



PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

Montrose Bay High School Major Refurbishment

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

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

Legislative Council

Mr Farrell
Mrs Taylor

House of Assembly

Mr Brooks (Chairman)
Ms Ogilvie
Mrs Rylah

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1 INTRODUCTION

To Her Excellency Professor the Honourable Kate Warner AM, 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:-

Montrose Bay High School Major Refurbishment

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 works for a major refurbishment of existing learning areas at Montrose bay High School to provide contemporary learning environments.
- 2.2 The Montrose Bay High School Major Refurbishment is part of the State Government's *Reinvigorating Tasmanian High Schools* program. This program has a funding commitment of \$68 million over four years to upgrade facilities at a number of high schools to provide flexible and contemporary learning spaces, with the aim of promoting 21st Century learning and teaching practices.
- 2.3 The main building facilities were constructed approximately 50 years ago. Since that time some areas have been redeveloped, with major upgrade works undertaken to create new and refurbished Science, Music, Performing Arts, Art and Library facilities. Through the remaining areas of the school, although well maintained, significant learning areas are mostly near original and are no longer conducive to 21st century learning and teaching practices. Additionally, the use of IT and collaborative teaching in these facilities is high which requires significant adjustment from the technology, teaching practices and facilities of the past.
- 2.4 The proposed works include:
 - Redevelopment of Block A to create a year 7 learning hub including flexible and adaptable general learning areas, and food technology improvements, including provision of a flexible catering kitchen;
 - Redevelopment of Block B to create a year 8 learning hub including flexible and adaptable general learning areas;
 - Redevelopment of the gymnasium (Block E), including floor resurfacing, improved storage facilities, the provision of toilet and changing facilities within the gymnasium building and separate, secure access; and
 - Creation of a new school entrance and administration centre wrapped around the gymnasium exterior.
- 2.5 The proposed works have the following advantages:

- Provision of flexible and adaptable general learning areas to enhance teaching and learning in line with contemporary practice, while providing the capacity to cater for future changes in pedagogy, technology and student enrolments;
- Creation of year level learning precincts within the structure of the campus;
- The capacity to offer improved catering and food technology courses, and as a result, enhanced career pathways;
- Promotion of community access to the gymnasium, especially out of school hours; and
- Provision of a secure, yet welcoming entry point and administration facility for the school, and overcoming the sense that the school is “back to front”.

3 PROJECT COSTS

- 3.1 Pursuant to the Message from Her Excellency the Governor-in-Council, the estimated cost of the work is \$5.8 million.

The following table details the cost estimates for the project:

Description	Budget Component (\$'000)
Construction	4 830
Furniture and equipment	220
Upfront expenses including consultant's fees	500
Art in Public Buildings	80
Construction Contingency and post-occupancy works	170
Total	5 800

4 EVIDENCE

- 4.1 The Committee commenced its inquiry on Monday, 7 December last with an inspection of the site of the proposed works. The Committee then returned to Committee Room 2, Parliament House, Hobart, whereupon the following witnesses appeared, made the Statutory Declaration and were examined by the Committee in public:-

- Robert Williams, Deputy Secretary Department Services – Department of Education;
- Tony Luttrell, Chief Financial Officer – Department of Education;
- Mandy Reynolds-Smith, Principal Montrose Bay High School; and
- John Button, Principal / Architect – Heffernan Button Vos Architects.

Project Overview

4.2 Ms Reynolds-Smith provided the following overview of the school and the proposed works:

.....I am very passionate about my school. Montrose Bay High is in its sixth year. It was a merged school from previous Claremont High and Rosetta High. At the time of its merge it received quite a significant build, however that did not enable the site to be fully refurbished or reconfigured. The school has had sections not developed since 1965, which you visited today. The administration block is on the wrong side of the school since the merge.

..... The school was built in 1965 and as such is quite old-fashioned in the sections we looked at today and not geared at all towards contemporary understanding of teaching and learning of adolescents in the twenty-first century. Our economic base is around the city, with some employment gained from the paper mill and hop farms further up the river. There is a lot of trade-based occupancy, officer workers and generational unemployed within our community. Our school is governed by the association. It is proactive in making its voice heard and is very passionate about the build that is about to resolve some of the difficulties we have been facing.

The community is very proud of the school and very proud of the amazing performing arts centre, which was part of the initial merge build. As a school we've been working hard on building a new culture for Montrose Bay High, one that is quite aspirational, and having a clear vision of empowering our community through educational excellence and our motto of, 'Connect locally and globally, innovate for the future and educate for a changing world' is what we're actually focussed on trying to establish and achieve through the additional funds for the build.

We want our general learning areas to be both practical and inspiring, but more than anything we want them to be flexible to meet future paradigm shifts in education. That is really critical to maximise from the build. We have strived with the planning to create light and open spaces that can work together or work separately, with students and staff being able to access the spaces easily and have vision across quite a wide area. The combined spaces would also enable master classes for instructional teaching and whole grade gathering.

