

North West Support School Burnie Campus - Major Redevelopment

Submission to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works

1 July 2026

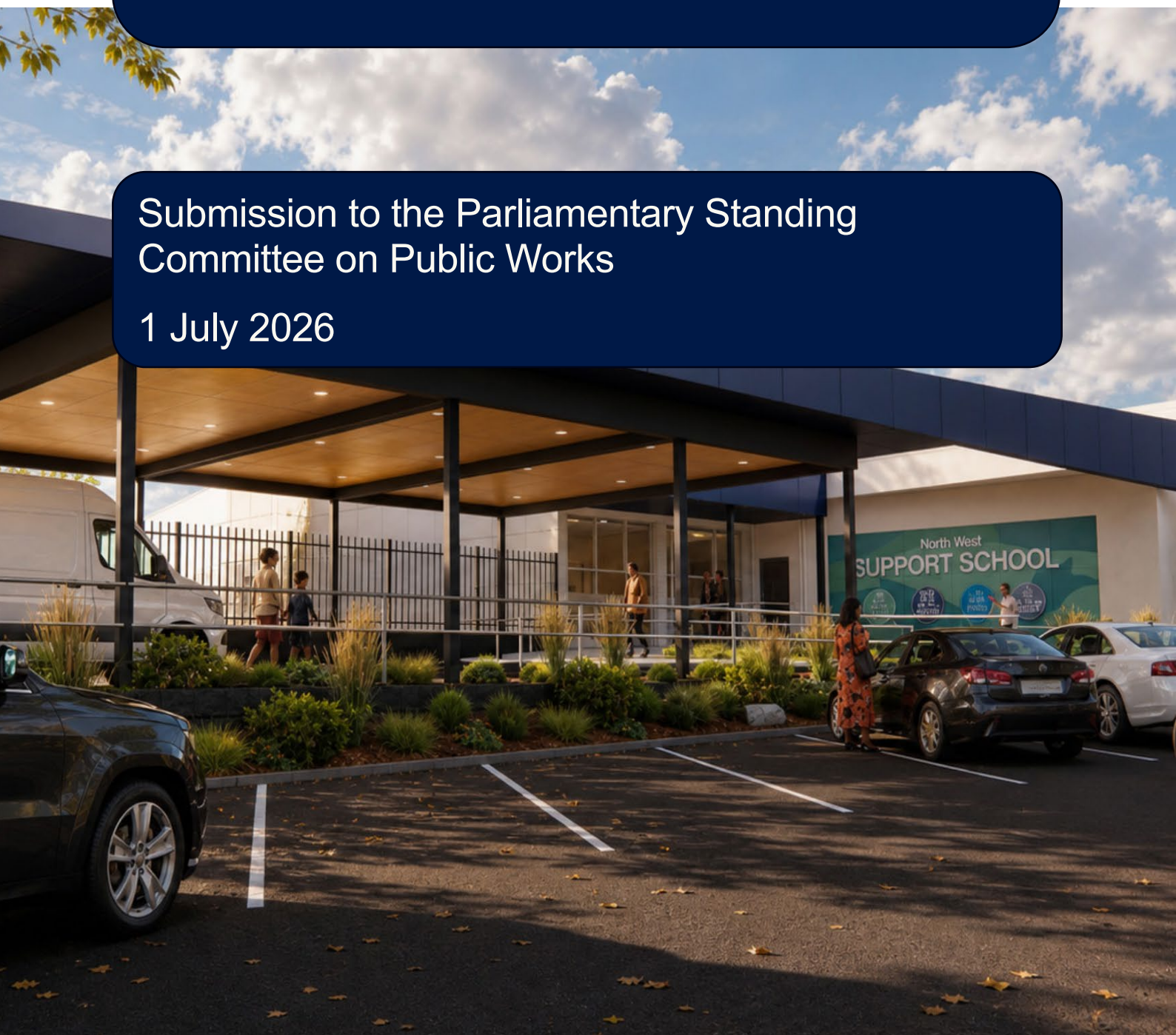


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1 Introduction

The Department for Education, Children And Young People (DECYP) seeks approval from the Parliamentary Standing Committee On Public Works (Public Works Committee) for the major redevelopment of the North West Support School (NWSS) Burnie Campus.

As part of the Tasmanian Government's 2021 election commitments, a total budget package of \$62.15 million was allocated to construct a purpose-built NWSS on a new site in Devonport and deliver significant upgrades to the NWSS Burnie campus.

The school is characterised by highly specialised, learning facilities supporting students with disabilities, offering opportunities for high quality educational and social experiences in a safe, caring, and respectful environment.

Funding is provided through the Capital Investment Program (CIP) for a major redevelopment of NWSS Burnie per the concept plan (Attachment 1).

Community and stakeholder consultation has assisted in defining the scope of works to include contemporary learning areas, associated support spaces, and amenities.



Image: A student from NWSS

2 School Philosophy and Community Connections

NWSS is guided by a philosophy of inclusive, personalised and relationship-based education that recognises the individuality, dignity and strengths of every student.

Central to this philosophy is a Team Around the Child (TAC) approach, where strong partnerships with families, allied health professionals, NDIS providers and the wider community ensure coordinated, holistic support around each learner.

Through shared understanding and collaborative decision-making, the TAC supports student wellbeing, authentic learning and successful transitions beyond school. This commitment is reflected in both educational practice and the current and future provision of shared, flexible facilities such as therapy spaces, hospitality, gymnasium and hydrotherapy pool, which promote participation, inclusion and real-world skill development.

All design and operational decisions are underpinned by four core values — We are Safe, We are Learners, We are Respectful, and We do our Best — reinforcing NWSS's role as a trusted, connected and valued part of the North West Tasmanian community.

The project vision has been established to support the school philosophy and needs and can be summarised as follows:

- To provide a modern, inclusive, and accessible learning environment tailored to meet the needs of students with disability.
- Deliver a safe, flexible, and future-focused school that supports various educational programs and therapeutic services.
- Promote independence and skill-building through an environment designed with universal design principles.
- Enable community engagement while maintaining appropriate levels of safety and separation.

3 Contemporary Pedagogy and Learning Opportunities

The DECYP Strategic Plan 2024-2030 outlines a shared vision for children and young people in Tasmania. The Strategic Plan connects the work of everyone in DECYP to:

- 'Our Why' Bright Lives. Positive Futures.
- 'Our How' Every child and young person is known, safe, well and learning.

Contemporary pedagogy at NWSS is a contextualised application of the system wide DECYP Pedagogical Framework and is defined by highly individualised, student-centred learning that responds to the complex cognitive, sensory, physical and emotional needs of students from kindergarten to Year 12.

