



PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

Redevelopment of Hobart City High School

*Presented to Her Excellency the Governor pursuant to the provisions of the
Public Works Committee Act 1914.*

Legislative Council

Ms Rattray (Chair)
Mr Harriss

House of Assembly

Ms Butler (Deputy Chair)
Ms Burnet
Mr Wood

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1 INTRODUCTION

To Her Excellency the Honourable Barbara Baker AC, Governor in and over the State of Tasmania and its Dependencies in the Commonwealth of Australia.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY

The Committee has investigated the following proposal:-

Redevelopment Hobart City High School

and now has the honour to present the Report to Your Excellency in accordance with the Public Works Committee Act 1914 (the Act).

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 This reference recommended the Committee approve the Redevelopment of Hobart City High School, which will upgrade school infrastructure on the New Town Campus to offer a welcoming and safe environment and provide learning spaces that support contemporary teaching and learning practices.
- 2.2 Hobart City High School (HCHS) commenced operation in 2022 as an amalgamation of Ogilvie High School and New Town High School, in response to community demand for a public co-educational offering in the area. HCHS operates across both the New Town and Ogilvie campuses.
- 2.3 The New Town campus was opened in 1952, and many elements remain unchanged since that time. The large quadrangle and the surrounding buildings do not support contemporary teaching and learning practices or provide a welcoming environment for students. The size, configuration and placement of classrooms also inhibits the delivery of contemporary learning.
- 2.4 The original design of single classrooms accessed from long corridors prevent easy student movement and flow between activities, create bottle necks and isolate students and teachers from their peers and support networks. There is little scope for collaborative practice or programs because of the limited spatial connections and movement between learning spaces. Crowded corridor environments that students must transit through multiple times a day cause stress and anxiety to many students. The material conditions of the rooms and hallways cause distraction and trigger dysregulation for many students. Students with sensory needs do not have access to withdrawal or retreat spaces within or near classrooms.
- 2.5 The central quadrangle is currently an under-utilised space, and later additions to the original design have adversely affected its usability. It surrounded by other buildings and partially built over, making it cold and disconnected, limiting its capacity to provide a welcoming heart to the school.

- 2.6 The current reference seeks to better utilise and modernise space within the existing footprint of the central quadrangle and surrounding buildings.
- 2.7 The proposed design will create improved connections between areas through transforming the current quadrangle into flexible learning spaces across two levels, which will also address the difficulties in facilitating modern teaching practices. This will include expanded science facilities and new commons areas for student use.
- 2.8 The proposed works will include the following elements:
- An integrated learning heart for the campus connecting
 - Flexible learning spaces on both the ground and first floor levels.
 - A social heart centred on an improved courtyard on the ground level.
 - A connected campus that joins the ground and first floor levels with a new stair underneath a roof lantern in the centre of the courtyard.
 - Improved science and art areas.
 - Moving the canteen to give internal and courtyard dining opportunities.
 - Better distributed student bathrooms.
 - Bringing together staff office areas for collaboration and support.
- 2.9 The centre of the first floor science block above the main courtyard is to be reconnected by moving the preparation room to one of the former laboratories. A new stair to the ground floor below a roof lantern above encloses this area to create a comfortable and connected series of science spaces with improved daylight around a connected learning commons.
- 2.10 On the ground level, an extension will create flexible learning studios and student commons for social opportunities. Two new art studios and a redeveloped studio are gathered around the smaller courtyard where the new kiln room will be placed in the former canteen.
- 2.11 The works will remove asbestos from the redeveloped areas, improve building services, and provide upgrades to the stormwater management system and the roof, both of which have experienced issues in the past due to age.
- 2.12 The proposed works:
- Build on the previous works that were completed in 2022 to enable the transition to HCHS and the delivery of a co-educational facility to students of all genders.
 - Create light filled, inviting, spacious areas in which students are safe and visible.
 - Regenerate the building for ongoing use as a contemporary school.

3 PROJECT COSTS

- 3.1 Pursuant to the Message from Her Excellency the Governor-in-Council, the estimated cost of the work is \$19.6 million.

The following table details the current cost estimates for the project:

| DESCRIPTION | COST ESTIMATE |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|
| Construction Cost | \$14,650,000 |
| Construction Contingency | \$1,640,000 |
| Consultant Fees | \$2,600,000 |
| Statutory Fees | \$200,000 |
| Furniture/Equipment/IT | \$900,000 |
| General Project Contingency | \$70,000 |
| Tasmanian Government Artsite Scheme | \$80,000 |
| DECYP Project Management | \$410,000 |
| School Administration Support | \$60,000 |
| Post Occupancy Contingency | \$100,000 |
| Total | \$20,710,000 |

The 2021 Tasmanian State Budget committed \$21.6 million for works at HCHS. \$2.39 million was utilised for a previous project to enable the co-education on both campuses and there is \$19.21 million available for this major redevelopment project.