The new spaces will also enable us to personalise our learning considerably for students because we will be able to have vision with students actually being able to be in other spaces. Today when we were outside the bottom of B block and Adriana asked me about the corridors, I said, 'In actual fact, in the way that has been designed it will actually be part of the learning space for the students'. Part of the new way of teaching involves response to interventions, so regrouping our students and enabling students to be able to move into different places. The build will enable us to do that.

This year our staff have been trialling professional conversations and using video collection of observational data and further developing our collaborative planning teams. That has been quite tricky because our spaces have not been designed for that. However, with the restructuring of our timetable and the restructuring of the buildings, the design of the building will really enable us to support that style of practice.

The redevelopment has been thoughtfully planned. The grade-based general learning areas actually create a learning village that will enable our students to have a sense of pride, belonging and connection. The year 7 area will enable our youngest cohort to have a space to come into in the morning in the internal courtyard, which we visited, and a wonderful breakout area to gather informally, undertaking personalized learning in their own block. B block will actually be refurbished along the same thinking. The new spaces will be contemporary, open and connected, where teachers can both plan and teach together, and students will own their classrooms without losing their discipline-based teachers.

The model is not a middle school model, but it is around keeping students connected to their own learning village or hub - however you would like to describe that. It's an environment

that we have designed to minimise bullying and harassment issues and is respectful of students' needs, but also mindful of dealing with large numbers of adolescents. Those two things sometimes are a tension, but I think the design enables us to cover both of those things. We are wanting to create an exciting and practical learning space that will service the needs of our communities for decades to come. We want something that creates spaces that our communities are proud of, and also will further our aspirational culture.

4.3 Mr Button added the following:

.....From our perspective the project breaks up into effectively four different components, two of those being A block and B block, with the general learning area refurbishments and reconfiguration to meet the newer paradigm. The admin building was there to correct something that's fundamentally wrong with the building campus at the moment to do with front entry.

The project has been quite difficult in terms of meeting the budget. There is no question about that. We are trying to spread the dollar a long way and covering off many different parts. In working with Mandy right from day one - and she is very passionate about this - our instruction has been that it is about the education, not about the offices, not about the grand gesture. It is to do with the education. That is the driving factor behind it. That is what we have attempted to achieve, to spread that money across all the parts and get really good value, but also make it work practically and provide the school with a very presentable identity and front door.

Refocusing the Layout of the School

4.4 The Committee noted that a major part of the proposed works was the creation of a new school entrance and administration area, with the aim of refocusing the layout of the school. The Committee sought further information from the witnesses on the issues associated with the current entry point and administration area, and what benefits were anticipated as a result of refocusing the school layout:

Mr FARRELL - What have the really big issues been with having your entrance at the back end? Apart from the confusion to everyone, how does it affect the whole flow of the school day?

Ms REYNOLDS-SMITH - In a range of ways, I suppose, is the answer. There is a security issue for us as well, and that is something that we have been very mindful of. We have had strangers roaming through the school and so we are getting phone calls saying 'There's somebody on site. They don't have a visitor badge', et cetera. Now they have to come through the front section of the school. Despite the signage we still had people coming up through the school and this creates a more secure system for us.

In terms of the flow of our community members coming into the school, it is problematic when they come in the back of the school now and we have to get them all the way down through the school to the performing arts centre. Despite the fact we say to students, 'Get your parents to go down there', they are used to coming to the front of the school. So there is that whole traffic of moving the community right through the school. That is going to be resolved by them coming into the front of the school and being connected to the very public face of the school where most of our events happen. Then there is that nice connection straight through to student admin. Usually that is done in front office but sometimes parents need to go through to student admin and now they are going to be able to walk straight through. We will not have that issue of having to have someone guide them all the way down, because there is no hope of them finding it on their own.

As to student flow, the student flow will be great for things such as the outdoor education. No longer will they have to be up in B block for their teaching space and then work their way all the way back through the school to where the resources are. They will be right beside

their resources, which is a major bonus for us with this space. For student movement in and out of the gym to use the toilet and access their drinking fountains, all that will now be provided for within the gym. The supervision will be much better and much easier for our students to access so the flow of students in and out of our gym I believe would be significantly enhanced with the new model.

In terms of the A and B block, one of the most significant improvements for us will be not having years 9 and 10 students coming up into the junior school. That has been problematic moving them up into the spaces. If you see the year 10 boys, they are quite large and then if you see some of our little year 7s who haven't got to puberty yet, they are quite small and it can be quite intimidating for them to see large groups of tall people moving in. That will be resolved: the 9s and 10s will have their block and the 7s and 8s will have their own block. There will not be that constant moving of students in and out of all the different blocks. They will have their own learning area, they will be much more settled. The transitions between lessons will be able to be in their own space. They will not be moving all over the school like an old-fashioned, traditional high school. The build will resolve a whole range of issues to do with transitions between spaces.

