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THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS MET AT HENTY HOUSE, LEVEL 4, CHARLES STREET, LAUNCESTON, ON FRIDAY, 30 OCTOBER 2015

KINGS MEADOWS HIGH SCHOOL MAJOR REFURBISHMENT

Mr ROBERT WILLIAMS, DEPUTY SECRETARY, DEPARTMENT SERVICES, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION; **Mr TONY LUTTRELL**, CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION; **Ms LEE BARKER**, PRINCIPAL, KINGS MEADOWS HIGH SCHOOL; AND **Mr DAVID GILLIES**, ARCHITECT AND DIRECTOR 6TY° PTY LTD, WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

CHAIR (Mr Brooks) - Welcome to the committee. The committee hearings are a proceeding in Parliament, which means it receives the protection of parliamentary privilege. It is important legal protection allowing 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 Parliament receives the very best information when conducting its inquiries. It is important to be aware this protection is not accorded to you if statements that may be defamatory are repeated or referred to you outside the confines of the Parliamentary proceedings. This is a public hearing. Members of the public and journalists may be present. This means your evidence may be reported.

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.

In terms of any further information not in the written statement - to save time, I ask the Committee to ask questions to direct us to any issues you are interested in. We would be happy to answer.

CHAIR - Do you want to add anything, David?

Mr GILLIES - I am happy to go through the proposal. We have brought a number of copies today, if the Committee would like to have one to work through.

Mr LUTTRELL - It might be worth mentioning this is going to tender tomorrow. That obviously has caveats around the actual contract subject to approval.

CHAIR - We will do that when we reach tendering and contracting.

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.

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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 that the scope from the department? The instructions?

Mr GILLIES - Yes. The money was to be spent on improving student outcomes.

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.

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.

Mrs RYLAH - How do we stop kids using it for enjoyment?

Mr GILLIES - The lift will generally be locked, unless there is a need for that lift to be used.

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

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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.

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

Mrs RYLAH - Which one is that?

Mr GILLIES - It is right at the end, if you scroll through to A019. 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.

As part of the art program the Government projects have running, we are looking at creating some of the balustrade panels around the front of the forecourt to incorporate some of that artwork.

Mrs RYLAH - I raised the question when we were out there in regard to locker space. It is broken up here. However, I see that there are two hidden spaces on the east and west end from the staff room, where bullying could occur. Will there be cameras in place?

Mr GILLIES - There will be. There are cameras throughout that central flexible learning area.

Mrs RYLAH - Who monitors those cameras? Anybody? How are they -

Mr GILLIES - They are not monitored. They are recorded. If there are activities going on, they can be looked at on the tape.

Mrs RYLAH - The tape is kept for some time? How long?

Ms BARKER - We renew after a month, I think. That tends to be the time that is necessary when we are investigating things.

Mrs RYLAH - Thank you.

Mr GILLIES - At both ends, that area - it is not as though it is a concealed space. There is glass looking at it. It is not, technically, a dead end. The office space that is beside it will

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have glass around that as well, so if there is a teacher sitting in there working, they will be able to see that area.

Mrs TAYLOR - There are no toilets in this block, are there?

Mr GILLIES - There is one toilet.

Mrs TAYLOR - Accessible toilet, I see, yes. But general student or staff toilets?

Mr GILLIES - The toilets we saw this morning in the common area are the grade 8, grade 7 toilets.

Mrs TAYLOR - Yes. But there is no covered walkway to those, is there?

Mr GILLIES - No. That toilet has been put into this building, so if students or staff need to go to the toilet, they go there rather than leave the building during class time. Any other time, they go to the common room.

Mrs RYLAH - This is a unisex toilet?

Mr GILLIES - Correct. One thing we did not mention this morning - I will just make a point of it now - 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.

Mrs TAYLOR - You have a couple upstairs, haven't you?

Mr GILLIES - Yes, we do. That is primarily to allow people to use that during class time. Down beside the lift, which is on A008, which is the drawing before the upstairs plan - at the northern end, in the top right-hand corner we are recreating the boys' and girls' toilets that we are displacing from upstairs.

Mrs TAYLOR - The access is from outside?

Mr GILLIES - That is right. So they will have access to that when the building is locked.

