Submission No 8

INQUIRY INTO THE BUILDING THE EDUCATION REVOLUTION PROGRAM

Name: Mr Darren Kennedy

Date received: 5/05/2010

Dear Director,

I write to you in response to correspondence I have received from the BER Implementation team based on an inquiry from myself on the 24th of February concerning the canteen built at Orange Grove Primary School at Leichhardt.

Firstly let me say I welcome the establishment of this inquiry as the information available at this stage clearly shows that much more benefit should have been gained by schools across the country for the money the government and tax payers have paid out. The process seems flawed in the accuracy of data used to allocate grants and it appears that the BER team were more intent on making things happen quickly rather than taking the opportunity to make sure money was well spent and cost effective. It also seems to have failed that in lots of instances as Principals were not actively consulted or engaged yet they are the person in the best position to know what the schools need and are far more in touch with the costs of doing business in the local area.

As way of background my two children attend Orange Grove Primary School in Leichhardt and we live approximately 1.5 kilometres away. We were terribly excited to hear that the school would receive funding as part of the BER, however I am of the belief the process failed to allocate the school the correct amount of money and the works done were at an exorbitantly high cost for what was received.

Under the conditions of the grants and if the 2009 school population including the pre-school were taken into account the school would then have been entitled to BER Element 1 with a $2,000,000 allocation, and BER Element 3 with a $125,000 allocation. The numbers used however to assess the schools application were out of date and did not include the public pre-school which is fully integrated into the primary school. This meant instead of having access to $2,125,000 and being able to do a lot of very necessary upgrades we had to settle for $850,000 and $75,000 respectively to be spent on a new canteen and other minor works. That is a difference of $1,200,000 due to the use of inaccurate data!!!!

My first query is therefore, why weren't current student population figures used and why weren't pre-school numbers included to determine the size of the grant given to Orange Grove? Orange Grove is located in a demographic with a rapidly expanding primary school population due to the change in age of the people living there. Having access to the larger amount would have allowed the school to make upgrades and do essential repair work to enhance the school for the current population but also to future proof it for the next couple of decades.

My second issue is the cost of the works carried out, in particular the canteen building.

This building cost in excess of $500,000 to build which in all honesty beggars belief given it is smaller than the average bedroom in a house. To put this cost in perspective, I recently knocked down our family home and built a double brick and brick veneer 2 level, 5 bedroom and two bathroom house only 1.5 km away. The total cost including fitting out the kitchen, both bathrooms and other Personal Choice items such as carpet, tiles, floor boards etc was less than $400,000 and that also included the demolition and significant excavation.

The BER provided me with a cost break down which I have attached. No matter how you look at it the cost of this one room building made of bricks and with a colour bond

roof with minimal site preparation is extraordinarily high and the cost does not even include anything other than a hot water heater and some cupboards. How can a canteen of the above nature cost so much more than my 5 bedroom house to build? The BER team have stated that it is due to more exacting standards for school works and provided the following specific points:

- The building has been raised to allow for water to drain away from the building which has generated additional foundation and excavation works.
- The building has an oversized roof which is used to cover the ramped walkway into the rear of the building offering additional protection from the elements for both students and staff.
- The canteen is being fitted with semi-commercial food preparation facilities that comply with food services requirements.
- Site services are all routed from the administration building which include electrical and communications cabling, along with 20 meters of hydraulic services infrastructure.

None of the above can possibly justify the cost being so high. The "oversized" roof for example is smaller than most car ports yet cost $24,568 for "roof structure" plus $19,958 for "Roofing". That's a total cost of $44,526 for a roof that would probably just cover most cars. On top of that and due to the lack of consultation with the principal and staff many of the features of the canteen are impractical for normal use and many are of sub standard quality. For example just to lock the outward opening bench doors you need to be an Olympic gymnast. Two volunteers have already complained that they are worried about hurting their backs trying to lock the building.

In summary I believe the government and tax payers have in the case of Orange Grove missed out on an opportunity to properly enhance and future proof a school with proven growth. This has meant the children of Orange Grove have been significantly disadvantaged by the short fall in funding and the school and its volunteers have been provided with a ridiculously expensive canteen that is impractical and non-functional.

Again I appreciate the opportunity to review the process and hopefully deliver a better outcome for schools yet to have projects undertaken.

Regards

Darren

ORANGE GROVE PUBLIC SCHOOL (2812) - CANTEEN PROJECT ONLY

Website Headings	Item Description	Detail Breakdown Canteen Estimate	Detail Breakdown Associated Works Estimate	Website Cost Summary
Substation Allowance	Substation Allowance			**0**
MC Incentive Fee	MC Incentive Fee	11,184	4,137	**15,321**
MC Project Management	MC Project Management	3,957	1,464	**5,421**
Modular Building Cost	MDR Building Cost	0	0	**0**
Design Doc, Field Data, Site Management	Statutory Planning, Design,Documentation and Certification Costs	59,754	22,100	
	Field Data Capture			
	Site Supervision			
	Profit Margin			**81,854**
Preliminaries	Preliminaries comprising Site Establishment and Dis-Establishment, Site Accommodation, Site Labour, Temporary Works, Site Fencing, Security and the like	44,498	16,458	**60,956**
Substructure	Earthworks	3,696		
	Termite Control			
	Concrete			
	Masonry			**3,696**
Superstructure	Concrete	8,774	5,000	
	Roof Structure	24,568	0	
	Timber Flooring	0	0	
	Light Steel Framing	0	4,398	
	Structural Steel	7,330	0	
	Light Timber Framing	0	0	
	Masonry	17,569	5,000	
	Roofing	19,958	3,000	
	Cladding	0	0	
	Doors	13,119	0	
	Overhead Doors	0	0	
	Windows and Glazing	21,242	5,000	
	Hardware	1,466	0	
	Ceilings	4,306	0	
	Terrazzo	0	0	
	Plastering and Linings	5,990	0	
	Tiling	0	0	
	Resilient Finishes	4,888	0	
	Carpet	0	0	
	Painting	2,461	0	
	Metal Fixtures	9,701	5,000	
	Timber Fixtures	3,606	0	
	Miscellaneous Fixtures and Furniture	18,721	5,000	
	Signs and Display	0	0	
	Extinguishers and Blankets	716	0	
	Hydraulic Services	27,548	8,000	
	Mechanical Services	0	6,050	
	Electrical Services	19,216	50,814	
	Lifts	0	0	
	Sub-Total	**211,179**	**97,262**	**308,441**
Site Works	Demolition			
	Site Preparation & Bulk Earthworks			
	External Works - Excluding Power Upgrade			
	External Works - Power Upgrade			
	Landscaping		5,436	**5,436**
Site Services	Site Electrical Services	5,675	10,000	
	Site Hydraulic Services			**15,675**
Design and price risk	Design and price risk	15,361	7,087	**22,448**
	TOTAL ESTIMATED CONSTRUCTION SUM (ECS)			**519,248**