

# PUBLIC

## THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS MET AT PARLIAMENT HOUSE, HOBART, ON THURSDAY 14 NOVEMBER 2024.

### HOBART HIGH SCHOOL - MAJOR REDEVELOPMENT

**The Committee met at 2.00 p.m.**

**CHAIR** (Ms Rattray) - Thank you very much and welcome everyone here. Before we commence the hearing, I'd like to introduce the members of the committee. We have Dean Harriss on my right and Simon Wood on my left and Tania Rattray as the Chair. We also have apologies from Helen Burnet and Jen Butler today who are both unwell; we wish them a speedy recovery.

While I also have a moment, I'd like to acknowledge, as part of the hearings today as an observer, the former member for Hobart, the Honourable Rob Valentine. It is lovely to see you, Rob. We also have Mr President with us as well. It's a big day for this committee.

Secretary, please read out the message from Her Excellency the Governor in Council referring the project to the committee for inquiry.

Pursuant to section 16(2) of the *Public Works Committee Act 1914* the Governor refers the undermentioned proposed public works to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works to consider and report thereon.

Pursuant to section 16(3) of the act, the estimated cost of such work being completed is \$19.6 million.

This project provides the redevelopment at Hobart City High School.

**CHAIR** - Thank you very much. The committee is in receipt of two submissions and they are from the Department for Education, Children and Young People and the Honourable John Barker, President, Newtown High and Tech Old Scholars Association. Can I ask a member to move the motion that the submissions be received, taken into evidence and published?

**Motion agreed to.**

The first witnesses we have appearing before the committee today are representing the proponent, the Department for Education, Children and Young People. Could I ask each of you to please state your name, your position and organisation, and then make the statutory declaration. There is no longer a need to stand for any of those. So please, thank you.

**Mr KANE SALTER**, DEPUTY SECRETARY, BUSINESS OPERATIONS AND SUPPORT, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE; **Mr TODD WILLIAMS**, DIRECTOR, FACILITY SERVICES, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE; **Ms BRITANY ROESTENBURG** LEAD PRICIPAL, HOBART CITY HIGH SCHOOL AND **Mr MARINO ROSSI**, ARCHITECHURAL CONSULTANT, THOMSON ROSSI WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED

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Thank you. For those who have been to these committee hearings previously, you'll know that there's a statement that needs to be read before the committee commences its work.

Thank you for appearing before the committee and the committee is pleased to hear your evidence today. Before we begin giving evidence, I'd like to inform you of some of the aspects of committee proceedings.

A committee hearing is a proceeding in parliament and this means it receives the protection of parliamentary privilege and important legal protection that allows individuals giving evidence to a parliamentary committee to speak with complete freedom without fear of being sued or questioned in any court or place out of parliament and it implies to ensure that parliament receives the very best information when conducting its inquiries.

It's also important to be aware that this protection is not afforded to you if the statements that may be defamatory are repeated or referred to by you outside the confines of the parliamentary proceedings. As I said, this is a public hearing and members of the public, even journalists, may be present and this means your evidence may be reported. Do you understand?

**WITNESSES** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - Thank you very much. I'm not sure who is going to take the lead. Mr Salter, it may well be you?

**Mr SALTER** - I'll give a short introduction.

**CHAIR** - Opening statement, and then we'll launch into the proposal the submission as proper. Thank you.

**Mr SALTER** - Thank you. I thank the committee for the opportunity today to seek approval to proceed with the major development of the Hobart City High School. It was a pleasure to be able to do the tour today with some students sharing their voice and positivity about the project.

**CHAIR** - That was very much appreciated. So thank them, they did a great job.

**Mr SALTER** - Yes, and also a pleasure to do it with the former student as well, Mr Hennessy.

**CHAIR** - On the honour board, I believe.

**Mr SALTER** - I hope the committee got value out of the tour and the 3D visual tour as well. We appreciate the committee for allowing us to tender at the same time as seeking approval through the committee so that we -

**CHAIR** - We didn't have any choice.

**Mr SALTER** - Respectfully -

**CHAIR** - You did advise, you did advise.

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**Mr SALTER** - We always seek approval to do that and we appreciate the committee approving that. We hope through the submission and what you've seen today that the consultation and design process will see the key priorities delivered for the school, the school association and the students. We look forward to your further questions in the committee today, thank you.

**CHAIR** - Thank you very much. Our usual process is to start on page 1 or 3, as it is in this submission. There's just a little bit of history about the school itself. I'll ask if there are any questions around the actual history. It might be useful to put on the public record just how we've arrived at this particular, I suppose, school campus given that it's a fairly new arrangement. Can we have someone put that on the record? As in, it's come from a 'boys only' school to a co-ed school.

**Ms ROESTENBURG** - As a result of community consultation, the community wanted a co-ed option in public education for Hobart families. Previously, students were travelling down to Taroona whereas the single sex options they found limiting. So the imagining of Hobart City High came from that community consultation which began in 2021. In 2022, it was co-ed year 7 and single sex year 8 to 10 girls on the Ogilvie campus; and year 8 to 10 boys on the New Town campus. In 2023, we transitioned to being fully co-ed year 7 to 10, and Big Picture with our year 11 and 12 students.

**CHAIR** - We also heard this morning that the plans for the proposal are around the Hobart High New Town campus being a school of choice. Could you finish that sentence for me? Thank you.

**Ms ROESTENBURG** - Yes, certainly. The school of choice for Hobart families. Obviously, we want that choice. A large number of those families currently choose to go to private schools and they've requested a co-ed option. So really promoting that being the school of choice for Hobart families in line with the enrolment policy and the zoning.

**CHAIR** - Thank you. Any other questions in regard to the history, members?

We'll move over to the second item, which is the school community and connections. Are there any questions around that? It's certainly a wide range of curriculum offerings there - English, math, science, humanities, social sciences, health and physical education, technologies, arts, languages, and vocational training. Is there anything else that the school offers that isn't listed on that list around those community connections opportunities that's available?