The other area that we are looking at is the library, and that grade 7 common room we looked at this morning. I will run through that plan, A015. 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. Once the student goes in there, they are able to carry out their business.

CHAIR - That is part of an anti-bullying strategy, is it not?

Mr GILLIES - It is. Also as part of the design, the wall facing out into that common room is a glazed wall. People will be able to see into those airlocked spaces, and it is another area where anti-bullying does occur. We have had discussions with the school about whether that used to be clear glass, or have some sort of frosting on it. We are looking at some light frosting, so people are not seen as they come out of the toilet.

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CHAIR - So it is an open way?

Mr GILLIES - Yes.

Mrs RYLAH - In regard to the girls' toilet, I can see someone could stand around on the right hand side and not be observed as someone enters the door. Can you talk about that?

Mr GILLIES - The little alcove, yes. The doors into both of the toilets, boys' and girls', will be a clear glass door. It is not as though we are creating a pocket that is dark and dingy. There will be visibility into that area.

Mrs TAYLOR - Is the number of the toilets reduced?

Mr GILLIES - It has slightly, but the school was overpopulated with toilets. We generally maintain toilets where we need them, which is this common room and in grade 9 and 10. We are tailoring the number of toilets to suit the number of students using the area.

Mrs TAYLOR - It is one of those things. Everybody wants to use the toilets at break times.

Mr GILLIES - That is right. We have noticed there are not queues to go to the toilet with that area.

CHAIR - We might go to the process of consultation. I would also be interested to hear some perspectives from the school from Ms Barker. We might talk about those excellent students we had in the process today. I am not sure who would be best to kick off the conversation.

Mr WILLIAMS - I think Lee would be best

Ms BARKER - I have prepared some information, hopefully covering those things we talked about this morning. I will go through to give you a bit of background in this context.

Kings Meadows High School is a secondary school. That is, grade 7 to 10. In future, it may be 7 to 12. Hopefully, we have provided for that as well. It is located in the heart of Kings Meadows High School. It serves Youngtown, the northern midlands, and the Glen Dhu area. We have students from a rural and a suburban background. Our feeder primary schools are Glen Dhu, Evandale, Perth, Longford, and Youngtown. We have a very close connection with those schools. We have a group called Connect 6. We like to share our facilities and have them join us for occasions, so they become used to our setting.

The school is set on four acres of land. It has a number of sporting facilities used by the community, including the gymnasium, netball courts, football, and soccer grounds. We have an orchard and a vineyard, along with an extensive vegetable garden. These are all utilised by students for learning. I mention that because I want you to see we share our facilities and we are growing our programs.

King Meadows' economic base is business, retail, and farming. With the current economic downturn, the community has recently experienced many challenges with regard to scaling down of traditional industries and lack of employment opportunities.

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The school was established in 1960. There is a great pride in the tradition of the school. We have a school association that is not large, but very active, very supportive, very interested in what we are doing. We have 33 teachers, four administration personnel, four teacher assistants, six attendants, two canteen personnel, as well as a number of other support staff who use our facilities - the chaplain, the laboratory technician, computer network staff, social worker, guidance officer. We have a strong leadership team. We have some dedicated teaching staff, who are very professional.

This year in particular, we have tried to make links with our community. One strategy is to provide more opportunities for parents to visit Kings Meadows High School. This has been done by conducting informal evenings on site at Kings Meadows after what we have as our challenge day with our feeder schools, our beacon events. We have had parent tours, and tours of our associated business representatives. That is to have those programs that help children have real-life experiences. It is also to bring the parents and the business in, to discuss those as well. We would consider this redevelopment of extending those opportunities and avenues for that.

A strong sense of community responsibility and personal commitment is instilled in the students, via the broad range of educational and social programs linking real-world needs with future personal and social responsibilities. The school offers a wide range of curriculum options, subject disciplines and integrated programs, and has an expectation of achieving excellence in all. That is, excellence with student outcomes, teaching practice, parent involvement, and the business community as well.

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.

I spoke about a few things as well, which I am going to go into a couple of details about here. Teachers at Kings Meadows High School collaborate to plan inspiring, relevant learning that is purposeful. Learning that is stimulating and enables students to investigate problems and come up with solutions. There is an expectation at Kings Meadows High

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School that all students will experience success and they become well-rounded young people, able to contribute positively to society and their community.

