

**Submission
No 123**

INQUIRY INTO THE BUILDING THE EDUCATION REVOLUTION PROGRAM

Organisation: Sutton Public School P&C Association
Name: Mr Duncan Bosworth
Position: 2009 P&C President
Date received: 7/06/2010



SUTTON

Sutton Public School – Striving for Excellence

SUTTON PUBLIC SCHOOL PARENTS & CITIZENS ASSOCIATION

President: Sally Harriden

Secretary: Louise Griffiths

07 June 2010

NSW LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

SUBJECT: SUBMISSION TO NSW LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, GENERAL PURPOSE STANDING COMMITTEE NO 2, INQUIRY INTO THE BUILDING THE EDUCATION REVOLUTION PROGRAM - SUTTON PUBLIC SCHOOL P & C ASSOCIATION.

Sutton Public School is a school of about 140 students that is located in southern NSW about 20km NE of Canberra. Sutton School was successful in receiving funding in the Building the Education Revolution (BER) Program Round One. Funding of \$850,000 was provided by the Federal Government for construction of a new library. I would like to address the items: Whether costs charged for construction of BER projects are in line with industry standards; and whether outcomes were of acceptable quality and suitable to the needs of each individual school.

The Sutton P & C's concern with this program was with the continuing reduction of our new library's scope and capacity throughout the project due to construction costs that were more than double those that were originally advised at the commencement of the program. We consider that the costs charged for the construction of our BER library exceeded industry standards. The resulting excessive cost resulted in Sutton School receiving a modular design building of 150m² instead of the initially accepted 275m² brick construction library. Throughout the program there was a lack of consultation and cost visibility from the NSW Department of Education and Training (DET). In addition the building did not come equipped with adequate heating and cooling facilities that will require the P & C to provide more funds. The outcome was that our school received a facility on the same scale as our current library and the school has subsequently needed to review what the new building will now be used for. A new facility has been welcome by the school and Sutton community and will be well utilized though we feel for the money spent a much more suitable and valuable facility could have been constructed.

Continued reduction in new library scope and capacity and increasing costs

On 26 March 2009 as a result of the BER round 1 funding announcement and contact with the NSW DET, the Sutton Public School Principal accepted on behalf of our school community the funding to build a "14 core" library. This 275 m² library was to be almost twice the size of our current library and equipped with the latest technology. The basis of this acceptance was an Education Revolution School Costings spreadsheet (Economic Stimulus School Costings.xls - attached) which provided a costing of \$470,000 for a 14 core library and \$285,000 for the smaller 150 m² 7 core library. These costs were for a brick building but did not include GST (10%), site works, professional fees or a locality allowance (15-20 %) or cost escalation beyond Feb 2009. An MDR (Modular Design

Range) 14 core library was costed on this spreadsheet at \$240,000. The respective Size 14 and size 7 component design range library plans were provided on the DET website for the school's reference at the time of acceptance (Sheet No L105 and L103 attached).

The school staff and parent community were advised and were excited about this new facility. The school was initially advised that the \$850,000 would cover the cost of a 14 Core library including fit out using the Department's contractor. Near the end of April 2009 the DET indicated that the funding might now only cover the construction of a 7 core library of a similar size to our current library. At this time the school considered managing the project themselves so obtained an indicative costing from a Canberra based quantity surveyor which indicated that a brick 14 Core equivalent building and fit out could likely be provided within the \$850,000 budget. The school decided however to continue with the Department project managing thinking that 14 Core MDR was to be provided and since we felt our principal, staff, P&C and school were not in a position to take on the additional responsibility and risk of managing the project ourselves. We had accepted the NSW Department of Education and Training proposal on that basis.

In June the school was informally advised by DET (i.e. by telephone) that the budget could now not build a 14 Core MDR library and anyway we were not "entitled" to the bigger building since we did not have the required number of children (150) at the school. We were not aware that the Federal government money was linked to the attendance criteria but rather thought that we should get the best library for the money provided.

The DET advised that instead Sutton Public School would get a brick 7 Core library equivalent, we (incorrectly) assumed that this would include an excellent fit out in order to utilise the budget since the building was now reduced by half the size. The school reluctantly agreed to this on the proviso that the school could retain the current demountable library so that we had the additional space required. The school were also fearful that if they did not agree to the smaller library that they would receive no new facility at all. A number of times during the project the school was advised that they had spent all of their money so no changes were allowed and that we might lose the funding if we kept "stuffing around".

