHAIR - The design and materials plan - I have been given examples previously where the architects have put in what I consider to be silly specs on paint tints and varnish tints that we have to fly in from Europe or wherever it came from. There is nothing in this that we cannot get from our local small building business supplier. We can go down and just get the tin of paint that we need, rather than have to fly it in from somewhere.

Mr GILLIES - Yes. We are not anticipating it coming from anywhere else. We specified standard paint manufacturers.

- 4.14 The Committee also wished to satisfy itself that the design requirements and specifications were not excessive. The Committee questioned the witnesses on this matter and the witnesses provided assurances that the emphasis was on the provision of learning spaces and attaining value for money in sourcing materials and constructing these learning spaces. The Committee also noted the excellent job the architects for both projects had done in meeting this brief:

CHAIR - I have a comment on the architects. I have been known to have a difference of opinion with some of the architecture on other buildings, but they have done an excellent job. Where previously I have had concerns around part of the design seemed to be more expensive than what was actually required, with the options that were produced on this one, David and Joel have done an excellent job on the project. It is good to see not only the consultation, but also the responsible expenditure in the design that adequately delivers what is required, is aesthetically workable, but not over the top. Over the last six years, I have raised at this committee where, sometimes, it has been a little bit more expensive for the taxpayer than it had to be in some of the design aspects.

Mr WILLIAMS -As I mentioned at the beginning, throughout these projects we are putting parameters out, which are, 'We do not want fancy facades and great spaces for gatherings.' We want spaces that are primarily learning spaces. If they can perform other functions, that is fine, but we have taken that view as well that we do not want to spend valuable money on....

Mr GILLIES - A statement.

Mr WILLIAMS - On statements, yes. I will stop with that.

Mr GILLIES -Thank you for your comments. We appreciate that.

CHAIR - I want to briefly touch with the architects. Are there any design requirements that are what some would consider beyond reasonable, that is, you have not got a special paint specification that we have to fly in from Europe, or anything like that in there?

Mr COCKBURN - The simple answer is, no, we have not done anything frivolous or outlandish when it comes to the selection of materials.

Mrs TAYLOR - That is what he was trying to avoid saying.

Mr COCKBURN - Yes. He can say that. We have not - briefing engineers and specifying that they come from Italy, require three-month lead times, and cost a lot of money. We were very conscious of being able to maintain, and recurrent funding for schools not always being there. It is a matter of building simple, robust spaces that can be easily dealt with in terms of maintenance. I think Cary mentioned earlier, it is flexible enough to be used for other purposes as they go through. I do not think we have done anything outlandish, if that is the right word.

CHAIR - I suppose we look at it - we want it to be contemporary, we want it to be modern, but also in the design aspects - and I have raised this previously in every other Public Works Committee I have sat on - the fact that sometimes architects, certainly not that I can see from this design, go beyond what I think would be reasonable to the taxpayer in their design and the aspects of that. I wanted to make sure that is part of the brief, scope, and specifications that you have put in this. I believe you determined the requirements of flooring, and things like that, to certain requirements. They are not over the top, you could say.

Mr COCKBURN - No. That is right. Typically, with Education Department jobs the budget is not huge. With the area we are dealing with, there is a significant amount of floor area here. We have to be particularly careful when it comes to those sorts of things. You have to choose, as I said, materials that are going to hang in there. They are going to last. They are going to be robust. It sounds like a lot of money, but you spread it over that many square metres, and it is not. You have to use it wisely. That is where adaptable use of existing structures and buildings is where it is at. You cannot afford to knock it down and start again. Try and do what you can.

Kings Meadows High School – Design of Proposed Works

4.15 The Committee noted that the proposed works at Kings Meadows High School utilised existing buildings rather than building new ones. The Committee sought further detail on why new buildings were not considered, with the witnesses noting that utilising the existing building provided the best value outcomes within the available funding:

Mr GILLIES - We went through a series of design master plans. We ended up with 12 in total, raising in price from a little over \$5 million to slightly over \$10 million. We then had to go back and reassess these master plans in light of funds that were available. We ended up settling on option 7B, which is well known around the school.

