



PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

New North West Support School Devonport

Presented to the Clerk of the House of Assembly in accordance with House of Assembly Sessional Order 321.

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

Legislative Council

Ms Rattray (Deputy Chair)
Mr Hiscutt

House of Assembly

Ms Butler (Chair)
Ms Burnet
Mr Shelton

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1 INTRODUCTION

The Committee has the honour to report to the House of Assembly in accordance with the provisions of the *Public Works Committee Act 1914* and House of Assembly Sessional Order 321 on the -

New North West Support School Devonport

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 This reference recommended the Committee approve the construction of a new North West Support School Devonport campus (NWSS Devonport), to replace the existing school.
- 2.2 The NWSS operates campuses in Burnie and Devonport. The NWSS provides tailored education and therapy programs for children and young people with moderate to severe disabilities from kindergarten through to Year 11 and 12.
- 2.3 In 2021, the Tasmanian Government committed to deliver an upgrade to the NWSS Burnie and construction of a new purpose-built NWSS in Devonport. The Tasmanian Government subsequently committed funding of \$62.15 million. Further commitments expanded the scope of the works to include hydrotherapy pools at both schools.
- 2.4 Of that funding commitment, \$47.75 million was allocated to constructing the New NWSS Devonport.
- 2.5 The existing NWSS Devonport is located at 113 Middle Road, Devonport. Several identified deficiencies are impacting the school's ability to effectively support student learning and deliver the best possible educational outcomes. These include:
- Small, inflexible learning areas;
 - A lack of therapy and regulation spaces;
 - Circulation constraints that hinder safe and efficient movement for those using mobility devices;
 - A shortage of accessible personal care facilities with hoist capability;
 - Zoning and safeguarding limitations that impact student safety and supervision; and
 - Poor access to external learning environments, with some not fit-for-purpose.
- The existing constraints negatively impact student safety and dignity, limit access to reasonable adjustments, reduce staff capacity to provide proactive support, and hinder the delivery of appropriate educational and therapeutic programs.
- 2.6 The proposed works will involve the construction of the New NWSS Devonport campus at 3–9 Mersey Main Road, Spreyton, on land adjacent to Spreyton Primary School. It will be built with the following features:

- 12 General learning areas (GLAs) with embedded regulation rooms, kitchenette, teacher resource zones, amenities and directly connected outdoor learning areas;
- Shared specialist spaces that support life skills learning across the campus, such as the Eat Learn Grow program spaces, accessible kitchen areas, personal care facilities, and community café spaces. These area and programs replicate real world daily living contexts and support skill development, agency and active participation in everyday life;
- Hydrotherapy pool with ramped access, sensory appropriate finishes, and separate change facilities;
- Inclusive gymnasium supporting whole school events, physiotherapy, active play, and quiet movement zones;
- Regulation rooms, sensory spaces, and high-activity movement zones;
- Flexible rooms for consulting therapists and clinical specialists;
- Central secure reception, welcoming foyer, connected leadership offices, confidential meeting rooms, medication spaces, staff workrooms, and compliant record storage areas;
- Village Square and café space to support the Eat, Learn, Grow programs and foster vocational learnings, stronger community engagement and relationships with the school;
- Covered external pathways, sensory considerate transitions, predictable movement routes, and safe connections between indoor and outdoor spaces; and
- Capacity for a new GLA Hub in the future should this be necessary.

3 PROJECT COSTS

3.1 Pursuant to the Message from Her Excellency the Governor-in-Council, the estimated cost of the work is \$49.5 million.

3.2 The following information taken from the DECYP submission provides detail on the funding for the capital program at both North West Support School (NWSS) campuses, the funding breakdown for the new NWSS Devonport, and the cost estimate for the work as at the time of making the submission:

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 Devonport and Burnie projects as follows:

AVAILABLE CIP BUDGET	\$,000
Devonport	47,750
Burnie	14,400
Total NWSS Program Budget	62,150

The NWSS Devonport Project total funding is broken down below:

AVAILABLE BUDGET	\$,000
2024-25 State Budget CIP	47,750
Sale of the existing NWSS Devonport Campus	1,000
Total NWSS Devonport Project Budget	48,750

The following table details the cost estimates for the project:

DESCRIPTION	COST ESTIMATE (\$'000)
Construction Cost Estimate (including cost escalation and site infrastructure allowances)	32,630
Market Conditions Forecast	2,670
Construction Contingency	3,263
Consultant Services	2,833
Statutory Fees / Insurances	726
Other Project Costs (Land Purchases and Legal Costs etc)	3,617
Furniture/Equipment/IT	1,000
Tasmanian Government Art Scheme	80
DECYP Project Management	1,350

School Administration Support	60
Design Contingency	341
General Project and Post Occupancy Contingency	180
Total	48,750

The Devonport campus is funded within an approved \$48.75 million, comprising \$47.75 million in State Budget funding and future sale of the existing campus site located in Middle Road, which is conservatively estimated at \$1 million.

...

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

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

- \$2.670 million Market Loading
- \$1.872 million Cost escalation (p.a to midpoint construction)
- \$3.263 million Construction Contingency
- \$521,000 Design and post occupancy contingencies.¹

¹ North West Support School -New Devonport Campus, Submission to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, pp.18-19

4 EVIDENCE

4.1 The Committee commenced its inquiry on Thursday, 2 July 2026 with an inspection of the site of the proposed works. The Committee then returned to Aberdeen Room, Paranple Convention Centre, Devonport, whereupon the following witnesses appeared, made the Statutory Declaration and were examined by the Committee in public:-

- Kane Salter, Deputy Secretary Business Operations and Support, Department for Education, Children and Young People;
- Todd Williams, Director Facility Services, Department for Education, Children and Young People;
- Sarah Jane Murphy, Principal, North West Support School, Department for Education, Children and Young People; and
- Tara Broun, Architect Cumulus Studio.

The following Committee Members were present:

- Ms Jen Butler MP (Chair);
- Hon Tania Rattray MLC (Deputy Chair);
- Ms Helen Burnet MP;
- Hon Casey Hiscutt MLC; and
- Mr Mark Shelton MP.

Overview

4.2 DECYP provided a video flythrough at the hearing, with Ms Broun accompanying the presentation with an overview of the key features and design of the proposed new school:

Ms BROUN - ... The video begins entering the southern transport roadway and moving over the visitor car parking onto the level-grade pathways next to the pool area. This is a rendering of the concept materials with lightweight material above and masonry below. To the left here we have the parent pick-up and drop-off, which is under cover; and beyond that, beyond the fence, is the bus pick-up and drop-off.

We're moving now into the main entry of the school into the village square, moving past the 360-view reception area. On the left, there is a large window you can see, which is the principal and assistant principal's office. They have direct connection with the community into this village square. On the left is also a cafe spilling out into the space.

We're now moving down the main corridor. On the left is all the southern bank of ancillary spaces and on the right are all the banked classrooms. Each segment of the corridor is broken up by secure doors.

Moving down, we turn into one of the classrooms. We move through the main entrance bag drop area into the classroom. In the foreground is the main teaching area with the teaching wall. This is a visual imagery of the concept materials palettes, which are kept medium to dark to be robust and not show marks.