Lack of information, consultation and transparency from the NSW DET

On Thursday 13 August 2009 the school principal was officially advised that an error had been made by the DET and that the original plan had only scoped a 7 core MDR library (15m² larger than our current library). Notably a Department Officer took responsibility for the error and provided a written apology to the Sutton School community. We therefore learnt that the \$850k could now only pay for a 7 Core MDR library although apparently this had always been the case it was just that we hadn't been told that information by DET. We were not provided at this time with any breakdown of costs and indeed received very little information in writing at all from the DET. The school was accused of stalling the project and advised that they ran the risk of not getting a new library at all unless we agreed to commence the project straight away. We were concerned knowing that the cost to another local school for a 7 core size MDR fitted out in recent years was less than \$300k.

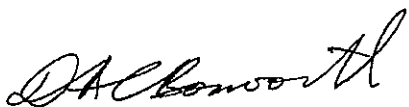
The principal continued to request and wait for costings which were eventually received on 02 October 2009. We were surprised to see all the extra fees and noticed that the demountable building did not even come equipped with air-conditioning. The day after receiving the costing the construction team arrived to start the work and the principal and staff finally got to view the plans for the building on-site. When a staff member noted that the building had a westerly orientation and

would be quite warm in the afternoon and suggested it should be oriented to face a different direction they were told in no uncertain terms that the school had already used all their funds and a change in the plans could not be considered. Sutton School has felt that they had been pressured by the DET to accept the smaller demountable and had very little input into what we were to get for our money. The lack of consultation by DET in the process has caused our teaching principal a great deal of unnecessary stress and has required her to regrettably keep updating staff and the school community on setbacks that have been encountered.

Acceptable quality and suitability

Construction of our modular design library has been completed and at the time of writing (June 2010) is about to be handed over to the school community. We are happy with the outcome (a new facility) but feel the construction costs were too high (at least double) and that we did not receive the best library for our children that we consider \$850,000 should buy. The building is not air-conditioned and heating is by unflued gas heaters which we are asking the DET to replace before handover. At this stage this does not appear to be imminent and the Sutton P & C is preparing to spend more of its hard earned fundraising money to provide a comfortable and healthy environment for our children and staff in a brand new building.

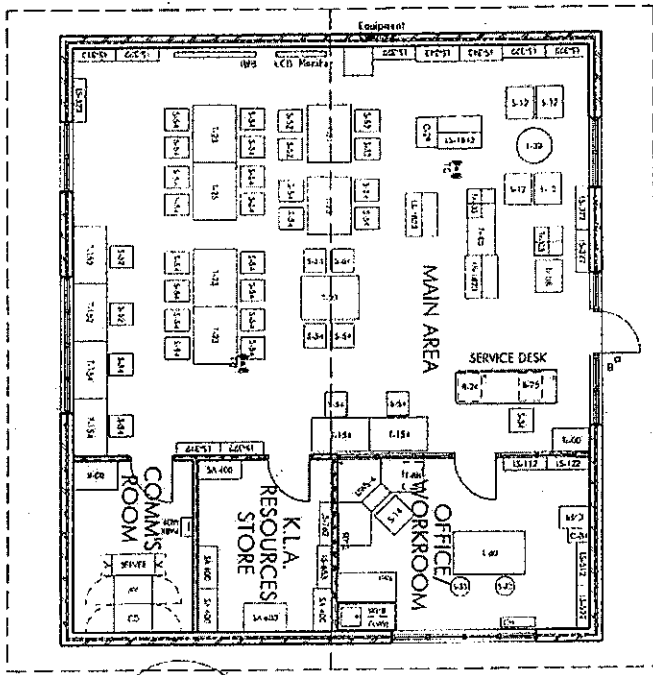
Yours sincerely



Duncan Bosworth
2009 P & C President
On behalf of the Sutton Public School - Parents & Citizens Association

Attachments

1. Economic Stimulus School Costings.xls – attached
2. Size 14 component design range library plan (Sheet No L105)
3. Size 7 component design range library plan (Sheet No L103).



