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THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS MET IN THE FUNCTION ROOM, CRADLE COAST AUTHORITY, BURNIE ON WEDNESDAY 3 JULY 2024.

INQUIRY INTO THE MAJOR REDEVELOPMENT OF MONTELLO PRIMARY SCHOOL

The Committee met at 2.01 p.m.

CHAIR - I thank everyone for appearing before the committee today. The committee is certainly pleased to hear evidence. Before you begin giving evidence, I would like to inform you of some of the proceedings of the committee.

The committee is a proceeding of parliament. This means it receives the protection of parliamentary privilege. This is an important legal protection that allows individuals giving evidence to a parliamentary committee to speak with complete freedom, without the fear of being sued or questioned in any court or place out of parliament. It applies to ensure that parliament receives the very best information when conducting inquiries. It is important to be aware that this protection is not accorded to you if the statements that may be defamatory are repeated or referred to by you outside the confines of the parliamentary proceedings.

Again, this is a public hearing and members of the public and journalists may be present and means your evidence may be reported. Do you understand?

WITNESSES - Yes.

CHAIR - I ask the Secretary to read the message from the Governor.

The SECRETARY -

Pursuant to section 16.2 of the Public Works Committee Act 1914, the Governor refers to undermentioned proposed Public Work and the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works to consider a report thereon.

Pursuant to section 16.3 of the act, the estimated cost of such work being completed is \$9.95 million. This project provides for the redevelopment of Montello Primary School.

CHAIR - Thank you, before we commence, I will introduce the members of the committee. The committee secretary, Scott Hennessy; the member for Huon, Dean Harris; Jen Butler MP; Tony Rattray MLC; Helen Burnet MP; Simon Wood MP; and James Reynolds for Hansard.

CHAIR - We are in receipt of a submission from the Montello Primary School redevelopment. This is for 3 July, The Department of Education, Children and Young People. We also have somebody else who will be providing a submission.

We have Todd Williams, Director of Facility Services, Department of Education, Children and Young People. Welcome, Todd. Min Harman, Acting Deputy Director of

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Infrastructure Delivery, Department of Education, Children and Young People. Dion McCall, Principal of Montello Primary School. Thank you for the guided tour this morning, we appreciated that. We have Christy Denman, Architect David Denman and Associates.

All witnesses representing the project proponent are appearing concurrently and there is one public witness.

Mr TODD WILLIAMS, DIRECTOR FACILITY SERVICES, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE; **Ms MIN HARMAN**, A/DEPUTY DIRECTOR INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE; **Mr DION McCALL**, PRINCIPAL, MONTELLO PRIMARY SCHOOL; **Ms CHRISTIE DENMAN**, ARCHITECT, DAVID DENMAN & ASSOCIATES, WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

CHAIR - Thank you. Would you somebody like to make an opening statement?

Mr WILLIAMS - Thank you for the opportunity this morning to informally walk around the school and see first-hand the challenges that Montello Primary School has. Thank you for the opportunity to formally present the proposal to redevelop Montello Primary School to provide contemporary connected learning spaces, improvement throughout the school for accessibility, much-needed support spaces to help the learning at the school and support the students. Together with the connections throughout the school, as we saw today, the levels at the school are challenging, and the redevelopment will certainly help to provide that at-level access, indoor and outdoor, for the students. Thank you and I welcome your questioning.

CHAIR - Thank you very much and we will open the questions. I think it is useful if we start at the beginning of the report. That is something that this committee has done in the past. It worked very well when the honourable Rob Valentine chaired this committee for a number of years. I will lead off in that way.

The introduction is on page 3. I'll open it up for questions. Please indicate who would like to start. Thank you, Ms Butler.

Ms BUTLER - A quick question in relation to the costs associated with the proposed project. Page 1 of the introductions notes a \$50,000 contribution from the school. Would I be able to ask for the record how that was raised by the school? Maybe the question is better to be directed to the principal.

Mr McCALL - Thanks for the question. At that point in time, we were able to off hold some savings in money that we would have spent on general upkeep and put that towards the rebuild, with the hope that we would be able to get more bang for that buck in the redevelopment than spending that money on general upkeep at that stage.

Ms BUTLER - That \$50,000 wasn't raised through fundraising through school activities?

Mr McCALL - It was part of the school resourcing package. We used some of that money at that point in time. That money was earmarked for early childhood playground

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anyway, but because we were going through this process, we moved that money from that fund to this process.

Mr WILLIAMS - I might add that we welcome the school's contribution. It's certainly not unusual that the vast majority of the developments that we do, schools do like to take the opportunity to contribute and every contribution is valuable in the context of achieving a good outcome.

CHAIR - I have a question in regard to the actual project. For a number of years, I have heard the honourable member for Murchison - who is here today looking on, and we welcome Ruth Forrest - has talked about the needs of the Montello Primary School. So, to see this reference was pleasing, and I expect she's very pleased.

I understand that it was on the top 10 list for a number of years of schools needing to be redeveloped, and the original project amount was in the order of \$7.7 million.

I'm just interested in how that price tag was arrived at and whether it was a department or perhaps a government decision of how the funds have been put together and the estimate for this project as it stands today?

Mr WILLIAMS - Certainly. Yes, we go through an annual process of prioritising the school capital submissions. Through that process the priority 1s that are identified are submitted through our annual capital process to government for consideration. In that, we, the department, does include an initial cost estimate that is not based on a detailed project plan. It is based on a square metre rate that we believe is appropriate to achieve the outcome. The detailed process that we've been through with Dion and Christie and the project team identified some challenges on the site - more challenges than we had expected. In listening to the community's priority needs as well, it was identified that the traffic management concerns that we saw and spoke about today and the accessibility concerns were important to resolve, as well as focusing our effort on improving learning areas in the school. Through that process we secured additional funding of \$2.8 million, and with the school contribution of \$50,000 that takes the total project funding up to \$9.9 million.

CHAIR - Are you able to describe the consultation or how that worked with the school community to arrive at what has been presented to us today?

Mr WILLIAMS - Yes, certainly. The consultation and engagement process is an important part of what we do and we introduced that probably about four or five years ago. Up front, we engage and have forums with the staff, students and community to listen to what the priorities are. That's done up front and during the process as well.

CHAIR - So more than one visit - one lot of communication?

Mr WILLIAMS - Absolutely, yes. There was the initial consultation process and that helped hone in on the priorities and form what we have today.

Also, when we had the concept plan with the additional funding, we went back out to the community 18 months after that initial phase to have another check-in to go - we listened and this is what we provided and that forms the basis of what's presented today. It's an invaluable process that brings a lot of benefit to our projects.

CHAIR - We'll get to this a little bit later when we get to the page where the costs are outlined, but, obviously, there will be a number of questions about cost escalation, which appears to be rampant - not only in building but everything. I'll leave those until we get to that page.

There is a supplementary question.

Ms BUTLER - As a supplementary question to the honourable Tania Rattray's previous question, this school was for 10 to 12, maybe even 14 years, identified in the tier 1 high priority range. For the record, can we ask why the school was not in receipt of the significant works that it is finally getting now? Why did it take such a long time for this to come to fruition?

Mr WILLIAMS - The release of the capital priority rankings has been in place, I think, since about 2018; I can be more specific on that.

As I said previously, all priority 1s are submitted to government for funding consideration. We are reliant on the government to provide the funding to progress our redevelopments. In recent years we have received considerable investment to upgrade schools and we're much appreciative of that. It is reliant on the government of the day to allocate funding, which is, obviously, also related to the state finances and the availability of state finances. The department is always continuing to put forward its list of priorities. We're very pleased when we receive them to get the best outcome that we can for the schools that receive the funding.

Ms BUTLER - But there is a decade of newspaper articles, community advocates, different members of parliament and representatives over many years - over a decade - talking about the problem with disability access and the standard of the school and calling out for that where other schools, which were also within that tier of priority, were funded appropriately?

I don't think you really answered the question of why this was not prioritised in that huge period until now.

Mr WILLIAMS - Well, the department did prioritise it as a priority 1 site with the other school sites that were on the list and submitted it to government for funding consideration. That is the role that we play. Government then makes its decisions on the priorities off the list that they choose to fund.

Ms BURNET - This is my first hearing. Thank you, Chair.

It is a question for you, Mr Williams. We went through the site this morning and it was very eye-opening to see the challenges of the site and situations where we have classes being interrupted or children getting from point A to point B through other classes or other goings-on in the school. I understand this had been identified as a priority 1 school or proposal. Would you say this is a major redevelopment of this school site?

Mr WILLIAMS - It will certainly provide major benefit to the school and therefore it can be termed a major redevelopment. The focus is on providing that benefit to the school.

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Ms BURNET - I note that last year there was consideration of the Cambridge Primary School development. I think it was \$15.1 million in the project budget. This is clearly a fraction of that - \$9.95 million - and on a very challenging site. Is there any particular reason why we have arrived at this amount? Is it purely what the budget has been allocated by the government or how do you make those decisions?

Mr WILLIAMS - I think there are two elements to that. If I reference Cambridge Primary School, yes, it is a \$15.1 million redevelopment; \$8 million of that is for redevelopment of the school to provide learning improvements and \$7.1 million of that is a partnership with council to provide improved outdoor amenities, gymnasium, and car parking. I just needed to separate that \$15.1 million out. The \$9.95 million is a substantial investment in Montello Primary School and will provide a lot of benefit to Montello Primary School.

Ms BURNET - Thank you. I suppose there is a supplementary question: is it enough? But I do not know if you can - for the requirements, really, of a school in significant need, I would have thought.

Mr WILLIAMS - With any project we have there are challenges to resolve all issues on the school site. Some stats that we have are that 70 per cent of our assets are over 50 years old and 35 per cent of our assets are over 70 years old. With that comes a lot of challenges and the challenge that we have and the responsibility the department has is to invest the money that is allocated by the government to get the best benefit that we can for the school. Undoubtedly, as you have seen, there are challenges on that side today. I hope you also see that the investment will provide significant improvement to the learning areas that we are talking about, and the connections, the disabled access, and the support areas of the school, which are much needed.

Ms BURNET - Sure, thank you.

CHAIR - Just a supplementary to that, if I might. You have actually talked about the split for the Cambridge Primary School and they have already been allocated their \$7.1 million, I think from memory, for their upgraded court facilities and ground facilities in conjunction with the council. Has that opportunity also been put to the Burnie City Council for an opportunity for the Burnie City Council to come on board with the Montello Primary School and already have the funds allocated for that next stage? We know from the information we heard this morning that one of the two courts that are available will not be refurbished because there is not enough money in the budget. Has that been something that has been considered by the department and/or by the school?

Mr WILLIAMS - Certainly. We engage with all councils around the state and we do offer partnership arrangements because we know that council as community and school as community can come together to provide mutual benefit. I do not believe that has specifically occurred in regards to the redevelopment of Burnie. The journey with Cambridge has been a long journey as well, that involved council. The oval that we use at Cambridge Primary School is a council oval and the parking that we use at the oval is a council area.

Nonetheless, we have connected with councils to talk about partnership arrangements and we have a number of great examples where that is working for the benefit of the community and for the benefit of schools. So, we certainly do encourage that, yes.

CHAIR - But it's not available for the Montello Primary School site in Burnie?

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Mr WILLIAMS - I'm not aware that it's specifically happened in regard to this development. I know that Dion engages with councils, as all principals have engagement with councils, given that community connection.

CHAIR - We know that it happened with the Legana School and we also know that it happened with the Cambridge Primary School redevelopment. It appears that the department is quite keen to progress. I'm interested in why it hasn't been done with this one, because it is a community facility, particularly those outside spaces.

Mr WILLIAMS - It's certainly not a deliberate omission by any means. The nature of Montello on school land does differ from Legana and Cambridge where it is a shared ownership of land and use.

In saying that, it certainly doesn't take away from the opportunity of partnering. We have examples where council leases the school oval and maintains the school oval and indeed, have done developments on school land. That comes back to council and how they secure their funds to provide that investment to support the school and the community.

CHAIR - With the after-school facility being provided at the school - that sits adjacent to a very nice little space that would be council- community-owned, on the bottom side - there's that opportunity. I'm wondering why that same relationship with councils hasn't been progressed to enhance what's being put forward at Montello Primary School like it has in other areas. That's what I'm interested in understanding.

Mr WILLIAMS - Thank you for reminding me that it is the council car park at the bottom -

CHAIR - Sits adjacent to a very nice little easement area.

Mr WILLIAMS - Absolutely, it does, and we are relocating the modular units to ensure that -

CHAIR - One modular unit.

Mr WILLIAMS - A number of units that come together.

CHAIR - One demountable.

Mr WILLIAMS - Yes, one collective of units to continue to provide the out-of-school care support. Through the development application, council has supported us in that approach, but the discussions have not gone further with council.

CHAIR - Will they go further?

Mr WILLIAMS - We're always willing to have those partnership discussions.

CHAIR - Somebody has to initiate them.

Mr WILLIAMS - Absolutely.

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CHAIR - I would expect that a government department like yourself would be an ideal department to progress a conversation.

Mr WILLIAMS - Absolutely.

CHAIR - Would that be fair to say?

Mr WILLIAMS - Yeah, absolutely.