Over recent years, there has been an improvement in academic results from both NAPLAN and the Australian curriculum, an improvement in attendance, and an increase in enrolments. To enable this to continue and strengthen, we need to be able to provide resources, facilities, and infrastructure that support dynamic teaching and learning. Kings Meadows High School values participation and engagement, so that our students become successful learners in line with the DOE 2014-2017 strategic plan.

A rich and diverse curriculum is provided that prepares students for the twenty-first century. Students need to acquire skills such as collaboration, problem-solving, communication and critical thinking, to become enterprising individuals who can make decisions and contribute positively to society. We believe the physical learning spaces and environment need to be inspiring and flexible to support quality teaching and learning. Classroom spaces and resources need to cater for a range of class configurations and team-based learning, or collaborative learning, along with access for students with disabilities. Engaging spaces which support and promote personalised learning.

I want to tell you of two things that are happening at Kings Meadows High School in our current situation. The first one, 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. Both grades could not utilise the grade 7 area, but we did do some creative timetabling and some other shifting, so that there was some time for both to spend time there. We have reported that to Hobart, because it is an international study and that sort of learning is looking very impressive.

One of the goals at Kings Meadows High School's strategic plan is to improve literacy and numeracy for all students. Teachers of literacy and numeracy plan what we call 'intervention lessons' specific to students' needs, so students can experience success. In practice, this means that classes for literacy and numeracy regroup. I heard one of the girls call it 'streaming' today. We actually regroup, which is technically the old word of streaming into what we call flexi groups. Initially, all students may be explicitly taught the concept, so that would be in a larger area, then they move off into groups depending on their needs.

We are having success with this, as our NAPLAN results last year identified us as one in 15 schools, that is, public and private, primary and secondary in Tasmania, as having better than Australian average in improvement. That is absolutely brilliant. However, larger

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classrooms where groups can break off and work with teachers able to move easily from group to group would enhance this work further. In addition, there are times when several classes need to work together initially and then move off into groups. Hence, classrooms that can open up into larger learning spaces would facilitate this learning.

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.

CHAIR - I had some budget and contract questions that I normally have. 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.

Ms BARKER - Thank you. I will pass that on.

Mrs TAYLOR - I have a number of questions. Thank you for both the tour and the submission you have made. I could not agree with you more. It is fantastic you have addressed all those issues of teacher professional development and learning, as well as for students. That is the most important thing for any student - skilled teachers are what make a difference in education.

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.

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Mrs TAYLOR - Does that cover floor coverings as well?

Mr LUTTRESS - 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.

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. That is lovely, that it is not just a statue in addition - not that I have anything against statues.

Mrs TAYLOR - No. That is right.

Ms BARKER - They have been really receptive in understanding how important it is for us to all have ownership of it.

Mrs TAYLOR - I could go on, but I am happy to come back.

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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.

Mrs RYLAH - I would like to go to some detail, overall, but some detail. I noted on this site that it is an uneven site. It is a site with height variations, and things like that. Can you tell me how you are going to address that? We have all sorts of surfaces. We have breaks between surfaces. Tell me about that.

Mr GILLIES - When we first started working on this project, one of the first questions we had for our building surveyor was, 'To what extent do we need to make the site fully disabled compliant?' Unfortunately or fortunately, whichever way you want to look at it, under the code, because the buildings are existing, we only need to provide access from the entry point of the building to the new works. That is what we have worked on. That is the way we have worked these designs out. For example, in B block, we have provided lift access from the ground to first floor. We have access into the building. That is the way we have approached all the other components on site. To go around the whole site and make it fully compliant is very expensive. We have focussed all the funds that we had on getting from the front door into the works area, and also on improving the areas that the students are going to be in.

Mrs TAYLOR - So each of the buildings will be fully accessible?

Mr GILLIES - Fully compliant, yes.

Mrs RYLAH - Getting to and from the buildings is somewhat challenging.

Mr GILLIES - It is.

Mrs RYLAH - I am sure you are finding that.

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Ms BARKER - Yes. The library area is very much up and down. You will be able to get to it more easily from one of the accesses. There is going to be a ramp. That is definitely an improvement. Getting to the C block, where the new library will be, that access will be even and there will be a ramp. It will be much the same to get into B block. It is slightly sloped, but at least it is even. By means of this redevelopment there is an improvement. It is probably not the best it could be. There certainly is an improvement in those three blocks.

