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# **Inquiry into the Upper Coomera State College Project**

## **TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS**

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**Brisbane**  
**Friday, 7 November 2003**

**WITNESSES**

Mr NEIL WHITTAKER ..... 1

Mr ALAN JAMES WAGNER ..... 1

Mr MAX SMITH ..... 1

Mrs JULIE GRANTHAM ..... 1

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The committee commenced at 12.38 p.m.

**Mr NEIL WHITTAKER**, examined:

**Mr ALAN JAMES WAGNER**, examined:

**Mr MAX SMITH**, examined:

**Mrs JULIE GRANTHAM**, examined:

**The CHAIR:** Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. I declare the hearing of the Upper Coomera State College project open. Thank you for your interest and for your attendance here today. The committee has advised the public of the inquiry by advertising in the media and also by writing directly to a number of individuals, organisations and government departments.

The terms of reference for the inquiry are to examine and report on the Upper Coomera State College project with particular reference to: A, the purpose of the work; B, the suitability of the work for its purpose; C, the necessity for and the advisability of the work; B, value for money achieved or likely to be achieved by the work; C, cost/revenue produced by and recurrent costs of the work; F, the public value of the work, including the impact of the work on the community, economy and environment; G, procurement methods for the work; H, the balance of public and private sector investment in the work; and I, the performance of the constructing authority, consultants and contractors for the work.

Before proceeding further, I would like to introduce the members of the subcommittee present today: the Hon. Kevin Lingard, the member for Beaudesert and deputy chair of this committee; Mr Robert Poole, the member for Gaven; and my name is Don Livingstone and I am the chair of this committee. The Public Works Committee is a committee of the Queensland parliament and as such represents the parliament. It is an all-party committee which adopts a non-partisan approach to its inquiries. Although the subcommittee is not swearing in witnesses, I remind all witnesses that these hearings are a formal process of the parliament and, as such, any person intentionally misleading the committee is committing a serious offence. I also remind witnesses that Hansard will be making a transcript of the proceedings. Therefore, I ask you to please identify yourself when you first speak and to speak clearly and at a reasonable pace.

It is important to note that the committee's role is one of scrutinising the government's Capital Works Program and services to ascertain whether the Queensland public is getting value for the money being spent. The committee does not have the power to stop or approve projects or programs. The findings of the committee will be the subject of a report to the parliament. The committee will make recommendations about the issues it deals with. A copy of the report will be forwarded to all witnesses.

In answering questions, unless a question is directed directly to you, we do not mind who answers the question. So please feel free. I now call the first witnesses. Would you like to make an opening statement?

**Mr Whittaker:** Yes, I would, if you do not mind. Can I commence by my introducing myself. My name is Neil Whittaker. I am the Assistant Director-General (Shared Services) in Education Queensland. Accompanying me on my right is Alan Wagner, who is the Director of Facility Services. Al is responsible for a range of facility services matters, including the delivery of major infrastructure projects to the Education Queensland capital works program, such as the Upper Coomera College. On my left is our partner, if you like, in delivering the capital works program, Max Smith. Max is the General Manager of Project Services from the Department of Public Works.

I would also like to recognise Julie Grantham, who is sitting over to the left. Julie is currently the Assistant Director-General (School Administration). Her substantive position is Executive Director, (Schools) from the Gold Coast South district. Julie is today filling in for the person who holds that position, who unfortunately is unwell. Julie will be able to answer particular questions the committee might have about the educational philosophy driving the design of the actual college.

I would like to take the opportunity to make a brief statement before we commence. That statement includes the fact that Education Queensland welcomes the Public Works Committee inquiry into what we believe was a very successful government project in the Upper Coomera College. We are confident that our submission sufficiently addresses the level of information

required for a comprehensive review but would welcome any further clarifying questions. It is our hope that the committee found our submission on specific issues particularly illustrating—how the strategic and innovative approach to capital planning through project delivery can provide very successful outcomes for the wider community—and I think that was illustrated in this morning's visit to the site.

As you know, the government's vision for the Smart State aims to create a state of prosperity which commits to equality of opportunity. In our submission, we proudly promote education as being at the heart of the vision. That means providing the very best learning opportunities possible for every young Queenslander regardless of their economic or social circumstances. *Queensland State Education 2010* and *Education and Training Reform for the Future* are the blueprints for improving the quality of educational experiences in the preparation of young Queenslanders for life beyond school. The more participation, skills and confidence that we can impart to our young people, the greater their chances of success will be in further education, training and life in general.