CHAIR - All right. We will wait. And while there's a little break, I'd like to acknowledge Anita Dow in the room as well. Thank you very much for coming along. Another local member.

Moving on off page 1; page 2? Actually, it's page 4, second page of our scrutiny. Any questions there?

Ms BUTLER - The second dot point states aims to provide facilities that 'have enduring quality'. Can you define what have 'enduring quality' means, for the record?

Mr WILLIAMS - Certainly. There are many aspects to it and I might ask others to join me in that conversation as well. We're certainly looking for long-term quality that provides robustness and fit for purpose into the future, and getting that balance to make sure that the redevelopment does not leave the school with a legacy issue to manage.

Ms HARMAN - Schools are places with 300-odd students running through. They need to be hard-wearing and we want the life of our asset to go on for 50-odd years after upgrade. So, there's that longevity of the asset, but there's also designs that, where we do redevelopments - we know that teaching methodologies will change, the needs of students will change. Not that you can foresee everything, but we try to maximise opportunities into the future so teachers and students can learn and teach in the way they want to and the building does not inhibit that.

Ms BURNET - So it is about good quality furniture and so forth-

Ms HARMAN - Yes, but also design.

Ms BURNET - -that will last a duration of time. There is value in that for the spend.

Ms HARMAN - Value for money and the expenditure and giving the users of that space opportunities to use it into the future how they want to.

Mr WILLIAMS - You can see through most schools, given the age, the additions that have been added over the decades and, in some cases, when we look at it now they are not necessarily the right area. It is having that eye on the future and making sure we are positioning for the future as best we can.

Ms BURNET - Chair, can we hear from the principal, Mr McCall, in relation to the contemporary pedagogy and how that might be enhanced with the proposal.

Mr McCALL - Yes, certainly. Thank you very much for the question.

Currently, it is very difficult for our students to go from place to place within the school. It is a long distance to travel and transitions take extra time than it should. Especially when you are dealing with seven, eight, and nine-year olds, it can be challenging to get those students from place A to place B. For example, our person taking through the library needs to act in a certain kind of way to get those children from one place to another place. It is not starting off in a nice, positive, and friendly way because you feel like a drill sergeant getting children from one place to another, because that is what is required.

One of the benefits of this plan is that the transition to one learning area to the next will be a lot better. I feel that what we are doing at Montello, from a learning space point of view, with contemporary learning, for example, with our literacy program, we have made really good gains with our literacy instruction, particularly with our reading. But at the moment it involves lots of moving around for children going to different groups. It requires children moving up and down stairs, going to different rooms, and that takes a long time. Some of that valuable instruction time is used in transitioning around the school.

Ms BURNET - As a supplementary - it's probably difficult because of the different levels for some, as well?

Mr McCALL - Yes. For example, we have two grade 3-4 classes downstairs, which was at the bottom of the very big staircase that we saw this morning, and then another grade 3-4 class at the top of those stairs. At the moment, when we are breaking into those groups and we have about 90 children moving to different rooms. Putting 90 children on that set of stairs at the minute is a challenge for me, from a safety point of view it is a concern, but also from a teaching and learning point of view it is a concern as well.

CHAIR - I note at the bottom of page 4 it talks about how the department 'aims to provide facilities that minimise cost to building maintenance budgets'. We went through the STEM part of the of the building, and we were informed that the windows were not going to be replaced in that particular area. If you are talking about minimising cost of building maintenance budgets and the minimisation of energy consumption - and I am sure the member for Huon, Mr Harriss, will talk about that further on - why would there not be a replacement of the windows? Particularly in that STEM building, when you cannot even open them safely because if you did, somebody might lose a finger if they dropped down. I do not mind who answers the question. Perhaps Todd, might be yours.

Mr WILLIAMS - Thank you. First and foremost, we want to make sure there is a safe operation in the school.

CHAIR - There is not with those windows, Todd.

Mr WILLIAMS - As I saw today, yes, thank you for bringing that up.

My commitment is to work with Dion to make sure the school can operate safely.

With any capital project, there has to be discussion around priorities because it's simply not possible to deliver all priorities within funding availability. That's a reality of the challenges that we face with every project we have.

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CHAIR - I say this with the greatest respect, but this isn't about a priority, this is a safety aspect, from my perspective. I hope it is from everyone else that's sitting here and there and anyone else who knows the school. That's just not acceptable.

I see a strong reason those windows need to be replaced ASAP - a bit like the children's climbing infrastructure.

Mr WILLIAMS - Dion and I have spoken subsequent to your visit and that's my commitment to work with Dion to do that.

We don't have an outcome of our tender process as yet. That is being worked through and I'm hopeful we get a positive outcome, and we will invest every cent into Montello Primary School. I say that because there is flexibility as we haven't contracted with the builder as yet to do that.

Ms BUTLER - One of the main concerns here is there is an investment of \$9.95 million into the school and there's a whole wall of windows which, if they fell, well, what they don't use would actually sever children's fingers. Those windows aren't being replaced as part of that \$9.95 million, and that just seems to be either really stingy or not listening to the needs of the school community: making sure those kids are safe.

If you can't open windows because they're unsafe, surely that would be a priority ahead of other things that are on this list of needs for the school. We would seriously ask that the window replacement is considered because it's certainly not appropriate. Any windows that can't open in a primary school is not appropriate, especially after we've been through COVID.

Mr WILLIAMS - Absolutely, and my commitment stands to work with them to resolve that. Safety is the number one priority. And yes, through COVID, we examined every external window in every school to make sure that it could open and close safely. I'm very disappointed to see that today -

Ms BUTLER - It is a few years ago now when surely, that should have been -

Mr WILLIAMS - It's my disappointment.

CHAIR - I'm pleased that the committee were able to be part of identifying that particular issue as a significant safety risk.

The member for Huon asked a question at the site and I'd really like him to re-ask that on the solar installation, given we understand there has to be an electricity upgrade.

Mr HARRISS - It was on energy as well,

The first question was what requirements are going to energy ratings with the rebuild?

I know, obviously, when we're doing non-commercial stuff, there's ratings you have to comply with, so that was one of them. Then the other one was if we're going to a \$10 million refurbishment and you were to put solar on at that time rather than doing it afterwards, there would be cost savings.

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Mr WILLIAMS - I am happy to respond and maybe if you want to talk about the initial energy question, I can follow up with the conversation or a response to the solar questions.

CHAIR - Would you move that microphone around just a little bit to make it easier, thank you.

Because you responded at the site it would be good to get that back on the record.

Ms DENMAN - All our new building work we designed to meet current standards and then the extent of refurbishment that we can afford into the existing spaces is obviously budget dependent. That's something that has to be assessed to the extent the scope of the budget allows us to do. When we commit to any new work, though, we are required to comply with all of the energy efficiency requirements of the Building Code.

CHAIR - Is there a separate fund that funds electrical upgrades that could be used in the Montello Primary School upgrade? Those funds that are not used from this particular reference - should it see favour - then could be put into some of those safety aspects. Is there an opportunity to do that?

Mr WILLIAMS - As part of the capital program, government has allocated us an electrical switchboard upgrade program. I think we're into our third year of upgrading.

Needless to say, we have a lot of switchboards around the state. A lot of switchboards that are reflective of the age of the asset and we are prioritising that based on the highest need. We have rated every switchboard, based on its condition and we are progressively working that through. Yes, there is -

CHAIR - But if you're upgrading a facility that would require an upgrade of an electrical switchboard, wouldn't it make economic sense to actually do the upgrade, to put solar in and do that all in the one go out of that bucket of money and leave the infrastructure upgrade from this particular bucket of money that may well address other safety aspects? Or do I just make too much common sense here?

Mr WILLIAMS - I would love to be able to do all of that at once. The reality is it's not feasible to do that. But in saying that, where that opportunity exists, absolutely, we'd take that opportunity if it can align appropriately -

CHAIR - Right. So, it could become a priority?

Mr WILLIAMS - Maybe, and the solar installation likewise. Government has invested in solar upgrades in schools and we are rolling out more of larger scale solar than what has previously been done. We get benefit from that obviously, because the usage is during the day.

We are capturing the savings from those solar installations and we'll be reinvesting. Likewise, we're into year three of that program, that is gathering momentum. The further we go, the more that we will be able to do.

CHAIR - I've probably got ahead of myself on my page numbers here, but the overarching question if this redevelopment doesn't come in on budget as we know what happens with budgets at this point in time right across any area, does the department go back

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to government? In this case would they say, this is a really important redevelopment for this school community and the safety of children and safety and access, we need some more money. Is that how the process would or could work?

Mr WILLIAMS - Yes, absolutely. I'm not pre-empting the outcome of the tender process because the -

CHAIR - Neither would I.

Mr WILLIAMS - valuation committee is working that through.

Through that process, though, we always take an opportunity to work with a builder to see what value management they can bring to the table. Not being disrespectful at all, but builders look very differently as to what architects do. There may be reasonable practical options to put on the table that we should rightfully consider in considering value for money.

Will it take away from the amenity improvements we're trying to achieve? If it does, then we're not interested in that. But will it provide a practical, robust, builder's solution that doesn't take away from amenity? Then, we'd be silly not to consider that.

Should we find that the outcome of the tender means we have a budget problem, we've been through a very lengthy process with the school and the community and I do appreciate the patience because it has taken a while to get to this point.

A very valuable process and time to get to a good point to work through the priorities. Absolutely, and the department and I believe, the minister has openly said, we're committed to delivering the scope of works that are presented. That's a long way around me saying yes, we would be going to government to say we have a problem and we need help to resolve that funding issue.

CHAIR - So, we won't be cutting corners. If the committee decides to approve this reference, there'll be no corners cut?

Mr WILLIAMS - Our commitment is to deliver the scope as presented. I always have my fingers crossed in going to a tender process because it's a true test of the market at that time. And I continue to be surprised. Sometimes it's positive; sometimes it's negative.

CHAIR - You'd still be in shock after Brighton, I suppose.

Mr WILLIAMS - That was a large shock. As I think you've mentioned, there has been significant increases in not only materials, but many things over the last five or six years. That has been a challenge to deliver good outcomes.

I'm very pleased that the funding commitment has been increased and I'm looking forward to delivering the outcome for Montello Primary School.

Ms BURNET - Chair, I might just ask a question, if I may. I think Mr Williams talked about the guillotine windows that we saw will be addressed; is that what I'm hearing?

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Mr WILLIAMS - Yes, absolutely. I'll work with Dion to make sure that a solution is in place to make sure the windows safely open and close.

Ms BURNET - You talked about the enduring quality and building for 50 years. As part of that enduring quality, is there energy efficiencies which will ultimately bring down the cost of power and so forth with the proposed new designs? That also includes proper ventilation - we've just been through a pandemic - and proper ventilation allowed at the same time?

Mr WILLIAMS - Absolutely, yes, and ventilation is a very important part of the project. I'm not sure, Christie, if you wanted to talk any more specifics?

Ms DENMAN - We've relied on using passive ventilation for our compliance with the building code. So, all the operable doors and windows are calculated and quantified to ensure that they're getting enough fresh air in to keep that air healthy. And we also, in our centre addition, have windows that will have a CO2 monitor, so they will actually open and operate to ensure that air is coming in and that will be extracted through the centre of that new central addition.

We have done some improvement to the windows that we've been discussing. I think three bays of those windows are being replaced with new operable doors and glazing to provide access to the new deck and learning area in that part. We have had lengthy discussions about how we balance all of that out to try to establish our scope. There definitely is improvement on that facade, but not in its entirety. There are new doors and operable - I think that is operable doors going out to the deck on that level, so all those new doors will allow to ensure that we have the right result when the project is finished and doesn't prevent further upgrade and maintenance to go on. A lot of those things can be done with cyclical maintenance and five or ten-year plans. So, we've looked at perhaps the notion of enduring quality, in that we don't want to - we're not doing anything that would prevent continuing improvement of all of the parts of Montello, acknowledging that we can't currently - the scope that's on the page is the scope that matches the budget we've been given.

Ms BUTLER - I have a quick question on the bathroom facilities. We do appreciate - thank you for showing us the bathroom facility or the toilet facility and change room facility that is currently not being utilised due to not being safe.

CHAIR -It's in the wrong century, I think.

Ms BUTLER - Yes, it did look like something out of a Harry Potter basement, to tell the truth. Could you just tell us the number of toilets which will be available to the students between now and the build completion because they're not being able to use their normal toilet facilities? They're using the toilet facilities up in the school hall, I believe. Could you for the record say how many toilets that is? Will that be the number of toilets that all students from the school will be using between now and when the build is completed?

Mr WILLIAMS - Yes, certainly. I might get Dion to help me with the specifics.

The toilet capacity for a school is obviously very important and is set under the building code based on the capacity of the school, which is 475.

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The toilet block that we saw today was isolated, very old and, rightfully, Dion and the teachers have decided that that's unsafe to use. He's done that knowing that he has other toilet options to use. Those toilet options are not in all the right locations; hence the proposal that we put on the table to make sure there are individual private cubicles positioned in all the key areas around the school.

Ms BUTLER - That's in the new build. I'm talking about the interim.

Mr WILLIAMS - Absolutely. Perhaps, Dion, you might be able to give a bit more information on how the toilets are working.