Educational opportunities are aligned with the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF), Working Towards Foundation Level Curriculum, the Australian Curriculum, and Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification (TASC) requirements. Learning is authentic, functional, and connected to real-world contexts, with a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy across a broad and balanced curriculum, alongside targeted learning that supports communication, independence, wellbeing, and the development of essential life skills.

NWSS supports students with autism, intellectual disability, physical and neurological conditions, and complex sensory and medical needs.

Learning environments intentionally uphold every student's fundamental right to communicate by ensuring access through their preferred communication methods, including Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) systems. Communication access is embedded across all learning contexts, enabling students to engage meaningfully and participate as active learners.

High staff-to-student ratios, embedded therapy, and structured yet flexible learning experiences ensure students are supported to actively engage, build capability and achieve their personal best within safe, inclusive and future-focused learning environments.

The redevelopment of the NWSS Burnie campus will enhance learning and operations by providing modern facilities that support inclusive and flexible education. New general learning areas (GLAs) and alternative learning spaces will allow personalised and small-group programs, while specialist facilities such as therapy rooms, the extended gymnasium, active learning areas, and a hydrotherapy pool will enable on-site delivery of wellbeing and allied health programs. Improved staff workspaces, meeting rooms, and a central leadership hub strengthen collaboration and coordination, and enhanced accessibility and clear zoning promote safety, dignity, and efficient day-to-day operations.

4 Capacity Assessment

4.1 Enrolment Demand

Tasmania currently operates three support schools. Enrolment is considered through an annual nomination process that assesses student eligibility and determines whether a support school is the most appropriate educational setting to meet the student's needs.

Nominations are initiated by a parent or guardian and are considered for students with a significant, identifiable disability, including moderate to severe intellectual disability. This may be accompanied by severe physical disability, a moderate to severe Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), or other cooccurring disabilities.

The Support School Placement Committee reviews nominations made by families, and enrolment occurs when the committee agrees that a support school is the most appropriate school enrolment for the student.

The NWSS operates from two separate campus facilities. One located in Burnie and the other in Devonport. The catchment area for students attending the Burnie campus extends from Rocky Cape, Yolla, Ridgley through to Ulverstone and the outlying rural areas.

4.2 Capacity

The current NWSS Burnie campus currently has 10 general learning areas (GLAs) which will be increased to 12 GLAs and associated amenities through the redevelopment. This will allow for further capacity.



Image: A student from NWSS

5 School Site

The existing NWSS Burnie campus is located at 36 Thorne Street, Acton. The site was formerly the Acton Primary School site which was closed in 2009.

Following closure of the Acton Primary School, the Thorne Street site was redeveloped and reopened as an education hub including the NWSS Burnie campus, which was completed in April 2017. The site is shared with other DECYP operations, including the Burnie Child and Family Learning Centre.

The existing support school consists of several existing linked buildings located on the northern half of the site.

6 Community Consultation

DECYP undertakes extensive community engagement for all major capital works projects and initiated community consultation for this project in 2023. Through this consultation feedback was received on the infrastructure needs of NWSS in order to provide high-quality contemporary learning and support for students and staff.

A community engagement outcomes report (Attachment 2) was prepared following the consultation process and published through DECYP's consultation platform, school communication channels, and DECYP's website.

The project working group (PWG) comprising representatives from the school, school association committee, DECYP and the design consultant team, have met fortnightly to progress the design and project.

Staff have been consulted during the design phase and feedback incorporated into the design.

Consultation outcomes directly informed the development of a site master plan reflecting key community priorities for teaching, learning, student wellbeing, and site functionality.

In response, the PWG developed a concept design that enables priority works in line with the agreed scope to be delivered within the approved budget.

The concept plan (Attachment 1) for the proposed works was shared with the broader school community in May 2026, and the consultation process was promoted via the school's communication channels, the DECYP website and social media. As part of the community consultation process, staff and parents/carers had the opportunity to provide any additional feedback on the design proposal.

To date there has been a small number of submissions seeking further information and a significant number providing positive feedback on the proposed concept plan. The consultation period is open until 12 June 2026. The results of the consultation process were not available at the time of writing and will be shared with the committee at the hearing.

7 Proposed Works

The NWSS Burnie campus will provide contemporary design solutions and fit out to enhance teaching and learning opportunities. The proposed works will enable students and consider sensory, cognitive, and social abilities offering opportunities to foster social inclusion and enhance wellbeing.

Redevelopment of the Burnie campus includes:

- a new accessible hydrotherapy pool and associated change and toilet facilities with internal access, storage and plant and equipment spaces along with separate external access to facilitate community use
- redevelopment/upgrade to accommodate a total of 12 GLAs
- improved access from internal learning areas to external play spaces including minor landscaping
- upgrade of existing kitchen cabinetry to facilitate improved safety and provide alternative safe breakout spaces for students
- new undercover structures and walkways to improve all weather access for student drop-off and pick-up
- upgrade of existing spaces to provide breakout/regulation spaces, staff offices, meeting rooms, amenities, support rooms, and storage.

Specific considerations in the building design and site redevelopment will reflect the specialised needs and activities of students including:

- access and movement between spaces and buildings

- acoustics
- colour and materials (sensory effects)
- lighting (sensory effects)
- increased natural light in internal spaces
- student and building security
- community areas and parent spaces
- emergency preparations
- equipment and furniture
- layout of functional spaces
- wayfinding
- access to outdoor spaces
- variability in visibility and privacy as appropriate to specific spaces
- transitions between spaces and activities.

A proposed staging plan has been developed to facilitate the continuous operation of the school throughout the construction period, while minimising disruption to teaching and learning activities. The sequencing prioritises student and staff safety, learning and ensures clear separation between construction and occupied areas.

Works will be carefully staged to enable progressive decanting of learning areas, reducing the need for temporary buildings and optimising the available budget.



Image: Students from NWSS

8 Design Philosophy

8.1 Design Principles

The DECYP Built Environment Guide (BEG) identifies seven principles as a guiding set of values.

These principles facilitate a collective understanding for all involved when designing DECYP environments. The BEG has identified aspirations that provide greater detail to the meaning of each principle.

The costed concept plan for NWSS Burnie has been designed with consideration of the BEG principles and aspirations, noting specific connections between the NWSS Burnie design and principles below:

- **PLACE**

The redevelopment represents a thoughtful balance between past and future—retaining the identity and community significance of the existing school while transforming it into a progressive, inclusive, and sustainable learning environment. Through flexible design, neuro-inclusive principles, and a strong commitment to sustainability, the project creates a place where students feel safe, supported, and inspired to reach their full potential.