Education Queensland has a very large and dynamic capital works program, as you are probably well aware. It is fair to say that the primary focus of our capital works program is to ensure that the facility's provision responds to contemporary school curriculum planning as well as addressing student enrolment demand. The need for the new school on the western side of the Pacific Highway at Coomera was initially identified through the application of the department's planning framework and confirmed in 2001 through the local area facilities planning process. Provision of the new school would provide relief for Coomera State School, which is located on the eastern side of the highway adjacent to Dreamworld. Coomera State School was not well located in terms of future growth patterns, as outlined in the Gold Coast planning scheme.

It is particularly pleasing for Education Queensland to acknowledge the tangible benefits that the new Upper Coomera State College brings to the community as documented in our submission. These benefits are a direct result of the built environment, providing value adding and support to the delivery of contemporary educational services that will best prepare our students for the future. As you have already seen this morning, the project had extensive community involvement and community discussion. We have seen a project delivered that is certainly a quality project. Through innovative delivery strategies, it was delivered on time and under budget. Most importantly, the project has the full support of the community evidenced by the stakeholder feedback in our submission. That is what I would like to say.

**Mr Smith:** Thank you very much. I would just like to place on record just how proud we are as an organisation to be involved in what we believe is a very successful project, in particular emphasising the point that my colleague made in terms of the partnership environment in which the work was done. The partnership started from the school committee, which was very much involved—and I think that was one of the success stories in that—and also the ability of all of those people to work together for a common goal, which was a good project outcome: the school community, the people who represented the school community and the Project Services project management team. I would also like to place on record the quality of Walter Constructions, the construction managers, and also PDT, the architects. I thought that that team was quite a powerful team. The environment in which they went about it, particularly the focus on a good project outcome, I think is now evidenced in the field. As I said before, we are very proud of this project. The other thing which was very much a focus was local content. We were reporting on a monthly basis to look at value adding wherever we could to maximise the amount of private sector local content. I think that is also reported as being a success. Thank you.

**The CHAIR:** How will the use of an enrolment management plan address enrolment growth for the Upper Coomera district?

**Mr Whittaker:** Generally with new schools, they are very popular with the local community. If we do not manage the enrolment trends and the enrolment drifts of those schools, what you can end up doing is having a school grow at a faster rate than what was originally planned. Indeed, you end up with underutilised facilities then at the surrounding schools. The enrolment management plan was designed to ensure that the provision of schooling for people living within that catchment is provided at the most appropriate site for that particular area. So in the Upper Coomera area the enrolment management plan excludes people, if you like, travelling across catchments from other schools and joining the school in its early days, and then the

growth of the school exceeding the design growth. Hence you get overcrowding and other issues that impact on the educational delivery of the total school.

**The CHAIR:** When would the department need to construct a new primary school in the Coomera area?

**Mr Wagner:** Our current planning is in the next 15 years. That is dependent on the rate of growth in the area.

**The CHAIR:** Has there been any word to determine whether you will need to build a new school or would you just increase the existing school? What would be the best way of handling that? Is it too early to tell that?

**Mr Wagner:** Currently, we have a couple more stages planned for the Upper Coomera State College. Normally, we would have three primary schools for each secondary school. So if you treat Coomera State School as it exists and the Upper Coomera State College primary component, they would be looking at one in the future probably to the north of the current site.

**The CHAIR:** Until recently Education Queensland had delivered school infrastructure using the S88 design approach. What approach is Education Queensland now taking in the design of schools with each school, or will schools now be built to their own unique design?

**Mr Wagner:** Under the Queensland State Education 2010 plan we are providing differentiated solutions, meaning one-off design solutions, to meet the particular requirements of individual communities. So we will determine the curriculum needs and then provide facilities that will match that need.

**The CHAIR:** What are the implications in terms of cost and time in looking at these factors?

**Mr Whittaker:** When we allocate a budget for a new school, we do it on the basis of the design standards that underwrite the 88 design series. So basically, we estimate what an 88 design series school would cost to provide the same services that the new school is designed to provide. Then that becomes a limit of cost, if you like, capital allocation for the design of the school and we design the unique features of the school within that limit of cost.

**The CHAIR:** Can you describe the approach taken to design the Upper Coomera State College?

**Mr Wagner:** Following on from the need identified through the consultation process, an educational brief was developed. That outlines the needs of the actual school in terms of outcomes. My people will translate that into a facilities brief, which is simply a schedule of words that describe how the building should look and feel, sizes, et cetera. We would then normally engage consultants to commence the design process, in this case through Public Works as the project manager.

