

INQUIRY INTO THE BUILDING THE EDUCATION REVOLUTION PROGRAM

Organisation: Cattai Public School P&C Association
Name: Ms Helena Bark
Position: President
Date received: 7/06/2010

Helena Bark
P&C President
Cattai Public School

Submission to the Upper House inquiry regarding the Building the Education Revolution

To the Committee,

On the 20th of March 2010 I sent a letter on behalf the P&C association of Cattai Public School to the Hon Verity Firth MP seeking answers to concerns relating to the BER program at our school.

For the purpose of this submission I would like to refer to this letter for the history and details of my original concerns.

It is interesting to note that other than a confirmation of receipt I still have had no response from Verity Firth.

With the assistance of Louise Markus MP, Ray Williams MP and Ray Hadley (2GB) I have been able draw significant attention to our project in the form of Media attention and a much talked about site inspection from Brad Orgill.

I believe it was only as a result of ensuing media attention that we will receive the water tank and connected classroom which had previously been denied as the original budget blowout was revealed.

However, no reference to reinstating the \$202,444.00 COLA to the project was made. Interestingly any reference made in regards to the construction of the COLA was vague at best from the outset.

It was initially stated broadly that the COLA was about 6 x 8 meters in dimension.

This was literally gestured with a sweep of the hand (by a Multiplex executive) over the general area in which it was to go. We were not given any firm documentation or plan.

As a reference point, the school had a COLA built in 2008. It is 10 x 15 meters and cost \$32,243.00.

As we were forewarned in our meeting with Multiplex (held in November 2009) that the project may well exceed the budget, (as others already had) - it is my opinion that there was never any intention to build the COLA at all.

At this point I wish to note that we do not actually want the COLA.

We don't need Multiplex to build a COLA at that price.

It has taken almost 6 months to obtain a copy of the costing for our project. When it did finally appear the contents were STARTLING to say the least.

A few examples to highlight my concerns.

1. The final costing estimate is now \$920,963 - \$50,963 MORE than our funding allocation.
2. The actual cost of the building is \$333,354.
3. There was a \$50,000 allocation for a sub-station which WAS NOT REQUIRED.
4. The allocation for landscaping was \$23,044 which consisted of about 4 square metres of turf and 17 pot plants.

The budget STILL does not appear on the BER Website.
The entire document has been included as an attachment to be included in my submission.

I am waiting with interest to hear from Brad Orgill after his visit to our school. I have personally asked Mr Orgill to ensure that the project costing be re-visited and that the project be delivered to our school at the ORIGINALLY stated cost of \$678,178 with ALL the original inclusions stated in our project brief.

In addition we are calling for the remaining \$202,444 be returned to the school to use on projects in consultation with our school community.

I listened with interest to Julia Gillard on the recently aired 7.30 report and she CLEARLY stated that it is within Brad Orgill's power to make early recommendations on individual projects and if he does she (Ms Gillard) will be all ears.

I hope this happens.

In the meantime our P&C Association will meet to discuss how best to raise the funds to purchase the Air Conditioning unit required for the \$920,000 library that we did not need.

Yours Sincerely
Helena Bark

Tuesday, 30 March 2010

To The Hon. Verity Firth.MP
Governor Macquarie Tower
1 Farrer Place
Sydney, NSW, 2000

cc: Louise Markus MP Member for Greenaway, Ray Williams MP, Member for Hawkesbury,
Ray Hadley, Radio 2GB

Dear Verity,

As a representative of the P&C Association at Cattai Public School I wish to bring to you concerns regarding the Building Education. We are a small school of 57 students in the Hawkesbury Shire.

As you are no doubt aware there is a growing concern regarding the 'Fair Costing Value' of the BER P21 project.

I would like to add our schools name to the list of schools who are seeking answers regarding the nature of costing and works carried out in their respective schools.

Our reasons for concern and our statement of information at hand are as follows:

Initially we were given the option of Self Management for the BER project, however, as we are a small 3 teacher school our Principle is also the teacher of a composite class.

It was decided therefore that time constraints did not allow such a project to be undertaken. The School community supported this decision.

Our initial request was to have a hall built as currently the school travels to use the hall at Maroota for School and Community events. We hold our assemblies in one of the classrooms.

The dimensions of the hall design available from the selection offered by Multiplex was so small it would not have accommodated our very modest school family - this is somewhat of a joke!

A meeting was held late last year with concerned parents, teachers and Multiplex representatives attending.

We were informed that a 7 core library was the best option for our site constraints.

We asked if the interior of the library could be modified to serve as a hall as that is really what the school needs, but were informed that, as they are pre-fabricated pods and pre-assembled off site, the design can not be changed.

We asked if they could justify the enormous cost of the project given the fact that in this area one can purchase a 5 acre property with a 4 bedroom home, pool and outbuildings for \$850,000. They suggested the extra safety features for a school facility were more expensive, therefore leading me to interpret then that the new library/staff room/ office we built not 18 months ago for \$350,000 is not to safe standard? I think not.

We asked that they provide a costing breakdown. They would not..

We asked that they employ local tradespeople to carry out the works as our school community has all the necessary skills and tradespersons required to undertake such a construction. They couldn't.

Had we been able to employ at a local level, funds would have been injected directly into the local economy which was, I'm sure what the Labor Government had intended.

