

INQUIRY INTO THE BUILDING THE EDUCATION REVOLUTION PROGRAM

Organisation: Henty Public School P & C Association
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HENTY PUBLIC SCHOOL

P & C ASSOCIATION

President: G Newton

Secretary: K Penfold
Lieschke

Treasurer: T

SUBMISSION TO THE INQUIRY INTO THE BUILDING THE EDUCATION REVOLUTION PROGRAM

Our school is in a small town of 1000 people in the NSW Riverina. There are two primary school providers in Henty – our public school and a private Lutheran Church run school. Both schools received grants of \$850,000.

Our funds were to cover the renovation of our existing historic hall and refurbishment of our aged toilet block. The local private school used theirs for the building of two new classrooms, a library and a new toilet block.

Under Department of Education guidelines we must use government approved suppliers and contractors. Using this program our expenses were \$80,000 for the design of the renovations and \$150,000 for the building management.

Alternatively the local private school – due to being able to engage their own local suppliers of these services – has spent \$8000 on design and \$20,000 on building management. The building manager is a local construction firm and that money will stay local. Our building manager – Lang O'Rourke is Sydney based.

Now that our project is nearing completion we now notice two things. Firstly, the job is not what you could consider “complete” – there was no allocation in the project budget for items such as stage curtains which would make our hall more usable. Secondly, our school body, both parents and staff, have not been able to have input into areas of design which will impact on our school for a long time, such as landscaping in the area around the hall which had to be excavated to make way for the renovations.

Our concern is now that we will be left fundraising and working voluntary hours to finish off the job and fix up the mess left behind.

In our submission we would like to highlight our main areas of concern:

1. Value for money from government funding of which we may not see the likes of for some time. If schools and parent bodies were able to appoint their own project managers to work to their plans for the school, much more would be achieved in providing high quality infrastructure for the education of our children.
2. Huge profit making by project managers.
3. Lack of input from staff and parents into the works. While we will be the users and custodians of these facilities we had very little voice in the decision making.
4. Lack of local promotion from building project managers to encourage local service providers to tender for some of this work. No local tradesmen have been used on this project.
5. That parents and staff will have to work and fundraise to “fix” or “complete” areas of the project we are not happy with – increasing the burden on already stretched resources.
6. That private schools were allowed to control their own projects by being able to appoint their own manager, develop their own designs etc. As a result they have achieved greater value for their government allocated dollar.

We would welcome any visits to our school to show how the money has been spent and any member of our P and C executive is happy to talk further on this matter.

Please contact
President Graeme Newton

Secretary Kellie Penfold

Treasurer Tracey Lieschke