Our surveys indicated the two hot spots for our school were transitions between lessons and the locker bay. More than 85 per cent of students indicated they think our school is a safe and orderly learning environment, and 99 per cent of the students feel connected to our school. So it is not a huge issue but they are the hot spots our students have named, and this build resolves both those issues.

General Learning Areas

- 4.5 The Committee noted the redevelopment of the general learning areas in A Block and B Block, which will create learning precincts for Year 7 (A Block) and Year 8 (B Block) students, with flexible and contemporary learning spaces that can be adapted to changing educational needs. The Committee questioned the witnesses on how they envisaged the redeveloped area working in practice and the impacts on teachers and students:

Ms REYNOLDS-SMITH - one of the things that is perhaps a hallmark of my practice is that I put the kids first, so I will be really honest and say the build has been led absolutely about creating the very best teaching and learning spaces I can get.

I totally understand as a senior experienced principal that if I do not look after my staff they are not going to look after my students either. I believe we have very nice, purpose-built staff study spaces so the grade team is based in the centre of the grade. Currently they are tacked on the end in an old classroom without any sort of purpose, storage spaces, not designed for collaborative planning - that has been a major issue for us. The places are built with students' needs as part of that, putting it very central to the corridor so there is high vision, high accessibility for the students to staff, but also a nice environment for our teachers as well. There are toilets in each of the blocks so they are close by but not in an inappropriate learning space.

I believe the teachers are being heavily consulted around these spaces - the classroom design, support - probably leading-edge work we have been doing - around improving quality teaching. One of the things we have been very focused on is improving professional conversations between teachers and depersonalising practice. The design of these rooms will enable us to do that.

Mrs TAYLOR - When we were there you were talking about the bigger open areas in A and B block being available for small groups as well. In particular, you might have said you were expecting to have double the number of students with special needs next year than you have this year. When I talk about teachers, I am absolutely in line with you for the best result for students, but the best results for students comes from the best environment for teachers to work in. Are you looking at greater numbers of teachers? How are you going to manage

that when this build is done? If you have small group stuff then you have to have people to lead small groups.

Ms REYNOLDS-SMITH - No, not necessarily. There is a range of different strategies in place. If I take A block, for example, where there are three spaces that are separate but also can be opened up and connected, there are three teachers available to that space. We would also use our support teacher, so that creates a fourth person to support our special needs students, and we would also have aide support, plus our senior teachers. The notion would be that we would regroup and split children into different spaces by bringing those people in.

Part of the biggest issue for us is that currently we do not use our corridor space because there is no vision. If the teacher is in the corridor, they cannot see what is going on in the classroom. A young student I was speaking about before - Tamara - is highly personally motivated and does quite a lot of her work in the library, because we have a library technician or a librarian in there, because she does not need to have direct instruction. Once she is clear about what her purpose is, she will go away and work quietly on her project, but we have line of sight and vision, so she is supervised.

We would use the same model up in our corridors for those students we know who can actually work independently there. We can see them and see that they are on task. We are going to be able to do that. We currently cannot do that. We do not have students working in the corridor because there is no supervision for them.

Mr WILLIAMS - That is really important because we modelled a lot of this, in terms of the department, on a school like Burnie where they have taken these old corridors and turned it all into glass. They can do collaborative teaching by opening a door up and then closing it off if they want to shut it down again. They can see. There is the breakout space where the kids are. You can see that from the classrooms, so the teachers are constantly in contact visually. That makes a huge difference to how they can use the space.

Mrs TAYLOR - I am just trying to make sure that you are not complicating matters for teachers and making it more difficult for them.

Ms REYNOLDS-SMITH - No. We are splitting the difference in the sense that we are aware that all glass will be problematic for our students. They take some time to settle into their learning et cetera, so we are using a combination of glass and timber so that we have really good vision, but we have also got places that students can work unsupervised where they are not distracted by anything that is going on outside. It is a good combination. It is ultimately practical. It has to be flexible. It has to be used in a range of ways, but the school itself has actually been trialling quite a range of things. It is quite scary having someone come and watch your practice, if that has not been part of your practice, but our teachers, a group of them, have been volunteering to have professional conversations and video them, and collect video evidence in their classroom. There is a very strong feeling they know that by working together we will improve our practice.

The model we are putting into year 7 next year is very much a team teaching model. It is very open and it is moving into the other grades as well. De-privatising practices might be a bit of a catchphrase, but it is very much around where we have been headed as a school. We have been doing classroom walk-throughs for a number of years now and feedback to staff and to the grades. I do not think we are complicating it for them. I think we are actually value-adding to their practice.

.... The build is informed by our needs, by what is going to work for our community and for our students. There is not an overall model I am operating on, but certainly the notion of twenty-first century learning spaces is the underpinning principle. I am wanting to make sure that whatever we do is flexible to meet any shift in paradigm in the future.