On the left, we have a few breakout rooms. We're moving over the kitchen and art area of the space at the moment. There's several alternative learning nooks as well in the space for privacy.

Then there's an outdoor learning secure area. The passive outdoor area is what we've just moved through in between the classrooms and now we're in the active learning outdoor area with all the play equipment, swings, which are very important. This is broken up into two spaces by a central village green area. Now we're moving into the senior side of the playground equipment.

The building's form is kept quite simple, with one big gable roof over the whole complex. In the background you can see the Kelcey Tier ranges and a bush kind of area separating the school from the Mersey main road to create kind of separation there.²

Need for and benefits of the Works

4.3 The DECYP submission outlined the need for the proposed works, and the significant benefits to the school community:

The project responds to an identified and critical need to replace the existing Devonport campus, to meet the needs of students who have high and complex educational, therapeutic and medical support needs.

As part of the broader support school program, detailed in section 12.1, the Tasmanian Government has committed \$47.75 million through the Capital Investment Program for the design and construction of the new campus, including all buildings, site infrastructure, landscaping, specialist learning, therapy spaces and a hydrotherapy pool.

The new campus will deliver a contemporary, inclusive and purpose-designed support school aligned with DECYP policy settings, Disability Royal Commission (DRC) reform directions, and best practice in support school education.³

...

While the existing site is currently accommodating 61 students, the environment hampers the ability of staff to safely and effectively adjust to student needs due to:

- Undersized and inflexible learning areas.*
- Insufficient therapy and regulation spaces.*
- Constrained circulation unsuited to mobility devices.*
- Limited hoist enabled personal care facilities.*
- Poor zoning and safeguarding limitations.*
- Poor access to external learning environments that are not fit-for-purpose.*

These constraints negatively impact student safety, dignity, access to reasonable adjustments, staff capacity to provide proactive support, and the delivery of appropriate educational and therapeutic programs.

² Transcript of Evidence, Department for Education, Children and Young People, pp. 2-3

³ *North West Support School -New Devonport Campus*, Submission to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, p. 4

The new campus will support approximately 71 students across 12 General Learning Areas (GLAs), reflecting the growth in student complexity and the need for specialist spaces.

The proposed new campus is designed with spatial modelling allowing flexibility to support additional students if required due to cohort composition or future demand.⁴

...

The proposed new development for the NWSS Devonport campus represents a necessary and future focused response to the increasingly complex educational, therapeutic, and behavioural needs of the student cohort.

The existing Middle Road facility no longer provides the safety, accessibility, or specialist infrastructure required to support students who rely on predictable, trauma aware, universally designed environments.

Consultation with families, staff, disability advocates, clinicians, and department specialists has shaped a design that prioritises dignity, safety, sensory regulation, and inclusive learning.

The new campus will deliver purpose built GLAs, therapeutic spaces, hydrotherapy, outdoor learning, and community facing areas, ensuring the school can provide high quality, individualised education within a calm, supportive, and adaptable setting.

The project will deliver a safe, modern and rights-based campus that upholds dignity, enables reasonable adjustments, supports participation and wellbeing, strengthens community connections and reflects contemporary expectations for inclusive education for students with disability.⁵

Key Design Principles and Features

4.4 The DECYP submission highlighted key features of the new school design:

The new NWSS Devonport campus will be a fully purpose-built, contemporary environment designed from the ground up to support flexible, individualised and small-group learning through integrated education, therapy, wellbeing and support services. Its coherent campus-wide layout, logical circulation and clear zoning enhance accessibility, supervision and operational efficiency, while improved traffic and arrival arrangements support safe and efficient student transport.

The design allows for greater site capacity and future-proofing to accommodate enrolment growth, program expansion and evolving student needs, alongside purpose-designed outdoor learning and regulation spaces and optimised staff collaboration through shared professional areas. This design will ensure that the campus can effectively meet the complex needs of students now and into the future.⁶

4.5 Ms Broun explained a key principle in guiding the design was ensuring students are respected as individuals and empowered to make decisions for themselves:

Ms BROUN - One of our key design pillars that we identified from the very beginning was dignity and agency. As Sarah Jane mentioned, we've really honed in on that. It is a fine balance to strike between privacy - obviously we have many amenities and bathrooms, et cetera, in

⁴ North West Support School -New Devonport Campus, Submission to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, p. 7

⁵ North West Support School -New Devonport Campus, Submission to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, p. 22

⁶ North West Support School -New Devonport Campus, Submission to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, p. 6

this project that you can't have visibility into and they need that privacy - but we have run tests and we've had meetings with the DECYP inclusion team to look at where all our window placements are, et cetera, so that we can make sure there's a lot of eyes on the classrooms, et cetera, so that, for example, those rooms that are in between the classroom and the corridor, there are windows aligned exactly so that when people just happen to be passing down the corridor, they can see straight into the classroom through those rooms. So, you're getting that double visibility into those small breakout rooms and into the classroom. So, there's no pockets that anyone can be secluded in.⁷

4.6 The Committee asked the witnesses how accessibility would be improved at the new campus:

CHAIR - ...one of the recommendations of the royal commission was more inclusive interactions, I believe. What other recommendations from that royal commission have you embedded into the design and will feature as a part of this project?

Ms MURPHY - The design is all based on universal principles of access for students, so accessibility has been really well considered. Also, the design to allow for the least restrictive environment for our young people to have access to.⁸

...

CHAIR - Just on that, within this design component is there an even greater widening of those access areas? I think it was stated this morning that wheelchairs are getting heavier and wider. Can you talk to us about that, to provide some insight into Hansard?

Ms MURPHY - With technological advancement, wheelchairs are pretty amazing now. They can go from sitting to standing. We have lots of young people who have got electric wheelchairs, and the width of those wheelchairs - in the current corridors you actually can't pass them. That causes other issues for young people, particularly those who have sensory disabilities, to be able to have to wait at the end of a corridor when you can see where you want to go but it's unsafe to transition through. Cumulus have been really intentional in the design of corridors and spaces so that they can be multi-use for young people transitioning at the same time, without having those blockers and barriers.⁹

4.7 The Committee also asked how the design would accommodate improved safety within the school:

CHAIR - ... safety was a large aspect of part of the royal commission's findings. What aspects of this design will provide an even safer environment for people?

Ms MURPHY - As part of the works, which I will get Tara to talk about, we have worked with inclusion and diversity around ensuring we have really great visibility and access from all angles of all areas to access spaces, including those individual therapy spaces, classroom spaces. Tara talked about the way the corridors have been segmented to allow students to have freedom of movement between spaces and classrooms.

Mr WILLIAMS -... the Department also has design guidelines that drive all our projects and the safeguarding principles and safety that underlie all of that. That's an important part of all our design considerations and absolutely for the North West Support School.¹⁰

⁷ Transcript of Evidence, Department for Education, Children and Young People, p. 4

⁸ Transcript of Evidence, Department for Education, Children and Young People, p. 3

⁹ Transcript of Evidence, Department for Education, Children and Young People, p. 6

¹⁰ Transcript of Evidence, Department for Education, Children and Young People, p. 4

- 4.8 The Committee observed the design seeks to bring the outside indoors, to support student wellbeing through a calmer, healthier and more engaging learning environment. The Committee asked the witnesses to explain how this concept had been embedded in the design:

Ms RATTRAY - While we were talking about the design, I heard this morning... that a lot of the windows were strategically placed to also be able to take in the outside view as well. Was that correct...?