- **SUSTAINABLE**

Sustainability is embedded throughout the project, with a strong emphasis on environmental responsibility and resource efficiency. The decision to refurbish and extend existing buildings significantly reduces material waste and embodied energy, aligning with Tasmanian Government sustainability objectives.

Key sustainable initiatives include:

- maximising natural light and ventilation to improve indoor environmental quality
- energy and water-efficient systems and fixtures
- reuse and recycling of existing building materials and infrastructure
- improved building performance through upgraded glazing and insulation
- enhanced acoustic treatments to support comfort and learning outcomes
- reduction of greenhouse gas emissions through adaptive reuse strategies.

These measures contribute to healthier, more productive learning environments while minimising environmental impact.

- **ACCESSIBLE**

The redevelopment is guided by principles of universal design, ensuring equitable access for all users. The design will exceed standards required by the National Construction Code and will remove physical barriers and promote ease of movement throughout the school.

Features include:

- wider-than-standard doorways and corridors
- step-free access and seamless floor transitions

- ramps and accessible pathways where required
- durable, smooth floor finishes suitable for mobility aids and equipment.

This inclusive approach ensures that all students, staff, and visitors can navigate and utilise the facilities with dignity and independence.

• **SAFE AND SECURE**

The redevelopment is founded on the creation of a contemporary, inclusive, and future-focused learning environment that responds to the diverse needs of its students while supporting modern teaching methodologies. At its core, the design prioritises safety for all, flexibility, adaptability, and student wellbeing, ensuring that all spaces are safe and responsive to education.

• **ENGAGING**

The design reimagines the school as a dynamic learning environment where students are empowered to engage, collaborate, and thrive. Recognising that the existing facilities no longer support contemporary pedagogical practices, the redevelopment transforms inflexible cellular classrooms – ill equipped with insufficient spaces such as storage, alternate learning, and therapy spaces – into larger flexible learning spaces that encourage creativity, independence, and collaboration.

Spaces are intentionally adaptable, allowing for a variety of teaching styles, group configurations, and individual learning needs. This flexibility ensures that the environment can evolve alongside educational practices and technological advancements.

• **AMENITY**

A central component of the design is its commitment to neuro-inclusivity. The redevelopment acknowledges and supports diverse cognitive, sensory, and behavioural needs through carefully considered spatial and material choices.

Design strategies to increase the amenity of the campus include:

- sensory-responsive environments with controlled lighting, improved acoustics, and tactile materials
- flexible furniture and adjustable learning settings to accommodate different preferences
- clearly defined zones and intuitive wayfinding using colour, texture, and signage
- integration of natural materials, textures, and planting to create calming, restorative spaces
- a fully equipped hydrotherapy pool that compliments therapy choice for students
- inclusion of dedicated amenities, including student toilets and adult change facilities, to ensure dignity and accessibility
- co-location of equipment storage with learning spaces to enhance functionality and reduce disruption.

• **ADAPTIVE AND FLEXIBLE**

The design prioritises inclusivity, accessibility, and adaptability to support diverse learning needs.

Key design responses include:

- provision of larger and well equipped new and refurbished GLAs

- integration of alternate learning spaces alongside each GLA to support varied teaching methods and student needs.



Image: A student from NWSS

9 Design Concepts

The design process is grounded in a methodical master planning approach. A comprehensive review of the existing campus established a clear understanding of site constraints, opportunities, and legacy infrastructure. This was paired with the development of a detailed return brief to ensure alignment between the Project Brief, functional requirements, and available budget.

Multiple design options were explored, testing a range of strategies including:

- integration of new build elements versus adaptive reuse of existing structures
- reconfiguration of building functions within the established footprint
- optimisation of spatial relationships across the campus.

The proposed design has the following advantages:

- utilises the existing building fabric and site infrastructure
- reinforces the flow of students through the school and connections between students and associated school functions
- creates junior and senior learning precincts within the structure of the campus
- logically locates functions around the existing school footprint and around other DECYP tenancies that are co-located on the site

- locates the hydrotherapy pool on the perimeter of the school campus to allow for community access
- creates stronger links between the senior students and support services such as the library and kitchen to aid in the development of advanced skills
- maintains existing access, bus, and car parking areas
- utilises existing driveway infrastructure to develop and undercover drop off/pick up area
- provides a consolidated zone where staff can take a break, meet and work out of student-centred areas.

9.1 Building Materials

Materials have been selected for longevity and low maintenance. Externally the materials will be a combination of powder coated aluminium windows frames, lightweight cladding and colourbond roof lining which contrasts yet compliments the hard-edged industrial nature of the 1960's building design. The original buildings were designed to withstand the day-to-day use by students, and this philosophy will carry through into the current design.

These materials provide a weather tight skin that will withstand deterioration and require very little maintenance for years to come.

Internally, a similar philosophy will apply to combine a combination of robust materials with existing modified forms to create an inspiring environment that will encourage teaching and learning and be a place where students feel safe and supported and a place that they will be proud to call their own.

Inspiration of the interior design will be drawn from nature to provide a calm environment.

9.2 Landscaping

The outdoor play area will support junior students, with direct access provided from all GLAs. This space will be integral to fostering holistic student development, delivering meaningful benefits across both physical activity and social-emotional wellbeing.

The landscape design will incorporate a diverse range of play elements, including trampolines, swings, slides, a wheelchair-accessible sandpit, hammocks, shade structures, and a series of landscaped nooks that encourage exploration, quiet retreat, and social interaction.

All above-ground play equipment will be installed with compliant soft-fall surfaces to ensure safety. The design will respond sensitively to existing site conditions, working with the natural slope and ground levels to create an engaging and dynamic environment.

Circulation pathways will be durable, clearly defined, and universally accessible, ensuring ease of movement and inclusivity for all students.



Image: A student from NWSS

9.3 Sustainability and a healthy learning environment

The design process confirmed that it is more cost effective to remodel and renovate existing buildings rather than build new. To this end, the existing building has been overlaid with contemporary education principles to create a modern learning environment.

The design will provide an environment that places the students and teachers at the centre and provide them with access to appropriately conditioned spaces and good natural light. The works will address the poor aspects of the 1960s design such as poor building orientation, poor acoustics, deteriorated building fabric, and inadequate access for all.

This approach will maximise recycling from the existing building fabric and upgrading finishes and fittings to provide an appropriate learning environment.