Mr McCALL - It is a bit of a pressure. At the moment we have 285 students. The decision we made is that in regard to the four boys' toilets and the four girls' toilets that are in that current bottom location the risks that are presented weren't worth keeping them open from a safety point of view. Currently there are enough toilets for our students to use, but it just means extra travel time and distance. It's more of an extra transition, especially for those children down in the bottom toilets.

Ms BUTLER - Can someone tell me how many toilets there are, if that's all right, in the interim? I did ask also on our tour and I didn't get a straight answer. You've had time to get that number for me - just for the interim until the build is complete.

Ms DENMAN - Our first stage of the programmed works is the entire lower ground level, which is years 3 to 6 students.

Those toilets that you saw that are currently out of action will be demolished and replaced in the first stage, so we are addressing that as the first priority, which will result in additional toilets by the end of the first stage.

Ms BUTLER - How many toilets are there at the moment?

Mr McCALL - I'll give you an answer. I was just adding them up. At the moment we have 285 students and we're looking at 15 to 16 different cubicle toilets, but some of those are in different locations. Some are more appropriate for kinder or early childhood students and different things like that. There are enough toilets, but they are not in the best location or the most convenient location.

CHAIR - That doesn't include staff toilets of which there were three, from memory?

Mr McCALL - No. There are four all up.

CHAIR - Three female and one male?

Mr McCALL - Yes.

CHAIR - Thank you.

This question probably more goes to Dion. With regard to the original master plan - and Todd said in his previous answer to a question that this has taken a long time to get to where we are with this reference - can you give me some indication of what was cut from the original

master plan? You talked about a cover over the outdoor court areas and you said that was cut. Was there anything else that was cut from the original master plan that you'd like to share with the committee?

Mr McCALL - Yes, with the original plan of \$7.1 million the project working group worked through that stage and came up with a master plan. Then that went to the quantity surveyors and was costed and came in a lot more than \$7.1 million.

CHAIR - The outdoor roof was one?

Mr McCALL - That was one of the things that went.

CHAIR - And another court?

Mr McCALL - The other half of the netball court went as well.

We prioritised the pick-up and drop-off zone because that was going to be on the street so we brought that back into the building because that was a priority for our school and our parents, which meant that the learning area in prep to year two has not made it through to the final round. The staff resourcing area is going to be a bare shell. Any desks, joinery, and those kinds of things within that staff resourcing area are not included. The early childhood playgrounds which will be through the middle, where we looked today - in the original plan, it was a lot more comprehensive and had a lot more features to it. When that building came in, the civil construction costs were quite high so we had to cut down in that area. That is where the netball courts and the early childhood playground and a lot of that was cut during that process. That is part of the reason why it took so long because it was a very hard decision to make.

CHAIR - What to lose and what to hang on to.

Mr McCALL - Yes, because it was all really important.

CHAIR - The community, particularly the school community- have they decided, we are happy with what we are going to get, or are they saying, no, this is not good enough? How is that conversation panning out?

Mr McCALL - We have a variety of responses.

CHAIR - I did read some of them.

Mr McCALL - There are a lot of parents who see \$7 million at that point in time and now \$9.95 million as a lot of money to them and some people would struggle to visualise what you could do with that or how much that is. I have some parents who are thinking that we are going to be able to build this big fantastic new school with that amount of money -

CHAIR - Taj Mahal.

Mr McCALL - because they do not have a grasp on the reality of that money.

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There are other parents who do have a good, strong grasp on that and are in the construction industry and know what is achievable with \$7 million or \$9 million, and they have been coming to me all the time.

Also, some people within our parent population have a really good understanding of the disability access codes and things like that, so they know how much that is going to cost. That is all reflected in that 'Get Involved' campaign and that community feedback, and you can see some of the responses there. From the word 'go', the strong feeling from the parents is that \$7.1 million was not enough money and when it was then increased to \$9.95 million, I still have been told that it is not enough money.

CHAIR - The school association - do they have a formal position?

Mr McCALL - The school association has given this plan their approval, their tick. At that point in time, I do not think they would have given the approval if we were leaving the pick-up and drop-off zone on the street. That is part of the reason why this process has taken a bit longer. We went back to the drawing board and put that back in. But you use the word 'happy', I am not sure that they would use the word 'happy' now that we are not doing the early childhood classrooms.

CHAIR - They are resigned to the fact that this is it.

Mr McCALL - Yes. They have said, we will prioritise the safety of the kids in the pick-up and drop-off zone over the learning areas of the early childhood - which is a difficult decision to make.

Ms BURNET - I can see that this is like Solomon's choice, it is very difficult to weigh one against the other. I am interested in the community consultation. I can see that there was a significant amount of engagement, from what I have read, and not a bad response rate and involvement, which is good; but can you describe how it was that the community members, people who responded, came to those priorities and whether you get the impression from them that those are being met?

Mr McCALL - This would be the same for all sorts of developments that go on. A survey is put out and some questions asked to prioritise those. The priorities came through very strongly for the Montello rebuild and some of those were not achievable with the budget. For example, a lot of parents who really wanted a school gym built. That's not achievable with \$7 million or \$9 million, or if you did, that's all you would build. Some of those priorities haven't happened; but there have been other priorities along the way that I feel that within the budget that we've been allowed, we've been able to try and address and meet those as best as we can within that dollar figure. Christie's done a good job, especially with the disability access. You saw today all these little multi-levelled levels into the side of the hill bring it all into two levels, and that will be good once it's happening. The reality is that it has used a lot of the money to make that move happen, which means that there is less money for some of that other stuff that are still probably strong priorities, but haven't been able to be achieved.

Ms BURNET - A supplementary question, it might be to you, Mr. Williams, obviously, there are limited finances. Should this be ticked off, and once it occurs and there is a redevelopment, how long before this primary school can be asking for another prioritisation of funding?

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Mr WILLIAMS - Every year, schools get an opportunity to review and update their capital submissions, and we actively work with them to make sure we've captured that information and to make sure we're well informed, so that can flow into every annual state budget process. So, it is an annual process, and that's part of the reason why we look holistically to make sure that we understand all of the challenges, to help Dion and the school lodge their next capital submission. We will work with them on that, to make sure it's in.

There is nothing stopping Dion and the school from lodging a submission this year.

CHAIR - Except about 200 in front of him.

Mr WILLIAMS - There are a lot of schools and there and there are a lot of challenges.

CHAIR - I went to one yesterday that was 61 last year, 61 this year.

Mr WILLIAMS - If I may just go back to the consultation process. We absolutely value that process. I'm very proud of the initiative to put that in five or six years ago, to engage and listen up front, and we're very open about that. We released the outcomes report for everyone to see what the community and the school have said. And through that process, we then release our design, which hopefully is representative of what we've heard. And we did that again through the second phase of the consultation process.

My view is that that was well-received, because we did not receive any strong opposition to that plan.

Ms BURNET - Can I ask a question just back on the school philosophy?

CHAIR - That'll be the last one because I need to move on, but yes, by all means.

Ms BURNET - Principal McCall, if you can give us an idea, for the record, of the school community and catchment, please.

Mr McCALL - Our school has a strong history within the Burnie area. While the pulp mill was operating, a lot of the families that worked there had their children go to Montello. The closure of that in the 1990s has led to a few generations now of lots of unemployment. Our ICSEA is at 900, and it points to a lot of social disadvantages within our community. There are a lot of private renters who are finding out that they are becoming homeless overnight. There is someone coming to me every week not having secure housing, that is a constant.

We have lots of very hard-working families, where they are two adults in the house, both working, but they are struggling to make ends meet because of the cost-of-living pressures and things like that as well.

From a catchment zone, we are looking at the area around Montello. A lot of the houses there are private rentals, as I said, or there are some Housing Tasmania houses. There is a lot of social housing - there are a lot of Salvation Army family violence houses in our catchment zone as well - after they've been in the initial house, that then they get relocated to units that are owned by Salvation Army, but they're in our zone. Then once students arrive at Montello, regardless of where they end up moving to, the families would like to keep them at that school,

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which is great for us. It also includes the CBD area of Burnie and South Burnie. Where we are at the minute, at the bottom of the hill, is in the Montello zone. It is a very short drive to the top of the hill, but as you could imagine, for a family that doesn't have access to reliable transport, it can be a significant barrier.

CHAIR - Do you see a growth area around Montello Primary? It's not shown on your projection but are you seeing something different? I'm not from Burnie.

Mr McCALL - The potential growth area in our zone is the CBD. There is a priority from the Burnie Council to try and invest more in urban housing and if that eventuates, the closest school is Montello. We have a few students at the moment whose parents own a shop and then live above the shop and then they come to Montello. But for any high residential area in the town, the nearest school would be Montello.

CHAIR - It makes sense to get this right at this time, given the projections -

Mr McCALL - Yes, that's right.

Ms BURNET - and high needs - many children with disabilities or parents with disabilities.

Mr McCALL - We have a lot of children on learning plans and assessed against their learning plans. We have lots of children with a neurodivergent diagnosis, whether that's ADHD or autism, and we like to think that we cater very well for those children. And we've had lots of strong feedback from parents who have said that they appreciate the way that we cater for their children's needs. But one of the things that is holding that back is the physical environment. So, we've done the best we possibly can within the structure that we currently have.

CHAIR - That brings me to my next question. It was suggested, not only by a couple of people that I spoke to but also in here, that it should have started again. If it started on the flat surface, which was the oval area, and built a whole new school, then you wouldn't be dealing with a lot of these issues. I asked that question on site and I'd appreciate the response on the public record, just so those people know that I've asked the question. Why didn't we have a new build, a greenfield site, given the challenges with the site?

Mr WILLIAMS - Thank you. The proposal was to redevelop and reuse, and that's a particular focus of the department.

We have an ageing portfolio that we need to bring up to a contemporary standard and Montello isn't any different to that. I firmly believe that we will be able to do that with the investment that we're making, rather than rip apart, throw away and start new.

It is a reflection of the aged asset portfolio that we have right across the state, and a desire to work with what we have and reuse and contemporise - which we have been doing with the support of government and we wish to continue to do. I know that Dion, the previous principal, had a strong view of building a new school. That was not part of the submission that we put forward to government. Indeed, where that was proposed was on the oval, which is a much-needed oval for the school to use as well.

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CHAIR - I think 'good bones' was what you told me the school had, at an earlier time today.

Mr WILLIAMS - Despite its appearance, there are good bones there and worthwhile reusing rather than throwing away and disregarding, and it's something that the facility services team is absolutely committed to do because we have a number of schools that are in a similar condition we wish to reuse and repurpose, which is, I believe, the right thing to do.

CHAIR - So, obviously, Dion, your school community now has a change of attitude, from the previous principal who you told us has since retired. It came to that resolution that it was a repurposing, not a total request for a rebuild?

Mr McCALL - I think much the same as I said before with the gym. the reality is when you look at the price tag of the original price tag of \$7.1 million, it's not a practical solution to propose a brand-new build for that figure.

I know there have been lots of parents and people within the school who have proposed maybe it might be better to spend more money and have new buildings. The challenge that was ahead of me as the principal when I first walked in to the job was to use this price tag of \$7.1 million to make the best possible outcomes we could for it from a teaching and learning point of view. I have put myself into that to try and do that as best as I possibly can. I certainly know from the analytics of the feedback there was a lot of feedback mentioning bulldozers and we should get rid of that and start again.

CHAIR - They were pretty clear.

Mr McCALL - Yes. The reality I'm dealing with is I need to work with the facilities team and with Christie to try and come up with the best solution within that price tag. And I think we've come up with a pretty good solution within that price tag.

Would we have a better solution with more money? I'd say definitely yes.

CHAIR - Were both options looked at of redevelopment or complete rebuild? My understanding was that both options were on the table, let's look at them. Is that the case?

Mr McCALL - No, we have not looked at a new build option.

CHAIR - Discussions around a new build option?

Mr WILLIAMS - I've never had any discussion about a new build option, none at all.

It is very difficult to visualise from the plans how what we saw today can be turned into contemporary learning and if I focus on MythBusters and one of the myths was - 'You can't polish a turd' - I love MythBusters and I watched that show, they did promise and show that you can. I don't mean that disrespectfully at all. I say that in the context of reusing and contemporising, modernising. Perhaps, Min who has worked on many projects over a number of years to convert old, aged, unsuitable assets into contemporary learning environments.

Ms HARMAN - I believe the work that Christie's done and what the plans show is that we will be providing contemporary learning.

Are we fixing everything on the site? No, because we've discussed that already, but we will provide new contemporary spaces and respond to the support requirements that Dion's talked about and enable trauma-informed practise on this site. I also think that utilisation of the oval to rebuild a brand-new school compared to the importance of the outdoor spaces to that school means redevelopment is the best option.

CHAIR - If you built a new school on the oval, when you got rid of the old buildings that are no longer necessary wouldn't you have that as your oval space? Wouldn't you do a swap?

Ms HARMAN - You would but you'd be terracing that and you wouldn't be able to achieve that external flat space the oval provides at the moment for outdoor play.

CHAIR - In the past that was probably like that before it was flattened.

Mr WILLIAMS - With an unlimited amount of money, of course you could achieve a new level playing surface.