Ms MURPHY - One of the things that we love about our Middle Road campus is that from all aspects of our windows, we're looking out through that beautiful bushland and so the window placement in the new build allows us to have that beautiful view of the Kelcey Tier and the bush planting that exists around the boundary of the school.

Ms BROUN - We have the classrooms deliberately stacked in twin pairings so that in between them they have that massive outdoor space that they get to look out onto. We call it the passive outdoor space because it's not necessarily going to be distracting for them with a lot of equipment and playground equipment and activity going on. It will just be kind of a nice outlook as well.¹¹

- 4.9 The Committee recognised the importance of inclusive interactions and providing opportunities for collaboration with other schools. The witnesses explained how the location and design of the school would promote this interaction:

Ms MURPHY - The site that has been selected for North West Support School is at Spreyton, which is a co-located site. It is co-located with Spreyton Primary School, which opens up further opportunity for us to engage with local area schools. Currently, the North West Support School Devonport campus has ongoing relationships through the Young Leaders of Tasmania program with Devonport Primary School, Hillcrest Primary School, Reece High School and Don College. This allows for an additional opportunity for our students to be able to collaborate and work with Spreyton Primary School.¹²

...

Ms BROUN - ...we've deliberately placed that village green, the grass kind of area near to Spreyton Primary School, so that with the Twilight Festival, which used to be named the Apple Festival, there is that ability to collaborate the future if the school wants to be involved in that festival as well.¹³

- 4.10 The Committee understood the limitations of the current school, noting the new school was being designed with flexibility in mind, to provide improved student support. The Committee asked the witnesses about the challenging topography and building layout at the current school and the benefits of the new school design:

CHAIR - ... the submission refers to high staff-to-student ratios, embedded therapy. Can you provide us with what your staff-to-student ratios - what they are at the moment, what you, in an ideal world, would like to see in the proposed facility, and whether or not your ratios in the current site might be undermined because of that lack of space?

¹¹ Transcript of Evidence, Department for Education, Children and Young People, p. 4

¹² Transcript of Evidence, Department for Education, Children and Young People, p. 3

¹³ Transcript of Evidence, Department for Education, Children and Young People, p. 5

Ms MURPHY - So, at our Devonport campus we have 21 teachers, 44 teacher assistants and 65 students. So, we have an incredibly high adult-to-student ratio, and as you have alluded to, some of those ratios need to be considered currently because of the actual environment that we're working in to provide support for students, particularly when you are navigating and accessing a site that is on an incline with mobility issues. The beauty of having a new school that has - will be fit for purpose, have a nice, flat access for all areas of the school and also the consideration of the design around the connection to outdoor, the colocation of two classrooms, creating a pod, allowing flexibility for staffing to move between pods.

Unfortunately, at Devonport, as you would have seen today when we did the walk-through, we've got terrapins that are external to the main building. So, we don't have the flexibility to have staff moving to support students as needed. We need them to remain in the spaces that they currently are. So, a purpose-built design that is universally designed for all students to be able to access will allow us to look at the way we utilise our staff.

CHAIR - ... what we saw this morning on our site tour was quite steep inclines and declines, especially in ramps, where it didn't look like there was enough space, especially for a larger wheelchair to be able to navigate. Can you talk about how the sloped surface of the current site has impacted on being able to provide the kind of support that you'd like to, to students?

Ms MURPHY - Part of our pedagogy is that we want students to be as independent as they possibly can be and, unfortunately, the current site precludes that from happening. As you would have seen, the main corridor that has the steep ramp at the end, if you are a young person who is navigating in a walker on an incline with a mobility impairment, the only way you can do that is to have two adults with you to ensure safety. That has significantly impacted the independence that our young people can have. They cannot navigate our school without an adult, and that is not the type of environment that we want for our young people. We want them to be able to have access to the entire school without having to seek out adult assistance to be able to do that.¹⁴

- 4.11 The Committee noted the design of the GLAs will allow for a more effective and flexible grouping of classes to meet changing student needs and student cohort. The Committee asked the witnesses to further explain these benefits:

Ms RATTRAY - With regard to student numbers, I note that in our paperwork it says 61 students currently, ... but the new campus will support approximately 71 students.... Are more students able to be facilitated? I'm thinking about futureproofing...

Ms MURPHY - As I explained yesterday, our classes are made up based around a whole number of factors. You would have seen this morning in the site tour how small the classroom spaces are.

The actual spaces of our proposed new build will allow us to group classes much differently than what we do now, so we're quite constricted in how we can group our students. In terms of every year, we don't know what the intake's going to be. That's flexible, based on nominations and placement committee, as to how many students. We'll move from 10 GLAs to 12 GLAs. That will allow us that flexibility if we have some young people who need to be working in different spaces, and depending on the student's disability will depend on the make-up of those classes.

Ms RATTRAY - Potentially, more than the 71?

Ms MURPHY - Potentially.¹⁵

...

¹⁴ Transcript of Evidence, Department for Education, Children and Young People, pp. 5-6

¹⁵ Transcript of Evidence, Department for Education, Children and Young People, pp. 6-7

Ms MURPHY - And the classroom spaces, because of the way that they've been designed and the storage facilities that we will have attached to classrooms, some of the limitations about the number of students we can have in classrooms is based around the number of pieces of equipment that we have sitting around in a classroom. When you've got six students, you might have six adults, and in some instances, you could have six pieces of equipment in a space. However, because we've got purpose-built storage facilities for each of the pods, you take the equipment out of the space where also our classrooms - we've got dedicated teaching spaces, we've got therapy spaces, breakout spaces - plus we've then got a whole other section that's just dedicated to meal prep, arts and the arts, and then the outdoor areas as well.

So, the actual floor space, once we get in there, our class make-ups could look different, again, to the model we've got now, because we're not in a situation to have been afforded that luxury in the current campus.¹⁶

- 4.12 The Committee also heard there would be a significant increase in support and therapy spaces. This would benefit students and their families by removing a barrier to establishing NDIS service agreements for students under which service providers can provide sessions within the school:

Ms RATTRAY - What about the NDIS service agreements? Is that the same? You've put a hold on those as well?

Ms MURPHY - Yes. We've got a small number of service agreements that were previously established, and I mean, you walked through a portion of the school today - there are no meeting rooms, there are no opportunities for us to be able to have therapists come onsite. So, again, we've had to put a hold on having any more service agreements for NDIS therapists coming into the school, because we simply don't have the spaces to enable that to occur.

Ms RATTRAY - But that will change with this new facility?

Ms MURPHY - It will change exponentially in the new model, because we've got therapy breakout spaces in classrooms, we've also got separate therapy and breakout spaces. And we've actually got meeting room spaces that will allow NDIS therapists to hold case meetings within our school, which will be a real advantage for families.¹⁷

- 4.13 The Committee recognised the student transport and parking constraints at the current site and noted the new school would be much safer and accessible. The Committee asked the witnesses to expand on the advantages of the transport and parking design measures:

CHAIR - Moving on... to transport and access planning. It will support multiple school buses and safe movement for high-needs learners and visitors. How will this design improve transport and access planning, as opposed to the current site?