Food technology facility improvements

- 4.6 The proposed works include redevelopment of the school's food technology and catering facilities. The school is keen to widen its offerings in this area, as the capacity for students to gain a career in the hospitality industry is high. However the school's current facilities severely limit the school's offerings in this area of the curriculum, thereby directly impacting on students' employment pathways.
- 4.7 The school also has community partnerships which are already building on the skills students have in food technology, and the current facilities hamper the school's capacity to maintain and grow these important community partnerships.
- 4.8 The Committee sought further details on the proposed improvements to the schools food technology facilities, with the witnesses noting that having flexible facilities to maximise the use of the available space was a key driver in the design:

Ms REYNOLDS-SMITH -I am also hoping that for the hospitality, that will give us an edge in that space. The little program we run on Second Bite, we have had lots of students wanting to get into that program but we haven't been able to facilitate that because we don't have the kitchen space to do it. This will enable more students who wish to pursue the hospitality area to be encouraged to go into that industry as well.

Mr FARRELL - So currently you have one kitchen for 600 students?

Ms REYNOLDS-SMITH - Yes.

CHAIR - Your home economics has the mobile work stations. Is that following on from the concept from Latrobe?

Mr WILLIAMS - Yes, and Mandy could explain. I am not sure whether you were with us when we were looking at that particular part.

Ms REYNOLDS-SMITH - My thinking around that and talking to other schools, mostly my experience comes from Devonport High. Matthew Jago was the person who ran the catering kitchen up there. I believe when I was principal at Devonport High, it used to have \$150 000 worth of catering go through that small kitchen, and Matthew is pretty awesome in that space. So I have learnt a whole lot of things from talking and working with Matthew for a number of years; creating flexible spaces in the kitchen and having work benches that can actually be moved and reconfigured, depending on what that particular course is, or program, or the group you are working with is really important.

There are some places that are built in but most of the things will be standalone, all linked around the bench. It perhaps will not look like it is mobile but the design is so that you can actually remove things easily and put new upgraded facilities in over the years as kitchens change, and also reconfigure the space to make it work for particular groups of student's needs. Matthew has probably taught me that it is important to do that.

Also having free access down the pathway through to the refrigerators rather than having that behind closed doors so a lot of the planning for that, and that is still a draft and it has to go back to our home economics and aids and people who work in that space, but a lot of my thinking around the mobile space has come from learning in the kitchen with Matthew.

.....It is primarily around providing a teaching and learning space for hospitality skills because our students are actually letting us know they are really keen to be doing a SecondBite program which it focuses on. It is a good, practical plan to maximise that use of space with an economic approach.

.... You will have seen our garden and our students who are involved in that. Also, we get a lot of produce from SecondBite, which our students are involved in, preparing and some eating, and also preparing for meals. As part of the SecondBite program this year, it was tricky given our facilities, but we actually had a number of people from an aged care facility

and the SecondBite students prepared the meal for them and then served the meal. We actually served it in that space we are turning into a catering kitchen, so we put our classes in another space. Whilst we don't have a dedicated space, we do play in that space. I would love for you to give me another \$1 million and I will be able to create a cafe, but we have looked at that al fresco-type setting beside there and it gives us the possibility to run those events in the warmer weather.

Mr WILLIAMS - Those doors are all sliding onto the open space.

Ms REYNOLDS-SMITH - There are dual purposes really. It means the back end of that will let light through into that back corridor and connect that space to there as well. We also think that could be a service counter if we were having a hot cross bun and hot chocolate day or chocolate chip cookie day, so they could be sold to students out that other side. Or it could be a special function where we can pull the doors back and use the courtyard and the balcony.

The other part of that is being smart around accessing plumbing, lighting and those sorts of things rather than spending another \$50 000 and putting it somewhere else in the building and having to get it there. We have been trying to maximise the spaces we have and I think that is a clever use of that space. It would be lovely to have more facilities but I think the site of it is well-thought-out to maximise what we already have.

Gymnasium Improvements

- 4.9 The proposed works include significant redevelopment of the school's gymnasium, with the intention of encouraging greater student and community use of the improved facilities.
- 4.10 The current gymnasium set up presents a significant barrier to student participation and community use. The Committee sought further information from the witnesses on the impact that improved gymnasium facilities would have on students and the wider community:

Mr FARRELL - Linking back to community use, it has been really clever design and planning around your existing gymnasium. It is very clever to cover a building that is basically a big shed.

... .. With the gymnasium, currently you would like to utilise it more. How will this help you utilise the gymnasium to a better degree for the community?

Ms REYNOLDS-SMITH - In a range of ways. Currently we cannot have the gymnasium being used after cleaning hours because of security issues. While there are cleaners on site we can give them access to the building, but after hours we can't because there is no security. We have to give them the keys to the school, basically. With the new model there will be toilets and change rooms. They are individual change and toilet cubicles, not big open spaces because we know that that is not a place to go to. They will have an entrance straight off the carpark, being able to come into the gymnasium to use that, and within that gymnasium they will have the change room areas they can access. Currently they can't do that.