**The CHAIR:** Can the department provide a per-student comparison of the cost of providing the Upper Coomera State College and recent school deliveries using the S88 design?

**Mr Whittaker:** On the last page of our submission to the inquiry we gave an indication of similar recent projects that were implemented. From memory—Mr Wagner may be able to confirm this—none of those comparative schools that we have there are S88 design. They are all the differentiated design. We have not overlaid on our data the student numbers. If the committee would allow us, we would like to take that question on notice and go back and calculate the figures and provide them.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you.

**Mr Smith:** It is becoming more and more difficult also to compare, on floor area in particular, because of the uniqueness of the site. We are getting into a situation now where quite a significant amount of the capital costs of all of the schools in actual fact are now tied up with civil infrastructure. That is just by nature of the design and the nature of the new school profile. So when you start to compare apples with apples, whilst you can get a bandwidth, it is very difficult to compare plus or minus 3 or 4 per cent in that area, which we could do before with a lot of the other sites. I am just making you aware that it is becoming more and more difficult to benchmark by virtue of the variables that have come in over the last few years. On top of that issue, as you well know with the building industry the way it is, market forces are also there. It will be very

interesting in the future. When we look back in time, I think a lot of the variables will deal with not necessarily the design solution but topography and market forces.

**The CHAIR:** Could somebody explain the difference between the traditional provision of the general learning spaces for years 8 and 9 compared to what is provided for the Upper Coomera State College?

**Mr Whittaker:** I will ask Julie Grantham to join us.

**Mrs Grantham:** My name is Julie Grantham. I am Executive Director for Schools in Gold Coast South and previously principal of a P-12 school, at Varsity College. I am currently acting as Assistant Director-General, School Administration.

It is well known that in the middle phase of learning there is a disengagement of a number of students in the learning process. We have looked at the pedagogy in classrooms and how we can respond to make that more inclusive of students and their learning styles. As we have done that we have looked at classroom design to ensure there is flexibility in classroom design so that the teacher directing learning and the group learning that students can do in small teams or as individuals can occur within the classroom. Our classroom traditionally had 30 tables and chairs where children were instructed by the teacher. Now it is facilitated learning, where students can move between activities. The approach we take to teaching can contain a lot of movement by students. There are not as many teachers teaching that particular class and it is a more integrated approach to learning.

**The CHAIR:** I understand that there are 172 car parks on site, with a further 52 spaces planned. How did the department determine the demand for car park sites?

**Mr Whittaker:** Can we come back to you on that? That is a technical answer we will have to follow up on.

**The CHAIR:** Yes, thank you.

**Mr LINGARD:** As new sections are built obviously it might affect the students who are there already. What is your philosophy on new construction and the safety of the students who are there at present?

**Mr Wagner:** We construct for one additional year to the opening year. We opened Upper Coomera State College with P-8, so we provided facilities for year 9 as well, which gives the school this year as a break. We have just commenced the design for the next stage, which will open in 2005. In terms of the site safety, we follow all of the required safety regulations. As you would be aware, we construct all over the state on active schools. That is very well managed and student safety is of significant importance for us.

**Mr LINGARD:** What is your philosophy as far as the use of common facilities like libraries, sports grounds and so on sectioned by each of the subschools?

**Mrs Grantham:** One of the things we have been very keen to do is maximise the space. For example, if we have a primary school and a secondary school separate from each other, what we have tried to do is, by bringing them together, provide a larger facility that is more functional and allows for flexibility in design. With the number of students on the site that are separated into the phases of learning, what we do is adjust bell times, for example. Different phases operate lunch hours, there are different starting times and there are different finishing times, so that the access to all of those facilities is maximised and so there is no overcrowding or blending of the students in their activities.

**Mr LINGARD:** Can I ask you about the old 78 concept and the old classrooms that had the dividers in them? Is there still a need for those? Is there still a demand for those?

**Mrs Grantham:** We still put some dividers in. What we find is that it allows teachers the flexibility of learning. So we may have teachers that are more comfortable in the traditional mode of having their class contained within a space and they can pull the divider across, or they may open up and have pods of learning or groups of learning happening in different ways, with teachers taking different students of different ability levels. So I think there is still a place for dividers, because it allows that flexibility of teaching.