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PROJECT MANAGEMENT

DESIGN DOCUMENTATION

COMMITTEE

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

EDUCATION REVOLUTION

LIBRARY

SIZE 7

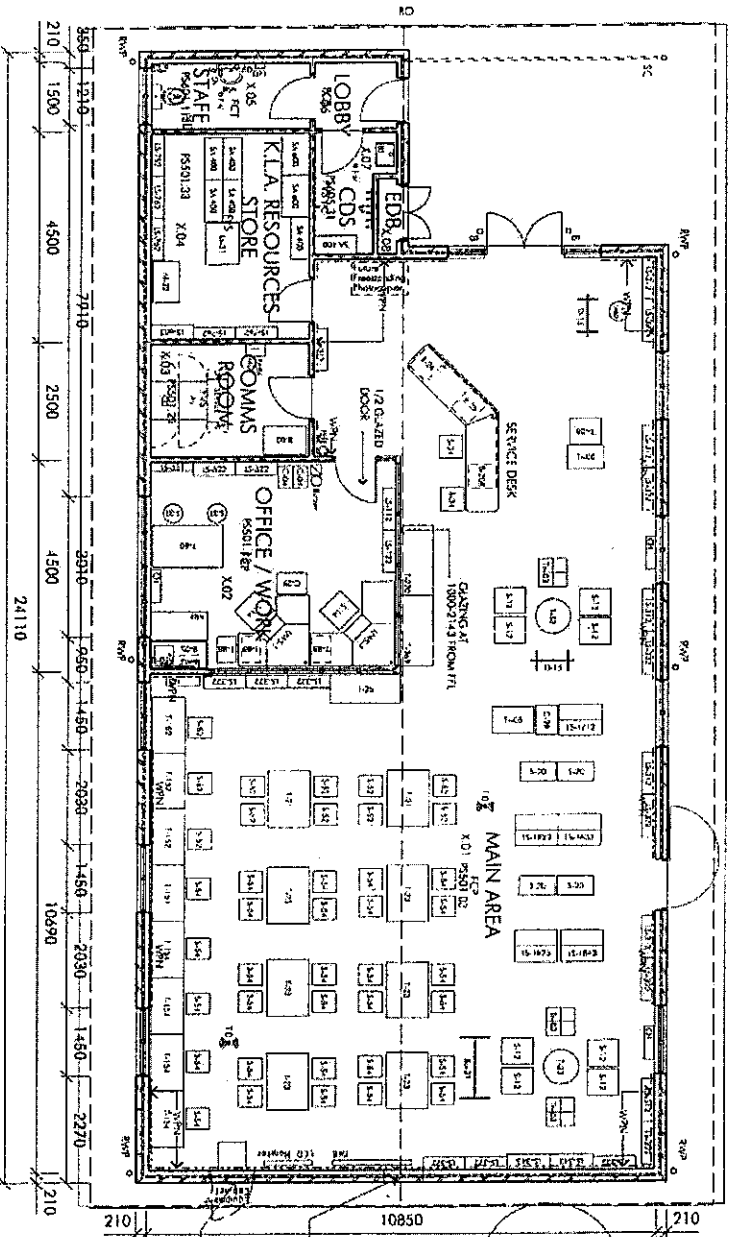
FURNITURE PLAN

Scale: 1:100

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PROJECT MANAGEMENT
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 DESIGN DOCUMENTATION: [Name]

CLIENT
 Education
 Research
 Committee
 D E T

COMPONENT BRANDS
 BUILDING THE EDUCATION REVOLUTION
 LIBRARY
 SIZE 14 LINEAR
 FURNITURE PLAN

DATE: 1:109
 SCALE: 1:12
 MAY 2006
 LIB5

Education Revolution

School Costings as at February 2009

BPI 174.3F

Item Ref.	Description	Cost (\$)
Halls & COLA		
01	7 Core Communal Hall & COLA	545,000
02	14 Core Communal Hall & COLA	910,000
03	21 Core Communal Hall & COLA	1,166,000
Library		
04	7 Core Library	285,000
05	14 Core Library	470,000
06	21 Core Library	603,000
Administration (Incl. Staff Facilities)		
07	7 Core Administration & Staff	694,000
08	14 Core Administration & Staff	864,000
09	21 Core Administration & Staff	927,000
Home Bases		
10	2 Home Base Unit	352,000
11	Special Programmes Rooms (21 Core)	151,000
Canteens		
12	7 Core Canteen	89,000
13	14 Core Canteen	135,000
14	21 Core Canteen	185,000
Toilet Block		
15	14 Core Toilet Provision	324,000
16	21 Core Toilet Provision	486,000
COLA		
17	14 Core COLA	87,000
18	21 Core COLA	123,000
Special School (Based on Bullimba School)		
19	Two Home Base Block	627,000
20	Library	311,000
21	Multipurpose Space with COLA	607,000
22	Hydrotherapy Pool, Incl. building to house pool	1,141,000
MDRs		
23	MDR Home Base Block	215,000
24	MDR 14 Core Library	240,000
25	MDR 21 Core Library - No cost info currently available	

NOTE : Costs are at February 2009 BPI (EBA) 174.3F

With the exception of the Special School and MDRs, the above costs include the following:

- Contractor's Design & Documentation - 5%
- Design / Planning contingency - 5%
- Construction Contingencies (Contract - 3%; Foundation / rock - 1%; Client - 1%)

Exclusions :

- . Goods & Services Tax (GST)
- . Site works
- . Cost escalation beyond February 2009
- . Professional fees

Locality Allowances :

Apply the following indicative percentages for locality allowance:

- . North Coast - 8%
- . South Coast - 10 %
- . Central & Western NSW - 15% to 20%