There are also spaces that will be teaching spaces which will be free and more flexible spaces, as opposed to, say, our mini gym at the moment, which is not a teaching or open space where coaching groups can come in and run their teaching part and then do the work in the gym, so we are creating a space for them. It is more designed for us but it will enable the community to use that space because it will have toilets and change space. There will also be security that stops them accessing the rest of the school.

Mr FARRELL - You already have a bit of experience with your performing arts centre being used by the community.

Ms REYNOLDS-SMITH - We do. Our performing arts centre has its own toilets and change area and its own security and is used every weekend of the year. It is hired, which is a great source of income that keeps our performing arts centre looking really good. We can use that money to keep it refurbished. More than anything it means that our community is using the facilities within their base, which is wonderful. We are hoping to give our community greater access to our gym once we can resolve the security issues.

... .. One would hope that with improved sporting facilities that would encourage students to go into that space.

Design and Building Materials

- 4.11 The Committee noted the previous redevelopment of the Performing Arts Centre and the Equipment Resource and Information Centre (the school library, also known as ERIC), and was interested to hear how the proposed design and building materials would complement the previous works:

Mrs TAYLOR - The first lot of build you did has a lot of wood externally and on the performing arts centre as well, which looks stunning. I know it ages and it takes some maintenance probably, but it is beautiful. There is not that kind of detail in these plans at the minute, but are you planning for more of that. I would hate to think that you might, because of cost, just build in concrete and not have it.

Ms REYNOLDS-SMITH - My brief to John was that, because it is the front face of the school, it is where our community first comes to the school. It is in a significant landmark space, so it needs to make a statement, but it cannot be an expensive statement. I do not want bucketloads spent on the facade of the building, but I do want it to say, 'Wow, this is pretty contemporary. This school is in a great spot and they've taken some time to do their planning.' Where the building wraps around back into the performing arts courtyard, where the staffroom runs along and looks out into the courtyard, which is so nice with our staffroom being connected to the courtyard, there is a really strong feel from staff that the external part of that needs to have some sort of timber cladding that creates an automatic link with the building there, the courtyard and up into that space. The timber that was used on the performing arts centre is extremely expensive, so we may not go with exactly the same, but we do not feel that it needs to be, but that connection of having the timber we believe is really important.

I am pretty impressed with the way John has really listened to us the whole way along, working with us. It has been a big ask for him because we are trying to get as much as we can and do the best we can for the students. I do not think it is about the building being such a statement that it has to look like MONA or it is taking a whole lot of money, but I really love the design that John has come up with that is sympathetic in design. It does not copy them, but there are some elements that actually link the whole thing. Obviously we are not going to be able to do that amazing external facade that MONA has. I think at this point we are looking at compressed cement sheet.

Mr BUTTON - Compressed cement sheet with a finish of some sort on it, something that doesn't take a lot of maintenance - a stain, a patina, something that will be interesting. A lot has to do with the shaping of the wall. It is not an ordinary building, but kept quite simple and economical is what we are looking for, but also to be quite different.

Ms REYNOLDS-SMITH - We are recycling a fair bit. I did say to John that I am keen to have timber and glass and light - three things this building must feature. In the old library part we are looking to reuse quite a lot of the dado, and a lot of the classrooms will feature dado and timber wall, so there will be a lot of recycling from the site to maximise the use. We are on about sustainability with our students so we need to model that in our own build. From the previous build we have some of the dado left that is going to be recycled for some of these spaces, so I think our new build will feature timber.

Consultation

- 4.12 The Committee questioned the witnesses on the consultation process for the proposed works. Ms Reynolds-Smith indicated that there had been significant consultation within the school community, including students and staff. Ms Reynolds-Smith also indicated that community feedback about the project had been very positive:

Mrs TAYLOR - You might like to talk to us about what consultation there has been with students and teachers and community.

Ms REYNOLDS-SMITH - The consultation process has been over many years in a sense because this is the second part of the build for Montrose Bay High. The first part of the merge involved enormous community consultation, which evolved into the plan. This is really the second part of that plan. However, this build consultation has involved our community, through our school association, looking at draft plans and informing the school team where they would like it to go, and involving our school community through open consultation. We did offer to run an evening except we did not get any takers for that, so we put it out on Facebook. We had the school plans at the front office and a comment board there for our parents, either anonymously or identify themselves, to provide feedback to the plans.

The student consultation - I run a student think tank every year and this year the focus of the student think tank had a specific focus around the build. I talked in grades 7, 8 and 9, assemblies. With 10s going out they are not actually impacted in that sense, although I had a group of year 10s in the student consultation think tank. I talked with them around what was being planned, what we were hoping to achieve. The think tank has informed some of the things students have been asking for, like an improved gymnasium, so over the last three years that has been information that has actually informed our thinking.

Mr Woolley, our head of operations, has been meeting with our grade teams. He meets with the grade coordinators who then go back to their grade teams, who then meet with us around the draft plans. The heads of learning areas that are being impacted on with the build have met with me and gone through the plans carefully, and then go back to their team and talk around what our plans are. So the consultation has been at a range of different levels. The team - Spencer, Sharon and myself - from the school have worked closely with John around the build and he has very kindly provided plenty of drafts to go back to staff.