**Ms ROESTENBURG** - They cover the broad range of the curriculum areas; the only addition, potentially, is the parallel pathway of a Big Picture Academy for year 9 to 12 as well.

**CHAIR** - Moving on. Teaching and learning framework - I don't have any questions around that.

Number 4 is the student enrolment demand and school capacity. From the information received, it talks about the proposed works will reduce this capacity from 850 to 800 students, with the overall capacity of the Hobart City High School following these works as 1700 - 800 at New Town and 900 at Ogilvie. Yet, when I asked this morning, I wrote down a different answer. I wrote down current student numbers were 1000.

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**Ms ROESTENBURG** - Approximately 1000.

**Mr SALTER** - So I think that 1700 is the capacity, and the 2025 projection is 1160 and the 2026 projection is 1126.

**CHAIR** - Right, and the five-year projection is 1400, is that correct?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - We haven't included those longer-term projections because it's very unclear, given what we're currently doing. On page 6 we have a history and a projection for 2025-26. Really challenging to project that far out at the moment. The school is managing its enrolments due to the construction program that we're doing. I think we'll find out the true results in a couple of years once we've made our way through what's going to be - obviously, a construction process is challenging. So, there's a deliberate management arrangement for that while we work our way through it.

**CHAIR** - Does that cause any issues with the feeder schools? I note they are Bowen Road, Campbell Street, Goulburn Street, Lansdowne Crescent, Lenah Valley, Moonah, Mt Stuart and New Town, all primary schools, obviously. As the feeder schools, does that cause any issue around those students using the Hobart City High campus as a school of choice?

**Ms ROESTENBURG** - No, we currently take all students from our feeder primary schools and we have the capacity to. So, if all 100 per cent wanted to come, we could cater for them within those numbers and that's where we're aiming to be.

**CHAIR** - Any further questions? I don't want to be asking all the questions. Project selection, and this is possibly a fair question to ask. It's an election commitment from 2021, but was this infrastructure upgrade on the priority list prior to the election commitment? I'm keen to understand that.

**Mr SALTER** - Yes. As we've outlined in the submission, it was in the priorities submitted to government. Then, during the election process, the government committed to \$20 million for, I suppose, the first stage of overall master plan. So, it did flow from a budget priority.

**CHAIR** - Is there a list that's available, a priority list of schools? It may not be relevant, particularly to this reference, but for the committee's further information.

**Mr SALTER** - On an annual basis we publish the priority one list of schools and schools get to see that. That's an available document that we can provide to the committee.

**CHAIR** - Right, and that changes annually?

**Mr SALTER** - Correct, yes.

**CHAIR** - It's interesting because I would have thought a priority list would have kept on going up the list. As somebody went off, you would just keep climbing up. But it doesn't actually work like that.

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**Mr SALTER** - To a large extent, that is correct. When I say the list changes, that is as projects are funded then those projects go up and there might be on occasion some that the change priority -

**CHAIR** - That leapfrog?

**Mr SALTER** - The published document has priority one schools. We don't rank them in terms of 1 to 20. So there might be 20 schools you'll see those as priority one. Then you'll see the priority two schools and then priority three.

**CHAIR** - There's no actual ranking for a school. It's just you're in a section, if you like, priority one, priority two, priority three, and so forth.

**Mr SALTER** - In the public document it's just categorised as one, two, or three.

**Mr HARRISS** - Just on that, the second paragraph has 'school capital works proposals are received annually and evaluated for feasibility ...'. Who puts the proposal forward? The schools, do they? Are they required to do that as part of their - I'm wondering about that process. So you have a list of identified category one, two, and three, but what do you then require schools to do?

**Mr SALTER** - I'll start, then Todd might want to add in. It's a two-way process where we hold a range of condition data for schools, capacity data. So, that conditioned data in conjunction with schools providing submissions on an annual basis, and sometimes those submissions might roll over from one year to the next - that range of information together is part of the package to inform the priority one, two, and three.

Todd, do you want to add more?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - I think the key part there is, schools are best placed to talk about their needs. Yes, we hold building information, but the schools are best posed to talk about their needs and their direction. The two come together annually. Then there's a process of assessment and prioritisation annually, and a submission to government annually.

**CHAIR** - Are they rated, like capacity over access to contemporary learning, that type of arrangement? I have a school in my electorate, Perth Primary school that's oversubscribed. They were recently having a class, virtually, in a garden shed out the back. Is there a rating for each of the aspects?

**Mr SALTER** - There is a weighted criteria that they are considered on, yes, with high weightings for both condition and capacity.

**CHAIR** - Right. Because this one's only at 63 per cent occupancy, with a potential increase. We might not be able to quantify that for another couple of years given the new arrangements. So, that wouldn't have had a heavy rating on this proposal?

**Mr SALTER** - Correct.

**CHAIR** - Right. It would have been the lack of contemporary learning space that would have been identified as a higher need?

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**Mr SALTER** - That combined with the government priority in terms of bringing the new school together. So, those conditions and the school coming together -

**Mr WILLIAMS** - And building condition would come into that as well.

**CHAIR** - Yes, that good hardwood, we saw that.

**Mr SALTER** - Good hardwood. We love hardwood.

**CHAIR** - Good, sturdy hardwood. I think Hon John Barker would agree, good sturdy hardwood.

Moving over to the project selection. We've talked about that somewhat already. Are there any further questions in regard to that?

I did ask prior to the hearing about the allocation of funding. There's already been, I understand, some money spent, but not out of this project money at the school to make it fit for purpose, if you like. Is that correct?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - Yes, that's correct. There were some enabling works that have been done to support the transition to the co-education school. In our submission we show where that expenditure is included on page 15. Those enabling works were necessary to allow the co-education to commence.