Students and teachers can spend long periods indoors so there is benefit from buildings with improved natural light, fresh air, and access to external views from the learning spaces. The proposed redevelopment of the learning spaces and amenities will incorporate the following features:

- internal spaces designed to maximise daylight and air quality
- larger and more efficient glazing systems that provided improved visual connections to the outdoors
- environmentally responsible building materials and room fit outs
- improved acoustic performance through appropriate material selection
- creation of flexible and adaptable spaces that can be used for multiple purposes

- retaining and reusing as much site infrastructure as possible such as walkways, car parking and roadways, stormwater, and sewerage systems
- upgrading the electrical system as required to improve energy efficiencies
- reuse of existing materials
- waste management and recycling during demolition.

9.3.1 Energy

The redevelopment provides an opportunity to significantly reduce energy consumption and associated operational costs through a coordinated series of passive and active design strategies.

Key initiatives include the introduction of appropriately designed overhangs to external windows to minimise summer heat gain and reduce reliance on mechanical cooling. Thermal performance will be further enhanced through upgraded insulation to redeveloped building elements and the incorporation of double glazing.

Energy efficiency will also be supported through the specification of high-efficiency air conditioning systems and LED lighting throughout. Lighting controls, including occupancy sensors in low-use areas such as storerooms, will ensure energy use is optimised without compromising functionality.

9.3.2 Indoor environmental quality

The redevelopment prioritises indoor environmental quality, with a particular focus on lighting and thermal comfort as critical factors influencing student wellbeing and performance.

Lighting design will provide a balanced, comfortable environment through the use of high-quality fittings that minimise glare while delivering warm, consistent illumination. Dimmable controls will allow users to adjust lighting levels to suit different learning activities. Natural daylight will be maximised while carefully managing glare.

Mechanical systems will deliver appropriately conditioned air to all occupied spaces, with individual user controls to enhance comfort and adaptability. Material selection will prioritise low volatile organic compound (VOC) products to support healthy indoor air quality.

Acoustic performance will be addressed through considered design and engineering to control noise levels and enhance learning conditions.

Strong visual and physical connections to outdoor play areas and natural elements will further enhance wellbeing.

9.3.3 Site ecology and water cycle

The redevelopment responds to existing site conditions, particularly the challenges associated with roof drainage in buildings that have evolved over time. Identified issues, including internal water damage, will be addressed without increasing stormwater load on the existing drainage infrastructure.

The design of the junior playground will provide valuable opportunities for students to engage with natural elements, including fresh air, daylight, and landscape features, as part of the learning environment. The external space redevelopment will also reduce hard surfaces, allow increased stormwater infiltration, and contribute to improved site ecology.

9.3.4 Access and safety

To create a safe and accessible neuro-inclusive environment, design elements being considered include:

- sensory-friendly elements adding dimmable lighting, soft flooring and panels for better acoustics, sensory zones, different sensory textures, etc.
- flexible spaces and furniture: adding movable walls, adjustable furniture such as standing desks, adjustable seating, etc.
- zoning and wayfinding: defining zones such as learning or eating spots by use of coloured walls or textured carpet; clear signage for smoother navigation
- biophilia: adding natural elements such as plants or water features, using earthy tones for walls or floors, incorporating textures that mimic elements found in nature, etc.

10 Accessibility

Universal access is provided to all areas where the redevelopment is to take place.

The design embeds accessibility throughout the campus by addressing:

- mobility access – wide circulation paths, hoists, adjustable furniture, door widths
- sensory accessibility – acoustic control, muted finishes, low stimulation and regulation spaces
- cognitive accessibility – clear wayfinding, predictable layouts, visual cues
- inclusive facilities – accessible toilets, adult change facilities and hydrotherapy.



Image: Artist impression of the NWSS Burnie undercover entrance

11 Tasmanian Government Art Site Scheme

The redevelopment presents an excellent opportunity for a suitable artwork to be incorporated into the social and public areas of the school. The artwork component will be progressed by a focused subgroup of the PWG.

To date, Arts Tasmania has commenced planning the process to procure a local artwork that can inspire learning and interaction.

12 Project Management

12.1 Funding and Budget Estimates

The 2024-25 Tasmanian State Budget committed \$62.15 million in the Capital Investment Program (CIP) for the NWSS. The CIP program budget for the NWSS is broken down across the Burnie and Devonport projects as follows:

	CIP Funding \$,000
Devonport New Campus	47,750
Burnie Redevelopment	14,400
Total NWSS CIP funding	62,150

The NWSS Burnie Campus Redevelopment total funding is broken down below:

Available Budget	\$,000
2024-2025 State Budget CIP	14,400
School Contribution	400
Residual Funding from previous Support School Program	578
Total Project Budget	15,378

The budget estimate is summarised in the table below:

Description	Cost Estimate (\$,000)
Construction Cost (inc. site infrastructure upgrades)	9,665
Market Conditions and Escalation	2,115
Construction Contingency	1,178
Consultant Services	946
Statutory Fees / Insurances	212
Furniture/Equipment/IT	429
Tasmanian Government Art Scheme	80
DECYP Project Management	369
School Administration Support	60
Design Contingency	145
General Project and Post Occupancy Contingency	179
Total	15,378

12.2 Construction Budget and Allowance for Escalation

The total budget estimate is summarised above and demonstrates sufficient market and escalation allowances, as well as a construction contingency to manage unforeseen circumstances that may arise during construction.

A staged construction program has been developed to minimise school operational impacts during construction and is anticipated to be undertaken over 18 months. Site infrastructure service upgrades are included in the construction cost.

The available budget for Burnie, based on current Quantity Surveyor (QS) advice, is summarised below and includes allowances for:

- \$2.115 million Market Loading and escalation
- \$1.178 million Construction Contingency
- \$324,000 Design, general and post occupancy contingencies.

12.3 Project Timeline

The key upcoming dates for the project are as follows:

Project Task / Phase	Completion Date
Development Application submission	June 2026
Public Works Hearing	July 2026
Tender date <i>*subject to Public Works Committee approval</i>	November 2026
Tenders close	November 2026
Tender assessment and approval	December 2026
Construction commences	February 2027
Construction completion <i>*subject to construction market capacity</i>	October 2028
Defects liability period <i>*subject to construction completion date</i>	October 2029
Project completion review and evaluation	December 2029
Project finalised	December 2029

12.4 Potential Project Constraints

Risks and constraints identified in relation to the project budget, timeline and scope include the following:

Identified Risks	Risk Mitigation Strategy
Budget overrun	Quantity Surveyor estimates undertaken at key milestones and allowed time for Project Working Group design review. Manage contingency and furniture and equipment funds. Ongoing global supply chain volatility and construction market conditions may impact material availability and pricing.
Budget overrun due to unidentified infrastructure issues	Review of infrastructure as part of Stage 1 of the project to ensure all infrastructure issues are identified.
Program delays	Allow sufficient time for design development, approvals, and review in the project program. Allow adequate time for contractor to review and confirm the staging plan.