CHAIR - I had it written in my notes to ask about the lift. I do not think there are many schools with lifts in them.

Mr WILLIAMS - When you do a major rebuild like this, you have to comply.

CHAIR - Does that make the department look at what we are going to do about the schools that do not have one? I suppose you have to fix them one at a time.

Mr WILLIAMS - Yes. It is simply a matter of money. Retrofitting lifts is horrendously expensive.

CHAIR - When it was first raised, I had not considered it properly. Obviously, it is a requirement anyway. It is an interesting challenge for other schools as we go ahead. What they are going to do with people who are living with a disability?

Mr WILLIAMS - Or a broken leg.

Mrs TAYLOR - What do we do now about students who have a physical disability? To get them into those upstairs areas?

Ms BARKER - We cannot have them. We cannot accommodate them. If they have an injury, we re-timetable classes. We reschedule them so they are not up the top of B block.

CHAIR - That would be a challenge.

Mr WILLIAMS - You have to make a reasonable adjustment to what you do.

Mr GILLIES - With some of the master plan options, what we did look at was removing the top floor and having all the classrooms down at ground level, thereby eliminating the need for the lift. It is probably a preferable option, but it comes down to dollars.

CHAIR - It would have cost more, wouldn't it?

Mr GILLIES - Yes, so the cheaper option was to put the lift in.

Mr FARRELL - What interested me when we had a look around - and what this design has been based on, with the openness and the sharing of classrooms - you have one classroom where there were two teachers teaching a class. You were saying that is a more modern approach. Is your school the only school doing this? Is it being trialled throughout the Education Department? What sort of results are you finding from that more open way of teaching?

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Ms BARKER - We are not the only school doing that. That approach has been ongoing. It is a bit about what is the purpose of having the two teachers in the classroom. It does improve outcomes. That was a bit about the flexi-grouping that is unique to Kings Meadows High School. It does improve results. The students are advantaged, but so are the teachers. That does not happen every lesson. It is on a needs basis. We have not thrown out everything, or turned the curriculum upside down. We are aware there are some explicit teaching, one teacher with their group, which is also very important. We are not minimising that.

Mr FARRELL - It must be advantageous for those particular grades with this open interconnecting system, which you are building all the classrooms around. I remember going through school and we were divided up into A, B, and C group. We were in different blocks. It was almost like we were in different schools at times. Do you find it creates better interaction with the students in the grades?

Ms BARKER - Yes. I keep saying about the twenty-first century skills. We do not solve problems on our own - very rarely. If you do have a solution, it is learning those skills to be able to talk about it with everybody else, or be able to give the information so they come up with the solution. Students have to learn that. The one difference is providing them with all the information. It is getting them to think. It is getting them to think about their thinking. When you have students working together, or you have a number of teachers, there is more opportunity for that to happen. It is a different way of teaching and getting students to think.

Mr FARRELL - Following on with the architects, who were looking at the open areas. What has been put in place? In the older buildings, one of the teachers was saying that you could get some noise interference if one class was doing something quiet, and another class was doing something not so quiet. What changes have been made to try and minimise that with the new building?

Mr GILLIES - The connections between classrooms are glass sliding doors. The door design is such that they will take double glazing to minimise that noise transfer, and also seals on the doors too to limit that as well. We have used this system in all the schools we have done in recent times. The feedback from the schools is that whilst you might get a little noise, it is not enough to disturb the class next door. If there is, they will get used to it.

Ms BARKER - Wendy and I went to look at the schools that David and Joel's company have done. It is quite a similar design. We stood in the middle classroom. There were two either side, and it was soundproof. You were aware that there were other classes, but it was very good.

Mr WILLIAMS - This sort of design is what you would see us requesting in all of these new builds, as I think Bernie talked about. The assistant principal loved the flexibility and they are actually opening and closing these sliding doors. They are not like the old concertina doors that used to get stuck and were noisy. This is a new ball game for flexibility.

Mr LUTTRELL - The department is quite keen on that collaborative teaching. We are now sharing data more often across teachers. That is really important about individual students. There are the teaching groups in the schools, as a whole staff, looking at each individual student and working together how best to provide support. You have the data that informs

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the interventions, and having the facilities to support that is an important part. It is part of a broader strategy around collaborative teaching.