Primarily, this review told us that we could not build new buildings. We had to spend the money on refurbishing the building stock that was out there. We decided we would spend the money on classrooms.

CHAIR - Was there a reason why you could not build new buildings?

Mr WILLIAMS - I think it was the financials. We would not maximise the benefit for the students if we went to build new buildings. That was the basic premise.

Mr GILLIES - For the sake of interest, the exercise we went through on the double storey building - to reproduce that same floor area to accommodate twenty-first century learning would cost an extra \$600 000. That was only providing the same footprint of the building. What we have managed to achieve up on top is an increased floor area, which fits the budget.

- 4.16 The Committee noted that the design for the first floor of B Block (Building 2A) included keeping the existing structural poles in what will become a flexible learning space in the middle of that floor. The Committee expressed some concern that this may compromise the openness and flexibility of this space:

Mrs TAYLOR -I am concerned about the poles in the middle of your flexible spaces on the first floor plan. I love the plan. It is great you are pushing the classrooms out and having the flexible spaces. Are you not going to have students walking or running into poles? Looking at a mobile phone, or carrying a book, and the poles are in the middle of the space.

Ms BARKER - We observed that in the buildings down the north west coast. They have done some designing around poles with refurbishment. That was a question we had. We saw the design. From that, it might be used to display. It is in decent areas and seemed to be a big enough space for them to move around, and did not seem to be prohibitive.

Mrs TAYLOR - This is your flexible space that you can bring your students into. You do not want too much on the poles. You want them to be the least visible as possible if you are bringing all your students out into the flexible space. You do not want to put walls or display posters around there. It seems a bit of a hazard.

Mr GILLIES - We have used columns in other designs we have done up in the north west. The columns in that particular building define spaces.

Mrs TAYLOR - I hear what you are saying but you do not want this space cut up. That is deliberately why you have big flexible spaces outside your classrooms.

Mr GILLIES - But they were flexible spaces too. We did exactly the same thing, yes.

Mrs TAYLOR - That is fine, if the school is happy with it.

Mr GILLIES - From a functional point of view, they are holding up the roof. From a financial perspective we cannot take them away.

- 4.17 The Committee noted that students would often have to walk between buildings to access their lockers and the toilets. The Committee questioned the witnesses on why covered walkways had not been included in the proposed works:

Mrs TAYLOR - Why are you not doing covered walkways between buildings? In particular, between your grade 7 block, toilets, and art. It is not a very long distance.

Mr GILLIES - We looked at those in a fair few of the master plans. It came down to priorities, and where the money was to be spent. It was focused on classrooms, and making those spaces right.

Mrs TAYLOR - Is there big money involved in covered walkways?

Mr GILLIES - There is, hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Mrs TAYLOR - Because students are having to walk from one building to another, because of the sort of site you have, among other things -

Mr WILLIAMS - The way I look at these is, you build the space. You can add to these things later on. If you do not build the space, you never have it. It is probably a better strategy to make sure you have the classroom space. Later, in maintenance and upgrade programs, you will be able to find the money to do those sorts of things, whereas, to build new spaces takes a major injection from the Government.

Mrs TAYLOR - I hear what you are saying. The students in that grade 7 block have to go out of the building and to another building to their lockers and toilets. It does not seem to be ideal.

Prospect High School - Improvements to the Art and Drama Space

4.18 The proposed works at Prospect include improvements to both the art and drama spaces. The Committee sought further detail on the proposed changes to these facilities:

Mr FARRELL - On some of the design features - we had a tour of the art room, and that seemed like a classroom that had been adapted for people to do art in, rather than a purpose-built, if that makes sense -

Mr STOCKS - It does.

Mr FARRELL - There are some design ideas that were discussed about how that is going to be improved. That would be good to get onto the record, if you would like to go through them.