**CHAIR** - That was the \$2.39 million?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - That is correct.

**CHAIR** - Has that been fully expended?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - Yes, I believe so.

**Mr HARRISS** - And that was aware at the time that 21.6 was committed to - that was allocated in that - as in it wasn't above that?

**Mr SALTER** - Yes, it was a component of that original allocation.

**CHAIR** - But this has had to have an additional \$1.5 million to deliver the core needs of the project.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - Correct.

**CHAIR** - We will get to page 15. Sometimes they overlap a little bit.

**Mr WOOD** - I'd like to like to hear, for the record, a little bit about the logic with the way that the teaching environment has changed now and why the need for these works. I know we've touched on it a little bit. But it was pretty plain to see today that it's a very divisive, if you want - or segmented is probably a better word - in its layout and in part 6 here, it's mentioned that they don't offer a warm, welcoming environment. Obviously, it's very important

for children to feel safe and welcomed and comfortable in their school, they spend so much time there. I wonder if we could have a little bit of detail on that.

**CHAIR** - That might be Marino's. I think it's your time to shine.

**Mr ROSSI** - There's a lot of published research internationally as well as nationally that supports the evidence around the importance of the learning environment to actually achieving academic results, but also importantly wellbeing for students. The idea here is that - this is a significant investment in student wellbeing and academic excellence. The idea here is, we are looking to remodel what you've correctly identified as a very rigid, structural building to provide more flexible space.

**CHAIR** - With historic values?

**Mr ROSSI** - Correct, there's a lot of heritage around the school. There's a lot of, as you would have read in the preceding pages, a lot of academic excellence associated with the school when it ran as an all-male facility. And, with the conversion to co-ed, the possibility to extend that excellence into the future is very important. Particularly when you change from single-sex to co-ed, it's significant change in school history. The issue that comes with that is providing appropriate spaces for both male and female students. Things like changing the provision of toilets but also spaces where that support socialisation between male and female students is important as well.

**CHAIR** - Any additional questions around that? Thank you. That leads into the design of the redevelopment. Would you like to make a comment around - I mean, you just talked about the needs of the school. Is that really the architect behind what's been presented to us today?

**Mr ROSSI** - No, I wouldn't say we were leading that. A lot of our works are in response to the feedback that's come back through the community consultation. There was quite a significant community survey that was undertaken, which I think is in the appendix.

**CHAIR** - It certainly is.

**Mr ROSSI** - So that's the starting point. The other issue was that we undertook a number of workshops with staff, and the leadership team who have very been instrumental in driving a lot of the agenda. A lot of the change, in terms of identifying things like wellbeing, student agency - and when we say student agency, we're talking about the ability for students to take responsibility for their own learning, if they're able to, to undertake self-directed learning. Now, for that to happen, you need more than just the traditional box classroom where you have to sit at a desk and look at the front. So, allowing that possibility to then allow the school to run other curriculum advancements, things like STEM, et cetera.

A lot of change globally around the programs that are running within school don't within traditional one-size-fits-all approach, which is what the school was originally designed to be. So, you'll have students that fall outside those parameters and what we've responded to as the designers, is understanding what the school wants to do, the community, then providing the suite of spaces to allow that to happen.

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**CHAIR** - Can I have some comment around the Big Picture? In the comments that were provided, it talks about, they see some issues with the proposed Big Picture space. Were they addressed? The issues that were identified by the input from staff and students in the design.

**Ms ROESTENBURG** - The Big Picture was previously located on the Ogilvie campus and has moved across to the New Town campus -

**CHAIR** - So, there's no Big Picture now?

**Ms ROESTENBURG** - Yes. They're co-located on the New Town campus. We have 90 students in Big Picture years 9 to 12. This aligns with their learning design and some of these new spaces. A lot of those issues have been addressed, yes.

**CHAIR** - Right. But, it is on the second-floor, Big Picture?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - Sorry, Tania, did you pick that up in the consultation feedback?

**CHAIR** - Yes.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - I believe we responded to that comment and accommodated, and I understand that it's all working well where they are.

**Ms ROESTENBURG** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - So, those comments are not necessarily relevant to what's been put forward?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - Relevant at the time, but were subsequently -

**CHAIR** - But it's completely out of date?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - It's a little bit out of date.

**CHAIR** - Maybe a summary would be helpful next time. Otherwise I've read all that for no reason, if you don't mind. My time is like yours - pretty valuable so, thank you.

We're on to the proposed works. We did hear from the students this morning and I've acknowledged that they presented very well, so please pass that back on to them, I said they all get gold stars this week.

An integrated learning heart, a social heart-centred, improved courtyard, connected campus, improved science and art, moving the canteen to give internal and courtyard dining opportunities, better distributed student bathrooms, and bringing staff offices for collaboration together. That's the basis of what's been proposed here?

**Mr ROSSI** - They're the essential improvements, yes.

**CHAIR** - Yes, building on previous works that were completed in 2022.



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**Mr WOOD** - There was some mention this morning about the accessibility and the distances that students have to traverse in the current layout. Obviously, this plan addresses that and will - perhaps a bit of comment?

**Mr ROSSI** - The original traditional courtyard layout of the school was very much centred around corridors being the primary means of access and you would have seen in the site tour today that they are quite long, direct means of access. What the transformation will do is include new internal access points throughout both the ground and first floor level that effectively reduces the travel distance.

It's not just an issue about travel distance. It's also about seeing every step as a learning opportunity. So, the ability for one student to traverse from one space to another, it's what they see along that journey, seeing learning on display, feeling safe as they move through spaces. You would have got a sense that it's quite restricted, dark, claustrophobic in a sense - really breaking those barriers down, so students and staff can move through very open, visually connected spaces. Then they feel invested in the space, feel like they want to be there and, ultimately, the whole purpose of this redevelopment is to really improve their engagement in the learning process. The more enjoyable that process is, the better applied they will be and the better the results will be.