Mr FARRELL - That was illustrated very well at your school. When you look at what are now very small classrooms from the 1960s, and how the education system back then was very compartmentalised, it felt better in the newer, open buildings.

Mrs RYLAH - I noticed the air quality was bad in one of the buildings we were in. What are we doing about that?

Mr WILLIAMS - All the buildings that we are refurbishing are going to have cross ventilation through them. A request to try and minimise the use of air conditioning and mechanical systems. For example, in the top of B block, the highlight windows will be operable. Once the classroom window is open, it will be like a venturi system through it. The school has existing air conditioners throughout each of the classrooms. Whilst we are going to relocate them into the classrooms, a lot of the system is not going to be artificial. It is going to be natural.

Mrs RYLAH - The building I was surprised about was the red one.

Mr GILLIES - The library. That spends a lot of its time shut. There is not a lot of natural ventilation going through it.

Mrs RYLAH - Are we going to be able to achieve some?

Mr GILLIES - Yes.

Mrs RYLAH - They are using aluminium frame and double glazed windows. Are you using thermal breaks in those windows?

Mr GILLIES - Yes, we are.

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.

Mrs RYLAH - The use of Tassie oak where possible?

Mr LUTTRELL - Yes, we are.

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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.

CHAIR - You need to -

Mr WILLIAMS - You can do that. 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.

CHAIR - Okay. Excellent, because it did not -

Mr WILLIAMS - 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.

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,

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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.

CHAIR - The subcontractor management appended - have you heard of contracts being awarded at a lower price than reasonably expected? We know, given the current market and competition, it would be very unlikely this would be more highly bid than anticipated. There will probably be some competition, and there may be some companies that seek to buy the contract or go in, more or less, at a cost price. The concerns have been raised with me over several years. It is on the public record - especially a couple of school projects - where those contracts have been won based on subcontractors providing their quote for service. Once the contract has been awarded to the prime contractor, they then go back to the smaller contractor and have them reduce their rates by 20 per cent or more. If they do not, they indicate they will ring the contractor next door. Do you require an undertaking in your contracts for subcontractors to be treated fairly?

Mr WILLIAMS - I will take some advice on that. Yes, we do require a list of the subcontractors. If there is a variation in their price, we require them to talk to us about why and to look at each circumstance. That would be part of the process of architects and quantity surveyors going through and telling us whether we were receiving the right market outcome. On these big projects, we would be constantly comparing what we were expecting against the actual outcomes.

CHAIR - I am not sure how the department would know if they submitted a list of contractors they were going to use, and they based their price on that, and then went and squeezed them in the background. We know some of the bigger players do put significant pressure on some of their suppliers and smaller businesses. I am wary the Government and the departments are indicating to these bigger contractors we know what can go on, and it is not going to continue.

Mr WILLIAMS - As we have said, we put in place a reasonable set of checks and balances as far as we can. What goes on behind us, that is the responsibility of the contractors. If we were aware of it we will bring it to the fore and deal with it.

CHAIR - Were there any other questions?

Mrs TAYLOR - The contract timeline. Your timeline, ideally, is the tenders close in December, are assessed and approved in December, the contractor appointed in December, with construction beginning in December. That is fairly tight.

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.

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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.

CHAIR - Are there any other questions about the contract?

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.

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

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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.

Mrs TAYLOR - There is a pretty long time between starting and finishing construction. You are talking about starting construction in December this year, and finishing in June 2017. That is 18 months. How are you going to manage? Are you not going to do all the buildings at once?

Mr GILLIES - No, we are not. We are staging them. The construction program, as it stands now, is start if we can in December this year, and finish in December next year.

Mrs TAYLOR - You have two long school holidays, which is great.

Mr GILLIES - We are anticipating finishing it in December next year.

Mrs TAYLOR - That is not what it says, but that is good. While you are doing the upper floor, B block, you are not going to be able to use that entire building, are you?

Ms BARKER - No, we are not. For a period of time, while the demolition is being done on the first floor, we cannot use the entire building. After that, we will be able to. That is happening over the summer holidays. Most students are away and we can have that done. We will be able to use it when we come back. There will be a bit of a lag, but then we will be able to use it.