**Mr LINGARD:** I was intrigued by your en suite style toilets. We did not go into those toilet areas, but what is the philosophy behind the use of those and the area where outsiders can virtually see into the toilet doors?

**Mr Whittaker:** That was as a result of the consultation with the school community as a behaviour management issue. The internal toilets were a place of difficulty in controlling behaviour. Julie can probably talk a little more about that.

**Mrs Grantham:** What we were trying to create is a home area for students so that they did not have to travel away from the classroom. So the classrooms now are where they locate all of their belongings and where the bathroom facilities are available to them. They play in that area and the parent helpers in classrooms are in that area, but all within direct line of sight of the teacher. It is a philosophy of trying to create ownership of space so that students do not necessarily mix in other areas.

**Mr LINGARD:** May I expand on that and say that I was a little disappointed with the port racks. Also, what is your philosophy on locker room areas?

**Mr Whittaker:** In relation to the port racks, our advice is that there have been a number of wet days since the school was opened. After you raised the question down there today I specifically asked the principal and the heads of the subschools whether there had been any issues in relation to ports getting wet in those port racks. I was advised by the principal that there had been no cases and they had been specifically orientated so they were not on, if you like, the south-eastern side of the school, where the weather quarter comes from. There have been no cases of port racks actually getting water inside them, so the children's ports are dry and safe. In relation to lockers, I believe in later stages of the school—Mr Wagner may be able to confirm this—there are plans to construct lockers there. Do you know which stage that is?

**Mr Wagner:** It was based on the discussion I overheard this morning, so I cannot really add to that.

**Mr LINGARD:** So there are no specific locker areas as such being built into schools these days?

**Mr Wagner:** The brief for the successive stages is being formulated at the moment. So we would be responding, once again, to the community's requirements. It was indicated to me that the community was keen to have lockers at the middle and senior schools. How that is designed is yet to be defined.

**Mr LINGARD:** What systems are in place to prevent arson and vandalism of school property?

**Mr Whittaker:** We have security systems and detection devices in the school, and Mr Wagner can give you some further details of how they are hooked back to sensing devices and things. Across Queensland—and we are reluctant to indicate which schools have the security devices because of the deterrent effect—we have a significant number of schools that have intrusion detection devices and others that have closed circuit television and monitoring devices so that we can deter and/or catch any individuals who are planning any wilful damage to schools. Fires are what tend to hit the headlines, but there are other smaller incidents that do not get the headlines—and no doubt you would be aware of them from your own areas—that we are looking to detect as well, particularly through CCTV and intrusion devices.

**Mr LINGARD:** This is a magnificent complex, and full credit to what I saw there this morning. However, being an old school principal, I brought up a couple of things that I noticed this morning, and I meant to be constructive. So let me talk about one. I saw today a copper pipe coming up out of the ground that was connected to a tap held by two screws and a raw plug into concrete. The inevitable thing is going to happen. As kids go along, they will touch them and bang them. Here is a magnificent school, designed magnificently, and yet this is something which is so obvious that is going to break down. Why does this still happen?

**Mr Whittaker:** We try to minimise events like that occurring, and thank you for pointing it out. We will do something about it, I can assure you. What we have in place now is what we call post-occupancy reviews. We like to let the school run for 12 months and then we like to come back and have the architects, the builders and the school staff who operate the school meet together in a formal way and go through what works well in the school and what has not worked well in the school so we can take those learnings and build that back into the future projects. I am disappointed with copper pipes like that as well. I absolutely share your concern about a maintenance issue. It is our intention to put an enveloping pipe around that to prevent any damage occurring.

**Mr LINGARD:** Can I also say once again that I still see beams across the covered ways exposed. Inevitably, kids will jump up, swing on them and swing through them. I have been a school principal, and, if you have ever taken a kid to the office with two broken wrists after falling down, you would know that there is a design problem. Still at that school I see those covered ways with an exposed beam across them, but in many areas they are not exposed. So why is there not a common policy on the covered ways?

**Mr Wagner:** The brief was certainly to minimise the risk of that eventuality. You would have noticed the standard covered link was effectively screwed steel on a frame. It was the transitions where the issue has occurred. So we need to box in those transition spaces. I suspect that will be the outcome of the review.

**Mr LINGARD:** There was a seat about a metre back from the concrete where, quite obviously, the kids have scrubbed it with their feet. You can imagine the mud on a wet day. Why do we still allow that to happen? Blind Freddy can see that the copper pipe and the seat should not be there like that.