**CHAIR** - It indicates here that with an additional \$1.5 million from DECYP, funding the proposed design fits within the allocated budget project. Prior to that, it says the new structure above the science area has been reduced. So, has it been reduced, but then the extra \$1.5 million - actually, it says, proposed fits within the allocated project budget. I'm not quite sure of the meaning of that.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - Through the design process, we had some challenges to fit within the required budget and that took a little while to work through. There have been adjustments to that design as we've moved through. To fulfil the design that's presented to the committee today does require the additional \$1.5 million.

**CHAIR** - So, has the science area been reduced or not?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - There's still some minor adjustments to the science area, but not the full extent that we had originally hoped to do.

**CHAIR** - Right, so the extra \$1.5 million is effectively being put in to facilitate the science area.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - No, it's to facilitate the design that we presented.

**CHAIR** - Without the reduced science area, or with the reduced science area? That's what I am trying to clarify.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - With the reduced science area, yes. If I may, the core elements of infilling that courtyard and providing the contemporary connected learning areas through, what I'll call a barren space, they're all still being delivered within the funding. Yes, it was necessary to inject a little bit more money, \$1.5 million, to deliver all of those things. Through that process, science was reduced a little, yes.

**Mr HARRISS** - When we talk about the contemporary learning spaces and the open learning spaces, and the big sliding doors and glass doors and that - I suppose, when it comes to budget, and we spoke about weightings before, where does that come into it? For instance, we're talking about a science lab there, and maybe shrinking that to possibly accommodate some contemporary learning. I wonder how that sits into the overall build, as opposed to what we could do with 'X' amount of money and using that architectural contemporary build, which obviously chews up money but is -

**Mr WILLIAMS** - Yes, that's part of the process to work through. We always try to deliver as much as we can to get the most benefit that we can. Then, there's a budgetary check as we work through. The project working group that has the consulting team and project manager and the school involved, then work through that process of determining priorities and doing a value management assessment process, which we do through every project to land on a package that we believe delivers the best outcome within the money that we have to achieve the best results.

**CHAIR** - The follow-on question then, is the reduced science area going to be fit for purpose, considering that there's possibly going to be expanded student numbers in the future because it's going to be a school of choice for those Hobart students and families? Is that the best use - reducing the science area or having more breakout contemporary learning spaces?

**Ms ROESTENBURG** - The modelling of the science has been based around maximum numbers. Everything we've done is about futureproofing the school. It provides three contemporary labs with the gas and the facilities that are required, and that fits within the timetable of that maximum amount of students.

So, while there may be things happening in science, they don't necessarily need to be in a heart lab. They still have access to classrooms where they may be doing theory and things like that. So, it has been futureproofed and the facilities that are planned and the upgrades to the science there, well and truly fit within the capacity of the school.

**CHAIR** - I'm just thinking about all those budding scientists who say, 'You should have made it bigger'.

**Ms ROESTENBURG** - Part of the change to the design, in what's termed the reduction of the science, is whether the science lab is moved or not. But they very much become a part of the heart of the school, which is a critical part of the future of our school based around STEM.

**Mr SALTER** - Perhaps to emphasise, Todd outlined that we spend the time at the front end of projects to understand the priorities. That enables those to be worked through. We wouldn't be making an option that compromised a key aspect of the school.

**CHAIR** - One of my favourite parts of any proposal is around reuse of existing buildings and materials, because I'm a hoarder. I'm interested in what's proposed for the reuse of buildings and materials.

**Mr ROSSI** - Sure. Most of the demolition work, if you like, revolves around some of these existing brickwork fabric, particularly to the courtyards. We are looking to reuse, salvage, and clean-up existing bricks, which will then be used to create the new planter boxes in the

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courtyards. So, where possible, we are reinstituting the brickwork, retaining that as much as possible. We've looked at working with the heritage adviser and retaining as much of the timber panelling in the existing areas as possible and maintaining that integrity. Where any panelling or doors need to be removed, they'll be salvage and stored. So, a lot of that focuses around both the external fabric and some of the internal fitness that'll be retained.

**CHAIR** - That includes the coloured outdoor furniture that's in there?

**Mr ROSSI** - Yes, correct.

**Ms ROESTENBURG** - Probably repurposed, yes.

**CHAIR** - Isn't cleaning old bricks quite labour intensive? I wonder if it's - I mean, it may well help the aesthetics of the building, but is it value for money?

**Mr ROSSI** - Correct, it is labour intensive because it's brick by brick, but we think, in this instance, the extent of it is not at a point where it's going to become exorbitantly expensive. We think the value gained in reintegrating the brickwork in a tactile element, which is the planter box in the courtyards, it's visually accessible, it's tactile, it's part of the student environment. We think it's a good way of reinforcing the whole global idea of recycling, which is what kids are getting to understand in the world today, and the importance of it.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - Also, good skills for young tradespeople to learn along the way to do recycling.

**CHAIR** - It might put them off, if you don't mind. If that's what they do for a week, they'll probably say, 'I'm out of here'. Chipping off old cement from bricks for a week. Anyway, I'll leave that to the builders.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - Sustainable rather than wasteful.

**Mr WOOD** - I had something on that. The school has a significant historical value. It's on the Heritage Register, I believe. Is it fair to say, then, that all these works, or the majority of them, are internal? Not necessarily to the aesthetics of the exterior of the building? It is preserving that exterior that is so significant.

**Mr ROSSI** - That is correct. The other point to add to that is the internal lantern skylight, which you would have seen in the presentation this morning, the roof line of that doesn't exceed the roof line of the frowning tiled roof. Again, it's about keeping the scale within the existing building and not undermining the silhouette of the building as it currently stands.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - If I may.