Scope drift	DECYP Asset Strategy Executive committee approval to proceed received.
Unmet stakeholder expectations	Ensure Project Working Group has adequate resources to inform stakeholders. Management of stakeholder expectations with regular consultation to the school community as per the management and communications strategy.
Continuity of learning during construction work	Identify staged program with consultant and contractor to minimise disruption to school operations
Consultant underperformance	Ensure consultant has sufficient resources for the project and is given clear direction and feedback.
Contractor liquidation	Follow Treasurer's Instructions procurement guidelines and employ appropriate tender evaluation process.
Change in Project Working Group members	Project documentation up to date. Sign-off of key milestones as required. Continuity of Learning Services involvement.
Unforeseen site conditions	Full review of existing services by consultant team. Ensure project contingency is maintained at start of construction.

13 Declaration

The following statements respond to Clause 15(2) of the *Public Works Committee Act* relating to Functions of the Committee.

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

Yes, the design addresses the issues raised in consultation with the school and community including the need for more flexible/multi-purpose spaces, larger classrooms and breakout spaces, more professional support spaces, improved external access and improved amenities.

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

Yes, a whole of site master plan was developed and costed with the school and community priorities. The PWG considered priorities, staging and buildability of the works and agreed the proposed design and staging effectively addresses the highest priority needs. The design identified the most workable solution to meet the school's education requirements. The process includes

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?

Yes, the proposed works respond to the briefing requirements expressed through the Education Brief. 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?

Yes, the proposed works address priority areas of NWSS Burnie. Costs are minimised by retaining building structure and the use of modest, suitable new materials. Testing of options settled on the design which meets priority needs while remaining within the allocated budget.

Are the proposed works a good use of public funds?

Yes, the proposed works offer a cost-effective solution to meet the highest priority needs to assist NWSS Burnie to deliver quality contemporary educational experiences and to support the learning journey of the students and improve education outcomes. DECYP considers this to be a good use of public funds.

14 Conclusion

The proposed redevelopment of NWSS Burnie will provide a much-needed range of contemporary learning spaces to support the school's teaching and learning framework.

The project represents value for money as it will overcome many of the significant shortcomings of ageing infrastructure and provide settings for high quality contemporary learning experiences not presently possible.

Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works approval will provide the school community with assurances that the project will proceed through further detailed design, tender and construction and the needs of students and staff will be met.

It is recommended that the proposed works for the major redevelopment proceed.

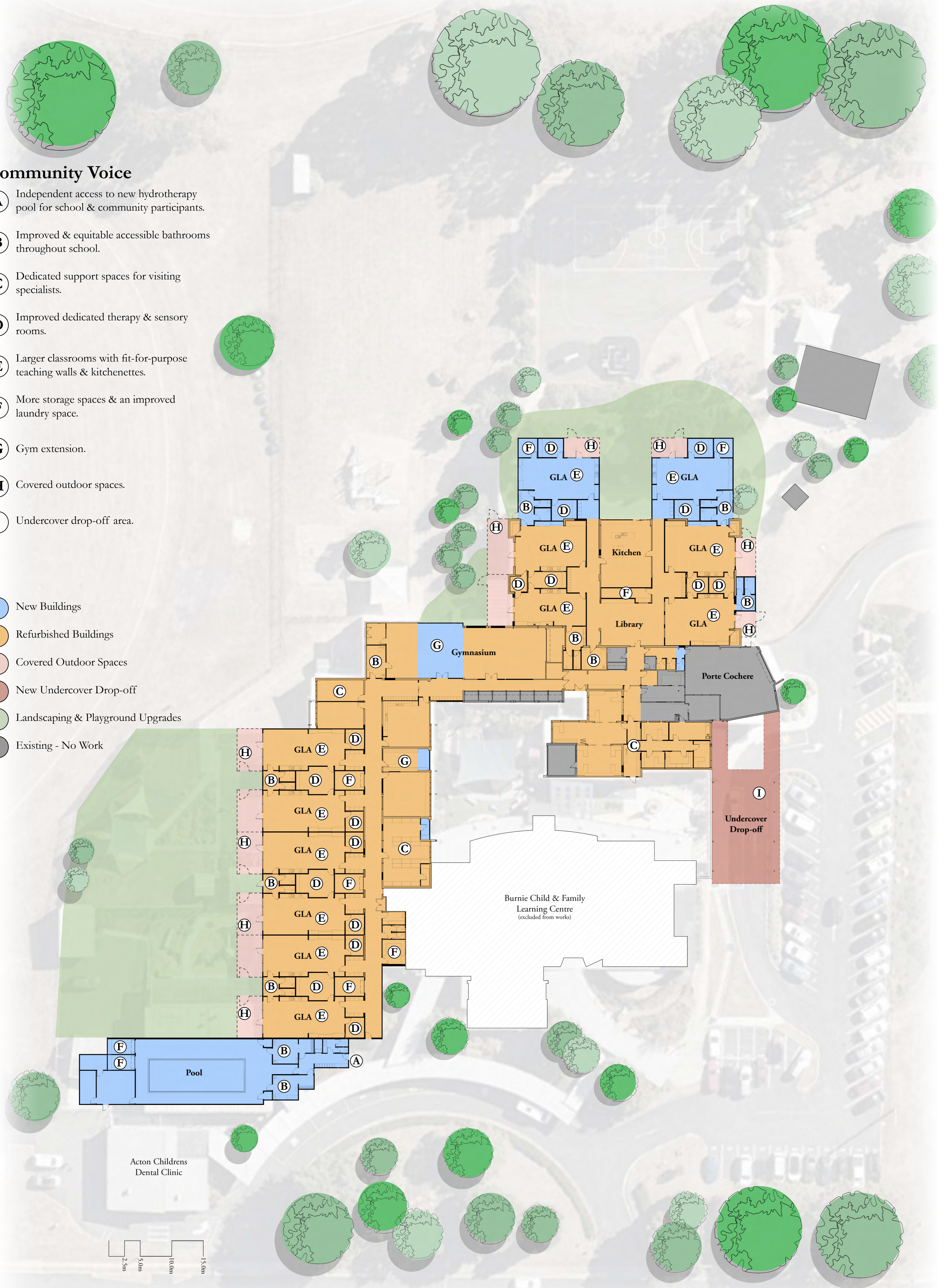
15 Attachments

1. Attachment 1 – Concept Plan
2. Attachment 2 – Community Engagement Outcomes Report

Community Voice

- (A)** Independent access to new hydrotherapy pool for school & community participants.
- (B)** Improved & equitable accessible bathrooms throughout school.
- (C)** Dedicated support spaces for visiting specialists.
- (D)** Improved dedicated therapy & sensory rooms.
- (E)** Larger classrooms with fit-for-purpose teaching walls & kitchenettes.
- (F)** More storage spaces & an improved laundry space.
- (G)** Gym extension.
- (H)** Covered outdoor spaces.
- (I)** Undercover drop-off area.