**Mr Whittaker:** That is something that we can again pick up in the post-occupancy review.

**Mr LINGARD:** Let me turn to external works. What was the general agreement between the Gold Coast and child-care centres on the sharing of cost, which has obviously been a very contentious issue with the building of all new schools these days?

**Mr Whittaker:** The Gold Coast City Council has worked extremely cooperatively with us in the provision of external infrastructure to the college and have done so, as I understand it, in total accordance with the government policy—

**Mr Wagner:** That is correct.

**Mr Whittaker:**—of a fifty-fifty sharing of the cost. We have built a number of schools, as you are no doubt aware, down the Gold Coast in recent times, and we find the Gold Coast City Council extremely cooperative in the way it has approached the construction of shared facilities with other schools, the provision of external infrastructure and the opportunities that we are developing with them on things such as shared sporting facilities, shared halls and those sorts of things. We have seen a continuation of that cooperation—

**Mr LINGARD:** So why is the present policy about the sharing of costs for parking areas and roadworks necessary for the new school?

**Mr Whittaker:** That is deemed external infrastructure to the school, and as a government policy I think it was brought out in 1997 that the Local Government Association and the government of the day agreed that external infrastructure costs were shared on a fifty-fifty basis between the Department of Education and the local authority. That is what the Gold Coast City Council have applied here, and we have, and it has been done in total cooperation.

**Mr LINGARD:** What were the outcomes of the design and cost review workshops held during the design development period?

**Mr Wagner:** I attended one of those workshops. I do not have a specific outcome for you, but generally it was a refinement of the design. So it is an iterative process of narrowing in on the outcome that the user groups and the representatives are happy with. It is a workshop process to advance the design stages whilst checking the budget issues, et cetera.

**Mr LINGARD:** Was any of the feedback from the project teams' stakeholder meetings incorporated in the project design?

**Mr Whittaker:** Are you able to give a specific answer on that?

**Mr Wagner:** Yes. I cannot give you a specific example, though.

**Mr Smith:** Just on that, if you are talking about value management workshops, that is really what they are about. If you are talking about getting value for money, it becomes an iterative process. Whilst those workshops are recorded, specifically we cannot give you any examples, but every school that is being done these days goes through a value management workshop. I can assure you that through those we are certainly getting significant gains. But the important thing is that we are getting input from the school community. I would suggest there are two words that could be used: value engineering. Once upon a time value engineering used to

happen but that was done by 'engineers' without any input from the community. Now that we have moved up a rung, I think that is where we are really getting our returns.

**Mr LINGARD:** Were any other sites considered for the development of the school?

**Mr Wagner:** Yes, seven other sites. This was deemed the most appropriate.

**Mr LINGARD:** Can I ask why?

**Mr Wagner:** Generically there is a set of criteria that is applied for sites for schools. I do not have that with me, but it includes proximity to transport corridors, access, services, no powerlines—that sort of thing. In the area when the review is undertaken we identify possible sites and then evaluate them against the criteria to come up with a recommended site.

**Mr LINGARD:** What sorts of facilities of the school will be used by the community? And what have you done about community access to a small, specific area rather than people having to go right through the school site to get to a facility that they want to use?

**Mr Wagner:** As I understand it, the master plan shows the hall adjacent to the senior school car park, where I think most of us parked this morning, to enable easy access there. At the more detailed level, I cannot really answer that question. The school will negotiate with the community for use, and there are arrangements that have been put in place to make that happen.

**Mr LINGARD:** I have one more criticism. We went to see a facility where students were doing physical activities. Obviously they were delighted with that facility, but the new high school at Tamborine had a magnificent theatre complex built at its first stage. Why have you gone backwards in providing that facility as compared with a performing arts facility immediately in the school?

**Mr Wagner:** I can probably address that. Our standard provision normally provides for performing arts when year 11 kicks off, which is normally stage 3 of a four-staged high school. I did check up on the Mount Tamborine one. They brought it forward at the school's request, and we responded to the school's request. So they must have had to put something else back. In the case of Upper Coomera State College, they have elected to put theirs back into the fourth stage given that they have the current facility. So a performing arts facility will not come along until they have the year 11 and 12 students there.

**Mr Whittaker:** That is in response to the feedback we received through the community consultation process on what they saw as their priorities for the provision in their first, second, third and fourth stages of the school.

**Mr Wagner:** The indication to me was that they would prefer to have their multipurpose sports hall in advance of their full performing arts equivalent space in the next stage.