Mr STOCKS - As you have correctly pointed out, there are, essentially, three elongated classrooms joined together for an art space. It is not what I would call a custom-designed art studio. We have involved those key staff in providing input on how that space should look and work. We are seeing the same idea of flexibility in the learning space replicated in that art area, where we can compartmentalise it, if we wish, with sliding doors, but also open it up to one large space, where we might wish to do that. The other issue we have at the moment is the art store is not in the art room. That is going to be a design feature of the new build as well. There are two other aspects in that the art area will be adjoining the dance/drama room, which provides great opportunity for school productions, and things like that, for fairly seamless access to the art area for set design and costume design.

Mrs TAYLOR - could we ask about the flooring in the art area? When we were there, we were talking about replacing the asbestos tiles.

Mr COCKBURN - We have been having a number of sessions with the school, and bringing in various teachers for various components. The art teachers were with us last week, and we talked about this quite a bit - what would be an appropriate flooring for an art room. Generally speaking, it is a fairly rough and ready space. We talked about vinyl and those sorts of things. The cleaners get a bit upset with paint getting on vinyl. Their expectations are to have that vinyl clean all the time. We went down the track of looking at floor tiles and various options, and we came back to the existing concrete slab with a machine being run over it as being quite a good option - being sealed with some easy to re-apply sealer you can get locally and easily. Therefore, the art people not being as precious about the floor. It is a messy space, let us face it.

Mrs TAYLOR - Is a concrete floor fairly hard, in terms of health and safety?

Mr COCKBURN - Not really. There is no difference in terms of slip resistance to a vinyl floor, if you apply the right treatment to it. That is the first thing. Standing on a concrete floor - it is probably no different to what they are dealing with at the moment, standing on a very thin asbestos tile. I do not imagine it is that much different from standing on ceramic tiles, and that was talked about as being an option as well. Obviously, you cannot put carpet in there.

There was talk of putting rubber mats at certain intervals. The key thing there is the flexibility of those spaces and not being too prescriptive about what you put in one particular area, as opposed to another.

Mrs RYLAH - In terms of noise, one of the things that greatly irritates me is going to a restaurant with a polished concrete area, and then finding it very difficult to hear. This is a learning space. Can you talk about how we are going to mitigate any reverberations from sound?

Mr COCKBURN - As a general learning area, a concrete floor is not a good idea. As an art space, you probably saw today there was a lot of people standing around doing various activities. To me, art in these sorts of areas is purely that - there are lots of different activities going on at various times. Chairs being dragged across those sorts of floors, that generates noise. Cary might help me out here.

Mr STOCKS - We certainly would consider sound dampening. The other thing about teaching art - like Mr Brooks, I do not really have any artistic skill - the way the art teacher teaches is quite different. Often, other teachers will be instructing from the whiteboard to the whole class, or using the data projector or their computer. If you were to go in that art space those students are often clustered around the desk, much like we are here, so it is a much more intimate teaching space rather than an instruction space. As Paul said, I am not quite as worried about the art space, as I would be if it was a more general classroom. Your point around considering sound is a valid one we would need to consider.

Prospect High School Gymnasium

4.19 The proposed works at Prospect High School include improvements to the gymnasium and change rooms. The Committee questioned Mr Stocks on the proposed gymnasium works, who noted that it was a community facility that would provide value not only to the school but to the wider community:

Mr FARRELL - I was surprised you still have the change rooms remote to the gymnasium. It was almost like a brick outhouse. I imagine having changing and toilet facilities closer, or built onto the gymnasium are going to have a major impact.

Mr STOCKS - For the obvious reasons - as we all saw - particularly in the cold and wet weather, it is fairly unpleasant for students to have to go from one building to the other. Our gymnasium is also well utilised by our community groups. That adds to the value of that asset, and provides further opportunity for us to use that asset with our groups.

CHAIR - My question was around the gymnasium... .. It is the right idea to move the change rooms there. In the plan, we have an allocation for seating - portable stage area. Is that so you can see it from the stadium, if you want to have an assembly there?