An additional \$1.5 million is being made available by DECYP to deliver the core needs of this project.

4 EVIDENCE

- 4.1 The Committee commenced its inquiry on Thursday, 14 November last with an inspection of the site of the proposed works. The Committee then returned to Committee Room 1, Parliament House, whereupon the following witnesses appeared, made the Statutory Declaration and were examined by the Committee in public:-

Witnesses for the Department:-

- Kane Salter, Deputy Secretary Business Operations and Support, Department for Education, Children and Young People;
- Todd Williams, Director Facility Services, Department for Education, Children and Young People;
- Britany Roestenburg, Lead Principal Hobart City High School; and
- Marino Rossi, Architectural Consultant, Thomson Rossi.

Public Witnesses:-

- Hon John Barker, President New Town High & Tech Old Scholars Association.

The following Committee Members were present:

- Hon Tania Rattray MLC (Chair);
- Hon Dean Harriss MLC; and
- Mr Simon Wood MP.

Apologies were received from Ms Jen Bulter MP and Ms Helen Burnet MP.

Overview

- 4.2 The committee was provided with some background to the establishment of Hobart High School and the desire for it to be a school of choice for local families:

CHAIR - ...It might be useful to put on the public record just how we've arrived at this particular... 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.

4.3 The Hon. John Barker, President of the New Town High School and Tech Old Scholars Association, also highlighted this point at the hearing:

Mr BARKER - ... 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.

How was the Redevelopment Identified as a Priority by the Department?

4.3 The Department's submission provided detail on how projects are identified and prioritised internally within the Department. The submission also highlighted how the need for redevelopment of the New Town Campus was identified:

DECYP collects condition data across all sites and models the future capital and maintenance needs to ensure available funding is spent in the areas of highest need. Over 75% of DECYP's building infrastructure was constructed over 50 years ago, resulting in an aged asset portfolio.

School capital works proposals are received annually and are evaluated for feasibility, site knowledge, building condition data and known maintenance, health, safety and/or other issues. These elements are considered along with the capacity of the school in relation to current and projected enrolments.

In 2021, HCHS was identified by the then Department of Education (DoE) as a priority site for capital redevelopment. HCHS was included in the DoE submission to the Department of Treasury and Finance in 2021 and \$21.6 million was allocated in the 2021-22 State Budget.

After community consultation on the 2022 HCHS masterplan, the New Town campus was identified to have the highest need. Many areas of the New Town campus are in near original condition and are not contemporary learning environments.

DECYP considers HCHS represents a high need for priority works to provide facilities that are healthy, safe and fit-for-purpose to deliver high-quality teaching, learning and support services, with safe and welcoming spaces that contribute to improved education and lifelong learning outcomes for the school community.

The DECYP Asset Strategy Executive Committee (ASEC) reviews all capital projects over \$1 million of project value. ASEC, within the remit of the project objectives identified in the 2021-22 State Budget, has reviewed the scope, design and project budget and support this project to proceed to construction. Projects are then endorsed by the DECYP Executive Board.

The project team is preparing to go to tender and seeks approval from the Public Works Committee to proceed to construction. The Project Working Group (PWG) including school management and school association representation, DECYP Facility Services and Learning Services, worked closely with the consultant team to develop the design.

The built environment impacts education outcomes by either enabling or constraining the education experience. The New Town Campus requires updating to create spaces that support the range of pedagogical practices envisioned by the Teaching and Learning Framework and promote student agency and wellbeing outcomes.

The proposed project supports the DECYP Strategic Plan vision for every child and young person, to be known, safe, well and learning with the design seeking to enable a sense of

security and safety for the whole school community.¹

4.4 The Committee was interested to gain a better understanding of how this redevelopment fits into the prioritisation of projects across the Department:

CHAIR - ...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.

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 - ...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 - ... 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 -

¹ Hobart City High School – Major Redevelopment, Submission to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, 14 November 2024, Department of Education, Children and Young People, Page 7.

that range of information together is part of the package to inform the priority one, two, and three.

...

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.

- 4.5 The committee sought to understand how a school's needs are assessed through this process, and how this project was ultimately selected as a priority:

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 - ... 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?

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.

The Need for the Works

- 4.6 Both the Department's submission and the submission provided by Hon. John Barker noted that much of the New Town campus has remained nearly unchanged since the school opened in 1952.

- 4.7 The Department's submission highlighted the deficiencies and limitations of the current school design and layout which have necessitated the redevelopment:

Many elements of the New Town Campus remain from the original design. The large quadrangle and the surrounding buildings do not support contemporary teaching and learning practices. These areas have been identified as being in the most urgent need for upgrading. The major concerns are:

- The buildings do not offer a warm or welcoming physical environment for students or staff.
- The original layout and small additions over subsequent decades limit the sense of belonging and safety in the spaces.
- There are areas of the school where visibility is minimal, connection between areas of the school lack flow and the acoustics of some spaces result in loud disruptive noise as students transit through them.

