

**Submission  
No 57**

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

**Organisation:** Booral Public School P&C Committee  
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**Date received:** 1/06/2010

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## GPSC2 GPSC2 - FW: Inquiry into the Building the Education Revolution program

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**Date:** 6/1/2010 7:11 AM  
**Subject:** FW: Inquiry into the Building the Education Revolution program  
**CC:**

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### INQUIRY INTO THE BUILDING THE EDUCATION REVOLUTION PROGRAM

We, the representatives of the Booral Public School Parents & Citizens Committee are addressing the following points in response to the *Terms of Reference* for the *General Purpose Standing Committee No. 2* on the above matter:

**1. The levels and appropriateness of fees and charges imposed by various NSW Government agencies:**

On this, we cannot comment.

**2. Whether costs charged for construction of BER projects are in line with industry standards:**

No. The costs charged have been well and truly inflated. We have measured the costs of these building works against buildings typical of this area and against Council estimates based on a per square metre estimate for a building constructed from raw materials on-site. Council estimates are: \$1,000 per sq metre for a house and \$1,600 for a multi-storey RSL style of building. Whilst the actual costs on these two buildings amounts to approximately \$4,600 per square metre. These two buildings are semi-demountable. Having been transported from Queensland and essentially installed on-site. With none of the facilities in a house (eg bathroom, toilet, kitchen fixtures and plumbing). The construction is made from extremely cheap building materials.

**3. The effectiveness of government oversight and review of contracts signed between Head Contractors and the NSW Government.**

- From the understanding of our Committee, no government representative has attended this site in order to Project Manage or oversee the project in any way.
- If there has been without our knowledge, we would question the competence, due to:
  - Time taken (building works still incomplete – due for completion immediately after the school holidays before term 1, 2010 was due to start)
  - Costs blown-out (see point 2)
  - Errors in construction
  - Secondary issues due to poor design and poor planning
  - Project Managers justifying costs by laying blame on the site which was straight forward, flat, easily accessible

**4. The use of local builders and trades people during the construction of BER projects.**

- No local tradesmen were used at all.
- At least two accredited builders made a submission of an 'expression of interest', to which they received no acknowledgement at all.
- These builders boast substantial experience and their work can easily be scrutinized for quality and professionalism due to the examples of their work in the immediate area. They are both able to demonstrate their legitimacy through several completed projects in the immediate area. They live and operate locally and one builder in

particular has two children attending this school. (I am happy to offer their names and contacts if required).

- The Project Manager had very little contact with the school, due to the distance required to travel. Our understanding is that the Project Manager is based in Singleton, at least a 1hour 45 minute to 2 hours' drive away, therefore they rarely make inspections.
- The semi-demountable buildings were transported from Queensland (in excess of 8 hours travelling distance from our local community), no local suppliers were approached, despite the numerous qualified and experienced contacts in the immediate area.

**5. Whether outcomes were of acceptable quality and suitable to the needs of each individual school.**

Outcomes of this project are unsuitable and unacceptable for the following reasons:

- No consultation was made with staff or the P&C on the needs peculiar to this area at all;
- No insulation for noise reduction between the two rooms was considered, as a result, noise from the neighbouring classroom is almost intolerable.
- Despite previously installed in the rooms, no airconditioning was provided. The reasons given were due to some assessments made on average temperatures in this area. The temperature measurements were made somewhere close to Williamtown Airport, which receives sea breezes. We are inland, sheltered from the sea breezes and had our average temperature been taken in the immediate vicinity, would have reflected temperatures much higher than the actual assessments made.
- There is inadequate scope made to take advantage of present and future technologies. This is due to the small size of the classrooms and the lack of structural strength of walls.
- Ineffective use of spaces.
- Inadequate number of data points installed. The new classrooms now have fewer than there were previously.
- Ramp onto verandah is aimed directly at the door of one classroom. This causes congestion with movement of students into the two classrooms.
- Drainage problems – the storm water has been channeled directly onto the playground causing a quagmire.
- Rain draining across covered pathways channeled straight onto the verandahs, and so students cannot leave bags immediately outside classroom on wet days as the verandahs receive too much water. The classrooms are so inadequate in size, there is little room to have the bags inside.
- Furniture has yet to be delivered. There has been no choice offered to the teacher of what can be supplied. (ie: no pin boards, desks do not have under desk storage (essential when space/storage is inadequate, no chairs).
- A narrow garden bed and then grassy area is supposed to take carry the excess water away, but appears to be a difficult and cumbersome access for the lawnmower.
- Both classrooms do not have whiteboards attached yet and have small whiteboards leaning on a table so that works are not impeded.
- Due to the length of time this project has taken, access to library resources has been restricted as the portable building where the library is now housed has had to be used for everyday classroom use.
- The Portable building in which the library is now housed, is inadequate in structural strength to take standard library shelving.

**6. Any other related matters.**

Booral Public School is on the periphery of many of the community funded activities that occur in this rural region. For many years, the P&C has been a very hardworking group of people. We believe, it is inappropriate for us to have to fundraise for what is a basic provision in schools in more socio-economically cashed-up areas or city schools. It may be necessary for us to pay for an interactive whiteboard to be moved, as we want to take advantage of an offered Connected Classroom facility. However, there is only one bricked building into which this can possibly go, we do not wish to risk losing this offered extra, and so the P & C will need to provide funds to enable this.

The P & C should be drawn on for community efforts. Recently one of our students lost his father very tragically and much fundraising occurred to provide assistance to him. We have other families we wish to offer some support to as well, in the form of providing much needed financial assistance for excursions for many of these children are isolated from museums etc. However, their basic educational needs must be met and the Booral Public P&C wish to ensure they receive a level technological equality, as this is deemed to be the future of education. As you can see, this has been inhibited greatly.

What should have been a great opportunity for a school that has been overlooked for too many years for any educational investment, has turned into a 'scam'. Many of our parents have businesses and skills that they offer to the school for 'free' and yet it appears there has been profiteering and so we must dip into the generosity of our small community again, when the excess funds from this project could have alleviated that.

We trust the information above is helpful in this inquiry, and we invite any member of your committee to contact us if there is any other information you require.

**BOORAL PUBLIC SCHOOL PARENTS & CITIZENS COMMITTEE**