Consulting with our cleaners and administration staff has been an important part of this build too because we have learnt where we did not consult as much as we should have perhaps around the last build. There are some practical things we have learned. I am a farmer's daughter. I am very practical; I want this build to be as good as I can get it for my community. I also want it to last, so it needs to be sensibly designed and something to be proud of.

Mrs TAYLOR - Thank you for the students who were there with us today.

Ms REYNOLDS-SMITH - The two senior students were Anna Brett and Andrew Nicholson-Gibbs; our year 8 students were Hannah Barwick, Sylvia Reynolds and Kane Thorpe. They are our year 8 students who will benefit mostly from the build.

Mrs TAYLOR - They were very impressive and obviously involved in wanting the development to occur, but having thought about it and very happy to engage with us, which was a nice compliment to you.

Ms REYNOLDS-SMITH - Thank you. Some of them were in the student think tank and some of them were not. The others have been in briefings around the build with me.

CHAIR - Certainly the students were articulate, were wonderfully presented and passionate about the project. That is a great reflection on the school, on the community and also the leadership they are given. I felt it was excellent.

We mentioned briefly about the community consultation with the community and the parent body. Was there any negative feedback or concerns raised that, 'No, we don't want this' and 'any of that'.

Ms REYNOLDS-SMITH - No. The school association is really excited about it. There has been a lot of feedback over the years around the administration block being in the wrong place. As some of the group experienced today, we have visitors and members of the public arriving at the wrong end, particularly new parents. We try to deal with that. The feedback has been around, 'You need to get this sorted', and now we have been able to. There has not been any negative feedback. Certainly there has been plenty of questions asked around the build and why we would do this, and they have been very supportive of our responses.

Traffic Management

4.13 The Committee sought some further information on how the proposed works would affect student safety during drop-offs, traffic flow and parking.

4.14 The Committee noted that currently that a large number of students are dropped off at school on the Brooker Highway. The Committee questioned the witnesses on whether the proposed works, in particular the creation of a new school entrance, would lead to parents dropping their children off within the school grounds instead of on the highway:

Mrs TAYLOR - I am familiar with the school, and with that exact problem you are talking about. One of the issues over the years has been students being dropped off on the highway. I know you have made a big effort to get the buses to come around to where -

Ms REYNOLDS-SMITH - All of our buses come in, yes.

Mrs TAYLOR - Will this make any difference to that?

Ms REYNOLDS-SMITH - I would be crystal ball gazing if I would guess that. I believe with our seven cohort, if we are training our parents, 'This is now the administration, that is where they have to come in', we have far more hope of them coming in because that is where the parents have to go. They are not going to park on the highway and walk all the way down through the school to the very end. I believe this is probably our best chance of getting our parents to come in.

Mrs TAYLOR - Will students still be able to walk in from the front, from the highway?

Ms REYNOLDS-SMITH - Yes, they will be able to come across the overpass. That is really important because a number of our students come in on the other buses, which are on Main Road, Glenorchy. We have been looking at the security system during the day of how they will access those back doors because that will become the official -

Mrs TAYLOR - It will be the grade 7 block, yes.

Ms REYNOLDS-SMITH - Yes, that's right. We have had our IT guys working on quite a clever solution for that, that point.

4.15 The Committee noted the expectation that more parents would enter the school grounds to drop-off their children once the new school entrance was completed. The Committee sought further information from the witnesses on how the increased traffic within the grounds would be managed including the availability of parking:

CHAIR - Is there much more capacity for parking under this for drop-offs? I am looking at page 17. If we were wanting to flow more traffic stopping on the side of the highway and into this area here, wouldn't there be quite a traffic jam in the morning?

Ms REYNOLDS-SMITH - I don't know that it will be as bad as we think because we have hundreds of students come in on buses. At the end of the day we have the same thing; we have hundreds go out on buses. What I would say is that when we are having an event where we do need to have more parking, if you look at the foreshore area opposite where the red arrows are coming out, there is a big area that our parents use for parking. I am assuming that we will be making use of that if we are getting more coming in.

Mostly in high school there will be a lot of dropping off, not actually coming in. It is not the same as a primary school. But it is a bit of crystal ball gazing. We have capacity to increase parking if we need to officially, but as to how many parents will bring their students in, or whether they will drop the students off and they will walk across the overpass and in - some will do that as well.

Mrs TAYLOR - There is a fair sized parking area at the front -

Ms REYNOLDS-SMITH - Yes, we have.

Mrs TAYLOR - Will you continue to use that for parking?

Ms REYNOLDS-SMITH - Our staff will park there and we will ask those who park in the bottom carpark to move around so we have all that access to our community.