- New Buildings
- Refurbished Buildings
- Covered Outdoor Spaces
- New Undercover Drop-off
- Landscaping & Playground Upgrades
- Existing - No Work





GLA Render 1



GLA Render 2



Covered Drop-off Render 1



Covered Drop-off Render 2



**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
OUTCOMES REPORT
NORTH WEST SUPPORT SCHOOL**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

In 2021, the Tasmanian Government committed a \$20 million Support School Package which included \$15.5 million for the redevelopment of North West Support School (NWSS) Devonport campus. This was to be on a new site in Devonport, while the broader Package included a new hydrotherapy pool and upgrades for the NWSS Burnie campus.

The Government received advice that it could consider another option to deliver this commitment: consolidating the two campuses into a new single support school on the former Penguin Primary School site.

The Minister for Education, Children and Youth agreed to undertake broad consultation to test the school community's interest in further investigating this new option.

CONSULTATION PROCESS

The consultation process for North West Support School ran from 27 February to 20 April 2023. This included:

- Online feedback form
- Community meetings held on:
 - 28 March 2023 at the Burnie campus
 - 29 March 2023 at the Devonport campus.

The Department for Education, Children and Young People (DECYP) ran an advertising and communication campaign to ensure as many community members as possible had a chance to have their say, including:

- Parents and carers
- Staff
- Community members
- Service providers.

CONSULTATION SUBMISSIONS: A SUMMARY

Based on all submissions received, a greater number of respondents opposed the Penguin option (47 per cent) compared to 39 per cent of submissions received being in favour of the Penguin option.

The Department received **136 unique submissions** throughout the consultation process and there were seven submissions received through the Minister's Office, including one formal Question without Notice request from a Member of the Legislative Council.

There were 11 attendees for Burnie meeting and 16 attendees for the Devonport meeting.

WHAT WE HEARD: KEY MESSAGES

Almost all the feedback received opposed to the Penguin option cited the additional distance and travel times to get to and from the school and the perceived impacts this would have on students and their families.

Of the total submissions received, four said they required more information about the tailored transport solutions offered by the Department.

Of the submissions received in favour of the Penguin option, the increase in scale for resourcing and co-location with the Penguin District School were cited as the primary reasons.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

Community engagement activities for NWSS were tailored to meet three key objectives. These were:

- Facilitate effective consultation for NWSS to raise awareness with the whole school community and other stakeholders about the Penguin option and encourage participation in the consultation process.
- Generate community and stakeholder feedback on the Penguin option to help inform decision-making by the Minister and DECYP.
- Demonstrate the Government's commitment to genuine, inclusive, and transparent community consultation.

The following activities were initiated specifically to achieve these objectives.

Objective	Activity
Facilitate effective engagement for NWSS to raise awareness with the whole school community and other stakeholders about the Penguin option and encourage participation in the consultation process.	Extensively promote the consultation process via school communication channels, radio, print and social media advertising to maximise awareness of the opportunity to provide feedback.
Generate community and stakeholder feedback on the Penguin option to help inform decision-making by the Minister and DECYP.	Provide the mechanisms to receive submissions from all stakeholders to be considered and included in the consultation outcomes report, including online, hard copy, and face-to-face options.
Demonstrate the Government's commitment to genuine, inclusive, and transparent community engagement.	Extend the consultation period from six weeks to eight weeks to provide additional time for stakeholders to submit their feedback. Make the consultation outcomes report publicly available.

CAMPAIGN OUTPUTS

The campaign for NWSS was launched on 27 February 2023. The campaign ran for eight weeks and concluded on 20 April 2023. Campaign outputs were:

- Multiple articles in the NWSS newsletter
- Ministerial media release (and subsequent article in The Advocate newspaper)
- Direct postcard mail outs to all currently enrolled students' families, school staff and service providers
- Direct emails to all currently enrolled students' families, school staff and service providers
- Letter from the DECYP Secretary provided to all currently enrolled students' families, school staff and service providers
- Direct outreach to the Premier's Disability Advisory Council
- Direct emails to relevant Local Government general managers
- Direct emails to relevant State and Federal elected representatives
- Campaign postcards made available in the NWSS administration areas
- NWSS page on the DECYP website
- Multiple posts on the NWSS Devonport and Burnie Facebook Pages
- Online feedback form
- Dedicated email box to receive submissions

- Two community meetings (Burnie and Devonport campuses)
- 30 radio advertising slots on 7BU, 7AD and SEAFM radio stations
- Three print advertisements in The Advocate newspaper (including two Saturday editions)
- Three print advertisements in community press publications including the Circular Head Chronicle, Central Coast Voice, and the Kentish Voice
- Five weeks of Facebook and Instagram advertising geo-targeting audiences on the North West Coast likely to be parents of school-aged children aged 3-17 years.

INTERPRETING THE FEEDBACK

All feedback received through the consultation process has been reviewed and best efforts have been made to interpret it to ensure accuracy and integrity of the consultation process and support informed decision-making by the Tasmanian Government.

In interpreting the feedback, DECYP took the following approach:

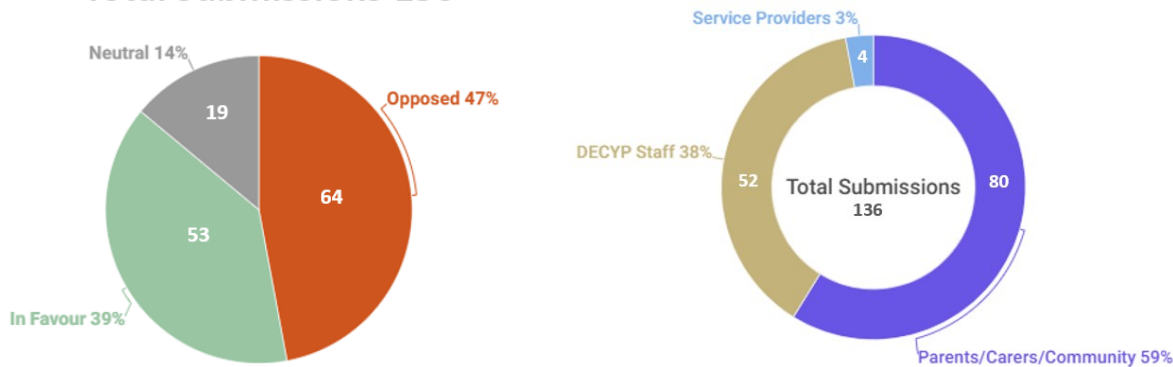
- Invalid submissions are considered those that have been left blank or are duplicates.
- Duplicate submissions are considered to be either those that are the same submissions received multiple times via the same or different medium, or multiple submissions from the same respondent expressing the same viewpoint. In such cases, to help determine sentiment in relation to the Penguin option, duplicate submissions have been counted only once regardless of medium.
- Submissions were considered neutral if:
 - It was unclear whether they were in favour or opposed to the Penguin option.
 - They did not express a preference and instead provided feedback on the types of services and infrastructure support schools should include.
 - The submissions listed both 'pros' and 'cons'; or
 - The submissions were requesting more information (such as transport arrangements for students).
- Submissions made via the community meetings have not been counted as unique submissions, and accordingly not included in the final tally in favour or opposed to the Penguin option. This is because no limit was placed on how much feedback one respondent could provide to the two questions, meaning that one respondent was able to provide multiple 'submissions.' Due to the nature of the questions, much of the feedback was also more general in nature, such as the type of infrastructure a support school should include.
- The majority of submissions received expressing opposition or support for the Penguin option cited multiple reasons. For the purposes of summarising feedback, the most common reasons for opposition or support for the Penguin option have been aggregated.

WHAT WE HEARD

Channels	Total Submissions Received	Invalid		Valid submissions	Penguin option		Neutral	Total
		Left blank	Duplicates		Opposed	In Favour		
Feedback forms	115	2	10	103	53	41	9	103
Emails	36		7	29	8	12	9	29
Correspondence	7		4	3	2		1	3
*Community meetings	143							
Social media comments	1			1	1			1
Total	159	2	21	136	64	53	19	136

**Not counted in the total tally as much of this feedback was more general in nature, with multiple responses provided by attendees*

Total Submissions 136



ONLINE FEEDBACK FORMS

The online feedback form was web-based using the Microsoft Teams platform, which respondents accessed via the NWSS *Get Involved* page on the DECYP website.

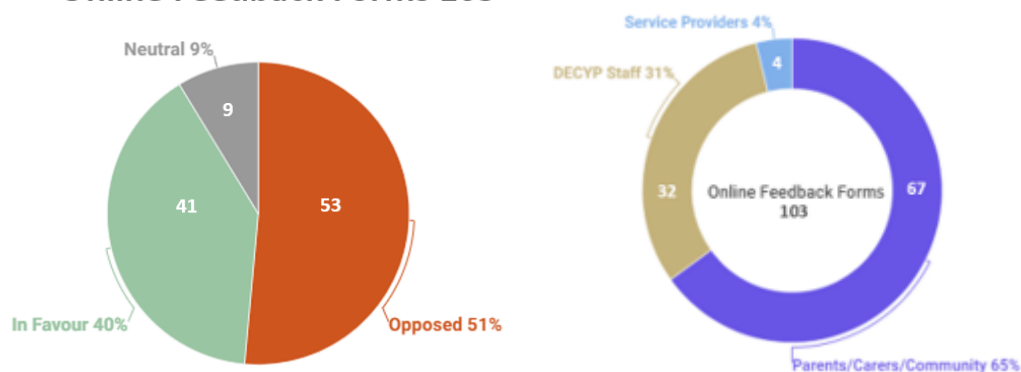
Response summary

- Of the 103 unique online feedback forms received:
 - 53 were opposed to a consolidated NWSS at Penguin.
 - 41 were in favour.
 - 9 were considered neutral.
- Of the total number of online feedback forms received:
 - 4 said they required more information about the tailored transport solutions offered by DECYP.
 - 8 raised the cost of fuel to travel to and from Penguin as one of the reasons for opposing the Penguin option.
- Of the 53 opposed to the Penguin option, the following concerns and themes were raised:
 - Concern about the physical and psychological impacts for students with severe disabilities of additional travel time on buses each day.

- Concern about travel distance and the time it would take for parents and carers to drive to the school in the event they needed to collect their child for health, behavioural or other reasons.
- Concern about the cost of fuel or loss of income for parents/carers having to take time off work to drive to and from the Penguin site.
- Some families have specifically moved to the areas nearby to the existing campuses to be closer to their child's school.
- Concern about the availability of residential properties for rent or purchase in the Penguin area and availability of nearby ambulance or health care facilities.
- Concern about their child's learning and behaviour resulting from attending a larger school at Penguin.
- Concern about the impact to parents/carers' employment or wellbeing resulting from additional logistical requirements for their child to attend school.
- Concern about the impact relocation of NWSS to Penguin would have on families' disability support arrangements through the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).
- Some respondents view the Penguin option as a loss of local community services for families in the North West region.
- Some respondents view the Penguin option as primarily focused on resolving administrative and logistical challenges for DECYP in operating a school with geographically disparate campuses.
- Some respondents said their preferred model was for NWSS to become two separate schools with separate principals.
- Of the 41 in favour of the Penguin option, the following benefits or issues were raised:
 - Greater student access to allied health and services which currently split time between three campuses.
 - The existing campus sites are constrained and do not allow for significant growth in enrolments.
 - Opportunities associated with co-location with Penguin District School (e.g. could allow for dual enrolments where possible).
 - Opportunity for NWSS students to come together and be more involved with each other, such as whole-of-school assemblies, group learning, etc.
 - Reduced impacts to school services from the principal and staff not having to travel between three campuses.
 - Improved learner outcomes resulting from co-location of staff at Penguin through greater staff interaction, professional development opportunities, and better staff morale.
 - Operating multiple campuses places greater strain on resourcing.
 - More space at the Penguin site allows for provision of more dedicated therapeutic and support areas for students.
 - More in-class support and senior staff onsite
 - Learnings from other support schools that underwent site consolidations (Northern and Southern Support Schools) identified student and staff benefits.
 - Benefits of having a fulltime nurse onsite
 - Equity of access for all NWSS students to contemporary learning facilities.
- Of the nine responses considered neutral, the following themes or issues were raised:
 - Concerns in relation to additional student, parents/carers and staff travel to the Penguin site (five of the nine neutral responses raised this concern).

- Questions in relation to the student bus arrangements for travel to the Penguin site.
- Questions about the availability of accommodation for professional support staff at Penguin.
- Suggestions for the types of facilities and spaces the redevelopment of NWSS should provide.
- Comments on the benefits that would come from consolidating the school on one site.

