

**Submission  
No 58**

## **INQUIRY INTO THE BUILDING THE EDUCATION REVOLUTION PROGRAM**

**Organisation:** Quaama P&C Association  
**Name:** Ms Debbie Platts  
**Position:** Vice President  
**Date received:** 1/06/2010

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## Quaama Parents & Citizens Association

President: Leticia Carroll

Secretary: Cheryl Sproules

Treasurer: Michelle Sutherland

The Director  
General Purpose Standing Committee No. 2  
Legislative Council  
Parliament House  
Macquarie St  
Sydney NSW 2000

26<sup>th</sup> May 2010

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing this letter on behalf of the Quaama Parents and Citizens Association as a submission to the Legislative Council Inquiry into the Building the Education Revolution Program. Please find attached a letter that was sent to The Honorable Verity Firth as well as other politicians expressing our objection to the cost associated with the projects constructed under the BER program at our local School.

We would like to make it very clear that the School in consultation with the P&C requested the projects and we are generally happy with the end product that has been received. In retrospect there are some things that could have been done differently or designed better. However given the rushed nature of the program there wasn't enough time for extensive consultation to occur.

Similarly we are totally aware that the Principal and other staff members at the school were not in direct control of these projects and what has happened is beyond their control.

Our major concern and objection as Parents and Taxpayers is the \$850,000 (incl GST) cost associated with these projects.

In our opinion this is absolutely ridiculous. What we found equally amazing was that the Project manager with Rankin Builders recently said on Sydney Radio 2UE that "there was no cost blow out.... We put a tender in for \$500,000+ it was awarded and we have come in on tender..."!!!!

A few questions we have are - Who authorized the tender? How could they see this as being a "value for money" tender? How many people tendered for our job? Was this the cheapest or dearest tender?

Hopefully the enquiry process will create some transparency to the process and will prevent future programs such as this that are such a blatant waste of Taxpayers money.

Should the Committee wish to visit our school and view the projects for themselves, the P&C would welcome them however advise that the request would have to first be made to the School Principal through the official channels.

Thank you for considering our concerns,

Debbie Platts  
Vice President  
Quaama P&C Association

# Quaama Parents & Citizens Association

PO Box 6004  
Quaama NSW 2550

President: Leticia Carroll      Secretary: Cheryl Sproules      Treasurer: Michelle Sutherland

The Honourable Verity Firth  
Minister for Education and Transport  
Level 31  
Governor Macquarie Tower  
1 Farrer Place  
Sydney NSW 2550

12<sup>th</sup> May 2010

Dear Sir,

This letter is to inform you of our absolute disgust at the waste of money associated with the Building the Education Revolution (BER) program. We are dismayed to discover that our projects at Quaama were not immune to the roting and cost blow outs that have been reported in the media.

We are a small school of 55 students, in a low socio economic, rural and drought affected community on the Far South Coast of NSW. To see such absolute waste of money really gets us all upset.

At our school we have received a new toilet block for our students (6 cubicles and a urinal), a sports storage shed (about the size of a double garage) and a covered walkway approx 50m long. The gold plated price associated with these three very small projects is \$850,000 !!!

Incidentally in the toilet block the toilets are all medium size toilets. There are no small toilets for the small kindy students, nor are there any full size toilets for the mature Yr 6 students. Our previous facility had 3 different sized toilets so students would be comfortable. Similarly the adults at the school (which can number up to ten regularly) have to share a single old unisex toilet in the administration building. Logic would presume that it would have been easier to add a male and female adult toilet to the end of this structure.

The question is did we receive "Value for money"??? The answer is a unanimous No.

Value for money was the COLA, which the P&C built 3 years ago over an old tennis court for a total cost of \$48,500 excluding the asphalt surfacing. This was funded by the Investing in Our Schools Program.

Value for money is my new large family home of 5 bedrooms, office and 3 living areas built late last year for a cost of \$470,000. I have four times the structure for half the price.

Let's get real here. Where has the money gone???? We know it didn't go to the contractors that did the actual work; they were paid "normal" tradesman rates.

There are so many other needs in our local community and in the wider community where this money could have done some real good.

Volunteer organisations that I am involved with include the local P&C, the Bushfire brigade and the Preschool management committee. Each of these beg, borrow and scrap together funds all the time in a variety of fundraising events to provide services and facilities for our children, families and the general community. We get excited about an event that raises \$1500, and then we see a project like this where the money was totally wasted by a small few who were awarded the management contracts and the associated bureaucrats.

Please explain, because this is totally wrong on a number of levels.

Yours truly

Debbie Platts (Vice President)

On behalf of the Quaama P&C Association

Cc: The Honourable Dr Mike Kelly  
Senator The Honourable Bill Heffernan  
Mr Andrew Constance