Mr STOCKS - We did not go into those buildings, but there is some current storage along that western side of the building. That would be expanded a bit more. That portable stage area would be like interlocking blocks, which can be easily shifted out into the gymnasium for assemblies and performances. It could also be used like a little amphitheatre, where you could gather students, or a sports team, and the teacher could talk to them.

I suppose one of the themes throughout the project is trying to be flexible with spaces. How a teacher or a class might use the space now, that might be different 10, 20, or 30 years down the track. We are trying to have a forward view of things.

CHAIR - Is the flooring in the gym being replaced?

Mr STOCKS - It is not being replaced in this project. What we do at the moment is upgrade, re-sand, re-coat it every year or two. That is done through the income generated from our user groups. It goes straight back into the facility. There would need to be some re-flooring done at the southern end of the gym, where the mezzanine level would be removed. Most likely, it would be some sort of carpet.

CHAIR - Was it determined the flooring did not need to be done?

Mr WILLIAMS - I do not think it was considered as a priority. The guiding principle is, it is learning spaces as the principle priority of this budget.

Prospect High School - Roof Replacement

4.20 The Committee noted that roof replacement was a large component of the budget for the proposed Prospect High School works. Mr Stocks and Mr Cockburn provided further detail on the state of the roof and the need for replacement:

Mr FARRELL - There is a fair budget for the roof replacement. What are some of the issues that you are currently having with the existing roof?

Mr STOCKS - Leakage, really. That is the primary issue. Although I have not been up on the roof, I believe it is to do with rust and that nature.

CHAIR - Is it a box gutter?

Mr COCKBURN - The internal section has a series of box gutters, which drain into the corridors. Effectively, it has internal downpipes, which have blocked up and caused leaks. The roof sheeting itself is very rusted on the outside edges. Whilst Cary says he has not been up there, I have. It has been there 50 years....

Implementation of the Tasmanian Government Art Site Scheme

4.21 The Committee noted that \$80,000 had been allocated under the Tasmanian Government Art Site Scheme for each school. The Committee sought further information on how each school would use this funding.

4.22 The Committee questioned the witnesses on how the artwork funded under this program would be incorporated at Kings Meadows High School:

Mrs TAYLOR - You are obviously complying with policy of Art in Public Buildings. In the submission from the department, I notice you are already going out to some Tasmanian artists looking for suggestions. It would be nice to think the school, and maybe the students or the parents, might have not only a decision in what goes there, but some hand in doing it. Is there interest in that?

Ms BARKER - That is a good suggestion. The artwork we are looking at - or the design factor - will allow for that. We are interested in something called DigiGlass. That is fairly permanent. It is a design on the glass. Our intention was we could have student input into the design. We can then pass those on. The images have to be done on the mainland. They can have an input into the design.

Mrs TAYLOR - That glass would be structural?

Ms BARKER - Yes. When we were talking about transparency of the glass - like in the grade 7 block today - we are imagining you will have panels with the images and impressions on them that will be collaborative. Some may be opaque, and you can sort of see through. Others will have a really nice design on them that is community based. The other part - in grade 8, with the balustrade - we are looking at panels. Again, we are going to put it out to the school community for design suggestions, and pass them onto the artist as well. We have already thought about that and really want that input.

Mrs TAYLOR - I am glad to hear you say that. Sometimes in Public Art in Buildings, people are still thinking about a statue, or some kind of artwork. At the Glenorchy Police Station, they have spent their money on coloured glass structural windows going through, which look fantastic. We need to be able to think in terms of structure. You have balustrades that might be part of the artwork, rather than pay for the balustrades and then extra -

Ms BARKER - Our architects, David and Joel, have been fantastic with this, because we wanted to be able to incorporate some of the cost and design into the building.

4.23 The Committee also questioned the witnesses on how the artwork funded under this program would be incorporated at Prospect High School:

Mrs TAYLOR - I have one question about the Art in Public Buildings. We talked about this in the previous project. It is a question we need to discuss in all buildings we look at. You have \$80 000 for Art in Public Buildings. Do you have plans for that? As it is, you need to engage local artists in some way. Are you intending this to be infrastructure? Are you going to build a fountain? What are you thinking?