Ms MURPHY - You experienced the lovely car park at Devonport this morning. It's a shame you weren't there at drop-off this morning.

CHAIR - I did. I drove through at drop-off.

Ms MURPHY - Oh, did you? You drove through at drop-off?

CHAIR - Yes, I was keen to see what it looked like, and it was so congested.

Ms MURPHY - ... We've got buses entering the same spaces as pedestrian walkways, we've got parents and staff arriving on site at the same time as students are walking through the car park.

¹⁶ Transcript of Evidence, Department for Education, Children and Young People, p. 8

¹⁷ Transcript of Evidence, Department for Education, Children and Young People, p. 7

Cumulus have been really intentional in their design. One of the things I shared yesterday was the benefit of the bus portico at Burnie, in that the bus can come in, the garage door can go down and we have a really safe, secure space to transition students on and off the bus. Cumulus have taken that on board and we have a gated bus area, also making sure that pedestrians are well catered for outside of having to walk through walkways.

Ms BROUN - Yeah, we realised very early on in the conception phase that we went down the route of looking into maybe doing the same bus garage as Burnie has, but we realised the really key factor there was security and having that secure space. So, we decided to save the money in the budget and, rather than building a whole garage, building just that kind of secure outdoor zone that's under cover. That actually allowed us to make it part of the traffic flow and get three buses in there all at once, and then they're in a secure, fenced, undercover zone and then they can move into the school. And yes, the traffic flow, how we've designed it with the turning circle and the double-length turning circle is a lot more efficient than the current site, which you would have seen the congestion there.

Ms MURPHY - And the increase in staff car parking at Spreyton, you would have seen there this morning at the site. There's two large car parks there...

Mr WILLIAMS - 130 car parking spaces provided for, which we talked about this morning we believe will also support Spreyton Primary School. We're not taking away from the turning circle and drop-off to support the primary school. We thought we were really lucky to secure the property with that car parking existing...

Ms BROUN - And there's a secure sliding gate that goes between the parent drop-off area and the eight or nine visitor car parking spots. That will be closed after hours, which then allows the pool patrons to go and park in those visitor spots and still access the pool but not be going into the school facilities, if that makes sense.

And then we've also considered maintenance and garbage trucks and everything, fire trucks within that. The maintenance area is off to the south-west corner, where there's a little maintenance shed, which you see on the plan. That's so that they can do all that rubbish collection and everything and not get in the way of, or be even near students when they're doing that.

Mr HISCUTT - With the existing car parks, is there much in the budget for resurfacing? Are they able to be left as they are? How much expected work is there to be on them?

Ms BROUN - Our civil engineers did do an assessment of those car parks at the beginning, and we are doing some make-good resurfacing works in there. So that's in the quantity surveyors -

Mr HISCUTT - Yeah, but not too much? It wouldn't be like resurfacing the whole?

Ms BROUN - No.

Mr HISCUTT - Minor works.

Ms BROUN - We've obviously assessed that, as what we need to do to make the surfaces good and improve the surfaces. We do have a new walkway going between the road and the car park as well because we have identified that the Spreyton Primary School parents park there and the kids walk across to that car park. We wanted to ensure that the new road in was obviously going to get more traffic and so, therefore, if those kids are walking, they need a safe pathway to walk along there and get to the car park.¹⁸

4.14 The Committee asked the witnesses about the type of buses that could be accommodated in the covered drop off/pick up area:

Mr SHELTON - ... The flyover we looked at this morning indicated that there was a covered area and the cars fitted under it well. Most of the children will come there on a Coaster-style,

¹⁸ Transcript of Evidence, Department for Education, Children and Young People, pp. 9-10

Rosa-style, bus. What would happen if a coach was bringing a regional child in and needed to drop it off? Is the cover still high enough for a coach to pull up under it?

...

Ms BROUN - ...I'm not sure off the top of my head how high that is. That might be one that we have to take on notice. But we have deliberately designed it for those Rosa-style buses just because the nature of the cohort they're collecting, they go to their houses directly, so they can't actually collect them most of the time from the bigger style buses.

... So, it's unlikely that bigger style buses are going to be going into that space. However, I do know off the top of my head that we have designed the traffic paths in the turning circles to account for the bigger buses.

...

Mr SHELTON - ...only looking at the possibility because the flyover is the first time we saw that and the height of it and it just sort of clicked to me then that, well, it's nice for cars. The weather comes in from the south so you don't want it too high or it would take away the efficiency of the waterproofing. ... if one happened to need it, what would be the alternative process for that bus to drop off that one child?

Ms MURPHY - ...In support schools there is a transport program for young people that come to North West Support School, so our students are not accessing generic State Growth bus services. So, we have four buses that come to our Devonport campus. So, we have three coaster buses and then a smaller van that comes into the Devonport campus. So, families apply to have a position on a bus and those buses have bus attendants on them that are trained to support the young people that are travelling on those buses. So, it would be highly unlikely that a child coming to a support school would be transported to the school via a generic State Growth run.¹⁹

- 4.15 DECYP subsequently confirmed that the covered pick-up and drop-off zone was not designed to accommodate larger coaches or Metro-style buses, as the greater clearance height necessary would compromise weather protection:

*The height of the covered bus drop off area is approximately 3.2 metres. This height is sufficient to accommodate the medium sized buses used by NWSS. In discussions with the school, it was determined not to raise the roof height of the bus drop off to accommodate larger buses. This was because the school does not use the larger (Metro) style buses and raising the roof height would result in reduced weather protection in the bus drop off area for the school's students and staff. Any larger style buses visiting the site will be able to drop off in a different location on the site.*²⁰

Traffic impacts

- 4.16 The Committee was aware of the traffic congestion issues that occur at schools, particularly at school drop off and pick up times. The Committee sought to explore the traffic issues that might arise with the new school, especially as it will be adjacent Spreyton Primary School, and any traffic management measures that may be necessary:

Ms RATTRAY - Just in regard to the traffic assessment... I note when I was trying to leave and turn west this morning, leaving the site - not terribly easy - I couldn't end up catching anybody to get on their tail to get out because the traffic was very congested. So, obviously, that's going to be some sort of an issue when there's multiple people leaving the site, whether it be

¹⁹ Transcript of Evidence, Department for Education, Children and Young People, p. 10-11

²⁰ DECYP Response to Questions on Notice-NWSS Burnie and Devonport, p. 4

after morning drop-off or in an afternoon collect, but we did hear this morning that there is going to be some traffic lights to the left of that Bay Road, or Bay Drive. So, I think that would possibly help in one direction, but it won't help the western direction. So, I'm just interested in whether that's part of the assessment process...