**CHAIR** - Always.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - Thank you, Chair. Absolutely, we've engaged throughout with Heritage Tasmania. We're very respectful of honouring the heritage and we do that with their advice and guidance along the way.

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**CHAIR** - I'm pretty sure I know the answer to this, but in the dot-point energy efficiency, that's only because the building materials that you're using inside don't have any solar options, is that correct?

**Mr ROSSI** - There's currently solar provision on site. I believe there's a solar system on site.

**CHAIR** - There is a solar system? Will that be enhanced? Because it's not a normal part of DECYP builds, is it?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - Well, there's a separate government program that we're rolling out solar in schools. I'm advised we have a 90 kW system on New Town campus, which is a good sized system. I don't believe there are plans to expand it, apart from to continue to get the benefit of a 90 kW system.

**CHAIR** - My perennial question is around the maintenance of any timber. Is there any external timber clad on this?

**Mr ROSSI** - No.

**CHAIR** - So we don't have to worry about the harsh Tasmanian winters undermining the integrity of the timber. Wonderful.

**Mr ROSSI** - That's correct.

**CHAIR** - Another key area is the Tasmanian government Art Site Scheme. I'm always interested in what's planned. I know there are some initial plans. If we could have that on the public record that would be really helpful.

**Ms ROESTENBURG** - We're looking towards murals to enhance the entrance to the school and to integrate with the hall of flags, drawing on three key themes. We're obviously going out to artists for tender, but around the traditions and history of the school, the coming together, the co-ed, and then drawing on our four new houses to bring in that aspect of the house culture and the elements of those four houses.

**CHAIR** - Have we already put out any interest to the -

**Ms ROESTENBURG** - No, it hasn't gone out yet. We are still working with State Growth on that.

**CHAIR** - It's always good to give local artists an opportunity to display their expertise, but I'm sure that's well under consideration.

**Ms ROESTENBURG** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - Will that school association be part of that. It's good to hear. It's an opportunity for them to be involved directly.

**Ms ROESTENBURG** - Yes.

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**CHAIR** - Perhaps those young leaders as well that we met this morning. Any other questions? We have already touched on community consultation. Given that it has been some time since the initial consultation, was there any follow up with the community around the final design? I'm assuming that what is presented is the final design.

**Ms ROESTENBURG** - Yes. There's been lots of ongoing conversations at every public gathering and things. We've been sharing the fly-through video and updates around what's being proposed and where that's at through newsletters and -

**CHAIR** - Probably you aren't going to share, but was there any negative comments that were received where we didn't get what we really wanted?

**Ms ROESTENBURG** - Not at all. Everyone's been really supportive. The feeder primary schools are very excited about the prospect of what they might be coming to.

**CHAIR** - I know someone who works at Bowen Primary, very good primary and some students heading there.

I know there's a question around project management. We can do that question here on 11, or we can - well, it's all-encompassing on 11. If you'd like to lead off there, Mr Harriss.

**Mr HARRISS** - I've probably got this one original around - and I probably could have done this back further, Chair.

The initial \$21.6 million budget was 2021-22 state budget. Was it? There's been a fair rise in construction costs since then. When was the planning done? Did that shrink the original build capacity with budget constraints since it was announced?

**Mr SALTER** - Your question is clear. The government, as part of their election commitment, announced an amount of money. At that stage it wasn't defined exactly what that would deliver. It was saying, 'Take that, look at the priorities that have come through the community consultation process and see what can be delivered within that funding envelope'.

**CHAIR** - The construction contingency, my maths - and I got some help from my colleague next to me - is around 11 per cent. Is that what we'd expect to see?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - At this stage, yes. We've come a long way in progressing documentation and being prepared to tender, so we're comfortable and confident with the documentation that we're releasing to the market, which is important.

The nature of the work is such that there is demolition involved, and you never know quite what you're going to find and some surprises. But at this stage, where we're progressed and sitting, we're comfortable with that amount, adding that we have done robust infrastructure assessments throughout this project to give ourselves comfort in the works that we need to do.

**CHAIR** - In the statutory fees - that doesn't seem like a lot of - what do they consist of? If there's no external work, I'm interested in what the statutory fees are for this proposal.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - Our approval is on the way through. It's planning approvals and our building approvals.

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**CHAIR** - If there's no major structural work on the outside, there's no -

**Mr WILLIAMS** - We still require our local government planning approvals to proceed with the works.

**CHAIR** - But they don't add up to \$200,000. I'd expect - do they add up to \$200,000?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - I'd have to get more detail on that, if you would like me to.

**CHAIR** - Yes. If that is available. It seemed a lot for when there is not actually any building. We are still using the same footprint, if you like.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - There is still structural work. As soon as there is structural work undertaken that triggers a development DA.

**CHAIR** - You have to have a DA. I overheard that was \$32,000. And that takes a bit to get up to \$200,000. It would be interesting for the committee's information. The committee is happy to write.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - We can get that for you, shortly.

**CHAIR** - We have a question around the project management.

**Mr HARRISS** - The DECYP project management - \$410,000. That seems high to me. I am also interested in how that washes out in a budget respect, in the fact that it is part of this project - part of the \$20.7 million. That would be in-house, though. Is that right - as in wages, and whatever that I suspect are already covered in a yearly salary? No?

**Mr SALTER** - They are in-house staff but they are not covered through recurrent appropriation. They are covered through the projects that we get allocated.

**Mr HARRISS** - As I said, that \$410,000 to me seems a bit of money. Who decides that through DECYP, I suppose, from a budget point of view. Is that DECYP internally going, 'Our project management is going to cost X. We will use it out of the \$20.7 million'?

**Mr SALTER** - Across all the capital projects, we factor in a percentage to support the project management fees for the internal staff. That funds a range of project managers in Todd's facilities team.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - Every project has a least one specific project officer or project manager. There is project support staff and procurement staff that assist throughout the whole project, and there are facilities operations staff who then have to inherit the facilities and support the school in the management of the facilities.