Mrs TAYLOR - Use the downstairs.

Ms BARKER - Downstairs, yes. That is not out of action for the whole build.

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Mr GILLIES - We are anticipating downstairs will be back online in February next year. It is also a matter of moving people around the school while construction work is going on. That is the challenge.

Mrs TAYLOR - Good. A point to raise, how much capacity do you have to increase the school population? The last time we met as a committee we were talking about the Perth highway and the Perth bypass that is going to happen. The projected idea is that Perth will be bypassed. There will be room for a subdivision. Perth will then only be 11 minutes from the centre of Launceston, because the highway will go directly from Perth without stops. It will be the main highway to Launceston. They expect there will be a considerable population increase in Perth. It will become a sizeable town, and you are the closest high school, so you might get a lot more kids.

Ms BARKER - I guess there is capacity. We will be able to have 600. We will be able to have another 100 quite easily.

Mrs TAYLOR - Good. That was my question really. Have you capacity for more students? That is good.

Mr LUTTRELL - We have also identified and have plans for a potential growth area, so it is -

Mrs TAYLOR - Yes, but that is not in this. You are not going to get \$7.1 million every second day. I just wanted to make sure you are aware of that, because you could have a considerable increase in school population.

Ms BARKER - We have had a considerable increase, especially over the last two or three years. It has bumped up, and not just from Perth. We have quite a few borderline students that have choices between our school and Queechy or Prospect, and our enrolments have been increasing steadily. We were aware of that when we did the plans. We have provided for them.

Mrs TAYLOR - I am really interested in the plans for Perth. The intention is that it will become much more a working suburb of Launceston. Thank you. They are all my questions.

CHAIR - I had a couple of quick ones. 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.

CHAIR - We have not gone for some custom-made weird stuff from Italy or somewhere?

Mr GILLIES - No.

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Mrs TAYLOR - Italian marble tiles.

Mr GILLIES - I cannot find those.

CHAIR - We need commercial-grade materials. It has been raised previously on other Government projects, some education ones, others not, that some of the specs required were excessive in need.

That leads me onto my standard questions. One is the project priority from the education department. 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, except for Tarooma, which was not high priority back then. It had become high priority since, because of its capacity issues.

CHAIR - Yes.

Mr WILLIAMS - 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.

CHAIR - We are also dealing with the asbestos tiling in some areas as part of this?

Mr WILLIAMS - We deal with those as we need to.

CHAIR - Does this project deliver the stated purpose?

Mr WILLIAMS - We believe so. The people who has to live and breathe it are the teachers and principal.

Ms BARKER - We have had some good consultation. They are also very supportive.

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

Ms BARKER - Yes.

CHAIR - There is a reason I ask this. It actually says in the act, 'What we have to consider at instance', so if we do not ask that, then we may have a challenge with it. 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?

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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.

CHAIR - Thank you for attending. The committee will consider the evidence and make a determination. As I said, we cannot adjust or amend the plans. We can only recommend that they be approved or not. That will be done as timely as possible, but given the committee needs to give it due consideration. As I did advise you of the commencement, what you have said to us today is protected by Parliamentary privilege. Once you leave the table, you need to be aware that privilege is not attached to comments you may make to anyone, including the media, even if you were just repeating what you have said to us.

THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.

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PROSPECT HIGH SCHOOL MAJOR REFURBISHMENT

Mr CARY STOCKS, PRINCIPAL, PROSPECT HIGH SCHOOL, AND **Mr PAUL COCKBURN**, ARCHITECT AND DIRECTOR, CARROLL & COCKBURN ARCHITECTS, WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

Mr ROBERT WILLIAMS, DEPUTY SECRETARY, DEPARTMENT SERVICES, AND **Mr TONY LUTTRELL**, CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, WERE RECALLED AND RE-EXAMINED.

CHAIR (Mr Brooks) - Thank you for appearing before the committee. The committee is pleased to hear your evidence today. Before you begin giving your evidence, I need to inform you of some important aspects of committee proceedings. The committee hearing is a proceeding in Parliament, which means it receives the protection of Parliamentary privilege, an important legal protection allowing 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 Parliament receives the very best information when conducting its inquiries. It is important to be aware this protection is not accorded to you if statements that may be defamatory are repeated or referred to by you outside the confines of Parliamentary proceedings. This is a public hearing. Members of the public and journalists may be present.