Mr WILLIAMS - ...I suppose there's a couple of elements in what you're talking about. Our development application focuses in on our development and the traffic impact of that. At the same time, we're very mindful of the surrounds and what's happening. We have been in conversation with Devonport City Council through our traffic engineer and their traffic engineers as part of that proposal and we have had conversations with the Department of State Growth who have responsibility for the main highway, and all parties acknowledge that that's a busy highway, and through those conversations we understand that State Growth are planning a signalled intersection.

Ms BROUN - At Kelcey Tier Road, yes.

Mr WILLIAMS - At KelceyTier Road.

Ms RATTRAY - So, that's to the left of Bay Drive?

Mr WILLIAMS - That's for the south, south-west, they're further down, and the understanding in that is that that will provide a break in traffic that will help -

Ms RATTRAY - On one side.

Mr WILLIAMS - On one side: and we also discussed this morning, too, about there's an alternative route instead of turning right at Bay Road so you can go further up past the schools, past Spreyton, to come out in that alternative road.

Ms BROUN - So, I'm assuming this morning, when you came out, you went south and then back out next to the sports complex, trying to get out that way? Yes, I think if you're a parent who's going there regularly and you're wanting to go towards Devonport way, you will be going north.

Ms RATTRAY - The other way.

Ms BROUN - You will be going out near the Simplot area, because that's a much less busy kind of - by that time that's not the main arterial road.

Mr HISCUTT - It's interesting, because if you want to get to Middle Road, though, you still have to enter onto that road.

Ms BROUN - Yes, but you can still go that same way that I said, and then you go to - I don't know the name of the street is, there's a little -

Mr HISCUTT - You can turn into the bottom of Durkins Road or the other side of Fairbrother, but you still have to enter Mersey Main Road.

Ms BROUN - Yes, exactly. The Fairbrother road. You do, but there's a flow of traffic up there as well.

Ms RATTRAY - Sightline?

Mr HISCUTT - It's also more complex with the street coming down the other side as well.

Ms BROUN - I think that's essentially what the traffic impact statement says, that there's minimal impact to the intersections going on to Mersey Main Road, because, as we've discussed, there's not much traffic generated by a site like this -

Ms RATTRAY - It does say approximately 189 two-way trips in a.m. and p.m. peaks. That's considerable.

Ms BROUN - Yes, if you're talking about the ratio of how much traffic moves up and down that Mersey Main Road, I think I mentioned this morning that Mersey Main Road has more traffic than the Midland Highway... I know that it's a very busy road.

...

Mr WILLIAMS - I understand the issue, absolutely, and that's what we're working through as part of our development application. There are a couple of key little points in the summary that I think help summarise it, and I'm not quoting the words in the summary: no material network impact; combined demand comfortably within available supply; minor improvements recommended; 40-kilometre zone, sightlines, access. We're still working that through with council and their development application and what will be required as a result of that.

Ms RATTRAY - I recall this morning that that's actually a State Growth road, not a Devonport City Council road. Is that correct?

Mr WILLIAMS - Correct. Mersey Main Road is a Department of State Growth state-owned road. Bay Drive is a council-owned road. That's why we're having discussions with both parties.

Ms RATTRAY - About potential traffic calming or whatever that might look like, reduced speed limits; it would already be a 50, I expect.

Mr HISCUTT - It's 60.

...

Mr WILLIAMS - I pointed out in the summary, there are a couple of little bits that are minor improvements recommended: 40 kilometre zone, et cetera; sightlines. I take your point, absolutely. We will work through our development application and do the works that are required as part of that approval process.²¹

Land Purchase from Devonport City Council

4.17 The new NWSS Devonport campus will be built adjacent to Spreyton Primary School, on land that is owned by the Devonport City Council (DCC), and which is currently home to a number of netball courts and associated facilities. The Committee understood DECYP was purchasing this land from the DCC, and sought further information from the witnesses about the purchase, land transfer and rezoning and the plans for reestablishing the displaced netball facilities:

Ms RATTRAY - ... Another question that I have is about the school site itself, ... a sale transfer is currently underway from the Devonport City Council to the Department for Education, Children and Young People; so just to place on the record the cost of the purchase from the Devonport City Council, I think that would be reasonable to have recorded; is that possible?...

²¹ Transcript of Evidence, Department for Education, Children and Young People, p. 12-14

Mr SALTER - The figure is 3.3 million.

Mr WILLIAMS - Yes, it's 3.3 million. We've reached an agreement with Devonport City Council. Both parties had their valuations and that was the agreed valuation figure that we're now working to formalise with Devonport City Council. We spoke this morning about the netball courts, and the netball courts continuing to operate and we will not interfere with that. That's our agreement with council and the council undertaking their sporting precinct works, which will allow the netball courts to relocate, and that's the time in which we can start our works, and with council support, should the land transfer not be formalised, we will talk about agreements to access the land and do what we need to do. I'm hopeful that that will all be settled prior to that, but we're working through that detail at the moment.²²

...

Mr HISCUTT - Following on from Ms Rattray's earlier question regarding the sale from DCC to DECYP, my question was going to be what the land is zoned as, but I found that in the traffic impact assessment, so I got my answer to that.

Who is going to manage the rezoning of that? Will the Devonport City Council be required to rezone it before the sale or will DECYP undertake the rezoning?

Mr WILLIAMS - We're undertaking that process as part of the transfer.

Mr HISCUTT - Okay. That's obviously been taken into consideration, because I know that can take an amount of time as well, to get anything rezoned.

Mr WILLIAMS - That's underway and progressing and both parties are working together on that.

Ms RATTRAY - So, don't spend the money yet. Possibly.

Mr HISCUTT - Right. I just wanted to make sure, because that's caught up other builds recently that we just discussed last week with zoning issues.

Mr WILLIAMS - It is absolutely important that the land use planning supports the activity on the site.²³

...

CHAIR - It's our understanding from our witness walk-through today that there's a number of netball courts which the site will be built on, and the community will still be able to access netball courts but on a new site. Can you talk us through how that's going to be staged and just to allay any concerns the community have that they may be losing their netball courts?

Mr WILLIAMS - Absolutely no loss of netball courts. We're working closely with Devonport City Council, and the commitment that we have there is we will not start work or use the site until such time as the netball courts have been constructed. We will not take away from the community in that way. So, yes, at this stage - I just happened to bump into Matt Atkins, the CEO of council, because we're in a council building today, and just got some more confirmation on that June 2027. So, Fairbrother are under construction at the moment and the timeline is still June 2027, and that's what we're working to at this stage to be able to start construction.

²² Transcript of Evidence, Department for Education, Children and Young People, p. 14

²³ Transcript of Evidence, Department for Education, Children and Young People, p. 15-16

*But as I said, we would not take away from the netball courts and the use of those netball courts until the transition has occurred.*²⁴

Consultation

4.18 The Committee asked the witnesses to summarise the consultation undertaken to inform planning work for the new school:

Ms BURNET - *Regarding input, I don't know if the students have any input, but certainly the staff -*

Ms MURPHY - *We've had workshops running at both campuses and, as I said yesterday, we've actually had members from different campuses having input into the other campuses. Families, again, have been part of that. We've had lots of workshops. We've got two consultants: we've got Dr Victoria Williams, who's an occupational therapist who has been consulting, and Cumulus have had Scott Alterator providing advice to us as well around making sure we've got contemporary, inclusive learning spaces.*²⁵

...