- 4.16 The Committee also raised the issue of traffic management at the intersection of the school's access road and the Brooker Highway. The Committee noted that crossing the highway at the point was problematic, and sought further information from the witnesses on the traffic management issues at this intersection:

Mrs TAYLOR - The other thing I wanted to ask about is traffic management. I know what the intersection is like there, with people trying to get across the highway. It is a continuing problem. Are you still looking at traffic lights? Is the Government still looking at traffic lights on that site?

Mr WILLIAMS - We are not aware of that being something they are focused on at this time. We raise issues with them from time to time.

Mrs TAYLOR - It's not that I want more traffic lights, I assure you, on the highway there. That is a significant traffic point. I travel that bit of road every day and there is a concern with people coming in and out of the school and trying to cross the highway. If they just come out of the school and turn left, that would be fine, but they don't.

Mr WILLIAMS - I guess that is for traffic management experts. I cannot really make a comment on that.

Mrs TAYLOR - You have a school with 600 kids on the wrong side of the highway.

Mr WILLIAMS - I know DIER do traffic management studies and they're putting in lights at the Elwick Showground, so they obviously have their eye on that stretch of the highway.

Ms REYNOLDS-SMITH - There are a lot of management structures we put in place. You are right, it is problematic. I come in and out of that space quite a lot. We talk with our staff around the fact that they need to be very careful. We have trailers with dozens of kayaks coming in there, so we have the strategy of going down and around and coming through if we believe it is unsafe. We talk to our staff about using that. All of our buses turn left and use the lights to come around. We talk to our parents around being smart about how they exit and enter the space. It is something we continuously manage and we will continue to work with the department and roads and traffic to resolve it. That is a very busy piece of road and it is getting busier, so we continuously make our staff aware of the issues of trying to get across that space and how they might avoid putting themselves at risk there.

Mrs TAYLOR - I am thinking more in terms of parents than staff because your staff are probably super-careful.

Ms REYNOLDS-SMITH - We advise our parents around drop-off zones. Many of our parents opt to put their children out where they can use the overpass to walk into the school. That is probably the way the parents have resolved the matter. There is quite a safe place for them to pull off there to do that.

Project Budget

4.17 The Committee noted that the project had been approved and costed three years earlier at \$5.8 million, yet since that time the budget had remained the same. The Committee was concerned that this would impact on the ability to deliver all the elements of the project as originally approved, due to inflationary impacts on the cost of building, such as labour and material costs.

4.18 The Committee questioned the witnesses on what is effectively a funding cut for the project in real terms, and how this would impact on the project as originally envisaged:

Mrs TAYLOR - One of the things that concerns me, and we mentioned it this morning, when you originally got permission to do this, the amount of money that was allocated then is the same amount of money that is allocated now. It was something like three years ago and obviously costs have gone up in that time. You have talked a number of times about 'if we had another bit of money we would do this', or 'we've had to do the best we can with the money we have'.

Does that not concern you, Mr Williams? Three years later the same amount of money does not go the same way and you are having to cut things off the plan that might be important.

Mr WILLIAMS - I guess there are two issues there. The first is that it is an issue for the Government to talk about as to how much they allocate in the Budget to these sorts of projects. There isn't a single project we do that another \$1 million wouldn't add something more to the whole process. Notwithstanding what Mandy said that you would love to be able to do the next bit and the next bit, we now have -

Mrs TAYLOR - This is different; this is not add-ons. This is as the project was originally designed and it has had to be cut.

Mr WILLIAMS - Every project is cut in that whatever we are allocated we come up with the plan we want and then we have to scope it back to fit within the funding envelope. In one sense it is a bit of a cat-and-mouse game, as you are suggesting, but whatever we get everyone wants more and we are always cutting back.

Mrs TAYLOR - I don't think it is quite the same thing. If you decide on a plan and say it is good and you cost it and say this is how much it is going to cost, and then three years later what it would have bought then it won't buy now, why doesn't that get indexed or something?

CHAIR - Unfortunately this committee cannot change the scope or the funding, but what I think you will find -

Mrs TAYLOR - I might be saying this for future reference to you as the Government.

CHAIR - Absolutely, Mrs Taylor, we are the ones that fund it. Latrobe has been on the drawing board for six years at least, maybe 10 years. They missed out significantly in the BER. The high school has been identified by the Government as a significant priority for investment, but unfortunately there is only a certain amount of money. When we look at the priorities - and I am sure the minister did this with the department - these are the priorities and this is the bucket of money that is available, and they have tried to make it fit into as many schools as they can.

They may even see, as we have seen in previous Public Works hearings, projects coming in under. Given the tendering process, there may be some scope in there if it came in under, for example. We know the Westbury Road upgrade came in significantly under the expected cost. I am not sure if we added two kilometres of road to it, it is not the Education department's problem but -

Mr WILLIAMS - My sense is that this one, because it has been so tight to try to get as much out of it and the contingency is right down, is not going to be the one where there is going to be money left over. It has been tight to get as much as we can out of it.

I take your point about indexation.