Ms BUTLER - What we're learning from today's tour and also this committee now is that what the school requires is a lot more than what it's getting from this project. What it requires to be up to standard and to have windows closed properly, solar and so forth; that it is underfunded to a certain extent. If there was more funding available this could be a better learning environment for the school community. Is it a patch job because of lack of funding?

Mr WILLIAMS - I certainly don't believe so. I think the priority of the funding is being vested into the learning areas to provide contemporary learning. That's what the focus of our proposal has been, as well as ensuring the safety in the drop off and pick up zones, providing appropriate support areas for the one-on-one learning. So, I don't agree. I believe that absolutely the money is being invested to focus on the priority of learning.

Ms BUTLER - Can I ask you a quick question on the pickup and drop off area? I'm sorry, Chair, probably jumping ahead. I also would like to say for the record the tour of the school was lovely this morning. What an incredible job the staff and students are doing at that school. You can see just how much effort on a little budget that is going into the school. A lot of these works probably should have happened a very long time ago. I'll be completely honest, I did feel quite angry walking around the school, you could see just the sheer love for the students and how much effort had gone into trying to make the best of that situation. It's important that's on the record.

In relation to the drop off and pick up area. It does seem to make sense, however, the bus stop for the students to access - and yes, apparently there is only one bus that does leave and drop off. It looks like the students have to walk across the entrance of the car entrance area, to get to that bus stop.

Could you talk us through that design, because that seemed like a fault which could in turn down the track, lead to a really bad consequence. It could be dangerous.

Mr WILLIAMS - Certainly. I think Christie's probably the best placed to answer this. But I will start by saying, we have had a traffic engineer heavily involved in the modelling and

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assessing how that situation works. Yes, that would appear to be the case. What we talked about today was also the timing of the arrivals and departures and the crossing guard having the availability to stop the traffic and manage the traffic at the same time.

Ms DENMAN - We are obviously inheriting a pre-existing condition. And so, there is only so much we can do. I can't redesign the road as such, but we planned as best we could to limit any conflict between car and pedestrian movement. You have highlighted the one area we could not resolve without any management to help mitigate any problems with that.

We have highlighted the discussions we had on when are parents picking up their children and when does the bus arrive.

There was an understanding the majority of the high traffic flow for pickup will have already left the site by the time the bus arrives and that the children wait with the teacher in the pickup waiting area. Then the teacher guides that group of children up to the bus stop to hop on the bus. They're not moving without supervision or guidance from a teacher, with the addition of the person managing traffic at the crossing.

We actually already have this situation on the site, in that children can still cross the driveway to approach the bus stop. We are really still dealing with an existing condition that is there. We looked at turning circles with the traffic engineer to get buses onto the site. Because of the steepness of the site, we're chasing the hill, so we really would have lost all of the kitchen garden space in order to have enough room for a bus to come in and to turn and come back out again. It's trying to manage that balance between ensuring the school still has all of its recreation and amenity on site, space for the forecourt, the kitchen garden.

This is a flatter area at the top and the further we chase the hill, the steeper it's getting. The problem compounded rather than resolving itself by trying to get that bus onto the site, so that's where we've arrived, at leaving the bus stop in its current position.

Ms BUTLER - Because there is another space further down, adjacent to and for people listening to this broadcast who don't have access to the graph I'll explain.

There is a crossing at the outdoor learning - play - kinder area which goes across the car park, but there's a footpath which runs adjacent to the hall, down past the outdoor learning - play area. Adjacent to - it runs alongside the car park and then there would be space potentially, for students to cross on that crossing. They're not having to go across an entry or exit point, unless I'm reading it incorrectly, but there is a dedicated crossing there.

That could potentially be a really big problem because you're bringing it down to people management as a traffic safety risk. It's important for the record we've raised that as a concern because. On the flip side, is there a bus that drops students off of a morning and how would you manage that?

Mr McCALL - Yes. The bus that drops people off before school on the other side of the road near the crossing. They walk across the crossing guard and then across the - yep.

Ms BUTLER -Perfect.

Ms DENMAN - Looking at other areas of the street, there's certain distances in front of the stop and behind the stop that's required and with proximity to the T-intersection and then the corner, further up the end where that second crossing is, advice from the traffic engineers is they didn't fit the requirements for a safe pull in and pull out with the other movement going on.

Ms BUTLER - This is the best-case scenario.

Ms DENMAN - Yes. there's still room for discussion, particularly with council about where they locate and we're very open to that.

Mr McCALL - Yeah, I think this is the best solution for this budget.

Ms BURNET - Yes. We talked quite a bit about mitigation of problems this morning when we were on the school tour. Obviously, this is mitigating problems and problems of traffic movement, dropping children off in the morning, picking them up at night and high on the list of concerns of those consulted.

I suppose some school drop-off times limit car movements, and I note there are alternatives, but has that been considered as part of this as an option for your school, principal?

Mr McCALL - The current situation is we close our driveway down at 2:00 p.m. every day because we only have a very small amount of disability parks and then visitor parks. Previous to us closing the school down, there were actually physical fights over those car spots and people were turning up at 1:30 in the afternoon, quarter to 2.00 p.m. in the afternoon to make sure they had a pole position in the car park. That's what led us to do that. And then each afternoon at the moment, it's usually myself - not today because I'm here, but I'll be on the mobile phone to the staff on the deck who will then - I'll say, Lucy's mum's here. They'll send Lucy up. We'll safely put her in the car, then the next car will go.

Previous to us having that arrangement in place, it was really chaotic and bedlam. In that little road you saw right near the school hall, people were actually overtaking people on that road because they were annoyed at the fact that someone had to take a couple of minutes to plug their child into a car seat. I feel like we have had to put all this stuff, which is pretty labour intensive, into place to come up with a solution. That is why it came through as such a strong priority for the parents, especially when they were consulted, because a lot of the parents realised the safety of the children was paramount.

Ms BURNETT - Has that been in conjunction with the Burnie City Council or the road management in relation to this?

Mr McCALL - Previous to that, out on Bird Street, there was a situation where both sides of the road you could park on and there were quite often situations where a bus would be going one way and another bus would be going another way at pick-up and drop-off time and both sides of the street had parked cars. You had a bus here and a bus there and it was a Mexican standoff. We did consult with the council at that stage and the solution was to put a yellow line on the school side and have that as no parking, which has alleviated the traffic congestion. But it does mean it is now really tricky for a parent to drop their child off on the street safely without it being quite some distance from the school.

Mr WILLIAMS - In addition to the yellow line, councillors also moved the pedestrian crossing to the other side of the access road.

CHAIR - My next question is, possibly, for you Christie. Given we have talked about the compromise this reference has delivered for the school community, for the department right across the small budget, can you give the committee some indication of what aspects of this design you have had to really compromise on to fit it into the budget? Are there some aspects that would have been much better if you had a better budget and been able to deliver more contemporary learning in a particular area? Is there anything you can share with us?

Mr WILLIAMS - Before you start, Christie, as I have said throughout this process, most projects that we have do have challenges and challenges to deliver on priorities. Our focus has been to prioritise the areas to get the most improvement for learning outcomes. It is not unusual for a project to have to focus in on those priorities. Thank you, I wanted to start with that.

CHAIR - Thank you, you have been sworn.

Ms DENMAN - Going through the design process, we have three interconnecting buildings with access issues. To bring all those together we really had to deal with the entire footprint of the school. Sometimes, we can isolate an area and do improvement in one area, because the rest is functioning okay. But in this instance, particularly the issue of access, required us to resolve circulation around the entire footprint of the school. From that we have achieved some really good outcomes regarding the entire school now being under one roof. If it is raining, they are not moving from outdoor classrooms across to the main building getting wet. We have much shorter travel distances from small breakout groups or the reading and mathematical small group environment versus being with their home groups. By doing that, we have resolved a lot of the inherent planning issues that are limiting what the school and the teaching team can achieve because of either time getting lost, such as getting children from one place to another and supervision. It has allowed for a lot more flexibility within the teaching opportunities because there is good visual connection and supervision.

That has all come about because we have had to resolve this circulation requirement throughout the entire building, to make sure that it is accessible because of the level changes and stairs everywhere. So, that in itself is a great outcome. But then to spread the budget across the entire footprint limits the amount of improvement. That is where the extent of carpet and extent of new window replacement, they are the things that we've been struggling with and having to weigh up and manage, because we can't just look at one corner and get that 100 per cent right because the other areas are okay. It's been a matter of having to spread the scope of work across the entire footprint.

That's where the compromises are, in the level of individual parts coming up to perhaps what you might like them to be, in terms of standard. I also consider that in terms of allowing Montello to be put in a good place to move forward, it allows all of those things to be dealt with in time. We're not leaving a large ticket item unresolved. We've resolved those, and it's just that constant improvement and upkeep, in my opinion.

CHAIR - Thank you for that. Can you just give me some idea of how much of the existing buildings, the old ones that won't be refurbished, will have any facelift on the outside?

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Ms DENMAN - The exterior of the building will remain as you see it. All of the work is in the interior spaces, with the exception of the connections to the outdoor learning spaces which have decks; the connection out to the kitchen garden off the dining room; and the connection from the prep to grade two out to their learning environment. We have focused 100 per cent on where the internal learning spaces connect to outdoor learning spaces, and the rest of the aesthetic of the building hasn't really been afforded any attention, because we focused on what will directly benefit the students.

Ms BUTLER - I'm still trying to grapple with the low amount of money that's been provided for this development, and it clearly isn't touching the sides of what is required. Penguin Primary School, I believe, if you can confirm for me - I think we did that redevelopment as part of the Public Works Committee a few years ago -

CHAIR - Must have been before me. I haven't been to Penguin.

Ms BUTLER - I'm just wondering where the other schools which went through redevelopment were required to find this amount of cost efficiency in their refurbishments. I recall Penguin was about \$20 million; Cambridge was about \$15.1 million; Sorell was \$27.48 million. This went from \$7.5 million to just under \$10 million.

Were other schools required to skimp and save as Montello has had to skimp and save? Is there any basis for why this school is being underfunded? Or other schools and even schools close by? I don't want to take anything away from those schools at all, but why is this particular school being asked to compromise on safety for kids in their drop off and pick up area? Also, they might have to skimp on such things as not being able to have properly surfaced courts for the students to be able to utilise, or play equipment, or skimp in their early years area, and such things as solar installations and so forth. Why is this school is being asked, especially after waiting for such a long time for the funding, -well over a decade they've been crying out for this school to be upgraded. Why have they been asked to try to have to cut costs so much compared to other schools? Have other schools also been put in that position?

Mr WILLIAMS - As I've already said, every project that we go through has challenges and we examine the priorities in every project that we work on. There is a lengthy list of investment that the government has made over the last five or six years, and those projects range in size from \$500,000 up to the \$25-26 million for Sorell.

It is difficult on the surface to compare them, because they're not apples for apples and it is challenging to line those up. There is a range of schools that have had redevelopments that are less than the \$9.95 million redevelopment.

Ms BUTLER - Have those schools also been asked to compromise on safety for students in those redevelopments? Because this school committee has, it's pretty obvious from today's committee. We appreciate the fact that funding is finally being made available and no one wants to deny the school that; but why are they being asked to compromise so much?

Mr WILLIAMS - We are not asking the school to compromise on safety at all, and I was very clear that safety is paramount, and we will work with the school on doing that.

Ms BUTLER - That's not what the evidence has suggested today. We're getting children's fingers that could be guillotined. We have been hearing today about children's

fingers. They can't open certain windows. We've been hearing today that you can't guarantee the safety of the children getting on and off buses, because of costs. We've heard that school services - and we know there has been history at the school of students with broken ankles and so forth, and from uneven surfaces as well, and I'll be getting to that question soon, about how many students have been injured at the school.

We know that there are lots of compromises, and so I'm just wondering whether - or why - this school in particular has had to compromise because of funding, where other schools haven't had to compromise as much, because that is pretty much what I'm getting back from the evidence I'm being provided.

Mr WILLIAMS - No, we're not asking the school to compromise at all and the safety issue with the transport that I heard from Dion was more around parent behaviour -

Ms BUTLER - And cost.

Mr WILLIAMS - The traffic solution that I believe we've put forward is a good solution to help improve what has been problematic for the school -

Ms BUTLER - For the cost, it came down to.

Ms HARMAN - It's also about the availability of outdoor play at the front of the school as well though, and maximising those flat spaces for the early years and the kitchen garden and those elements.

Ms BUTLER - But my question is about whether other schools had to find the same efficiencies as the Montello community?

Ms HARMAN - A number of schools. It's very normal for schools to have to prioritise works and certainly with the Sorell redevelopment, there was considerable prioritisation required. The Lansdowne redevelopment was mentioned earlier, that was a much smaller budget and it looked at a specific area of the school. It didn't try and fix the whole site. Christie touched on it earlier, the difficulties of this site have meant that we have had to look at a development that goes across the whole site, which has been challenging, there's no doubt about that. But I suppose in other instances, we've looked at the highest priority area of a school and not tried to go right across that school site, which is what we're looking at with this proposal. But yes - with every redevelopment we do, there's difficult decisions to make, to prioritise works.