CHAIR - *...Can you run through the bulk of that community consultation - how that was undertaken and some of the responses that you received to that community consultation, for the record?*

...

Mr WILLIAMS - *Certainly... every part of our capital project, we do an upfront community engagement process to engage with the community and the school and the staff. That has been undertaken... There were... 136 submissions made as part of that process. The more recent stepping-through process - upfront we engage with the community and ask about the intent of the project and what they'd like to see in the project. Then we go through our iteration of designing with the consultant and the team, and when we have a concept to share, we go back out to community and share that plan and ask for their feedback on that.*²⁶

...

Mr WILLIAMS - *We've got the summary from our recent consultation when we released the plans that are presented to you. There were 23 submissions received: 12 from parents and carers or community members; and 11 were from school staff members. Eleven submissions contain positive feedback on the design of the new campus, of which 10 were from school staff members. One submission was considered neutral, seeking information on storage space. Ten submissions were received that expressed concern in relation to the proposed community use*

²⁴ Transcript of Evidence, Department for Education, Children and Young People, pp. 16-17

²⁵ Transcript of Evidence, Department for Education, Children and Young People, p. 9

²⁶ Transcript of Evidence, Department for Education, Children and Young People, p. 16

of the new hydrotherapy pool. One respondent expressed a view that the proposed colour palette and roofline was not contemporary.²⁷

Hydrotherapy Pool and Potential Community Use

4.19 The Committee questioned the witnesses about the inclusion of a hydrotherapy pool, including the location, cost and use of the community access car park, and operational arrangements with the Department of Health:

CHAIR - I understand from the submission there is a dedicated community access car park for the hydrotherapy pool. How much will that purpose-built car park add to the cost of this project?

Mr WILLIAMS - I think it's fair to say that the car park is available to the school during school time and the school will have absolute benefit of that as well.

CHAIR - Okay.

Mr WILLIAMS - Yes, the location of the car park is such that it's close to the pool and supports community use, but it's not an additional consideration. It's there for school use during school time.

CHAIR - Is there an MOU with the Department of Health, or what are the arrangements with the ongoing costs and the running of that hydrotherapy pool outside of school hours?

Mr WILLIAMS - ... the model is such that school have use during school hours and community use will be designed not to interfere or take away from school or school operations. That will be done via an agreement with the Department of Health. We've started to reach out to discuss that agreement and the basis of that agreement. The general underlying principle, of course, is that it won't interfere with school operations and it won't burden the school.

CHAIR - ...And the ongoing maintenance responsibility, the cleaning and so forth, of that hydrotherapy area, the onus of that falls onto the Department of Health, not so much the Department of Education, outside the school hours, is that correct?

Mr WILLIAMS - Outside of school hours, that's correct. Obviously, it's an asset that's owned by the Department and the school, and there's a cost that the Department incurs. And then outside of school hours, the principle is such that we seek to recover costs for that community use. That would be done through the agreement of the Health Department.²⁸

Project Costs

4.20 The Committee closely scrutinised the project cost, noting significant contingencies and allowances for escalation and market conditions had been included in the project cost estimate. The Committee also noted the consultancy and project management fees comprised a sizeable portion of the project budget. The Committee sought to explore these matters further with the witnesses:

Mr SHELTON - ... with the consultancy on this, it's a big job, yes, but it's nearly \$3 million and the project management of \$1.4 million. Getting to the build is becoming very expensive before you actually start it. My concern is that that figure is coming off what we can actually

²⁷ Transcript of Evidence, Department for Education, Children and Young People, p. 17

²⁸ Transcript of Evidence, Department for Education, Children and Young People, pp. 18-19

produce for each school. It's something you hear out there in the community, the red tape to get a house built and all that sort of thing. I know it's an issue. Unless we keep on top of it and make sure it's not any more than it needs to be, then the community is actually losing out.

You've said 3 per cent of each build is the figure. Many departments and different institutions use a figure to manage the money that goes through their books. But I'm saying we need to make sure that that figure is as minimal as we can so that we can actually get more use of that money on the ground...

Mr SALTER - Perhaps if I can comment there that, in the same way as the remit for this committee, we want to get value for money out of all the aspects to contribute to a quality outcome. I say that because it's not just about getting to the lowest price; it's about getting value for money for the quality that we're after.

In terms of, I suppose, the way that the budgets are compiled, we look at the best estimate for construction we've got at the front end we look at compared to the scope that we're looking to deliver. Then we look at the consultancy cost, then we look at the project management fee, et cetera, for the components. We're factoring in those costs at the front end at the same time as looking to deliver on the scope of the project, as opposed to just getting an amount and then subtracting those elements first to see what's left for the construction.

...

Mr WILLIAMS - ... We're also conscious, as Kane talking, when we're putting our submissions to government in, we're doing them in a way not to take away from the school. We're looking at what we're trying to achieve and we're putting in a gross project delivery rate, not a net project delivery rate, if that makes sense. The net project delivery rate is just pure construction. To get an outcome on a project, you need to gross that up for all the other things that have to help achieve to get the outcome, including the consultants, including the project manager, including the furniture and equipment, including the statutory fees, all of which, I totally understand, they're significant.

Ms BROWN - This project will have a very different square metre rate, as you probably well know, to a house, for example, because it is a specialised complex. There are things that go into this build and design that don't go into a house so the square metre rate will be more.

Mr HISCUTT - Just following on from Mr Shelton's comments, on the Burnie site, the market conditions and escalations compared to the construction contingency was about half the value of the market conditions and escalations. However, on this build, the construction contingency is greater than the market conditions forecast. Can you explain why they wouldn't be at a similar sort of - I mean, if we're picking 3 per cent for this and about 10 per cent for consultants fees and those sorts of percentages, why have they been considered in a granular level compared to other situations?

Mr SALTER - ... for the Devonport project, the cost escalation is included in the above-the-line and the construction cost estimate. So, it's in the \$32.6 million, but then below... we've got a breakdown of the market loading and cost escalation. If you take the total of the market loading and cost escalation, they're approximately \$4.5 million together, and if you compare that to the Burnie project, it's \$2.1 million, so approximately double. I mean, it isn't straight proportionate to the size of the project.

Talking about it with Tara and the facility teams, part of that reason for a lower market loading is that for a greenfield site there's less risk for contractors in submitting for that.

And then, if you compare the construction contingency for Devonport, say \$3.3 million, Burnie \$1.2 million, that is roughly the same percentage, sort of 10 to 12 per cent. I suppose it's always

the way when you have two projects coming at the same time with a slightly different presentation. They are fairly proportionate, but with some differences between the greenfield site and a redeveloped site.

Mr WILLIAMS - I think the key bit there is that they're very different projects, as we've talked about over yesterday and today. A greenfield site, as we know, as has been shown in the past, will be attractive to the market. The challenges of a redevelopment site are not as attractive to the market because of the challenges continuing to safely operate a site. So, sort of reflective. And just one last little point: it is based on the advice of the quantity surveyor that we have, and we have the same quantity surveyor on both projects.