**Mr HARRISS** - How does that money, from a budgetary point of view, come back into DECYP?

**Mr SALTER** - It's part of the capital appropriation that gets drawn down on an annual basis to support the range of project managers across each of the individual projects.

**Mr HARRISS** - Okay. And that \$410,000, is that somewhat standard - 2.7 per cent?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - My understanding is that an industry standard is somewhere between 2 per cent and 5 per cent for project management at the cost of the project. So we apply a percentage on every project allocation.

**Mr HARRISS** - The consultant fees of \$2.6 million, they would have some project management in it as well, or not?

**Mr SALTER** - There is certainly an element of assisting.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - In terms of contract administration, yes. From a project administration perspective, there is a project manager in my team, the DECYP team, basically the connection between the school and the consultant to make sure that we are bringing the two together to achieve the project outcome.

**CHAIR** - When you indicated that there is some procurement that is undertaken by the project management team, what sort of, things would the procurement include? Is that like funding the chairs and tables? What does that include? Obviously the construction cost and whoever who has been awarded the tender would be getting all of the materials required. I expect they're going to be doing their own procurement. What sort of procurement is undertaken by the project management team?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - It's supporting the release of the tender documentation for the tender release to go through. There's a lot of work in documentation to prepare and there are government processes that we're required to adhere to. We have to -

**CHAIR** - Like Buy Tasmania policy first if possible.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - All those things. So, yes, there's an internal procurement review committee. The tender processes are evaluated. There's an evaluation report produced that goes through all of that, the criteria including local content. Then the department has a procurement review committee whose role is to satisfy that we adhere to the Treasurer's instructions and government policy. In addition to that, there may well be other procurements that are associated. Furniture does come into play, procurement furnitures at times, depending upon how we wish to manage that and procure that. Most projects have support from the procurement team to help achieve that.

**Mr SALTER** - But that project management cost is effectively the project manager.

**CHAIR** - Project management cost - the 410,000?

**Mr SALTER** - Yes. So, the bulk of that is the internal staff project manager.

**CHAIR** - The one person with people assisting?

**Mr SALTER** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - All right. School administration support: is that provided to the school for

additional work that might need to be undertaken by the administration staff?

**Mr SALTER** - Yes, exactly. It seeks to recognise that, particularly where it's built on an existing site, there's a range of coordination work that has to occur and this is seeking to provide the school with some capacity to manage that.

**CHAIR** - Possibly employ a point 5 of somebody to assist or additional hours to work with.

A really important question, because some of us have been here far too long; I think that might be me, where we've seen some significant overruns - significant. I'm not talking one million or two, I'm talking millions. Is this a realistic budget for what we were shown through the 3D and then those significant spaces today? Of course, most of us are still living through the new Brighton School build, so that's something that stays with us. Can I have some understanding that you're very confident you're not going to put your job on the line, but -

**Mr SALTER** - No, I wasn't going that far, but I'm equally invested in making sure that we deliver the project within the funds available. The the project team get periodic QS updates. I think, as Todd alluded to, there's been significant investment in understanding the infrastructure needs, which sometimes can be a cost that catches up with you, but a significant time in looking at those infrastructure elements. We're as confident as we can be going into the tender process, and we understand that it's a reasonable time to go to the market. We're engaging with contractors to get a general understanding of how they're placed. So we go in with a good level of confidence, without putting my job on the line, as to what the tender result will be.

**CHAIR** - Is there any aspect of the redevelopment that could be pared back in some way? I don't mean leaving the paint off the walls. We had a former member who used to always ask, 'Is it the Rolls Royce model or is it the Commodore model of facilities'? Can you give me some understanding if there is a shortfall, what could be pared back, just in the way of more aesthetics than the actual build type of arrangement?

**Mr SALTER** - Well, firstly I would say that's why we've got the construction contingency there to give us some flexibility before having to look at reprioritisation. In terms of references to the gold plated, we're looking to maximise the outcomes for the students, not the most aesthetically pleasing high-end materials, but something that's quality and lasts time. It is no use going into cheap end either. If a very high tender result came in then -

**CHAIR** - You might have to go back to the original proposal.

**Mr SALTER** - I am just going to wait for Todd -

**CHAIR** - That was a really important question about meeting the budget.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - My apologies.

**CHAIR** - No, no, I know you're taking other advice.

**Mr SALTER** - I've just highlighted, Todd, that's exactly why we've got the construction contingency there at a healthy level to give us some flexibility if the tender result



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came in materially higher than the process we would go through. If you can describe for us -

**Mr WILLIAMS** - Certainly we would reconvene the project working group to discuss that result and consider what that means. What I would say is, I think we are well placed to enter the market from everything that we're being advised at the moment. The documentation that we have, we're very comfortable in releasing to the market, which reduces our risk in terms of ambiguity for builders to price. We are very comfortable. It's certainly by no means a Rolls Royce outcome that we're achieving. I'm very optimistic that we won't have to do a value for management process given that we've come this far. Should we have to do that, that would be part of the project working group's deliberations and we would get advice from the consulting team on what options we had to work that through. The school would be front and centre in those discussions.

**Ms ROESTENBURG** - There are already some areas that are identified that potentially may not get redevelopment. The professional support hub that we spoke about is one of those areas.

**CHAIR** - If the professional support hub - could you remind us what that -

**Ms ROESTENBURG** - So, yes, opposite the canteen. That is one of the areas that is identified, in worst case -

**CHAIR** - It may not receive what's proposed in here?

**Mr ROSSI** - Well, in the worst-case scenario it would just stay as it is because it's currently functioning in that location anyway. So, we did worst case under the provision at the moment, we would be refurbishing and making it much more contemporary and a higher quality space for the important tasks associated with student counselling and wellbeing.

