

**Submission  
No 2**

## **INQUIRY INTO THE BUILDING THE EDUCATION REVOLUTION PROGRAM**

**Name:** B Herning

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FROM

TO THE DIRECTOR GENERAL PURPOSE STIMULUS COMMITTEE  
NO<sup>2</sup> LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL PARLIAMENT HOUSE  
McQuinn St Sydney N.S.W 2000

Dear Sir / Madam

I am writing this letter in regards to this article, written in the Courier this week on the 14th April 2010.

By the time I had finished reading and finding out what responsible people in positions have done with the stimulus package is deplorable.

It was made to be spent and I respect those who spent the money on buildings and input to the children's education, not only has construction done for this generation but for the generations to come.

People in this article do not see that it is government and taxpayers money and they cannot be in charge of the treasury.

Parent & citizens are not government works, and school principals are employed as educators.

I only hope that by these stimulus packages that along the way that you employed and supported apprentices, cadets or whatever to further advance the workforce.

Something that locals do not seem to do.

B Henning.



# Camden Haven Courier

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April 14, 2010

## Stimulus building projects under scrutiny

**BUILDING** the Education Revolution's controversy is touching the Camden Haven as members of the public are asked to make submissions into a parliamentary inquiry of possible mismanagement of the system.

This coming term Laurieton Public School will make use of their new hall and covered outdoor learning area (COLA). Principal David Willard said overall the school community was happy with their new \$2million facility.

"A nominal allocation of \$2million was made for our school. We were offered a Core 14 hall last year and advised at the time that there would be very little left of the \$2million by the time it was constructed. It would seem that this will prove to be an accurate forecast," Mr Willard said.

"The school had input in the following ways: Whether to accept or reject the offer of a hall; location and orientation of the hall; colours chosen from a list of three or four standard schemes and a few other minor aesthetic and practical considerations.

"The hall has been constructed in line with standard plans of the NSW DET Assets Management Unit. Variations were generally not allowed as these would have increased costs and slowed the project's progress. The hall construction includes all fittings necessary for it to be fully utilised, including sound and lighting, a large stage area and appropriate furniture. The hall surrounds, including part of the playground, have been landscaped to complement the hall's inclusion in this area.

"We did enjoy very good communication with the onsite construction team so I was able to inform the community of progress throughout the construction process. There were some inconveniences for students and teachers throughout this time, but everybody cooperated extremely well, understanding that we would have to tolerate less space during construction.

using the excellent facilities of the hall to support our very busy performing arts program, as well as class based activities in PE, drama, dance and a variety of other areas. The covered outdoor learning area part of the hall will be invaluable in many ways and available as an extension of the playground at all times.

"I am very happy with the final result. As much as we would have liked a hall at our school, I had no real expectation of that ever happening before the BER program came along."

North Haven Public School will also have a Core 14 hall constructed with their grant of \$2.85million, however principal Peter Vincent said while this style of hall is suitable for Laurieton Public School with an enrolment over just over 200, his school of 395 students will not be comfortably accommodated.

"Our project (hall/canteen) is still at the tender process. We have yet to see any budget details but have concerns that we possibly may not be able to have the whole project completed because we have buildings to be relocated, which was surprising and disappointing," Mr Vincent said.

Mr Vincent said the school's Parents and Citizens (P&C) committee were working on issues related to their proposed hall.

St Joseph's Primary is also in the tendering process for their hall using the funding from BER. Unlike the public schools, St Joseph's project will be handled by the Diocesan Schools Planning and Priorities Committee which has been set up by the Bishop to oversee all capital projects in parish schools.

"Local schools and parish communities have been involved in decisions around what their particular project would entail. Funding was allocated to each school according to its enrolment and the usual guidelines that are in place for all capital grant projects provided by Government funding have



The new \$2 million hall and covered outdoor learning area (COLA) at Laurieton Public school through the Government's Building the Education Revolution has pleased the school community, however other areas aren't as impressed with the Government's handling of its economic stimulus plans.

ment from the Lismore Diocese.

Nationals' candidate for the federal seat of Lyne, Dr David Gillespie, said he was contacted by concerned citizens regarding extravagant non-commercial costs, delayed, modified and down-sized projects in Building Education Revolution (BER) Projects in public schools.

"The amount of money being spent in this so called 'revolution' does not add up with the actual structures we are seeing in our schools," Dr Gillespie said.

"Breakdown of figures on the BER website are also riddled with extremely generous separate extra costs for items usually included within the construction fee.

"The Rudd Labor Government and NSW Labor should accept responsibility for its inability to implement its policies at anywhere near standard commercial costs.

"Ms Julia Gillard is convinced that the BER has been a success and that outrageous costs like we've seen at Hastings Public School COLA are just isolated incidents. But this seems to be occurring all too frequently right here in our own backyard, here in the Hastings Valley.

many more covered outdoor learning areas, libraries and toilet blocks might have been bungled, or how much money might have gone to waste.

"In comparison schools in the private sector and Catholic school system who have been managing the funds and projects themselves have really used the money wisely and achieved value for their school and the taxpayers dollar. Why weren't public school principals and Parents and Citizens Committees given similar responsibilities? They all have skills and a track record of achievement- why not use them?"

Shadow Minister for Education Adrian Piccoli called on members of the public to make a submission to the Parliamentary inquiry into "the State Government's mismanagement of the Building the Education Revolution Program."

The inquiry, which was initiated by the NSW Liberals and Nationals following numerous complaints from the public, will investigate aspects of the BER including: the fees and charges imposed by the NSW Government; the cost

projects and their suitability to the needs of the school; and the effectiveness of Government oversight and contracts.

Mr Piccoli said the inquiry was a chance for people in the community involved with the BER to have their voices heard.

"There are hundreds of school communities across the State who feel like they've been ripped-off under the BER," Mr Piccoli said.

"There are also countless builders and local tradespeople who are saying they could have done a better job for a lower price, but were overlooked.

"This inquiry is open to all members of the public, including Principals, teachers, parents, tradespeople and anyone else who has been involved or affected by the BER."

Submissions can be emailed to [gpscno2@parliament.nsw.gov.au](mailto:gpscno2@parliament.nsw.gov.au), lodged via the website at [www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/gpsc2](http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/gpsc2) or mailed to The Director, General Purpose Standing Committee No. 2, Legislative Council, Parliament House, Macquarie St, Sydney NSW