- The campus lacks a welcoming 'heart' and connections to the exterior and nature are remote.
- The original quadrangle had been fully open to the sky before the 1968 addition of the science block above. Originally intended to provide a playing area protected from the weather, this became a poor-quality internal space in the centre of the campus.
- The original design of single classrooms accessed from long corridors prevent easy student movement and flow between activities, create bottle necks and isolate students and teachers from their peers and support networks. Crowded corridor environments that students must transit through multiple times a day are well known to cause stress and anxiety to many students.
- Some classroom spaces at the New Town Campus are too small to meet contemporary size requirements for use and inhibit multiple learning techniques.
- Teachers are constrained to working in isolation and must leave the individual classrooms to access any support. There is little scope for collaborative practice or programs because of the limited spatial connections and movement between learning spaces.
- The material conditions of the rooms and hallways cause distraction and trigger dysregulation for many students. Students with sensory needs do not have access to withdrawal or retreat spaces within or near classrooms.²

4.8 The Department's submission also highlighted the benefits of the proposed design in alleviating the identified deficiencies:

The design offers:

- Contemporary learning spaces that offer flexible learning opportunities in a variety of spaces, sizes and locations of learning and social areas.
- Access to temperature controlled and light-filled learning and social spaces.
- Increased connection and views to external courtyards and natural light.
- Visually, acoustically, and socially engaging spaces to cater to a variety of learners' needs.
- Contemporary, fit-for-purpose canteen and dining areas that are safe and visible creating conditions for positive social interaction.
- Contemporary learning spaces that support a sense of community that is safe, welcoming, and secure.
- Spaces for teaching and learning that can be adapted to respond to learner's needs and provide options for a range of teaching and learning practices.³

4.9 The committee wanted to understand how the redevelopment could improve student experiences and outcomes through providing contemporary learning areas, having observed the limitations of the existing facilities during their visit. The witnesses explained the importance for both academic success and student wellbeing:

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.

...

² Hobart City High School – Major Redevelopment, Submission to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, 14 November 2024, Department of Education, Children and Young People, Page 8.

³ Ibid, Page 8-9.

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.

..

...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.

- 4.10 The Committee had witnessed the accessibility issues within the current school layout, and questioned the witnesses on how this would be improved and the benefits that would be realised through addressing this:

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 ... 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.

Community Engagement and Consultation

- 4.11 The committee explored how consultation had informed the redevelopment and the level of community acceptance:

CHAIR - ...you just talked about the needs of the school. Is that really the architect behind what's been presented to us today?

Mr ROSSI - ...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.

... we undertook a number of workshops with staff, and the leadership team who have very been instrumental in driving a lot of the agenda.

...

CHAIR - ... 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 - ... 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.

- 4.12 The committee also heard evidence from the Hon. John Barker, President of the New Town High School and Tech Old Scholars Association, about the support of his organisation for the process:

CHAIR - ... 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.

Impact on Enrolment Capacity

- 4.13 The Department's submission outlined that the school's enrolment has been capped to manage both the transition to a combined school and in preparation for the impacts of construction:

To reduce the potential for disruption to learning through the proposed construction works on the New Town Campus, a capped enrolment process was implemented in 2023.

Additionally, in 2020, enrolments were capped to manage the transition to the new school. The capping of enrolments since 2020 for the commencement of the HCHS and then through the major construction period, has resulted in lower student numbers in 2022, 2023 and 2024.⁴

- 4.14 The Committee discussed the impacts of the completed works on the school's capacity and whether this was in line with projected enrolment into the future:

Chair - ... 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

⁴ Hobart City High School – Major Redevelopment, Submission to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, 14 November 2024, Department of Education, Children and Young People, Page 7.

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.

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.

- 4.15 The committee also heard that capping enrolment for the transition to the new school and the redevelopment have not placed constraints on the ability of the school to accept students from its feeder schools:

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.

Project Budget and the Scope of Works

- 4.16 The budget for the redevelopment and the earlier enabling works was detailed in the Department's submission:

The 2021 Tasmanian State Budget committed \$21.6 million for works at HCHS. \$2.39 million was utilised for a previous project to enable the co-education on both campuses and there is \$19.21 million available for this major redevelopment project.