Mr HISCUTT - If I can follow on from that, as two projects on very similar timelines under the same project banner, is there a general format? How does that get presented differently, because that now, if I've understood correctly, means that the cost escalation allowance is \$2.5 million for this second - so, the construction cost itself is actually only \$30 million if we're comparing apples and apples?

Mr SALTER - Yep. I take on board that we haven't presented the two tables consistently -

Mr HISCUTT - What I've said there, I've understood what you've said correctly?

Mr SALTER - Yes. If we took out, so, the construction costs there, \$32.6. If we took out the cost escalation of \$1.872, then that would be the comparison back to the \$9.6 million for the Burnie project.

Mr WILLIAMS - I think we did talk about this today briefly as well. If I may, we've tried a number of iterations over probably the last three or four years to get a consistent presentation format. Clearly, we need to do a little bit more work and we do welcome the feedback and the questions because we want to be transparent in all of this information.

Mr SHELTON - My mental arithmetic isn't what it used to be, but just going to my point, the discussion was around 4900 square metres, approximate cost of 45, if it was 49 it would be \$10 000 a square metre, and there's nine square metres in an old square, which puts it at \$9000 an old square. You mentioned the fact that domestic building - my son and daughter are getting a house built at the moment, and it's approximately \$25,000 a square metre - house finished. This one ends up at \$90,000 for the finished building, and I admit that landscaping and roads are costly and all that sort of thing, but commercial building seems to be exponentially, as you mentioned, going through the roof. How do we get value out of it going forward? That's the question, I guess.

Ms BROUN - Commercial building does have a tendency to be a bit more expensive.

I apologise; my brain doesn't operate in the old building squares. I only work in the square metre rates, which is the 1 metre by 1 metre.

Mr SHELTON - Yes, stick to square metres.

Ms BROUN - Okay, great. At Cumulus we do a number of different projects. We have a high-end residential area as well and in a higher-end residential area a house can cost anywhere between \$3500 on the low end to \$6000 per square metre. This project - I'm not quite sure what the latest figures are, but we had it sitting at about \$6500-\$6700 per square metre which, as you mentioned, the difference between residential and commercial - there's a cost increase for commercial. Then again, on top of that, as we mentioned, this has specialised facilities, a lot more toilets, a lot more plumbing than your usual kind of project, just due to the cohort; a lot more hoists, specialised equipment -

... All of these kinds of things bump it up even again above a commercial project price.

If you look at some of the hospitals that are built, I think their per-square-metre price is about \$10,000 to \$14,000 per square metre, that kind of thing. So, this kind of facility is almost starting to lean a little bit towards the hospital realm, so I think, from those examples, this is kind of a good square-metre rate where we're sitting currently for this build.²⁹

4.21 The Committee explored further with the witnesses the differences between a greenfield site build versus a refurbishment, upgrade or redevelopment, and how this impacted on project complexity and costs:

Ms BURNET - ... I think we're in a very unique situation with two projects going on at the same time. One we discussed yesterday, which was around the \$15 million mark retrofitting, versus this brownfield site next to the Spreyton Primary School, or the primary school, at \$47.75 million. I'm just curious to know - and I understand why things cost so much more when you're trying to get the best-practice model - but can you just take us through that experience of trying to build on a site versus building on a new site? It would be really good to hear from the architect as well.

Ms BROUN - Yes, that's a great question, thank you. At Cumulus Studio, we do a lot of alterations and additions. We're not new to that area either; we know that very well. And this is, as you say, a new site and a new build. So, obviously, with your renovation, you've got your existing structure there, and the structure makes up a large component of the costs in a construction project, so there is the difference between that.

There can be some hiccups during construction in terms of latent conditions that you find onsite that you didn't know were there. That's one of the downsides to a renovation project or alteration, and hopefully, you don't have that so much on a new-build site, but that is kind of the one - there's other things, I'm sure, as well - but that's the one downside to the alterations project. And yes, the new build, obviously there's just a lot more quantity that goes into a project like that. You're kind of starting from scratch. There's a lot more to design, there's a lot more to build, there's a lot more to source of materials, et cetera.

Mr WILLIAMS - Probably fair to add, too, that they are two very different projects. I think that's where you were going. I'm sure there's been two completely different experiences for Sarah Jane and the team along the way.

Ms MURPHY - Yeah. I think the beauty of this project is you have the freedom to design, whereas within our Burnie project, when you're doing a retrofit, some of those ideas need to be constrained by the environment that you're presented with. So, this project has allowed us to really go, 'we want the best support school in Tasmania that is purpose-built for these young people', and we've been able to include all of those things into our design in our Burnie project.

We've wanted to get them as similar as what we possibly can. The similarities are, we've got 12 GLAs - we'll have 12 both, hydro pools at both, we've got breakout rooms in both schools, we've got teaching walls, we've got kitchenettes in all classrooms, and we've got therapy spaces. We've tried to have some fundamentals that have been, if you attend Burnie, this is what it looks like and if you attend Devonport, this is what it looks like. We've even modelled - the classroom design from the Burnie campus is modelled off the Cumulus classroom design so that we can have them as close as possible. The architects are working together around making sure we've got a similar colour palette across the two schools. But most definitely, the ability to have freedom of design on a new greenfield site has been a very different experience than the retrofitting.³⁰

...

²⁹ Transcript of Evidence, Department for Education, Children and Young People, p. 23-26

³⁰ Transcript of Evidence, Department for Education, Children and Young People, pp. 8-9

Ms BROUN - If I may just address your comment around the comparison between an existing building and a new greenfield site: I guess I kind of alluded to it at the beginning when we were first talking and began this session, that when you've got an existing site, you've got the existing structure there, you've got maybe existing electrical cables in the wall, existing HVAC systems, you've got all that stuff that's already and that you're retrofitting, whereas with the new build we have to design that all from scratch. We have to liaise with the authorities on how to get that all approved. We have to go through more processes.

We have a - just working fortnightly with the Burnie team, we have a bigger team on the new build project than the Burnie team have on the existing project. There is just a lot more quantity and there's a lot more design as a result that goes into it. I think in terms of square metreage as well, I know Devonport is 4900 square metres. I'm not quite sure what Burnie is, but I've seen the plans and it looks to be - the amount of area that is new is a lot smaller than this site. It's quite a dramatic difference.³¹

4.22 The Committee asked the witnesses whether they expected the market response (via the tender) to align with their project cost estimate:

Mr HISCUTT - ... I just want to say with the evidence you've now got at this point in time, are you confident with that price as it's been presented? How are you feeling about that?

Mr SALTER - Yes, and as we do for all projects, we continue to get updated quantity surveyor advice. I was advised there'll be another one in August and then there'll be another one in September if, as according to plan, we're going to tender in October. We continue to retest it, along with the more detailed design, as it occurs.

Mr HISCUTT - From an historical perspective - and you've got some institutional knowledge here - how often is the final construction price majorly different from quantity surveyor's price?

...