We were also forewarned that the project may indeed exceed its budget. At the preliminary meeting!

Not surprisingly we were left feeling completely uninformed and powerless to have an input in how the funding would be distributed.

As a result it was determined that the total \$870,000.00 approved funding would allow:
A 3 core COLA with no inclusions budgeted at \$202,444
A 7 core library budgeted at \$678,187.00

The brief for the library was to include the following items:

- A 10,000 litres water storage tank
- 5kW PV Cells (Solar Panels)
- A connected classroom

We have now been informed that the library has exceeded its budget and we can no longer have the COLA, water tanks connected classroom and solar cells.

Forget about any remaining funds to the school.

Is it possible that a pre-fabricated pod on brick piers with no inclusions can cost \$870,000.00?

From the outset of the program the school community have been very concerned at the lack of disclosure by the management of Multiplex as to the costing of this project.

To date we have not received any breakdown of project costing despite repeated requests.

The BER website does not offer a breakdown under our school listing.

Indeed if I research the website, and read other schools costing, it is immediately apparent where the bulk of the funding is going - **Certainly not to the benefit of any of the schools.**

Therefore, on behalf of the school community I am requesting an audit and full disclosure of project costing be carried out.

We think it only fair and reasonable that Multiplex deliver a library with all inclusions at the stated cost of \$678,187. There is plenty of profit in that price.

Moreover, we think it also fair and reasonable that the school be able to use the remaining \$202,444 to design, project manage and build our own COLA to our specifications.

Unfortunately we have lost faith Multiplex and its ability to effectively deliver this program.

As we lead into the next election period it would be a fair assumption that peoples decision making will be based on close to home policies such as these.

We are just one of many small schools currently facing the same problems as a result of the BER program.

Obviously the program was meant to give our schools a much needed boost to facilities.

Please make the necessary decisions now to ensure it doesn't all end up as a healthy bottom line for big business.

I have every faith that you will acknowledge our request and offer a suitable solution to the problem.

Thankyou in advance for your consideration.

Yours Sincerely,

Helena Bark

P&C Association President

11/5/2010

BER Primary Schools for 21st Century
 CATTAI PUBLIC SCHOOL
 MDR 7CORE LIBRARY

SCH ID
 1535

Estimated Project Expenditure

Australian Government P21 Allocation \$870,000

	Estimated Project Expenditure (all figures exclusive of GST)	Amount
1	IPO Project Management Cost (1.3%)	\$11,310
2	Contingency (5%)	\$43,500
3	Network Substation Allowance	\$50,000
4	Managing Contractor's Incentive Fee	\$4,231
5	MC Project Management Cost	\$18,026
6	Modular Building Cost	\$340,710
7	Design documentation, field data, site management	\$138,570
8	Preliminaries	\$104,806
9	Substructure	\$7,311
10	Superstructure	\$91,897
11	Site Works	\$30,548
12	Site Services	\$80,054
13	Design and price risk	\$0
	Sub-total	\$920,963
	Balance (excl GST)	-\$50,963

[school name - Cattai PS]			
Website Headings	Item Description	Detail Breakdown	Website Cost Summary
IPO Project Management Cost	IPO Project Management Cost	11,310	11,310
IPO Contingency	IPO Contingency	43,500	43,500
Substation Allowance	Substation Allowance	50,000	50,000
MC Incentive Fee	MC Incentive Fee	4,231	4,231
MC Project Management	MC Project Management	18,026	18,026
Modular Building Cost	MDR Building Cost (1) Design and construction of in-situ substructure for MDR Building unit including cutting and filling site to levels, excavation, disposal of spoil, concrete piers and footings, backfill and compact ready for installation; (2) Transportation of MDR Building unit from the manufacturer's premises to site, unload and install in final position including making weathertight and connections to services;	333,354 7,356	340,710
Design Doc, Field Data, Site Management	Statutory Planning, Design, Documentation and Certification Costs Field Data Capture Site Supervision Profit Margin	106,027 2,500 17,349 12,694	138,570
Preliminaries	Preliminaries comprising Site Establishment and Dis-Establishment, Site Accommodation, Site Labour, Temporary Works, Site Fencing, Security and the like	104,806	104,806
Substructure	Earthworks Termite Control Concrete Masonry	0 0 7,311 0	7,311
Superstructure	Concrete Roof Structure Timber Flooring Light Steel Framing Structural Steel Light Timber Framing Masonry Roofing Cladding Doors Overhead Doors Windows and Glazing Hardware Ceilings Terrazzo Plastering and Linings Tiling Resilient Finishes Carpet Painting Metal Fixtures Timber Fixtures Miscellaneous Fixtures and Furniture Signs and Display Extinguishers and Blankets Hydraulic Services Mechanical Services Electrical Services Lifts	0 4,263 0 2,090 7,182 4,812 600 3,084 11,804 2,210 280 0 0 55,772 0	91,897
Site Works	Demolition Site Preparation & Bulk Earthworks External Works - Excluding Power Upgrade External Works - Power Upgrade Landscaping	0 4,652 2,852 0 23,044	30,548
Site Services	Site Electrical Services Site Hydraulic Services (including water tank)	36,392 44,662	80,054
Design and price risk	Design and price risk	0	0
Total		920,963	920,963

Note: Interactive classroom to be provided (Cost will be \$25,000)