An additional \$1.5 million is being made available by DECYP to deliver the core needs of this project.⁵

- 4.17 The Department's submission also noted both the additional funding that had been provided and some changes to scope of the work had been made since the initial budget allocation:

To ensure a budget fit, the earlier design required modification. The design proposal retains the key improvements of earlier designs, with the science area remaining in its existing location and a new canteen making use of an existing internal area connected to both the original hall and courtyard. The extent of the new structure above the science area has been

⁵ Hobart City High School – Major Redevelopment, Submission to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, 14 November 2024, Department of Education, Children and Young People, Page 14.

reduced. With an additional \$1.5 million of DECYP funding, the proposed design fits within the allocated project budget.⁶

- 4.18 The committee sought to understand the purpose of the additional \$1.5 million provided by the Department and the extent of the change in scope of the proposed works:

CHAIR – ... 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 - 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.

⁶ Ibid, page 10.

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.

- 4.19 The Committee questioned the witnesses further on how the need for contemporary learning had been balanced with the decision to reduce the scope of the science area:

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.

- 4.20 The witnesses were questioned further on whether they felt the budget was sufficient to undertake the works as detailed to the Committee. The witnesses

were also asked what elements might be scaled back or cut from the project to stay within budget if this became necessary as a result of the tender outcome:

CHAIR - ... Is this a realistic budget for what we were shown through the 3D and then those significant spaces today?

Mr SALTER - ... 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 the cheap end either...

... that's exactly why we've got the construction contingency there at a healthy level to give us some flexibility if the tender result came in materially higher...

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.

..

... 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.

Departmental Project management Costs

- 4.21 The Committee noted the budget included specific provision for the Department's project management costs. The Committee queried these costs allocated to project management by the Department and sought an explanation as to how this was calculated and what it was for:

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 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.

Project Timeline

- 4.22 The committee inquired about the forecast timeline for the project:

CHAIR - ... 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? ...

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.

4.23 The Committee also asked about the timeline to this point:

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.

Does the Project Meet the Requirements of the Public Works Committee Act?

4.24 In assessing any proposed public work, the Committee seeks an assurance that each project meets the criteria detailed in Clause 15(2) of the Public Works Committee Act 1914. Broadly, and in simple terms, these relate to the purpose of the works, the need for and advisability of undertaking the works, and whether the works are a good use of public funds and provide value for money to the community. In its submission, the Department stated:

Do the proposed works meet an identified need/needs, or solve a recognised problem?

Consultation with the school and community identified priority needs for quality education which can no longer be met by the restrictive original building are being addressed through this project.

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

Working within significant heritage limitations, the proposed design effectively addresses the highest priority needs to create a contemporary learning environment. The design process identified the most workable solution to meet today's education requirements and give flexibility into the future. The process included reports from the project Quantity Surveyor to ensure the cost plan meets the budget and the project is deliverable.

Are the proposed works fit for purpose?

The proposed works respond to the detailed briefing requirements expressed through the HCHS Teaching and Learning Framework for quality education. The design solution has the support of educational experts, school leaders, staff, the School Association and the community.

Do the proposed works provide value for money?

The proposed works address the highest priority areas identified through the community consultation process and the most significant shortcomings of HCHS. Costs were minimised by retaining building structure and using modest, suitable new materials. Testing of options settled on this design which meets the key priority needs while remaining on budget.

Are the proposed works a good use of public funds?

The proposed works offer a cost-effective solution to meet high priority needs for HCHS to deliver quality contemporary educational experiences and assist in improving education outcomes. DECYP considers this to be a good use of public funds.

4.25 At the public hearing, the Department's witnesses reaffirmed this view:

CHAIR - ... does the proposed works meet an identified need or needs, or solve a recognised problem?

Mr SALTER - Yes.

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.

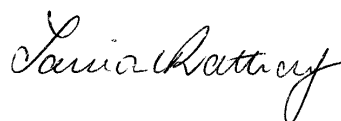
5 DOCUMENTS TAKEN INTO EVIDENCE

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

- *Hobart City High School – Major Redevelopment*, Submission to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, 14 November 2024, Department of Education, Children and Young People; and
- *Redevelopment Hobart City High School*, Submission to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, 4 November 2024, John Barker, President New Town High & Tech Old Scholars Association.

6 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1 The Committee is satisfied that the need for the proposed works has been established. Once completed, the proposed works will provide a welcoming and safe environment for staff and students, able to support contemporary teaching and learning needs.
- 6.2 The proposed works will deliver improved science and arts areas, flexible learning spaces, dining options, and bathrooms, benefitting student wellbeing and academic outcomes.
- 6.3 Redeveloped classroom and shared spaces will enable a wider variety of contemporary teaching practices and collaboration. The bringing together of staff office spaces will also support teachers in their practice.
- 6.4 The project will improve the experiences of students and teachers transitioning between spaces within the school, enhancing safety and reducing interruptions and stress.
- 6.5 Accordingly, the Committee recommends the Redevelopment of Hobart City High School, at an estimated cost of \$20.71 million, in accordance with the documentation submitted.



**Parliament House
Hobart
14 January 2025**

**Hon Tania Rattray MLC
Chair**