Ms BURNET - Perhaps we could have a question which might salve the concerns of Ms Butler and it's a question to take on notice, as to whether there is any increased injury at schools - comparable schools, to this layout. That might help.

Ms BUTLER - Yes, I hadn't got to that question about the injuries - but please go for it, because we did ask in committee.

Ms BURNET - There are probably some questions we won't get the answers today, but it may be useful in our deliberations later. And also, any injuries pertaining to travel to and from school in that school zone.

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Mr WILLIAM - Of course, we monitor and record incidents and I believe Dion has some information that he can share.

Ms BURNET - My point is comparatively as well. Is this the worst situation or not, atypical of what you see in a school setting?

Mr McCALL - I have the records from 2022, 2023 and 2024, as you requested this morning. My observation is that we don't have any more injuries compared to other schools, but I can't compare that. I don't have that information. But we certainly haven't set off any flags within the health and safety section of the department to get in contact with us and say - 'There are too many incidents here'.

In 2022 there were 52; in 2023 there were 65; and in 2024 there were 38; but that includes things like being hit in the head with a soccer ball, or a bruise to the cheek, or things like that. The level of injury is not -

CHAIR - You don't have the detail of what injury might relate to access around the school?

Mr McCALL - No, I don't have that level of detail with me.

Ms BUTLER - What I asked for this morning is injuries for both staff and students - and thank you for finding that information so quickly because it's only been a few hours - especially around ankles - the rolling of ankles or sprained ankles or breaking ankles and so forth.

Mr McCALL - The nature of our site does mean that there have been some students when they are playing who have rolled ankles and things like that because they're running around on the side of a hill. We have incidents where people roll their ankles and hurt themselves. There was one issue where a staff member did hurt themselves and they went through workers compensation. That was on our fitness track that goes around the perimeter of the school. It was covered in hot mix and there were some issues with some tree branches coming through and that staff member did hurt themselves while they were walking around with a group of students; but the whole fitness track has been replaced through the health and wellbeing funding that we received. We spent that on replacing that with the hot mix.

That was a pretty big job because it goes to the perimeter of the school which is a big area and it did take us all of that money. We were also helped out by facilities too with a little bit of extra money because they recognised that it was a big job and probably a little bit bigger than what we could achieve in our school resourcing package (SRP).

CHAIR - Are there any questions relating to page 9 -10 - Sustainability Approaches?

If not, I'll move over to page 10 which is Accessibility.

Ms BUTLER - Could you run us through the disability access for the site, with the new plans in mind, and the lift that we saw this morning on our tour, and how the new design and the refit will potentially create a more accessible school.

Mr WILLIAMS - The redevelopment will provide accessibility throughout the school. Apologies that we did not attach to the submission an accessibility plan that we have.

CHAIR - You are happy to table that? Thank you.

Mr WILLIAMS - Christie might add a bit more detail, but yes, the redevelopment will include a lift and several ramps throughout to ensure that accessibility is provided.

Christie, you might like to explain some more?

Ms DENMAN - From the footpath we have provided an accessible path of travel to the principal pedestrian entry, which is the main administrative entryway. That also connects to the kitchen garden, which is fully accessible, which allows access to the dining room space and to the sports courts. We also have accessible path of travel from the footpath to the kinder entryway as well.

If you have a look at the concept plans in the report, they are a little bit more up to date. We have two accessible car space areas; one adjacent to the kinder entry and one to the north near the hall which provides access via an accessible path of travel to the front door of the admin and also to the kitchen garden and support and the dining room, as per the access from the footpath.

Once you are inside the building, this diagram shows the continuous path of travel, which demonstrates that there is a continuous path of travel to every part of the school. We have achieved that by the introduction of a lift, which connects the lower ground floor with the upper ground floor, and the introduction of two large 1 in 20 ramps.

We have provided a 1 in 20 ramp because that is a gentler grade. It is not as steep. They connect from the centre addition to the earliest wing, which is the southernmost building. We're not quite sure why, but those buildings are approximately half a metre higher than the others on the lower ground floor, and 800 millimetres higher on the upper ground floor. So, those two ramps have been introduced to connect those.

From the learning environments we have also ensured that each indoor learning environment has an accessible path of travel to an adjacent outdoor learning environment. That's demonstrated to you by the arrows where they exit the building out into the play areas.

We discussed the outside-school-hours care facilities. To access that lower facility from the primary school, it would require exiting via the car park, via car to the lower car park, and then entering the building that way. Because of the steepness of the site, it would be simpler to use transport to achieve that, given the discussions we've had with our scope.

We believe that we've achieved a fully accessible outcome for Montello, and complies with the access to premises standards that are set out in the code - to the extent that we've provided an access to each type of space. It is not fully accessible to the oval without assistance, or fully accessible to some player equipment without assistance, but it is accessible to each learning space, each type of space, and to all outdoor learning spaces.

CHAIR - So, all the school areas for learning spaces are accessible by somebody in a wheelchair, somebody with a pram, to get around the school except for that after-school care area?

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Ms DENMAN - But they can get to that building. It is accessible via the bottom car park.

Ms BURNET - And the amphitheatre, so that's accessible from the lower ground?

Ms DENMAN - Exactly, yes. Via the lift you could participate on the lower ground floor or on the upper ground floor of the amphitheatre. You will always be present and participating. Obviously, you can't get to mid-levels or to tiered seating, but certainly be part of -

CHAIR - Whatever happens in that amphitheatre.

Ms DENMAN - Exactly.

Ms BURNET - Could you describe how the lift is likely to be accessed? Maybe Mr McCall?

Ms DENMAN - Do you mean in terms of management of the lift?

Ms BURNET - Management of the lift, yes.

Ms DENMAN - It would be fob card accessed. This is the advice I have been given because it is obviously a management issue, but my understanding is that admin can provide an access card to anyone that requires or is required to use the lift or would like to use the lift. That is, I believe, around managing children and their tendency to, perhaps, get a bit excited about using lifts unnecessarily but that is more the manager.

Ms BURNET - So, is it only a small number of people per capacity of the lift? Would you move a classroom or half a classroom?

Ms DENMAN - You are testing me. I believe it is 1400 long by 1100 wide. I have to check, but that is the requirement for it to be accessible to fit a wheelchair. I would have to double-check how many people it could carry. I am guessing it would be six to eight.

CHAIR - Is there a legal requirement for the size of a lift for disability access?

Ms DENMAN - Yes.

CHAIR - What about the ramp, is that the same? Is there a legal - what is the gradient there? Is it between 1-to-10 or 1-to-20?

Ms DENMAN - There is a variety of types of ramps.

You have a kerb crossing at a driveway or a car park onto a footpath. We have a 1-in-14 ramp, which requires the typical ramp you will see with hand rails on each side. It has certain maximum length and intermediate landings required.

Then we have the 1-in-20 ramp, which also has a maximum length. Because it is a lesser grade, depending on its width, it does not require hand rails; it is an easier gradient for people to manage.

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We also have a 1-in-10, which is a step ramp. It is basically the equivalent of a single step over a ramp length of 1900. It is only allowed to be 1900 in length because it requires a bit more effort to get the extra height. They are all stipulated within the Australian standard.

CHAIR - These meet all of those legal requirements for disability access, pram access and the like?

Ms BURNET - I need to ask again about the lift and the size because that seems quite small to me. I am a little spatially challenged, but not too badly. But is that future proofing for larger chairs and those requirements?

Ms DENMAN - I would have to take advice, really, on what that brief would need to be if there was a requirement for anything extra.

CHAIR - It is 1100 by 1400?

Mr WILLIAMS - We might get the specifics.

CHAIR - We would appreciate the specifics of that.

Mr WILLIAMS - The capacity of the lift is probably worthwhile. We will see if we can gather that for you.

Ms BURNET - Thank you. There is just some concern about that.

Ms DENMAN - The lift is an accessible lift so it meets the minimum requirements for access.

Ms BURNET - Well, otherwise it would be self-defeating, wouldn't it?

Ms BUTLER - I wanted to clarify the standards around the ramps. It states here that on the plan key that the variable is 1-to-10 to 1-to-20. It is my understanding that the Australian standard is 1-to-14. Is my information correct?

Ms DENMAN - That is a ramp. They have different names but there is a step ramp, which is a 1-in-10 and it is in the standard.

Ms BUTLER - Is that in line with Australian standards for disability access?

Ms HARMAN - For short distances only.

MS DENMAN - Yes, as long as it is a maximum length of 1900, which essentially gives you a rise of 190, which is a maximum step height.

CHAIR - Just a further question to the lift: obviously to fit a wheelchair that is fine, but you might have a carer and a support person or a support animal, if you like as well. I think we are all interested to make sure that it's appropriately sized not to just fit a chair with somebody in it.

Mr WILLIAMS - Yeah, I absolutely agree.

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CHAIR - Thank you.

Mr WILLIAMS - We're trying to source that as we speak.

CHAIR - Great, that's good. Thank you.

Any other questions on accessibility, members? If not, Tasmanian Government Art Site Scheme? My question is usually too early.

Mr WILLIAMS - A little too early, we are starting to work through the process, but an important part of the project.

CHAIR - But it will be practical.

Mr McCALL - It definitely will be.

CHAIR - Thank you, Dion. Thank you. Something useful for the school.

Ms BUTLER - Isn't that beautiful.

CHAIR - Yeah.

Ms BURNETT - Something imaginative and useful.

CHAIR - Thank you. Particularly when the budget is a challenging one. The art scheme is something useful. Project management. We've talked a lot about the funding and think we've covered that. Over the page, on page 11 we have an actual cost estimate there. The member for Huon might like to ask about the general project contingency, because he's done the percentage.

Mr HARRISS - There's not a percentage, no. Thanks, chair. In the general project contingency, that seems very low at 0.67 per cent. I'd like to know Department of Education, Children and Young People's average contingency, if they have one. I would have thought it was 5 to 10 per cent, not 0.67.

Mr WILLIAMS - Yes.

Ms HARMAN - The first line should say, construction including construction contingency. The general project contingency is more for other project elements as we go through. We always have an allowance within our construction budget element and typically around 7.5 per cent. It depends on the nature of the project, but it's rolled up in the construction element.

CHAIR - That's not normally how it's presented to the committee. With all due respect, we've always had them quite separate in the past. Is this a new way of presenting? Is this something the department have decided to roll in and not have it separated out so we have the percentage in our mind. The former member and chair of this committee loved to do the percentages.

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Mr WILLIAMS - No real explanation, apart from we should have absolutely had transparency on the contingency. As Min said, that varies from project to project, but certainly in the order of 7.5 per cent. We can certainly take that on board and correct for future.

I suppose the bit to add there is the construction contingency will end up being construction in the end, once it works through. It's a presentation issue to correct.

CHAIR - The \$58,000 in the cost estimate that says, general project contingency is for something else?

Ms HARMAN - Well, it's for the other elements. At the end of the day, the \$9.95 million is allocated to Montello Primary School. But it might be in additional council fees, it might be additional consultancy specialist requirements. It's for the non-construction elements.

Mr WILLIAMS - Maybe post-occupancy contingency when we finish and we go that needs to be fixed. The term general contingency as a catch-all if you like.

CHAIR - Do you have a breakdown somewhere in amongst your paperwork of the construction which includes the contingency of the 7.5 percent? Can the committee request we receive that in writing so we've something to pass on to the Public Accounts Committee if we should need to in the future?

Mr WILLIAMS - Yes, certainly.

CHAIR - Thank you.

Mr WILLIAMS - Min was saying the construction contingency amount for this project is around 7.5 per cent, we can get you the specifics.

CHAIR - It would be good to have it all stepped out like we'd normally have it. I've pulled out the Exeter High School - because I keep a lot of paperwork - and that was a 10 per cent allowance for both construction contingency of 5 per cent and design contingency of 5 per cent.

Are you thinking it's a bit cheaper to build on the north west coast?

Mr WILLIAMS - No.

Ms DENMAN - The design contingency is a reflection of that. We're at tender now and as we go through and get closer to tender, the design contingency reduces because you've been through the design process. There's not a separate design contingency at the moment because of where the project staging is at.

CHAIR - Interestingly, in the construction cost for Cambridge was 5.5 per cent and the construction contingency was \$510,000 for that particular school. I'm not as good at maths as what you are Todd.

Mr WILLIAMS - I'm hearing we need to improve our presentation and get some consistency of our contingency information.

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CHAIR - It's helpful for long-term members and for the newer members to have everything really detailed. It gives us a good understanding. That would be appreciated.

Are there any other questions while the calculator's out?

Ms BUTLER - The consultant fees are 8 per cent of the project's cost - if my calculations are correct, you might want to check that for me - at \$800,000. Is that a lot for a project for 8 per cent of it to be in consultant fees?

Mr WILLIAMS - It's absolutely necessary to have a quality consultant team on board to help us work for all the challenges.

The range we generally work through is from 8 per cent to 12 per cent of the construction value.

Mr HARRISS - What does the \$142,000 cover in the project management because the construction would have its own project management, obviously?

Mr WILLIAMS - Correct.

That's the general project management from commencement to completion. That's a component of my team in helping to work with the school, work with the consultant, work with all the parties that are required throughout the whole journey of the project.

Ms BUTLER - That's Department of Education project management team at \$142,000?