**Mr POOLE:** Page 14 of your submission says that the final total project cost was almost \$28 million. Can somebody tell me what stages 1, 2 and 3 cost?

**Mr Whittaker:** This is stage 1, so about \$28 million for stage 1. Stage 2, which is currently under investigation and design, is approximately \$12 million. For stage 3 and stage 4, as we get closer to building those we will make an estimate of what the cost is. You would appreciate at the moment that the building industry is fairly volatile and there are upward cost pressures. So it would be difficult for us to give you an accurate figure about what those stages might cost.

**Mr POOLE:** How much did the site cost?

**Mr Whittaker:** I think we have that.

**Mr Wagner:** I do not have a total. We had four lots that were purchased. One was \$575,000, one was \$850,000, one was \$970,000 and the other was \$970,000.

**Mr POOLE:** I would hate to be buying it now. Does the project budget include the cost of a site?

**Mr Whittaker:** Are you talking about the \$28 million?

**Mr POOLE:** Yes.

**Mr Whittaker:** No, that \$28 million is the cost of construction once we had acquired the land.

**Mr POOLE:** How do the projected recurrent costs for the Upper Coomera State College compare with other P-12 schools? Are they equivalent costs?

**Mrs Grantham:** For maintenance?

**Mr POOLE:** Yes.

**Mrs Grantham:** The materials that were used at my P-12 school were very durable and very responsive to the local environment—the conditions, the oceans, the breezes, et cetera. In terms of Upper Coomera, I cannot comment specifically but I know that the maintenance costs for Varsity College were minimised because of the construction.

**Mr Wagner:** For Coomera, it was an intent to reduce recurrent costs, as is generally the case. Certainly the galvanised steelwork finish throughout the college is a low-maintenance cost. The granisite treatment up to the top sill height level is a low-maintenance cost. You would have noted some high-level middle finishes, which are very low-maintenance costs, and a Colourbond tin roof, which is also a low-maintenance cost. So, overall, the building maintenance costs would be low for that school.

**Mr POOLE:** I think we did make comment of that this morning. Obviously they were a lot more favourable than the traditional school as we know it.

**Mr Wagner:** There is not much timber there, which I guess is one of the high-maintenance cost areas.

**Mr Whittaker:** And painting is minimised.

**Mr POOLE:** What methods were used to consult with the community about the project? How did the department initially go about that?

**Mrs Grantham:** The process that I used was an engagement in a series of focus groups, including teachers, community members, industry and business. That was then broadened to public meetings, where information sharing broadened to the general community. So it was a series of strategies that involved a range of people who had specific interest in schools.

**Mr POOLE:** Was it advertised or word of mouth?

**Mrs Grantham:** No, it was advertised. We have examples here of advertising for another school that is about to open in Gold Coast South that was similar to the Upper Coomera experience.

**Mr POOLE:** Yes, I have noticed that. What was the outcome of the risk management workshops in terms of potential impact on the community?

**Mrs Grantham:** There is a real intention on behalf of Education Queensland schools to position themselves to be contributors to school communities and for their facilities to become integral to the provision of facilities that are in schools. So, in terms of risk, we do not see our provision to be a risk but rather an enhancement of what the school community has to engage with the broader community.

**Mr Wagner:** The formal risk management workshops with Walters, as the contractor, which we tried to operate in a partnering type environment, was to identify the significant project risks—if that is your question—the time cost and quality outcomes on this particular project. We went through each of those issues and identified contingency plans and impact if something did go wrong.

**Mr POOLE:** Was the government's Art Built-In policy considered in this project? If so, can you give us details of this implementation?

**Mr Whittaker:** I do not know the detail of that. We would have to take that on notice.

**Mr POOLE:** Thanks. What environmental issues did the department identify in its risk management workshops? Are they being managed and how are they being managed?

**Mr Smith:** Once again in terms of the details there, as Mr Wagner was pointing out before, there were two issues I suppose in terms of risk, which is the risk associated with the externalities, which is the community, and then within that project there were two layers. There was obviously the risk during the construction and then the environmental risk as a result of the construction. What we could do is I think table the outcomes of those risk workshops rather than sort of try to have a guess, because there are the obvious ones in terms of water and all those

sorts of things. That would be the best way to handle it I think—that is, for you firstly to understand it and the three layers, which are externality, construction and then outcome. We will table them on that basis.