Online Feedback Forms 103



COMMUNITY MEETINGS

Community meetings were held at NWSS Burnie campus on 28 March 2023 and at the Devonport Annex campus on 29 March 2023. The meetings were promoted via the school newsletter, Facebook pages, DECYP website, social media advertising, and direct emails. Registration to attend the workshop was via the NWSS *Get Involved* page on the DECYP website. A total of 27 individuals registered to attend the meetings (16 for Devonport and 11 for Burnie).

Attendees were seated in small groups and the format included a Questions and Answers session and a workshop component in which attendees were asked to respond to two questions. Across both community meetings, a total of 143 individual feedback submissions were provided to the two questions.

Response summary

Question 1 - What are the most important considerations for redevelopment of NWSS – infrastructure/facilities?

Respondents said they felt the most important considerations were:

- Fully fenced facilities
- Provision of therapy/sensory rooms and regulation spaces
- More bathrooms (inside and outside)
- Availability of onsite medical personnel
- Outdoor learning spaces
- Adequate space to allow for future expansion
- Adequate storage
- Level playground
- Shelter for drop-offs
- Decent sized library, music room, office spaces for staff, specialists, and visiting therapists
- ECIS integration
- Adequate car parking
- Design to be informed through consultation with staff
- Travel arrangements to Penguin.

Question 2 - What do you believe are the biggest opportunities or challenges with the Penguin option?

Opportunities

Respondents said they felt the biggest opportunities with the Penguin option were:

- Greater allocation of support staff on site more regularly
- Access to other new education and sporting facilities
- Better options for grouping students with similar needs
- More opportunities for students to interact with Penguin District School
- No doubling of resources
- Access to high school subjects such as woodwork, art, music, etc.
- Greater capacity to accommodate more students
- Onsite hydrotherapy pool
- More areas for therapy
- Bigger library
- Improved outdoor areas
- Input from all involved to get the best outcome
- Community access of site
- Accessible play equipment.

Challenges

Respondents said they felt the biggest challenges with the Penguin option were:

- Travel time/distance for families living further away
- Medical concerns
- Families being unable to collect their child if required
- Cost of transport (fuel)
- Risk of non-attendance/home schooling
- Sensory overload for some students with larger gatherings/noise
- Impacts to therapy appointments and NDIS funding
- Lack of affordable housing in Penguin
- Risk of nearby highway/noise, etc.
- Parents not having drivers licences but needing to collect their child from Penguin
- How tailored can the student transport be? (flexible, door-to-door drop-off/pick up?)
- Impact of additional travel time on students with continence issues
- Distance from hospitals
- Impacts to student learning due to fatigue from additional travel.

EMAILS

Email submissions were encouraged via the DECYP email box.

Response summary

The email responses received in favour of the Penguin option highlighted a range of perceived benefits, including:

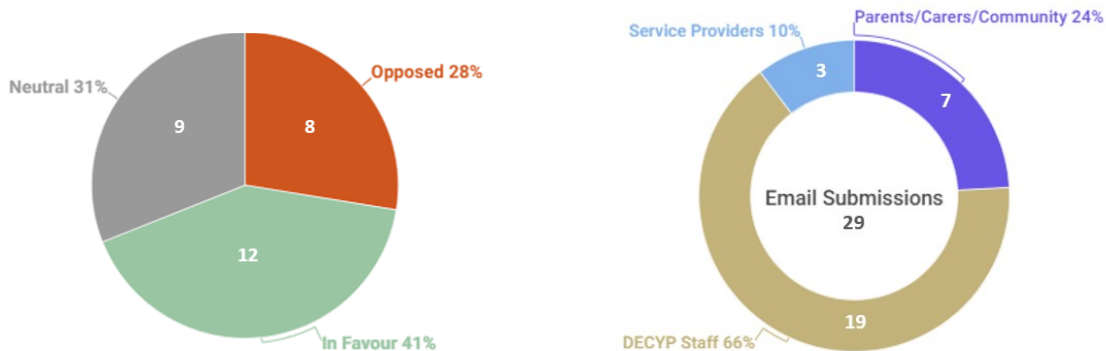
- Penguin having good outdoor areas for inquiry-based learning
- Support staff all being co-located on one site
- More space for physio programs
- Having the opportunity to accept more students
- Good for resourcing/equipment and shared facilities
- Penguin potentially being available sooner than a greenfield site build
- Onsite hydrotherapy pool
- Penguin District School and sporting facilities nearby
- Opportunity for increased class combinations
- Improved staff health and wellbeing
- Better professional learning opportunities.

The email responses received opposed to the Penguin option highlighted a range of concerns or issues, including:

- The increased travel time/distance for families living further away
- Medical concerns
- Families being unable to collect their child if required, additional bus travel increasing dysregulation of students
- Additional strain on parents and carers already “doing it tough” caring for children with severe disabilities
- Penguin being a “village” rather than a city and lacking facilities and infrastructure
- Lack of support from a majority of families for the Penguin option
- Lack of health care and accommodation in Penguin
- Increased financial costs for families
- Some NWSS staff having to find other employment due to distance to and from work
- Impacts to NDS arrangements for families.

The email responses received considered neutral highlighted a range of perceived positives and negatives with the Penguin option. Five of the nine neutral submissions raised perceived impacts to students and families from increased distance/travel time to and from the Penguin site.

Total Email Submissions 29



CORRESPONDENCE

Two unique submissions were received directly by the Minister’s Office.

Response summary

The two unique submissions opposed to the Penguin option highlighted a range of concerns, including:

- The need for NWSS to have at least 10 dedicated therapy rooms in order to cater for the current number of student enrolments and that this was unlikely to be achieved on one site.
- The desire for families on the North West Coast to retain the two separate campuses, but that these should be resourced separately and have separate principals.
- That one NWSS would not be able to readily accept students from mainstream schools.
- That students in wheelchairs find long travel to and from school emotionally and physically tiring.
- That having the two campuses allows parents/carers to more easily collect their child if ill or in need of their presence for therapy sessions or to attend assembly.

SOCIAL MEDIA

One social media comment was received by DECYP during the consultation process, noting that due to moderation policy requirements, the capacity to provide comments on Facebook pages managed by DECYP (including schools) is limited.

Response summary

The one Facebook comment cited the capital investment in the Burnie campus in 2017, and that the Penguin option would be a waste of this investment.

NEXT STEPS

This outcomes report has been provided to the Minister for Education, Children and Youth, DECYP Executive Group and DECYP Learning Services Division. The report was considered by the Minister as part of the decision-making process to not continue with the Penguin site option and to proceed with the election commitment which included a new school site in Devonport and upgrades to the Burnie campus. The feedback and submissions received will provide a valuable input into progress those works.