Mr WILLIAMS - Correct, yes.

Ms HARMAN - Does that get separated out? Is that how it normally happens from the Department for Education, Children and Young People? Yeah, right.

Ms BURNET - Are we talking from 2021 or earlier to 2026?

Mr WILLIAMS - Yes, from the start, from 2021 until 12 months after completion of the construction. I have a project manager allocated to every project and that's representative of that component.

Mr HARRISS - So it's part of their wages? Are you saying that \$142,000 covers a DECYP -

Ms HARMAN - representative on the project and the other costs associated with the -

CHAIR - Who are already employed?

Ms HARMAN - Yes.

Mr HARRISS - So, it doesn't actually cost the project -

CHAIR - Well, it does because it comes off the budget.

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Mr HARRISS - Yes, that's what I'm saying. It's allocated to the budget, yes, but it's not an additional DECYP staffer is it?

Is that what you're saying? It's not, it's not additional. It's not travel cost or it's not -

Ms HARMAN - It covers travel costs and all the elements of staffing.

Mr WILLIAMS - It covers all the costs associated with having a project manager on the project for the period of the project.

Ms HARMAN - I might say it's not a huge amount of money over the course of this project, six years.

CHAIR - Two years.

Ms HARMAN - No 2021 to 2027.

Mr WILLIAMS - From the start to the end of the project, your post occupancy. Every project we have has a project management allocation as part of delivering that project.

CHAIR - Everyone is set out a little bit differently.

Ms BURNET - It's hard to compare, isn't it?

CHAIR - Any other questions, members?

The project timeline. This will be what everyone's waiting for.

The construction tender was advertised in April. I saw it when I was having my coffee one Saturday morning. I was hoping to get back on this committee at the time. Then the parliamentary hearing in July - we've met that. Contractor to be appointed August 2024.

It doesn't leave a lot of time between this committee's decision and the contractor being appointed. Can you just walk me through where we are with that timeline?

Ms HARMAN - Tenders have been received and the evaluation is underway. It might be a bit optimistic because we no doubt won't have a decision from the committee until August, but we will be well placed once a decision is made - should it be favourable - to award the contractor fairly soon after.

CHAIR - I am not as au fait with how time frames work in this building industry as Mr Harriss would be; but, to appoint a contractor and then start construction - are you talking early August, late September or are you talking mid and mid?

Ms HARMAN - It varies depending on the capacity of the selected tenderer. Fortunately, things seem to have got a bit easier. A few years ago, it was a was a considerable period, particularly in more remote locations. Six weeks isn't unreasonable.

CHAIR - Would anyone like to follow up on my assumption there?

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Ms BUTLER - Today we heard that the construction will take about two years. Are we going to be able to meet January 2026?

Mr WILLIAMS - A little unknown because the criteria on the tender is the value for money consideration, price, time and quality. That's being worked through. We would do our best to try and minimise the impact to the school and timing, such as the start of a new school year. I'm sure Dion would be very grateful for that. There's an element of unknown and we'll know that once we've worked through the tender process. That's our guess at this point.

Ms DENMAN - Once we have that preferred tenderer, then we can discuss in detail the staging elements of the project. You're right - it's two years and it is a bit optimistic for January 26. It'll be dependent on working with the tenderer and working with the management of the school.

CHAIR - Thank you. Any other questions? We will move on to potential project constraints, and I am mindful that we have another witness coming before the committee soon. Thank you for your time, Ruth.

Ms BUTLER - I know it would just be a loose strategy and management plan at the moment, but what would the project schedule look like? How would the school coexist as a learning provider whilst all this work would potentially be underway? It would be a logistical nightmare. How will you coexist as a school and create or maintain a learning environment for the students whilst this project is underway?

Ms HARMAN - We have prepared staging diagrams, which we don't have today, but that is looking at how we can ensure that the works can progress while there are other classrooms available for the children.

The tender or the requests for contractors is that they work with the school. Certain times have been stipulated, or may be stipulated, where work can or can't happen, depending on its proximity to adjacent learning spaces. They're the sorts of things that would affect the program and the completion dates, to ensure the sanity of staff and children, some work might need to be programmed or slowed down just to ensure that all of that can coexist. Certainly, a disruption, but that is the nature of construction.

We have staged the works. The demountables are the last to be relocated, so they'll be in constant use throughout to allow the other spaces to be freed up while the work's being done there.

We have a plan for how that can happen, and then it will be day-to-day management of that.

Mr McCALL - And we are running at less than the capacity of the school as well, which helps with that. From a staging point of view, it's going to be chaotic. There's no way around it, but we will be able to move classes to different areas of the school. There'll be somewhere to move to. We'll work with the builders to try and get some of this signed off on earlier so that we can have students move into those areas as we go along.

Mr HARRISS - Will there be certain build works that have to be done in holiday periods or not, or is it anticipated that it can go -

Ms HARMAN - There usually is. I'm not across the detail of this program but there's often elements of construction where we time for holiday periods, absolutely - like changing over for a new switchboard or access works. The ones that will be very disruptive to the learning environment of the school and impact on the day-to-day safe operation of the school.

Mr HARRISS - Do we know how that sits with completion times, as in spacing the program out, or not really?

Ms HARMAN - Not at this point, because that will be a discussion with the contractor.

Mr WILLIAMS - And indeed part of the tender submission process that we work through and then preferred contractor and working through that staging plan.

CHAIR - Do you normally put penalties in place?

Ms HARMAN - We do have penalties in our contract documents. We prefer to work collaboratively with our builders for the best outcome for the school.

Mr WILLIAMS - The big stick approach generally doesn't work too well, it's more the collaborative.

CHAIR - I know, but it can also hurry them along a bit.

Mr WILLIAMS - Absolutely, and we work closely with the contractors regularly and we have respectful relationships.

CHAIR - A penalty clause is not unusual.

Mr WILLIAMS - Absolutely. It's part of the contract.

Ms BURNET - These identified risks that we have on point 15, the project constraints - are they in any particular order or are they just a potpourri of what might happen? What are the identified risks? Anything could happen?

Mr WILLIAMS - No particular order, but risk assessment is an ongoing part of all our projects and we review and update appropriately to present them to the committee, hopefully to give you confidence that we're managing the risk.

Ms BURNET - Budget overrun is a huge concern in the current global constraints, I suppose, with delays and having access to all types of works that we require. And I suppose program delays concern me the most, given this started in 2021. It's not due to finish by 2026 in January. That's a primary school life, that period. How do you mitigate in relation to that kind of concern that obviously the school community, the parents and the staff would have?

Mr WILLIAMS - It's not unusual for a project to go four or five years. The stages that we work through to do the consultation and engagement and planning design are very important. If you rush those and you get those wrong, you pay for the consequences of that. The construction period - it is very important to make sure that we continue to safely operate a

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school to make sure that that can happen. A usual project would run for four to five-year timeframes.

Ms HARMAN - We also have Christie and Dion and Matt at the forefront of the build process working with the contractor, and we have to ensure we get quality as well. Those timeframes will be set within the contractual arrangements. The school will be heavily engaged through the construction phase and involved in site meetings, and be fully aware of the programme as we go through the construction phase to hopefully assist in the running of the school.

Mr WILLIAMS - We're very keen to get the contractor on site and deliver the works, but we are also keen to make sure the quality is appropriate as well.

CHAIR - One last question is about the acoustics in that lovely hall you got in the Building the Education Revolution (BER) funding, thanks to the federal government at the time.

It hasn't quite hit the mark when it comes to being fit for purpose. We talked a little bit about some measures being put in place to deal with the acoustics. Is that something that's just on the general 'must do list', or is it going to be on a priority list? How are you going to deal with that in the future and brief as possible?

Mr WILLIAMS - That goes back to your question about through this process about what are some of the things that didn't make the cut. That was a desirable outcome for us, not just for the PE teacher, but for when we have whole groups in there, whether it's a lunch programme or assemblies or different things like that. It doesn't take very much for it to be very loud, very quickly in there. It does bounce around and it would benefit from some acoustic treatment. But, when we lined up the list of priorities, doing the acoustic treatment there didn't make the cut over other priorities.

CHAIR - Thank you. Any other questions?

Ms BUTLER - As a quick supplementary to that. Could you quickly run through the information that you gave us this morning on our tour about some of the acoustic benefits that you'll be providing during the build? You mentioned cutting down noise between floors and also different ways that the wind sound that people in the consultation have raised. How will these will be attended to?

Ms DENMAN - The wind would be the breezeway. The wind issue we've removed by building the centre addition. At the moment with that bridge way over the top creates a tunnel, draws the wind in, and creates a tunnel effect through that space. That's been mitigated by the introduction of a new built form in that location. We have also addressed acoustic issues between the floors by adding additional acoustic ceilings below the current floor ceiling system where footfall can be heard when children are moving above and the classrooms above can interrupt or distract children below. We have also introduced linings which absorb sound through felt lining and we have also got some battened systems that are designed to be reduced reverb and absorbed sound in the centre space above the amphitheatre area. Carpet throughout is also one thing, balancing the use of vinyls versus carpets and making sure that we have got a reasonable tolerance in there for children when they are moving, so there is predominantly carpet surfaces on the floor as well.

CHAIR - If there are no further questions at this point in time, I will ask the witnesses that we have the table to withdraw and we will prepare for our next witness because there will probably be a couple of questions after our next witness for you before we go through those really important questions. Thank you.

The Committee suspended from 4.16 p.m. to 4.27 p.m.

CHAIR - Welcome back. We have a new witness to the table, Natalie Bugg.

Ms NATALIE BUGG WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION, AND WAS EXAMINED.

CHAIR - Thank you, Natalie, and thank you for appearing before the committee. You were here earlier, but I'll just outline a couple of those areas that are important to the Public Works Committee. Before you begin giving evidence. There are some important aspects: the committee hearing is a proceeding of parliament. You do receive protection of parliamentary privilege and it is an important legal protection and it allows individuals giving evidence to a parliamentary committee to speak with complete freedom without fear of being sued or questioned in a court or place out of Parliament. It applies to ensure that Parliament receives the very best information when conducting its enquiries. But it is also important to be aware that this protection is not afforded to you if the statements maybe defamatory are repeated or referred to by you outside of the confines of the parliamentary proceedings as it is a public hearing. Do you understand?

Ms BUGG - Yes.

CHAIR - Thank you. Also, I thought we'd allow 15 minutes for you to talk to the committee about your concerns.

Ms BUGG - Yes, certainly. I will try to put 70-odd years' worth of evidence down as best I can for you.

CHAIR - Then we'll open it up to the committee for questions, thank you. You've already been introduced, but this is the committee: the Honourable Dean Harris, Jen Butler, Tania Rattray, Helen Burnet and Simon Wood, and our secretariat support. Thank you, Natalie, the floor is yours.

Ms BUGG - I am not sure if it's in the briefs or not. The school was built on 4 November in 1952.

CHAIR - Like a lot of schools in Tassie.

Ms BUGG - A lot of years. However, throughout the years there hasn't been, comparatively, to other schools - and unfortunately in this state, many other schools fall into the same problem where they have been just missed for this very, very important funding to bring them up to the legal standards to provide a safe education and a safe access to education for the students, a safe workplace for the staff and for the community. As was discussed before about accessing it for after school programmes, sports field and whatnot for different bits, there

are a lot of people that use that ground owned by the Department of Education, known as Montello Primary School.

However, as I'm well aware, you've all had a walk through this morning from the previous talks, it grossly falls short of anything resembling a safe access to education or safe access for staff or for the community, in many areas, from the guillotine windows - sorry, I like the title for that, I don't mean to steal your words there. The accessibility around the school in that regards, the disruption to classrooms, just through what the current design is. There is so many improvements that could and should be made.

It shouldn't be just about - if you know what I mean - ensuring it looks pretty or a table's going to last the next 30 years, so it cost a couple of dollars extra. Don't get me wrong, I agree those things are important too. Bring the electrical parts up to requirements. Christ, that's a legal standard? It shouldn't even be discussed. The school should be insured against the funding required to have done that, and it should have been done by the time those legal standards changed, making it a law.

But the same goes for the disability standards. Now, the proposed plan that was handed around to us all just before by the department.

CHAIR - This is the access diagram you're referring to.

Ms BUGG - It's pretty white and black and blue. The first thing that I call your attention to first is the plan key.

Access ramps variable 1-10 to 1-20. If this is the access diagram for disability, I'm sorry to say, but under CBOS legislation, access for disabilities it falls short, because the minimum legal standard is 1 in 14 gradients for any person with a disability. This is a ground or public land, owned by the Department of Education. It falls under those legal requirements, as does anywhere else for a disability ramp in the state of Tasmania.

CHAIR - You're saying that anything that meets the 1 in 10 does not meet the standard?

Ms BUGG - 1 in 10, 1 in 11, 1 in 12, 1 in 13, does not meet the legal requirements, okay.

Obviously, this very informal Photoshop version doesn't actually give the engineering details as to which area pertains to those shortfalls, or the earth moving that would need to be done to help ensure those gradients could be met safely. It also doesn't mention the width of the paths.

For any of those general paths or general ramp areas sloped, it's got to be a minimum of 1200 wide. That is another legislative bit of goodness.