**CHAIR** - Any further questions, members?

The project timeline - is the project timeline looking like it's meeting all the objectives on page 17?

**Mr SALTER** - Looking to have the majority of the construction complete by the end of 2025, should we get the committee's approval to proceed. The 2026 timeline is in line with the original budget which had the completion year as 2026.

**CHAIR** - Is that turnaround time from the tenders being advertised Saturday last to be a contractor appointed January and then work commence February? Is that realistic? I don't know if you have tried to get a builder of late. Perhaps the big ones are a lot different than the smaller ones who might be doing renos on kitchens or bathrooms or whatever. Gosh, you usually have to line up for a very long time.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - We certainly advise through the Future Opportunities website to advise builders of what we're doing and when we're doing it and when we're releasing things. So they're aware all the time of what we're doing. And yes, we know that there are key players that have been waiting for this tender to come out.

Then our role is to evaluate the tenders to the assessment and get it through the

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Procurement Review Committee that announces a tender. Then we have to get contracts drawn up with the Crown Solicitor, get the contracts executed and get the contractor mobilised.

**CHAIR** - I'm getting nervous about your timelines.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - I'm comfortable with those timelines because we're very keen to do that evaluation, lock in a contractor and get them on site and get them underway, as I know the school is. So, we'll be responding to that accordingly.

**CHAIR** - Is there any aspect of the building - and this may well be a question for you - around the type of building products that are to be used and been specified because from time to time there's a shortage of various building - is there anything that's looking like it might not be available or is there adequate substitutes always available?

**Mr ROSSI** - We certainly don't have any exotic materials included in this. The focus has been on aesthetic -

**CHAIR** - Good old hardwood.

**Mr ROSSI** - Yes. Durability is the key, but also importance on how their products look. Part of the process, the specification process, is that and in terms of working with the builder is actually getting a report on the lead times. There is an obligation for them to identify any lead time problems so we can then look at substitutions accordingly.

**Mr HARRISS** - Was it anticipated that the start would be prior to now? I know that when we were on-site this morning speaking to the students - and please correct me when I'm wrong. It's only got grade 10s there at the moment, or some 11 and 12 and that was in anticipation of project starting this year. Is that right?

**Ms ROESTENBURG** - Yes, that is correct.

**Mr HARRISS** - So that's been delayed a little bit. Then further to that, will that continue with just grade 10s as the project goes next year and into 2026?

**Ms ROESTENBURG** - By 2026 it's planned that year 9 to 12 will be back on the New Town campus. For 2025, it will be the 10s to 12s.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - Chair, if I may, I have some of that answer for you regarding the statutory fees. In the statutory fees budget, we have the planning permit, which is around \$45,000. We have the building permit which is around the \$40,000, and we have also included the Building Works insurance which is \$70,000, and we have the balance being a contingency for unforeseen or unknown things that we must do.

**CHAIR** - If the planning permit is \$45,000 and the building is \$40,000, that can't change or that wouldn't change?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - No.

**CHAIR** - And the insurance won't change?

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**Mr WILLIAMS** - No.

**CHAIR** - So there isn't a need for any contingency in statutory fees. Is that fair? You've got \$30,000 kicking around there.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - Yes, at times you never quite know what you have to do from an approval point of view. There might be other things that we need to achieve, so we always do have a little bit of contingency to make sure that we manage appropriately.

**CHAIR** - I'm just helping your budget here. What about the approval from Heritage Tasmania? Does that come at a cost? Is there any fee attached to the Heritage Tasmania approval?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - There would have been advisory done as part of the planning permit is advised.

**CHAIR** - So that's part of the \$45,000. It'd be interesting to follow up, but we don't get to follow up. We have to send it off to the Public Accounts Committee which is always looking for additional work, I believe, always. Any further questions on the timeline for the project?

We've already talked a little bit about potential project constraints, budget overrun, meeting the timelines. There's something called a scope drift here.

So review and approval to proceed, that's effectively an identified risk and then the risk mitigation strategy is review and approval to proceed. Is that just a matter of course? That's what the department does?

**Mr SALTER** - It's just about maintaining the scope within the funding envelope. It's more of a monitoring aspect.

**CHAIR** - No change in the project team members? It's identified as a risk. Nobody's on parental leave? Picked up the phone this morning and someone was on parental leave for three months.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - Stability through our projects is always welcomed and supported.

**CHAIR** - All right. Are there any further questions for now? If not, I'll ask you to leave the table, and I'll invite the Hon. John Barker to come forward.

Please don't leave, because we have some important questions to ask before we let you go. Thank you.

Welcome, John.

**Mr BARKER** - Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIR** - If you could please introduce yourself and then make the statutory declaration.

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**Mr JOHN SCOTT BARKER**, PRESIDENT, NEW TOWN HIGH SCHOOL AND TECH OLD SCHOLARS ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED

**CHAIR** -Thank you very much, and thank you very much for your submission, albeit reasonably brief. Even though you were listening at an earlier time, I'll do an abridged version of the statement.

Before you give evidence there are some important aspects, as this is a committee of the parliament and it receives the protection of parliamentary privilege and it's an important legal protection that allows individuals giving evidence to the committee to speak with complete freedom, without fear of being sued or questioned in any court or place out of parliament. It applies to ensure the parliament receives the very best information when conducting its inquiries.

Please also be aware that the protection is not accorded to you if statements that may be defamatory are repeated or referred to by you outside the confines of the parliamentary proceedings as it is a public hearing and we may well have public listening and/or journalists. Do you understand?