Mr WILLIAMS - The only thing we need to let you know is there was an error in the first document we provided to you. We are sorry for that. On page 15, under the Risk and Mitigation Strategy column, the second box down - 'Application for planning approvals submitted in September 2015' should say, 'Will be submitted in November 2015'. We have provided a revised copy of the document to the secretary.

Mrs TAYLOR - We already received that.

Mr WILLIAMS - On that basis, we will hand over to you for the committee.

CHAIR - Cary, if you would like to give an overview of what the project means, why it is important, and what difference it will make to your school and your community.

Mr STOCKS - Thank you for the opportunity to appear and thanks to the committee for visiting the schools this morning. I think that is really important.

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

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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.

Mrs TAYLOR - Cary, as principal, you are doing a great job with the school. It looks as good as it could do. It is very impressive. I understand what you are saying about not having an obvious front entry point. I am glad you are addressing that. Nevertheless, it looks nice. You are very lucky to have an absolutely flat site.

These older buildings with leaking roofs and noncompliant electrical infrastructure - that has to be addressed and replaced as a matter of urgency.

Your idea of putting undercover and connecting walkways on the outside of the buildings - they eliminate some of those internal corridors; that is, wasted teaching or learning space - that is a much better use of space. Congratulations on that. Also, you are eliminating some of those low ceilings and inadequate lights - and fresh air. I do not have any questions about this. It is a good plan.

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 so -

Mr FARRELL - We were discussing this when we walked around too - the importance of the appearance of the school. Mrs Taylor said the gardens are great and it does look really good, probably slightly dated. How important for a school, any school, is the appearance of the school?

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Mr STOCKS - There are two main things there. We know that people sometimes form opinions based on perception, when they might not necessarily know all the details. Having a school that presents well gives a sense of, 'That must be a good school.' That is important for public education. I believe very strongly in public education. It is really important that our community can have confidence in us. How a school presents very much shapes people's perceptions.

The second part to my answer would be, as I said earlier, our staff and students do take pride in our buildings. If you do have contemporary, pleasant facilities, it does create a greater sense of pride in the school and ownership of those environments. As you would see reflected in the plans, having that sort of grade-based model will, hopefully, enhance that ownership of spaces by students.

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.

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 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

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us some justification for the increase in cost, the differential between the two projects, please?

Mr LUTTRELL - Because the architects would not be able to make the comparison. Are there some facilities upgrades that need considerable work here compared to -

Mr COCKBURN - It is difficult to compare the two without having intimate knowledge of what these guys are up to.

Mrs RYLAH - That is why I thought the department would be able to give an indication

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.

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. Those quotes are the subject of an open tender process in line with the Treasurer's instructions.

Mrs TAYLOR - These are up-front expenses. I presume you have already spent these?

Mr WILLIAMS - They will be spent as part of the planning process, the design process. It is an ongoing process. The costs are coming out of an open tender process.

Mrs TAYLOR - Okay.

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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.

Mrs TAYLOR - Both schools are much the same age. This one is five years younger.

Mr FARRELL - This one was all built at the one time, by the look of it, where the other one had newer buildings interspersed around.

Mrs TAYLOR - I think this one does, too. There are big areas of this school not being touched, because they have had upgrades before.

Mr WILLIAMS - The MDT area was opened and refurbished this year. With what we are proposing here this school will be quite a good facility for the students who go there.

CHAIR - Depending on the department, we normally receive a more detailed budget breakdown in some projects. For future reference, it may be beneficial if we could include a bigger breakdown of where that allocation is. The community will be able to see that detail.

Mr WILLIAMS - We can give you what we have at the time. It becomes more specific once we have engaged the contractor or have gone through the contract negotiations. We can give you what we have based our pre-tender estimates on.

CHAIR - Normally, we receive that for roadworks, constructions. We have a landscaping aspect, all of those sorts of things.

Mr WILLIAMS - After this hearing, for both of these projects today we can email those documents.

CHAIR - That would be excellent.

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

Mrs TAYLOR - It would help us to have more. I know it is not a guesstimate, but it sort of is a guesstimate.