As you can appreciate if you're on crutches, for example. How on earth, if you've got a path that's this wide or just a metre - and I mean no disrespect to anyone here - but if you're a bit bigger of a size or whatnot or an older student, in that regard, you're arm width is wider than someone in grade one or prep age level to how much width they would need.

If you're trying to walk down a path or a ramp, for example, 900 or a metre wide, you can't even safely get yourself down the damn thing and keep yourself on it, let alone if you're

in a wheelchair or you've got to try and turn anywhere to come back the other way. You can't do it safely.

As you can see, I'm in a wheelchair myself, okay. There're other examples where people need crutches for mobility or they have a short-term injury. Someone has a car accident - not that I'm wishing that on anyone - ends up in a wheelchair short term or long term, or crutches as part of rehab; or turns around and does their own damn ankle on the school grounds because of the uneven slopes - as Tilly Hay did back in 2018, which is on the public record in the *ABC* article in 2019.

And yet, what's done? 'Oh, it's okay, we'll try and help the student get around the best we can, but we really can't get her too far around safely because the school's not damn well safe'.

No student, no staff member, no community member should be in that position.

The worst part of all of this is that in the *Disability Standards for Education Act 2005*, which is a federal act, in section 32 clearly states that all areas or all, if you know what I mean, schools should be up to disability standards. That's paraphrasing it because I can't find my own god damn note where I've got the quote written down, and I do apologise.

CHAIR - We can access it.

Ms BUGG - Specifically, I am referring to Section 32, as I've emailed even to Todd over the last few years. I've been fighting this battle for Montello Primary School for the last 5.5 years up to the federal ministers, trying to get the school its long overdue and well-deserved funding.

The school shouldn't be getting a cheap bandaid solution that doesn't even comply to legal or legislative requirements. Part of that federal 2005 legislation was that every state and territory in the country was given ten years-worth of extra funding as part of a detailed layout plan, so every school across the country could be brought up to disability and accessibility standards. Please tell me, in your walkthrough today, where Montello meets that for its staff, students, or the community. And please tell me how the Department of Education is providing a safe access to education.

That is a legal requirement, that every school in this country should be accessible for people with disabilities. That is federal legislation. The department can't hide behind that. They can't cry 'funding' because there was a 10-year staged funding plan for it, so there is no excuse that's tangible.

Please tell me the evidence today about the energy or the guillotine windows. How on earth are we allowing that to go on and to be the school's issue, to put up with that sort of safety concerns for the staff or students or the community going on to school property? What is the acceptable cost of a person's welfare and life?

CHAIR - Natalie, you don't agree that the proposal - because that's what we're looking at as a committee - meets -

Ms BUGG - No, it is a massive shortfall to what that school needs to get up to just basic legal requirements.

Don't get me wrong, I fully agree they deserve to have extra things as was spoken about equipment and whatnot, making the classrooms look pretty, extra bits to make it more enticing for a safe and happy learning area. I completely agree that every school should have that too, and funding only goes around so much. However, there are core things - the school needs and deserves those upgrades that have been withheld for years by the department. Quite frankly, like in the 2019 article with Tilly Hay, despite the fact that Todd himself sat close to where I'm sitting - next spot over, just to be accurate - and turned around and under oath disclosed that the records only started the tiered process in 2018, yet the 2019 *ABC* article proves that Montello Primary School had been at been a tier 1 requirement for funding, with many other schools mentioned in that article, for the eight years prior. How can Todd give evidence that is literally untrue and there is a part of public record proving it's untrue?

CHAIR - Are you asking the committee not to approve the plan that's been put forward?

Ms BUGG - I'm asking not only for the plan to be reviewed, but to be brought up to legal standards, which the school is overdue being required. The safety issues like the toilet block, the guillotine windows, the other things that the school needs to bring it up to a safe learning environment for them all, and the long overdue funding to maintain the school that the school has been withheld for years outside of it all.

CHAIR - I'm not here to defend Mr Williams. He's quite able to do that himself, but he did give a commitment to the committee earlier in the day -

Ms BUGG - I appreciate that.

CHAIR - Saying that he would work with the principal in addressing -

Ms BUGG - I appreciate that.

CHAIR - Those windows that were referred to.

Ms BUGG - My biggest issue and it has been right from the start of this, okay - now, in 2021, Jeremy Rockliff turned around as a campaign promise in March of that year, claiming Montello Primary School would get \$7.3 million. He committed it not to accessibility or anything like that, specifically about making the school look prettier, making the toilet block situations and whatnot fixed, some parking issues. That is online, free and available for everyone else to see what I'm talking about. Okay? It wasn't until September of that year, that the process for reviewing Montello for \$7.3 million and what the school needs, you know, the parent reach out and community -

CHAIR - The consultation process.

Ms BUGG - That wasn't even started till months later, after Jeremy Rockliff used it as a campaign promise, with other schools involved in that promise. Montello has been screaming out for this funding for many more years after they were legally obligated to have already got it, to fix the school for everyone - let alone maintain it throughout the years. What I'm asking for is not only this and the rest of it - so that it doesn't sit down and sandbag you with pretty, fancy words that aren't inclusive for all students, staff and communities.

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As an example to that, last year my son's EA - I've had to fight the department tooth and nail for my son to have a full-time EA as his specialists have recommended; not the school, they have been nothing but supportive. The issue was yes, it was policy and procedure, even legislated with his disability that he could get that, but the department refused to fund it to the school. That's what it all came down to. My son also attends with his autism assistance dog, which requires an adult handler with him at all times because, as a 10-year-old severely autistic boy, he cannot handle the dog safely or make good choices with it. In that, his EA turned around -

CHAIR - I know this is difficult but we do have to focus on the reference.

Ms BUGG -. She's injured herself at work. She was held off returning to work - even I was trying to support her, helping get her back, for my son's sake - purely because her work site was unsafe after injuring herself at work..

CHAIR - Are you aware that anything that's in this reference would assist in making it safe?

Ms BUGG - The testimony that Dion gave before about the staff member that hurt themselves on the walking track and was off for a while - that's my son's EA, so I can link the two to you -

CHAIR - We'd rather not identify people -

Ms BUGG - I'm not saying names here. I'm giving the testimony about my own child in that regard. Because of my son's disability needs, the school had to fund the cost of two staff members out of their budget - one being off because of injuring themselves in an unsafe site at work as well as funding another EA to cover my son while they were off work. Now that is two wages. How many staff do you think over the years have not been able to work at Montello or return to work when injured, whether through outside circumstances like a car accident or whatever, or literally cannot even work there because they have a disability. How much extra funding over the last 70 years has it cost that school because it is not even safe - let alone how many students for attendance and access to learning. That all adds up. These are people's futures.

CHAIR - Thank you, Natalie, I think members understand your passion very much. I would like to open it up to the committee to ask some questions in regard to what you have presented. Thank you.

Ms BURNET - Thank you for all of that background because I think it is really useful to hear that lived experience in the concerns that you have seen over many, many years by the sounds of it.

We have concept plans, conceptual plans, in front of us and the proposal is to address those access issues across the site for each of those learning areas and play areas and so forth. I believe that these are concept plans. Can you tell me, and it might be a question that we ask the architect as well or the department, but your understanding is what we have before us does not comply at all?

Ms BUGG - No. A building surveyor would point that out very, very quickly.

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Ms BURNET - I do not think we are up to the building surveyor point.

Ms BUGG - A building designer - who is also required as part of any major building project whether it be commercial or residential, in this case a commercial sort of setting - is required to draw up these plans. To do that they must draw those to legal requirement standards. As I identified to you, clearly just the plan alone already shows you it doesn't.

Ms BURNET - You were talking before about the right-hand turn or the amount legally required for a wheelchair -

Ms BUGG - For a U-hand turn, so a turn that backs onto itself, or a right-hand turn is 1500 wide.

Ms BURNET - Right, thank you. I will be asking questions again.

Ms BUTLER - I ask you for an overall answer; whether you consider the redevelopment of the school, the proposed project, will that meet the learning needs of the school community, as it is at the moment?

Ms BUGG - No. Please tell me how turning around and, if you know what I mean, the windows, the electrical, all of that, everything I have mentioned together, please tell me how that is a safe access to education for the students, a safe workplace under the Industrial Relations Commission laws. It follows human rights legislation, which is a federal act. It does not follow any legislation.

CHAIR - Natalie, just to be clear, my reference to the electrical upgrade was not around safety, it was about taking the opportunity while something else was being done.

Ms BUGG - Yes, not that part of it, but the upgrades that need to be done to the electrical standards that you mentioned.

CHAIR - No, just the electrical switchboard, not to the standards. I was not insinuating or stating that I felt that there was anything wrong with the electricals. I was just talking about using that opportunity.

Ms BUGG - Yes, while you are working on it, it is cheaper to turn around and add that in to make it more efficient.

CHAIR - I do not want anyone to think there is a problem at the school with the electrical safety aspects of the school. That would be terrible.

Ms BUGG - No, but bringing everything up to legal requirements is vital to providing a safe workplace. How is any of us sitting here going to be okay with the next person that gets hurt? I get the department just throws money at it or ignores it, which has been what's going on for years and years and years, despite how many people have brought this forward. Christ, it's been in the news that many goddamn times about this school. And what's being done? What has been fixed? It's actually law. I can't turn around, pick up a gun, not that I'm threatening anyone here just to be clear, but I cannot pick up a gun and shoot everyone in this room, have the police walk in, arrest me and go, 'I'm not accountable because I don't believe in following

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the legislation'. I'm held accountable for my actions if I do something that endangers someone else.

CHAIR - So, your issues are around compliance with legislation?

Ms BUGG - Yes, and safe access to education for all the students and a safe working environment for the staff.

Ms BURNET - Can you explain what you mean by say safe working environment?

Ms BUGG - If you go into your office at work, or even sitting here right now, under OHS legislation, those little cords you've all got dangling down there, the only risk mitigation that you've made it safer is the fact that they're in a closed little bit. However, if that was part of a walkway area, it's a trip hazard. Yes. So, if any one of us were to trip over that, then the owner of this building establishment is legally liable for that injury and held responsible.

Generally, a department of education for a department of education grounds, as in a primary school, a high school, a kinder, whatever it is that they run.

Ms BURNET - So, you're talking about physical safety rather than personal safety?

Ms BUGG - I'm talking about both. If you sit back and think for 30 seconds, what's the definition when someone says do you feel safe, what does it mean to you? Does it mean that you feel emotionally safe? Does it mean that you feel physically safe? Does it mean that the area around you is safe? All of those things. Does it mean that you are supported in a learning environment? Does it mean that you are supported to actually get the help you need to learn?

All of these things come together and are defined by each person. However, there are very clear standards in the legislation too, and the Department of Education has their own little part in their own legislation of providing a safe access to education, as well as following workplace laws to provide a safe environment for their staff.

CHAIR - Thanks Natalie. Would you like to add anything? We have clearly heard your concerns, and they'll be put to the Department, particularly about the minimum legal standard of 1 in 14.

Ms BUGG - Montello has done an amazing job, regardless of the department, using their budget to support the students and the families with the students, in that regards.

Christ, Dion, if I had a bad day trying to bring my son down to school when my husband went to hospital a couple of years ago, Dion personally arranged - if I couldn't physically get my son out of the car to his classroom - to have one of the staff members help me do that, because he physically needs to be taken from A to B for his disability, to help get him to school safely. That was going above and beyond to try to help work with the situation as screwed up as it was.

CHAIR - We did read in some of the notes that a lot of people believe that the principal, Dion McCall, is an absolute treasure.

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Ms BUGG - He is in that regards. With everything that I'm personal testifying with all of this and that I've been fighting for the last 5-and-a-half years, I want to make very clear to all of you that my problem is not the school or its staff.

CHAIR - It's the physical structure of the school.

Ms BUGG - No. My problem is the Department of Education refusing to fix the physical structure and the needs of the school.

CHAIR - For clarity, you believe the committee should reject this reference, this proposal to upgrade the facilities at the school and have it reassessed? Is that what you're asking for? That's what we need to understand.

Ms BUGG - This still doesn't come with a guarantee, even with the guillotine windows, that it's safe. As you've said, it sacrifices a lot of safety aspects, okay.

Yes, it needs to be safe for everyone. Do you want to turn around and send your own kids there to potentially be the one that got hurt? I've a son there and I don't even want to do that, if you know what I mean. No one should be in that position, and the school and the staff shouldn't be in the position if that's all they can provide for a safe education.

Ms BUTLER - Can I ask you if you believe there are aspects of this project or the proposal you think are really beneficial, that are really positive? As the chair has already stated, we can only make decisions based on the information of the project in front of us and based on information we've received, so thank you for your submission today.

Ms BUGG - Yes.

Ms BUTLER - What would some of those be for record?

Ms BUGG - Like fixing the issue with the toilet block.

CHAIR - That it's going to be demolished?

Ms BUGG - As it should have been many years ago, for everyone's sake.

CHAIR - It's got a lock on it.

Ms BUGG - Yes. A lot of the thought, if you know what I mean, that has gone into this with the crumbs that they've been given to try and do it, is a good start. However, it's a band-aid to a bigger problem and it doesn't fix the problem. And it is too, too little too late for something that's already years overdue.