CHAIR - The challenge with that is that we are going to spend \$5 million-odd here, and it is going to make it a little challenging in the short term for this high school to be back up on the list of needs and expenses. That is just because we would love to double it, and triple it, and fund more, but the state doesn't have any more money.

... .. Mrs Taylor, in our deliberations you may bring that up as an issue of concern. It is a valid point.

Mrs TAYLOR - Yes. As mentioned, eight years is what you budget for and then it is built eight years later.

Mr WILLIAMS - The harsh reality is if we put another million into this, it is a million that comes off Latrobe, or somewhere else in the system.

Mrs TAYLOR - It sort of is, or else you spread it out a little longer and you say, 'We've got this much so let's do the jobs to the extent that we would like to do them'. It means one school might be left off this year but -

Mr WILLIAMS - It is always a delicate judgment.

Mrs TAYLOR - Absolutely. I am sure you are doing the best you possibly can.

Ms REYNOLDS-SMITH - We are pretty thrilled to have the money and will absolutely make the most of it.

Project Tender Process

4.19 The Committee questioned the witnesses on the tender for the proposed works, including timing of the tender and the expected build time:

CHAIR - According to the program on page 14, tenders close in March and then the contractors are appointed in March. So it would take a good couple of weeks to appoint a contractor. You have the work scheduled to start the next month. Given the work that is on in the south, and even if a northern-based Tasmanian contractor was to win this contract, are they really going to have the ability to start this project within two to four weeks after they know they have won the contract?

Mr WILLIAMS - It will be part of the contract negotiations. I cannot tell you - it is one of the vagaries, one of the things we report to the government on these projects, the fact that we might not be able to get all of those things lined up. At the start we would be asking when we negotiate the tender and as everyone knows, we think the south is pretty tight, and we might have to adjust our time frames to deal with that. We are staggering going out to tender so companies have time to get into it. I cannot give you a guarantee because there are a lot of things going on in Tasmania at the moment.

Mr LUTTRELL - We have spoken to Michael Kerschbaum at the MBA, and with the program release coming up, so he has to communicate with his members so they will be aware of these things.

CHAIR - I want to confirm that we are staggering the release of these tenders so that every business that wants to tender can have a go at all of them, rather than them all being

due within a tight time frame. It may suit, again, the bigger multinationals or the ones that have their own tendering department. The smaller builders that may still be pretty qualified have to then pick one or two; they cannot have a crack at them all.

Mr WILLIAMS - It has just happened that the natural of course events is that we have staggered them.

Mrs TAYLOR - I want to ask about the build time because you are talking about starting in April, hopefully, and finishing in January, which would be fantastic because you would like to think that it would start the following new school year with it finished. But that is pretty tight because it is autumn, winter, spring, and you have one summer and one summer holidays in there already. Obviously you are going to have to stagger the building process for this year from April to December because you will have students there.

Mr WILLIAMS - Mandy talked earlier about there being a series of stages in this one...We do part of it and decant students out. These processes have been thought through. Once again, it is subject to planning appeals; there could be lots of rain in a particular year. This year has been fantastic and we saw the Myer building went up because it was sunny every day here in Hobart.

This is our best estimate and this is what has been worked through with the architects, with our people who are doing a lot of this. Once again there are some vagaries, whether it is weather or more planning processes that could get in the way, but we think this is a reasonable time frame. I don't think we have been over-optimistic or too conservative either.

Mrs TAYLOR - So you will make a point of trying to get finished before the next school year starts?

Mr WILLIAMS - That is the aim of this one.

5 DOCUMENTS TAKEN INTO EVIDENCE

5.1 The following document was taken into evidence and considered by the Committee:

- Major Redevelopment of Montrose Bay High School - Submission to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, Department of Education, November 2015.

6 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

6.1 The Committee understands that since the redevelopment was originally approved a significant amount of time has elapsed. However, there has been no additional funding allocated to allow for increases in building costs over that time, such that the original works as proposed and approved are unable to be completed within the available funding. The Committee is concerned that this effectively results in a funding cut, in real terms, and as a result, the redevelopment has been pared back, with elements of the project, which were considered necessary, removed from the scope of the works to meet the same budget.

6.2 The Committee suggests therefore that when there are significant delays between the approval of works and the commencement of those works, there should be a mechanism to escalate the available funding to cover inflation of costs such that the entire scope of works as intended can be undertaken.

- 6.3 The Committee is satisfied the need for the proposed works has been established and will make a significant contribution to improved student outcomes. Once completed, the proposed works will provide general learning areas that will promote flexible, contemporary learning practices. The proposed works will also resolve a number of other deficiencies identified within the school, such as the sense that the school is “back to front”, significant improvements to food technology and catering facilities to meet growing demand, and improvements to the gymnasium to enhance student and community use.
- 6.4 Accordingly, the Committee recommends the project, in accordance with the documentation submitted, at an estimated total cost of \$5.8 million.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Brooks', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**Parliament House
Hobart
17 December 2015**

**Adam Brooks MP
Chairman**