**Mr BARKER** - I acknowledge that, yes.

**CHAIR** - Thank you. Please, your submission, and anything that you'd like to add?

**Mr BARKER** - Thank you. The purpose of the submission - I agree, it's quite brief - on the basis that my association really wanted to express to the committee personally its support for the project. In my submission, I did indicate the background and the work that the association is doing. I need to emphasise, too, in terms of communication around the project over time, we have more than 600 people on our database - former students, et cetera -

**CHAIR** - That's a large lunch - 600 people.

**Mr BARKER** - Yes. I won't comment on that, Madam Chair. We have over 600 on the database. I mentioned also that since the move to the co-ed education arrangements, we've made an arrangement with the school association to form the friends of the new school. That's being expanded at the moment. It's early stages, but we've had one function with them to help raise some funds for a particular project the school wished. We're doing a lot of work there.

The other thing that I might add is that the school is about 105 years old now, in various iterations, in good nick. The facilities that you saw today on the school, you would have noticed a lot of those haven't changed since 1952 when the school was first constructed.

**CHAIR** - I did mention at our site visit that the history had served those students well.

**Mr BARKER** - We're very proud of the school, but the very important aspect of that is, there was expected to be some considerable concern when the co-education arrangements were announced, although we did have some input to that. That hasn't occurred, and it's been interesting to see how the former male students and the female students from Ogilvie are starting to work together. We see now our real objective is to really develop a cohort in the

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new school to actually develop some support base for the new students, to develop the culture of the school and assist the school wherever we can, so we're doing that.

That's the more significant part, that we continue our involvement with the school. I must say, as I did in the submission, with the total support of the lead principal, Britany, and her senior staff. They've been fantastic and welcomed us into the fold, which is fantastic. From that perspective, we really want to reiterate what we see, and we see that the development itself is really fitting the needs of the 21st century, some of the work that's been, and proposed to be, done there.

The other point, which you've already established through your questions, is that this has been going on for a fair while. It was first mentioned to me in 2018 that something like this would eventuate. We're really pleased to see it now happening.

**CHAIR** - Have you had a chance to have a look at the actual drawings that have been presented, and perhaps the 3D modelling? You're fully supportive of what's been proposed?

**Mr BARKER** - Absolutely. Yes. We've had walkthroughs of the proposal at the school and all of that. We think it's really welcome.

**CHAIR** - Perhaps suggest 'just get on with it' - would that be your message?

**Mr BARKER** - That's precisely it.

**CHAIR** - I thought you were going to get to that.

**Mr BARKER** - That's precisely it. I think that's really my submission, in a nutshell. The other thing I think is important is, given the school's developing as a co-ed school, there's a need to continue to engage the broader school community. This type of facility is going to encourage a lot of the parents to take notice and see that there's some real positivity going on, besides the actual activities that the school delivers itself.

**CHAIR** - I think the aim is for it to be a school of choice.

**Mr BARKER** - That's right. The other thing that I must say that we're very proud of - it's slightly to the side, but was in the submission, just to let you know - one of the initiatives that we've proposed, and will commence in January, is a health and wellbeing program for former students of the Old Boys, the fathers of the current students, and their close friends, where we're having, from our own resources, some of our students are well trained and qualified in health and wellbeing, we're utilising -

**CHAIR** - Some of them have gone to lofty heights, I might add - towards the end of the table.

**Mr BARKER** - Lofty's the word. We're really keen to get that going and, hopefully, once we can show some success with that, we'll extend that to the Ogilvie cohort. I think it's something that the Education department can think of in a broader context across all its schools.

**CHAIR** - Thank you. Any questions for Mr Barker?

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**Mr HARRISS** - No, I don't think so. It's always good to hear, though, isn't it, from outside of where we come from, a different perspective. Yes, it's good, and good to hear about that co-education from another -

**CHAIR** - That initiative about the wellbeing, as well, is something that you should be congratulated on, being proactive. I'm sure that the school and the school community really welcome that opportunity.

**Mr BARKER** - Yes, it's very good.

**CHAIR** - It would be an awesome mentoring opportunity as well, with some of the people that I expect are part of that 600-strong organisation.

**Mr BARKER** - Yes, and the alumni that we were hoping to help encourage and support at the school will obviously continue on in the role that we've had and eventually, I'd imagine, join together.

**CHAIR** - That's exactly right.

If there are no further questions, I'm obliged to make this short statement. I advised at the commencement of your evidence, what you said to us here today is protected by parliamentary privilege. I don't think you'll have to worry about that. Once you leave the table you need to be aware that privilege does not attach to the comments you may make to anyone, including the media - they're probably waiting outside for a media interview - even if it's just repeating what you said to us, do you understand?

**Mr BARKER** - I do.

**CHAIR** - Thank you very much.

**Mr BARKER** - Thank you very much for the opportunity.

**CHAIR** - Thank you for coming along today and being so proactive with the school.

**THE WITNESS WITHDREW.**

**CHAIR** - We will welcome back our proponents of the proposal, thank you.

Is there anything else that you would like to share with the committee before we ask a series of important and standard questions that the former member for Hobart and chair of this committee was always keen to put to the proponent?

**Mr SALTER** - Just to thank Mr Barker for his submission again and personally coming in. So, yes, on behalf of the school, it's fantastic, thank you.

**CHAIR** - These are questions: does the proposed works meet an identified need or needs, or solve a recognised problem?

**Mr SALTER** - Yes.

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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 SALTER** - Yes.

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

**Mr SALTER** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - Do the proposed works provide value for money and are the proposed works a good use of public funds?

**Mr SALTER** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - Thank you very much. We appreciate that. Before we finish up, I'll also provide the statement that I just provided to Mr Barker. As I advised at the commencement of the evidence, what you've said to us here today is protected by parliamentary privilege. Once you leave the table, please be aware that that privilege does not attach to comments that you may make to anyone, including the media, even if you're just repeating what you said to us. Do you understand?

**Mr SALTER** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - Thank you very much. As we have no more questions and nothing else to add, I will ask that the broadcast cease. Thank you very much. Thanks, Terry, for your time today. The committee will now enter into some deliberations.

**THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.**

**The committee adjourned at 3.18 a.m.**