CHAIR - Thank you very much, Natalie, and we appreciate the fact you've sat through a fairly long session to have your opportunity -

Ms BUGG - Five-and-a-half years is nothing to the time frame this afternoon because at the end of the day -

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CHAIR - I just have to advise you, as I did at the commencement of your evidence, that you said here today does attract parliamentary privilege, but once you leave the table, that privilege does not attach to the comments you've made.

Ms BUGG - I've been saying this up to federal ministers for the last five-and-a-half-years, so I've got nothing to hide and I really don't care at this point.

CHAIR - Well, thank you, but it's my job to make sure I inform you, or I'll get the sack.

Ms BUGG - I appreciate that.

CHAIR - Whatever you say to the media or anywhere else, even if you're just repeating it, doesn't attract that privilege. Again, we thank you.

Ms BUGG - If you look in the media, it's nothing I already personally haven't said before.

CHAIR - I believe you had a question you would like asked or is the question part of what you've already shared with us for the department? Mr Secretary informed me you had a question.

Ms BUGG - Within everything that a lot of the testimony that was given, I've been arguing this for five-and-a-half years and I urge you all, regardless of what you have been told, look at it against the legislation, please, and if you need any help with that, you're all welcome to reach out to me and I'll point to you where in that regard -

CHAIR - I wrote down those couple of areas that you pointed us to.

Ms BUGG - because a lot of those answers you were given were literally completely untrue. That is really sad at this sort of level when any of us sitting back looking up legislation, reading the black and white can see it for ourselves.

CHAIR - Thank you very much, Natalie.

We'll suspend for a couple of minutes and then I'll invite the department and the architect representative back to the table while Natalie takes her leave. Thank you, Natalie.

The witness withdrew.

The Committee suspended from 4.59 p.m. to 5.00 p.m.

CHAIR - Welcome back to the table, and you've heard what the Committee has heard, in regard to Ms Bugg's evidence to the committee. I'm not sure if you'd like to make a comment or you're just willing to have a question. Certainly, the Committee is open to whatever somebody would like to commence with.

Mr WILLIAMS - I'm happy to lead off.

CHAIR - Thank you, Todd.

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Mr WILLIAMS - I'm sure others will support and certainly, welcome Ms Bugg's input into the project. It has been a particular focus, as it should be, through any redevelopment to make sure there's appropriate accessibility throughout the school.

We don't have a choice but to comply with the law. That's what we must do and that's what we do and I believe we are doing that. I'll let Christie and Min also comment around how that occurs in the process of the Building Code and all the other legal requirements in the development application and the like. But rest assured, we do and we always will comply, because that's a requirement. And as with safety, as we've talked about it is paramount. My commitment is to work with Dion, as we work with every school to make sure that should principals and schools need support to ensure safety for staff, students and community members, we do that. We do that every day and as you can appreciate, there's an enormous amount of activity on schools every day. It is front and centre in what we do.

Perhaps if we talk about the process of ensuring we meet the legislation requirements of the Building Code is probably a key point to start with. Perhaps, if we give a little bit more clarity about the spacing or the requirements for disabled access. Are you happy to -

CHAIR - Well, particularly the reference to the minimum legal standard of being one in 14 minimum. I'm interested in that and sure others are also.

Ms DENMAN - I can't say why that is a held belief that one in 14 is the minimum, except to say that a ramp by definition is one in 14 and a step ramp by definition is a one in 10. according to the Australian Standard, which is AS 1421 part 1, which is - I can't recall the exact name of the standard, but that is the standard for access for disability.

Ms HARMAN - Access to premises.

Ms DENMAN - No, no. Sorry. If I'd known we would discuss it, I would have had a bit more information, but that has already been raised and our office has provided the diagram from the standard that shows that is an accessible ramp within the Australian Standards for access.

That has been clarified within the process. I'd also say that this - which it was noted - that this is a concept diagram. It's not drawn plans to demonstrate compliance. It's a concept to demonstrate the strategy for access and it's dated March last year. We have had nearly 15 months of developing our plans to demonstrate that they're compliant. Those plans -

CHAIR - Is there a plan now? This is concept, is there a proper plan?

Ms DENMAN - Yeah, the plans were viewed at the tour this morning.

Ms HARMAN - But there's also full documentation now of the accessibility through the tender documentation.

Ms DENMAN - That's right, yes. That is available. Yes.

CHAIR - That would be very useful for the committee to have, to be able to satisfy itself this is not just a concept, that there is an actual compliance plan.

Ms DENMAN - I have copies. I can actually -

Ms HARMAN - That'll be multiple plans. We are happy to provide, it will be considerable documentation.

Mr WILLIAMS - Yes, always happy to provide that information and we are now at the stage of the detailed drawings which goes into every nut, bolt, access path and the like, that the contractors need to. I didn't put those on the table because I thought they were too much information. Trying to reach the right balance and perhaps, the point of check of compliance sits with the building surveyor. As part of the consulting team, there is a building surveyor involved and that building surveyor has to provide a certificate of likely compliance that the council needs in order to satisfy their requirements. We don't have it yet, it is a work in progress. We have lodged documentation but that has not been finalised yet. From a legality compliance check it is the building surveyor's certificate of likely compliance that is the key part in the planning application.

CHAIR - The width of the ramps will definitely be at least 1200?

Ms DENMAN - We have to maintain an accessible path of travel of one metre under the code, but they may be greater than that throughout the site. Without the plan here, I cannot reference and tell you but they would be varying in size. They may be one metre where we are limited because we are in an existing building. There may be situations where we design within the constraints that sometimes are given to us, but we still must comply with the minimum standards-

CHAIR - Which is one metre and not 1200?

Ms DENMAN - That is my understanding, yes. But without having the documents to reference or specific examples, I would not like to generalise.

Ms HARMAN - That would be reviewed by the building surveyor.

Ms DENMAN - I do know that our external pathways are much wider.

Ms HARMAN - We generally try to exceed those quite considerably because of numbers of students-

CHAIR - That like to walk around together.

Ms BUTLER - Just to be devil's advocate in relation to a surveyor. You are reporting on whether or not the disability access meets standards. Wouldn't that come down to the terms of reference that the surveyor is provided? For example, if it was disability access for certain sections of the school, will the terms of reference be for all learning areas for the school or will the terms of reference given to that surveyor for their reporting purposes be just certain areas of the school?.

Ms HARMAN - The building surveyor has to assess the plans against the National Construction Code.

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Ms BUTLER - But, say it was this building - you do disability access but the term of reference that might be provided is, we are just looking at the lower ground.

Ms HARMAN - If there is over 50% of a building being refurbished, and correct me if I am wrong-

Ms BUTLER - That is the new CBOS legislation.

Ms HARMAN - -then the whole building has to come up to the National Construction Code. The building surveyor can't just look at a small element of the building design and determine on that.

Mr WILLIAMS - It is dependent upon the areas of work, yes.

Ms HARMAN - But it is not our terms of reference. It is compliance that the building surveyor has to-

Ms DENMAN - I would add that we have gone beyond the minimum, to provide a greater extent of accessibility than the legislation requires of us.

Ms BUTLER - But under the CBOS legislation as well, my understanding is that for major works to be conducted in that public space, the whole of that public space has to be accessible - so, that would have to be part of the term of reference. It couldn't just be certain sections of that. Do you think there is going to be enough funding in this budget to be able to meet that standard for the whole site? There are so many areas of it that need that upgrade - do you think you are really going to be able to do that within this budget?

Mr WILLIAMS - That is the plan that we have put forward and that is the plan that we believe.

Ms HARMAN - The department is committed to completing the plan that is on the table.

Ms BUTLER - I am not convinced you are going to be able to meet it, but that is just my own. I am not convinced that you are going to be able to meet those standards on this patchwork budget for this project.

Mr WILLIAMS - We are having a positive outlook to get the best for Montello Primary School.

Ms BUTLER - I really want them to have their upgraded primary school, but I do not believe this budget will cover it.

Ms BURNET - I fully understand the constraints of the site, and you talked about getting to that one metre minimum standard but ideally it is 1,200 that is ideal, by the sounds of it. I wonder how the department looks at issues; and it has clearly come up in some of the submissions that I've looked at, and this is probably not an unusual situation with schools and school builds, but given the gradient of the site, is there a reference group or do you go to ParaQuad or any organisation representing people with disabilities to have input? This is something that came up when I was on the Hobart City Council, you'd have a reference group for access issues into various buildings, and it was a very useful reference group that council

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used. I'm curious to know whether that is something that the department employs; or hearing that lived experience through the consultation and using that, how does that usually work?

Mr WILLIAMS - Certainly, the department has an inclusion and diversity team to help support schools in assisting students, and that's part of the collaboration that we have. We have used for some projects, particularly Southern Support School and Northern Support School, and we will be for the North-West Support School, the Premier's Disability Advisory Council as part of our consultation.

We do engage, not just our team - we open up broader to get views into that and the inclusion and diversity team have been involved through this process -

Ms BURNET - In this project?

Mr WILLIAMS - Yes.

Ms BURNET - Thank you.

CHAIR - Right. Any further questions? You haven't made a comment since we heard the evidence from Ms Bugg. Is there anything that you'd like to add, Dion, before we wind the committee up to deliberate?

Mr McCALL - I'll just say that obviously, Ms Bugg is very passionate, and -

CHAIR - We certainly gained that.

Mr McCALL - As you can probably imagine, I've had quite a few meetings with her over this period of time that her son has been enrolled, not just about disability access issues, but about a lot of educational issues. The thing that she keeps coming back to me is that from the word go, as soon as this was announced, she was of the opinion that it wouldn't be enough money to meet the Disability Code, and at that point in time it was \$7 million. And she felt that it needed to be a lot more. And I feel she's made that known to people within the department and politicians and the media. I don't think any of that is new information that's been brought up today; this has been on the public record for quite a significant amount of time.

CHAIR - And your view is that with the additional funds that have been allocated and the plans that the committee has before it, that there will be adequate funds to meet those disability requirements at Montello Primary School, while building a contemporary learning space for your students?

Mr McCALL - Well, I guess the plan that's been put forward, I've been led to believe meets the Disability Standard Code and that I feel that most of the budget we've used has been put in that direction to make sure that it gets there. Where I'm sitting is that the difference between \$7 million and \$9 million, I don't think is significant. I suppose the people who have been advocating to me saying there should be more money weren't talking about the difference between \$7 million and \$9 million, I think they're talking about quite a bit more. I feel that at the end of this project, there's still going to be quite a bit of pressure from the community asking for Montello redevelopment stage two.

CHAIR - Thank you and we appreciate your honesty in that response.

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Mr WILLIAMS - Excuse me, Chair. If I may, there were a couple of matters that you sought further clarification on, if you would like for us to provide those now?

CHAIR - Thank you.

Mr WILLIAMS - One of those was about the release of the capital submission - the capital priority rankings. I'm advised that 2016 was the first time the department released the school priority rankings. That was the first one and we have some information on the size of the lift.

Ms HARMON - The lift car currently is 1100 wide x 1400 deep and that's the clear to hand rails and any obstruction and 2200 millimetres high.

CHAIR - Thank you. Appreciate that.

Ms HARMAN - The 7.5 of the construction budget per the submission would be \$645,000 of the \$8.6 million in the construction budget.

Ms BURNETT - Can you say that again.

Ms HARMAN - The \$645,000 is 7.5 per cent.

Mr WILLIAMS - Is the construction contingency allocation in the figure that we didn't provide further information on?

Ms HARMAN - I think probably we do change it from time to time, on reflection. it's probably because we had tendered the project at the time. Noting that becomes a public document we don't want to overshare with our contractors.

CHAIR - It is a fine line between what you share and what you don't.

Ms HARMAN - It is a fine line, yes.

CHAIR - From this committee's perspective, that's for sure. Anything else to add Todd?

Mr WILLIAMS - I hope that answers all the questions. You will give us clarity on anything that's outstanding?

CHAIR - The sooner the answers come back, the timelier the decision will be. But you're already aware of that.

These are the magic questions and I have to ask these and happy for everyone to answer or somebody that you nominate.

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

Mr WILLIAMS - Yes, I believe so.

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

Mr WILLIAMS - Yes, I believe so.

CHAIR - Are the proposed works fit for purpose?

Mr WILLIAMS - I'll continue, and yes, I believe so.

CHAIR - Do the proposed works provide value for money?

Mr WILLIAMS - Yes, we've gone through a considerable process to get to this point and propose the priorities that are presented today. Yes, I believe so.

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

Mr WILLIAMS - Yes.

CHAIR - Thank you for answering those questions. Now to the statement after the evidence.

As I've tried to already advise you at the commencement of your evidence, what you said to us here today is protected by parliamentary privilege. Once you leave the table, you are aware that privilege does not attach to those comments that you make to anyone, including our friends from the media, even if it's just repeating what you have said to us.

Do you understand?

Witnesses - Yes.

CHAIR - Thank you very much, we shall conclude our hearing for today.

Thank you very much to everyone, particularly our friend in the corner over there who's been very patient. We hope this process has given you some insight to how the works for working through the committee and how we undertake our work when we're assessing a project. Thank you all.

The witnesses withdrew.

The Committee adjourned at 5.18 p.m.