Mr WILLIAMS - Certainly, during the COVID period, it was not as expected. More recently, with our statewide tenders we're comfortable with the advice that we're getting, and the market is suggesting that the market is okay and can cope. We do see regional differences - so we track that by north-west, north and south - and we think that the north-west market is ready and available to do the work. That's what we're seeing. Over time, it's sort of had peaks and troughs. Sometimes it's higher, sometimes lower, but consistently at the moment, we're pretty much smack-bang-on.³²

4.23 The Committee also asked the witnesses to explain the rationale for charging DECYP project management costs back to the project:

Mr HISCUTT - Yes. We had a little bit of a conversation yesterday regarding the DECYP project management and how that was all arranged. There's obviously a significant number on this build. My understanding with some, not at this high level, but some level of project management experience, a greenfield site provides a lot less challenges to manage than the brownfield site that's going to happen in Burnie, and yet this site has nearly four times or three times the cost associated with it for that. Would you talk me through, I guess, where that - what that will fund over the course of, I guess, that you'd call this a two-year project to completion almost... what will that achieve?

³¹ Transcript of Evidence, Department for Education, Children and Young People, p. 22

³² Transcript of Evidence, Department for Education, Children and Young People, p. 27

Mr SALTER - Yes. I will get to the high level first and then Todd can add. We do take a standard percentage generally across all projects, rather than try to differentiate too much on the fee - and I think that fee is 3 per cent. In terms of the length of the project, certainly longer than two years when you go from initial announcement in a budget, going through all the community consultation, concept plan, construction, and then certainly continuing to manage closely during occupancy until final completion, I think, as we outlined yesterday, that resource or resources are a key conduit between the Department and the school, the Department and the consultant and, absolutely, seeking to reduce the burden on the school through that close liaison with the consultant.

Mr WILLIAMS - ... I suppose there's a number of resourcing elements to a project delivery that we work through. It's all designed to support a good project outcome. It's designed to support the principal and the principal's team so that they can focus on the job at hand of continuing to operate and contributing to a very important project. The resources that are involved in the engagement and consultation processes that we go through - there is project management resources that are involved from commencement of the project through to final completion, and that includes the 12-month defect liability project. So yes, whilst there is a consultant team that lead the design and then act as the superintendent through the construction process, there is still a need to make sure that we're connecting well with the school, that the school's involved, and that's project management resources.

There's still a need during construction that while we're working through all the details, and I'm sure you understand that nothing quite goes according to plan from paper to reality; there's many, many iterations to go through. There's project documentation that we have to produce, project reporting that we have to produce as alike. I call it the project team responsibilities throughout the life of a project.

Mr HISCUTT - Yes. Well, I guess, the question would be: how many FTEs is that? Obviously, I mean, if we go from practical completion through the defect period, there's going to be very minimal touch points required. Like there's points in that five years that are intensely managed, and points that are less intensely managed.

Mr WILLIAMS - Absolutely.

...

Mr HISCUTT - How many FTEs is that providing for over what period of time?...

Mr WILLIAMS - I don't have the specifics of the calculation. What I would say is as a team, we have anywhere probably over 150 projects in various sizes going at any one time. A project manager will have probably, at a minimum, five or six projects in various sizes, some of which come to public works for consideration, many more that don't. You know, even there are differences as we've talked about in projects, so, larger projects can be simpler and easier; smaller projects can be more complex, and as you go through the project there, yes, there are peaks and troughs.

It's not a precise allocation per project. We have many things to deliver and many wheels to keep moving at the one time. We do rotate project managers. Whilst we try to keep them all the way through the project, the reality of this project is that it's going to have been going for probably eight or nine years by the time that we get to the end of it. So, we use our skills and specialisation. So, some project managers are really strong in a design process, some are really strong through a construction phase as well; but I think the key bit there is - and there are other resources that support them with their project plan, the reporting, the monthly reporting on status that we have to do, the consultation and outcomes report. So, I think the

key thing in there is it's not one project manager per project. A project manager has many projects on the go with varying scales and sizes.³³

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

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

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

Yes. The proposed works address a recognised need for the NWSS by providing a purpose-built campus designed to support students with increasingly complex educational, therapeutic and medical needs, restoring safety, dignity, accessibility and a fit-for-purpose learning environment.

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

Yes. The proposed works represent the best solution within the allocated budget as they directly address the accessibility and functional deficiencies of the existing campus through a purpose-built, universally designed facility that responds to an identified and critical community need.

Informed by extensive engagement with students, families, staff, clinicians, disability advocates and departmental stakeholders, the proposed works remain achievable within the approved \$48.75 million budget and alignment with the priorities and expectations of the NWSS community.

Are the proposed works fit for purpose?

Yes. The proposed works respond to the briefing requirements and deliver a fit-for-purpose, rights-based environment aligned with inclusive education reform directions expressed through the educational, policy setting and pedagogical frameworks and the Disability Royal Commission.

The works ensure students are supported irrespective of their need and able to participate safely, with dignity and consistency across all learning settings.

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 provide value for money by delivering a purpose-built, universally designed support school that resolves deficiencies of the existing campus and embeds specialist and therapeutic facilities.

Through careful scope management and the inclusion of appropriate contingencies, the project is achievable within the approved \$48.75 million budget while ensuring long-term functionality, durability and reduced lifecycle risk.

Are the proposed works a good use of public funds?

Yes. The proposed works represent a good use of public funds as they directly address long-standing limitations of the existing campus by delivering a purpose-built new campus.

³³ Transcript of Evidence, Department for Education, Children and Young People, pp. 21-23

These works enable higher-quality learning outcomes, dignity, wellbeing and participation, while providing a durable and adaptable facility that supports long-term educational and community outcomes for students with high and complex needs.

DECYP considers this to be a good use of public funds.³⁴

³⁴ *North West Support School -New Devonport Campus*, Submission to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, pp. 21-22

5 DOCUMENTS TAKEN INTO EVIDENCE

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

- *North West Support School -New Devonport Campus*, Submission to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works;
- New North West Support School Devonport Campus: Traffic Assessment Summary
- New North West Support School Devonport Campus – 3-9 Mersey Main Road, Spreyton: Traffic Assessment – Hubble Traffic, March 2026
- DECYP Response to Questions on Notice-NWSS Burnie and Devonport.

6 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1 The Committee is satisfied that the need for the proposed works has been established. Once completed, the proposed works will provide a future ready, contemporary and fit-for-purpose support school capable of supporting enrolment stability and increasing student complexity. It will deliver a fully accessible school and allow flexibility to support additional students if required due to cohort composition or future demand.
- 6.2 The new school will provide additional capacity in contemporary facilities, through the provision of 12 GLAs, which will be equipped with regulation rooms, kitchenette, teacher resource zones and amenities. The GLAs will also be directly connected outdoor learning areas, to enhance student learning and promote regulation. The new school will also provide a range of specialist and flexible spaces to support student skill development and to facilitate service providers delivering sessions to their student clients at the school.
- 6.3 The school will also include a hydrotherapy pool to support students with significant physical, neurological and medical needs through evidence-based aquatic therapy. The hydrotherapy pool will also be made available for outside schools hours community use, managed through the Department of Health, providing a valuable community asset.
- 6.3 Accordingly, the Committee recommends the New North West Support School Devonport, at an estimated cost of \$48.75 million, in accordance with the documentation submitted.



**Parliament House
Hobart
15 September 2026**

**Jen Butler MP
Chair**