

INQUIRY INTO THE BUILDING THE EDUCATION REVOLUTION PROGRAM

Organisation: Chatswood Intensive English Centre
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NSW Legislative Council Parliamentary Inquiry into Building the Education Revolution (BER) program.

Terms of reference: Any other related matters

ISSUE

Beverly Hills and Chatswood Intensive English Centres (IECs) are housed in sub-standard accommodation, poorly maintained demountable buildings which are more than 35 years old.

Beverly Hills and Chatswood IECs were unsuccessful in their applications for BER Funding under *P21, Science and Language Centres and National School Pride* due to the NSW DET's failure to identify Intensive English Centres in their data submitted to the Commonwealth in February 2009 for BER funding purposes.

Queensland's Department of Education did include its Intensive English school, which subsequently received more than \$1.5 million to upgrade facilities.

BACKGROUND

Intensive English Centres NSW

- The 14 IECs in NSW are specialist schools whose function involves receiving, assessing, referring, counselling, and teaching English to newly arrived Year 6 and secondary school aged non-English speaking students.
- IECs provide newly arrived migrant and refugee year 6 and high-school aged students with the language skills essential for successful entry into the NSW high school system.
- Students learn in an IEC for approximately 30 weeks before transition to their local government high school
- The first IEC, Cleveland St IEC, was established in 1977
- Beverly Hills and Chatswood IECs were established in 1978
- Beverly Hills and Chatswood IECs are still accommodated in demountable buildings originally sited in 1978. These buildings are in very poor condition, beyond economical repair, and fail to meet minimum standards for the provision of a 21st Century education.

Application for BER funds by Beverly Hills and Chatswood Intensive English Centres

February 2009	Commonwealth Government announces Building the Education Revolution stimulus program Commonwealth asked education department and Block Grant Authority to provide full list of schools.
11 March 2009	Chatswood and Beverly Hills IEC apply for P21 funding under the BER Program under the special schools category. Building the Education Revolution Guidelines 1. Overview The Commonwealth Government has committed funding of \$16.2 billion over three years to provide new facilities and refurbishments in Australian schools to meet the needs of 21st century students and teachers through the Building the Education Revolution (BER) program. The three elements of the BER are: 1. Primary Schools for the 21st Century – \$14.1 billion for all Australian primary schools, K-12 schools (primary school component) and special schools to build new iconic facilities such as libraries, multipurpose halls or classrooms, or to upgrade existing facilities.
1 April 2009	DEEWR sought confirmation from NSW DET that data provided in February was accurate
April 2009	Chatswood and Beverly Hills IEC applications rejected because BER funds are disbursed on information provided by the states and IECs were not recognised as schools. Representation directly to Dr Carol Nicoll, Commonwealth Co-ordinator of BER. Dr Nicoll advises the need for a separate school code in order to be recognised for funding. Representations to Angus Dawson, NSW BER Co-ordinator to find a way to give IECs unique identifying code.
28 May 2009	DEEWR agrees to issue a separate code for IECs ATTACHMENT 1
May 2009	NSW DET submits application for Science and Language Centres on behalf of a number of IECs
June 2009	IECs apply under P21 funding with newly issued codes. (see email Geoff Dodds and Paul Culshaw) ATTACHMENT 2

June 2009	IECs given High Priority in NSW DET's Science and Language Centre submission (see email Angus Dawson) ATTACHMENT 3
July 2009	IECs discover they have been rejected for all funding. (Email to Carol Nicoll) ATTACHMENT 4
July 2009	NSW understood that by the granting of DEEWR codes the Commonwealth was confirming eligibility of IECs for BER support. (See Michael Coutts-Trotter email 2/7/09) ATTACHMENT 5
August 2009	Angus Dawson email confirms funding applications have not been approved. ATTACHMENT 6
September 2009	Response from the Hon. Mark Arbib outlining reasons why the IECs were excluded. ATTACHMENT 7

COMMENT

There is inequity in the treatment of Intensive English schools across states for BER funding. Milpera State High School in Queensland is a state secondary school which provides intensive English and settlement services to newly arrived migrant and refugee students in the Brisbane area. This school provides identical services to NSW IECs. However, Queensland DET included Milpera in their data submitted to the Commonwealth for BER funding consideration. Milpera State High School received \$1.4 million under the Science and language Centres for Equitable Access for newly Arrived Students and \$125,000 under the National School Pride program. NSW DET failed to secure BER funding for NSW IECs.

As a result Beverly Hills and Chatswood IECs continue to be severely disadvantaged. Although NSW DET has set up a working party to review funding planning for maintenance and upgrading of IECs currently no money has been allocated for this purpose. Beverly Hills and Chatswood IECs continue to continue to provide an essential service to newly arrived migrant, refugee and full fee paying International students in sub-standard facilities.