**Mr POOLE:** Thanks.

**The CHAIR:** I understand there has been a number of similar new P to 12 schools constructed in Queensland. Has the department conducted any post-occupancy studies to assess the outcomes of these schools? If so, what lessons are there to be learnt perhaps for this new school?

**Mrs Grantham:** I can comment on that as I was principal of a P-12 school where the post-occupancy evaluation was conducted. The results from that evaluation concurred with the research that had been done prior to the educational brief being developed and responded to in terms of community. The parents were very comfortable with having a P-12 concept as the education provision in their local community. It enabled parents to become familiar with the curriculum that their students were studying and the transition of curriculum across the phases of learning. It enabled parents to respond to the values and beliefs that that school held so that they complemented their values as parents. It allowed parents to see that the educational practices that occurred were consistent with what was held in their community. Did you require anything else on that?

**The CHAIR:** No, that is fine.

**Mrs Grantham:** It was very successful in terms of being able to ensure parents and teachers were very happy with the facilities provided and that it maximised the availability of facilities to all ages of children rather than having traditional primary schools that did not have specialist facilities. The P-12 concept now enabled all children of all ages who attended that school to access performing arts facilities, home economics workshops and robotics labs. It was not restricted to the more traditional phases.

**The CHAIR:** Has the school been designed to be energy efficient? If so, what are some of those features?

**Mr Whittaker:** I think you would have noticed in the small number of buildings we went into today the large level of natural lighting that was provided. I think you will also find in the toilets that they are twin flush toilets, for instance, to reduce water consumption and hence the impact on energy. But Mr Wagner has a couple of other features that we might go through as well.

**Mr Wagner:** I guess generically in terms of the orientation of the site, the east-west buildings are pointing north to minimise the heat load and there is natural ventilation featured there. There is a large water tank—we did not actually show you that—down the bottom of the overland water flow course which is between the school and the oval which can effectively trap overland water flow and be used for irrigation. There is also a bore that has been sunk to provide an alternative to the town water supply. Apart from that, the lighting standards these days for fluorescent lighting, et cetera, are all low-loss ballast. That is a standard throughout government. So we have not gone further than the standard government ESD type solution.

**The CHAIR:** How many jobs were generated in the first stage of the project and how many were local jobs?

**Mr Whittaker:** If you want to move on we will have a look for that.

**The CHAIR:** That is fine. Can you provide a copy of the local industry participation plan report?

**Mr Wagner:** Yes, we can.

**Mr LINGARD:** Do we ever do any formal study as far as the impact on the local economy by these schools? Do we ever do any formal study?

**Mr Smith:** I suppose we do not do a formal study, but with regard to the impact during construction we have a whole series of multipliers that we use in terms of employment generation. We also do look then at the percentage generated locally, and the definition of 'local' is normally in the statistical boundary. So to answer your question, there is no formality done but certainly there are a lot of records kept in that regard to ensure that we steer our supply chain in that direction of supporting the local economy. But we do not in actual fact say that thou shalt have 80 per cent local input. We steer towards that.

**Mr LINGARD:** Is there any reason why Project Services decided on a non-traditional building delivery strategy as the most appropriate procurement method for the project?

**Mr Smith:** In general, Mr Lingard, I think every one of our projects now is becoming non-traditional. The reason for that is effectively that the traditional method of contracting certainly has its time and place. But with the complexities of these particular schools and the need to have an intrinsic community relationship, it is getting more and more important to start to join the designers, the community and also the contractors and the builders together as a partnership. You do not get that environment with the traditional formal contract. I would also say that there have been some time pressures on this particular project. I think that is well known. But if you look at the outcome, you would normally use this method of construction for most of your major projects anyway. Virtually every one that I know of these days would come out with a managing contract form in some shape. These are now getting up to something like \$20 million or \$22 million projects. If you look at the amount of civil works that you saw at that particular project, you are starting to get a lot more complex than just the old school. What I am saying here is that I think that the traditional method will nearly be the aberration. I think every one of those projects now for a lot of reasons, not just time, are by far proving the best way of going about business and most certainly producing outcomes.

**Mr LINGARD:** I have an educational question which is related to that question which is probably directed to Mrs Grantham. I go back as far as the old Roma middle school. We had a philosophy why we built the Roma middle school and why the grades were to be such and such. I note today they are talking about 1, 2, 3; 4, 5, 6; and 7, 8, 9. It is three different concepts. What is the generally accepted concept? Does the Education Department talk to the people who are involved in building and say, 'This is what we really want to aim at as far as the split between our three sections.'? Is there any common strategy now, or do you just go on demands? As such, are you really just alleviating the problem at Helensvale State High School by adopting the policy you have adopted at Upper Coomera?