Mr STOCKS - Ideally, we would like to have something re-done in terms of our school emblem, which is the eagle. You might have noticed a big concrete eagle at the front of the school. That is something very synonymous with the school. Over the years it has been in a state of disrepair.

Mrs TAYLOR - It does look a bit like a sad eagle at the moment.

Mr STOCKS - Yes, a bit plucked. We would like to do something along those lines, if it was possible through the art project. If it was not possible, my personal belief around artwork is, it is great if you can have something functional. Whilst it is not installed yet, in our previous MDT build we have a lovely outdoor seating area. I would be thinking along the lines of some artistic piece that has function as well.

Mrs TAYLOR - In lots of other buildings we have seen things like - I mentioned the Glenorchy Police Station, for instance, that opened in the last couple of years. They used a lot of their external doors - they used coloured glass as their art project. It looks fantastic from the inside. The friendliest-looking police station you could imagine as a result, in that public area. It is artistic, but they have used it as a functional piece. I wondered whether you were thinking maybe of using that in your front entrance, for instance.

Mr COCKBURN - There was talk of the screen on the front of the building where grade 8 is, which brings you back to the gym, as being artwork incorporated into some sort of screen, which allows you to see through. It allows light and ventilation into that walkway but also connects the public face of the building to the car park. That is the most prominent spot in the whole site. A public interface.

Mrs TAYLOR - Yes, you could have something that is functional and the same time beautiful, which would satisfy the requirement.

Mr COCKBURN - That is right. Rather than being tucked back somewhere that no-one sees.

Mrs TAYLOR - I hear your point about an eagle.

Mr STOCKS - That is one thing being discussed. We have not gone through that process yet.

5 DOCUMENTS TAKEN INTO EVIDENCE

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

- Major Refurbishment of Kings Meadows High School - Submission to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, Department of Education, October 2015;
- Major Refurbishment of Prospect High School - Submission to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, Department of Education, October 2015;

- Detailed design floor plans for Kings Meadows High School;
- Detailed design floor plans for Prospect High School;
- Quantity Surveyor cost estimates for the construction component of the Kings Meadows High School Major Refurbishment; and
- Quantity Surveyor cost estimates for the construction component of the Prospect High School Major Refurbishment.

6 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1 The Committee notes the provision in both works budgets for the Tasmanian Art Site Scheme. The Committee encourages both schools to carefully consider how the art funding is utilised, and suggests that consideration be given to artworks that are not only artistic and creative, but that also serve a structural or functional purpose.
- 6.2 The Committee also notes that, while the overall budget for each project is fixed, there may be some flexibility within the total budget to realign items if some components are under budget. The Committee suggests that if there is some flexibility within the budget for the Kings Meadows High School works, or the successful tender comes in under budget, serious consideration should be given to using any excess funds to replace the poles with beams in B Block to provide a more open space, and/or providing covered walkways linking buildings.
- 6.3 The Committee is satisfied that the need for the proposed works has been established. The Committee notes that building and classroom layouts at both schools have not changed significantly since they were built in the 1960's, however learning and teaching practices have. The Committee acknowledges that learning spaces need to reflect this change in educational focus. Therefore, the Committee firmly believes that the proposed works will help to create an environment that will facilitate flexible, contemporary learning practices and contribute to improved student outcomes. The Committee also notes that the proposed works make the best use of the existing facilities to accommodate new educational practices, rather than relying on construction of costly, new buildings.

6.4 Accordingly, the Committee recommends the:

- Kings Meadows High School Major Refurbishment, at a cost of \$7.15 million; and
- Prospect High School Major Refurbishment, at a cost of \$8.5 million,

in accordance with the documentation submitted.

**Parliament House
Hobart
17 November 2015**

**Adam Brooks MP
Chairman**

