

Submission
No 34

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

Name: L Mitchell

Date received: 1/06/2010

The Director
Standing Committee No. 2
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
Sydney, NSW 2000
Submission for BER Program

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01 JUN 2010
LEGISLATIVE
COUNCIL

Dear Sir/Madam,

I make this submission as a concerned taxpayer and a concerned teacher. My position at the school is as a classroom teacher, Federation Representative and Teacher Librarian. The observations made were during times when I was not in my class teaching, therefore I am sure I missed most of what was happening on or around the building site.

I would like to bring to your attention the following –

- At the beginning the Department of Education was reported to take 10%. What for?
- It is reported that GST was then taken on the grant to contractors.
- Self-management of the project was not an option. In previous times the school has asked for three quotes for building to be done and one of these was selected. The building contractor was the manager and the responsibility was always with him. We were told what was happening and who would do it.
- Six people from NSW and QLD arrived to site the building, in six different cars. They sited it in the middle of the students eating area. After an uproar from parents and community it was then resited to the only available space in the school yard.
- There was no liaison with the school teachers, Teacher Librarian (although the building was a library), P&C or any of the local community.
- The site was not cleared properly.
- A mower shed had to be relocated. No money was supplied for this.
- The Principal was dictated to by everyone who was involved. Other Principals in the area seemed to have more involvement in the process.
- Two architects arrived from somewhere in their cars (although the building was the same design as every other library in the state). When I asked to see the plan they didn't have one!
- The building arrived on a truck in September 2009 at an estimated cost of \$260,000 delivered to the site. It consists of one large room with two small storerooms and a workroom at one end. Not very much different to our portable library. It was to have been ready by January 2010. At this stage we hope to have the use of the library by August 2010, almost twelve months after delivery.
- We were asked to vacate our old library which has been sitting empty for five weeks now awaiting relocation. At present we have no library in operation.

Thousands of books sit in piles on tables in the new library which is not close to completion.

- During the last twelve months we have had dozens of people arriving at the school. Some have driven three hours or more just to get a signature ie a six hour drive all paid for from our money.
- A local builder could have built a brick building three times larger for the same amount.
- The building arrived with no verandah. It had to be built later.
- Only half the walkway was built and it stopped halfway.
- Two of the four windows were removed to make room for a whiteboard.
- The building was ready for gas heaters. Then electric heaters were installed.
- There was no gutter guard. Trees surround the school.
- There was no exit lighting.
- There was no communication between tradesmen. There was no one on site to account to. The manager from Reeds came occasionally but didn't seem to ever get on top of things. This in my opinion is the main reason for all the problems. People came and went at their leisure and just kept submitting their accounts. There were too many chiefs and too many meetings between large numbers of these chiefs (most a waste of time and money).
- A contractor sent out to look at a broken lock arrived with an assistant!
- A contractor asked to install vents had three trips out to the site. One to look, one to drill holes and one to push in the vents. Each trip cost the school travelling time, travelling money per kilometre and this was just for a few hours work. This pattern was repeated for nearly every contractor. A large proportion of our money must have been spent on travelling allowances and driving time.
- The downpipes were not connected to the drains; therefore another trip from the contractor was required.
- A plastic tank was installed in a bushfire zone. Then it was surrounded by a colour bond fence to keep out the flames. The fence is on a slope and half the tank pokes up over the top of the fence. The tank is not connected to anything except the gutter!
- Little has been done on the site this year.
- A road was built to transport the builders and trucks to the site. Then the manager wanted to pay for it to be ripped up and taken away. It is a track that is used to bring in and take away portable buildings.
- The old library was cooled with two air conditioners. Even though the new building has had half the windows removed we are not permitted to have air conditioning – Department rules. We have eight months of summer weather here – we are the same latitude as Byron Bay. For many months this library will be unusable. Remove half the windows in your house and see if it is any cooler!
- For the same money other schools in the area have received much more. Modanville Public School, only ten minutes away has an air conditioned library building, an administration area, camera monitored sick bay and a staffroom. Caniaba Public School nearby, received a similar amount of building for their \$850,000.

- The contract seemed to change whenever someone wanted it changed. We were unable to take possession of the building earlier this year because it was only half completed and had so many building problems.
- The accompanying photo shows the landscaping – some poor quality turf.
- In conclusion I have supplied some photos to illustrate my point of gross waste and mismanagement of money in this project. The large photo shows the \$850,000 non-air conditioned library with the land already supplied. The other photo is of a dwelling at Ballina some thirty kilometres to the east. Land, landscaping and luxurious two story air-conditioned dwelling built for a sum of \$639,000.

I would be most grateful if the Committee could look into the management of the Rosebank Public School library project. Thank you.

Yours faithfully



L. Mitchell





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