**Mrs Grantham:** I cannot comment on the Helensvale High School solution, but I can comment on the first part of your question which related to how children learn and when they learn. The work that we did was about responding to local demands. Originally, Upper Coomera State College was going to do its first phase as P to 5. The community consultation phase was very strongly against that. Because of that, we have responded by putting that first phase as 1 to 6. Parents were key influences in that decision. It aligned quite well with a structural response for us. So it was easily negotiated for us to deliver that.

We are more about the phases of learning. In the early childhood or the P to 3 there is intensive learning such as learning to read and then moving them into a new phase where we try to engage students in different ways to learn through 4, 5 and 6 as we develop their skills. In 7, 8, 9—in some schools it is called middle school—we are looking at expanding the curriculum choices into the areas that you would be well aware of as we start to introduce new areas into the curriculum and then of course the senior pathways, where we are trying to link more with either academic study into universities, into vocational areas or into other pathways for students to have. So what we are trying to do is break down in two phases of learning where we can concentrate particular strategies to introduce students to at those phases. Complementary to that is a management structure that enables people who work in those teams to really concentrate on the needs of those young people in those phases and then hopefully as they transition through they engage in the new bit that is introduced.

**Mr LINGARD:** I do not know if we just did not see them, but were there any manual arts and home economics facilities there today?

**Mr Whittaker:** Yes, but that is closer to the highway. Unfortunately we ran out of time. We had planned to take the committee right through that and show them to you, but we spent too much time in the early parts of the tour and did not get you there, unfortunately.

**Mrs Grantham:** Can I just add that if you can imagine children in years 5 and 6 going into the industrial technology workshops and working in robotics or on those machines, it is generating enormous interest and a real expansion of experiences for those young people. I cannot comment on the Helensvale High School part.

**Mr Whittaker:** In relation to Helensvale High School, this school will relieve the pressure on Helensvale High School. It is intended to. Our projections show the population, if you like, of

Helensvale High School plateauing now and declining in future years as a result of the construction of this school. So it will have a positive impact on the size of that school.

**Mr POOLE:** Neil, maybe you have those details, have you, that you were looking for earlier?

**Mr Whittaker:** No, unfortunately I have not. I have been through it. I have made a note for myself. If you do not mind, we will take that question on notice. I do know it is available in the department.

**Mr POOLE:** Okay. I will wrap up then. With regard to the tender evaluation criteria, what were the project's specific objectives? That is probably one for you, Max, is it?

**Mr Smith:** There is obviously the financial capability. So it is really focused I suppose at looking at the ability of the particular companies to deliver. If you look at the personnel whom they employ, the company's prior experience at those sorts of works and if there were any nuances to deal with the particular project, in this one it would have been the capacity to deal with the school environment and the school community. So it was very much layered towards that particular project and anything that is unique in that. The uniqueness would have been the capacity to deal with the community. The other uniqueness was that it was a rather large project. There are a number of things, as I said before—financial, capacity and experience. Really when you get down to it, when you are building a school we want to know how well you can build a school and whether you have a track record of building schools and being able to manage a school community.

**Mr LINGARD:** When the Public Works Committee went to Bentley at Cairns there was a new building which was considered a temporary where you would not build a covered way. Will you give a promise that that still is not the policy?

**Mr Wagner:** No, I cannot do that, Mr Lingard.

**Mr LINGARD:** Were all of those buildings there linked by covered ways?

**Mr Whittaker:** Yes.

**Mr LINGARD:** And will all buildings in the future be linked by covered ways?

**Mr Whittaker:** Until we do the detailed design, I cannot sit here and put my hand on the Bible, if you like, and give you that assurance.

**Mr LINGARD:** Has Bentley been linked up with covered ways?

**Mr Whittaker:** I am not familiar with Bentley.

**Mr Wagner:** Yes, it has.

**The CHAIR:** I thank everybody for their attendance at today's public hearing. I believe the committee has gathered some valuable information that will assist us with our inquiries. I formally place on record the committee's appreciation of the assistance that all those involved in the inquiry have provided.

**Mr POOLE:** I move—

That pursuant to section 50(2)(a) of the Parliament of Queensland Act the committee authorise for publication evidence given here before it this day.

**The CHAIR:** I declare the hearing closed. Thank you very much.

The committee adjourned at 1.29 p.m.