Mr WILLIAMS - We will give you the details as promised.

Mrs TAYLOR - You must have some business plan basis for it.

Mr WILLIAMS - We do have some high-level allocations, which may change.

CHAIR - My question was around the gymnasium. Sometimes, when we do not have a breakdown, we have to double check. I cannot recall. 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?

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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.

CHAIR - I spoke to Sandra de Paoli. It was interesting that her students, whilst we were in there, were working on what their new school would look like. Some of those ideas were interesting. I do not think they will happen, because it was referred to having chandeliers in each room and wearing dangly earrings. Great that the kids were working on that, but one of the children I spoke to mentioned the breakout room near Mrs De Paoli's office. Areas like that are being expanded because, not only the staff saw it as an opportunity, but I got the feeling that the children really appreciate having those spaces as a contemporary learning environment.

Mr STOCKS - That is exactly right. Where possible, we want students to be involved in this project and have their voices listened to in terms of consultation, as well as the staff and the community. We are certainly trying to do that in different ways. That sort of model that has been replicated out through the four grade areas of the school - whilst it is focussed on the classroom spaces, it is also around those breakout spaces that can be used for break times, for small group work, for individual work. Once again, that whole idea of giving students a sense of ownership over their space. When students have that ownership and sense of pride, they are more engaged in their learning. They have a greater sense of pride in their school. I think they are good things for students.

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.

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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.

Mrs TAYLOR - While you are on flooring and such, 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.

CHAIR - The idea of that - and I am not the most artistic MP I am sure - if kids are going to spill all sorts of stuff on the floor, if the paint happens to spoil on the floor and it dries when it is there, do you leave as part of the feel of the room?

Mr COCKBURN - The idea is to mop it up, but the residue is always going to be there. It is part of the thing. There was talk of painting the slab again every so often. It was almost like a workshop space rather than a general learning area, or even science lab floor. It was considered more in the line of MDT, and to certain extent, MDT does go well with art in

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that regard. One of the options was to look at building a new art facility right next to MDT but hard to justify when you have got the space within the existing buildings.

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.

Mrs RYLAH - I would like an understanding of what the front entrance is going to look like. It is a bit indistinguishable at the moment.

Mr COCKBURN - We are looking at a master plan. This has developed a bit since then. We do have preliminary sketches of it.

Mrs TAYLOR - Not with you?

Mr COCKBURN - Not with me, no. It is being developed. In terms of our progression through this project, we are probably halfway through the documentation phase. That was the document needed for tender.

We have worked a lot on the existing buildings - given solutions because they exist. The main entry is a new build. There are lot of things to consider. The intent is to create a welcoming space. It would have two walls, angled out in that sort of manner. I am going to have to describe this with my hands. You would walk through a lower section, which

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raises up quite steeply, creating a high volume inside. There is a big space on the left as you walk in for the honour boards and things the school cannot display at present, because they do not have an entry foyer. That continues onto the main linkway through the grade 8 section of the building. It also provides a step-off space on the left to an atrium, which currently is not really acceptable. It is hard to describe without drawings. It is a space of about 60-70 square metres.

Mrs TAYLOR - Would all the students come in through the main entrance at the beginning of the day?

Mr STOCKS - No, there will be a variety of different entrance points, primarily due to fire compliance. We have had to install a couple of extra entrances and exits toward the bus turning area. That will improve access through the eastern side of the building. We will be retaining all of our entry points at the front of the school, bar one, where you might recall we walk down a ramp at the end of the visit today. That will disappear, because it will be redundant. Along the front of the school, down toward the gym, is becoming an enclosed way and a more secure area.

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.

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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.

Mrs TAYLOR - You need to refurbish him, or her.

Mr STOCKS - One of the design principles was also around the comfort levels, with heating, cooling, light, and so on. With increased natural light, as Paul described, there may be opportunities. I have never been to the Glenorchy Police Station, but I have seen beautiful artwork with glazing and glass in other schools. I would certainly be open to that as well.

CHAIR - A couple of quick ones. Standard ones. Is this a priority?

Mr WILLIAMS - Yes it is. It came off the priority list we talked about earlier.

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.

CHAIR - We will put on the comments given previously regarding contractor use and management scheduling. Thank you for attending today, we appreciate it.

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

THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.