

**Submission
No 113**

INQUIRY INTO THE BUILDING THE EDUCATION REVOLUTION PROGRAM

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General Purpose Standing Committee No 2
Inquiry into Building the Education Revolution

NSW Department of Education and Training
SUBMISSION

Introduction

The NSW Department of Education and Training is pleased to provide this submission to the General Purpose Standing Committee No. 2's inquiry into the Building the Education Revolution program. NSW has been allocated \$3.5 billion in funding to provide minor and major capital works at every primary, secondary and central government school in the state. These works are being or have been carried out through three separate program components: National School Pride, Primary Schools for the 21st Century, and Science and Language Centres for 21st Century Secondary Schools.

According to the guidelines attached to this funding by the Commonwealth Government, the vast majority of the work in this program must be completed by March, 2011. This is a historic program of works that represents both a valued investment in our state's educational infrastructure and a welcome effort to stimulate the economy and support jobs in the face of worldwide economic uncertainty.

The scale and scope of the program, as well as the speed with which we have been required to roll it out, are unlike anything that has been seen in NSW. Building the Education Revolution is a government program unlike any seen in modern Australia. While the program is a welcome opportunity, it has also brought with it a number of challenges and risks – the biggest by far being, how to make sure that school communities receive quality works that represent value for money while meeting the tight timelines and guidelines set by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations designed to stimulate the economy.

The NSW Government responded to these challenges and risks early in the program by developing three separate and distinct models for delivering each of the three components of Building the Education Revolution in its public schools. This flexibility of arrangements in response to program risks is why NSW has been able to successfully deliver this program to schedule.

The facts show that our approach is working. As of the beginning of June, 2010, we have spent \$1.215 billion, with an average estimated 7,880 workers on-site on any given day through Primary Schools for the 21st Century. Across BER, on any given day, around 8,000 individuals are employed as workers, trainees or apprentices on building sites at NSW government schools. In NSW, Building the Education Revolution is achieving its stated goals of supporting jobs today while providing quality infrastructure that will last well into the future.

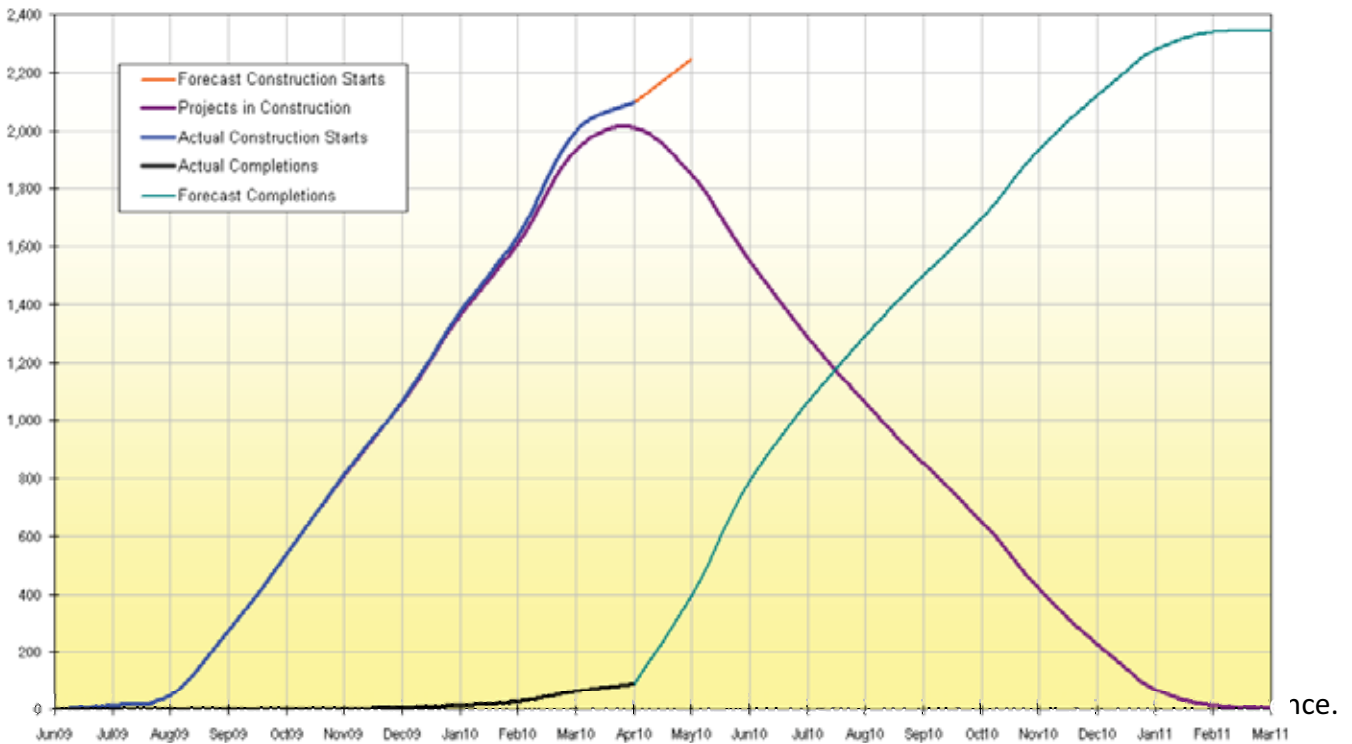
It is vital to remember the global economic circumstances in which this program was conceived, and remember that the international outlook is still uncertain. The objectives of this program were two-fold:

- 1. Provide an economic stimulus through the rapid construction and refurbishment of school infrastructure, and support jobs today, and,**
- 2. Build learning environments for children, families and communities, and provide long-term infrastructure for the future.**

This means that rolling out Building the Education Revolution has been a challenge, but a challenge we have met well. It has meant spending around \$3 billion on 2,370 projects in the Primary Schools for the 21st Century program alone (refer Table 1). As well, it has meant delivering in a variety of circumstances, and simultaneously building at sites as varied as remote country locations with only a handful of students, sprawling suburban campuses with many times those enrolments, and densely-packed urban schools, all while these facilities remain open and catering to 450,000 children between the ages of three and twelve. Where under business as usual, it might take four years to deliver a project such as a school hall from initial conception to final delivery – including a year to a year-and-a-half of planning and discussion with the school community, to fulfil the job and economy-supporting mandates of Building the Education Revolution, these time frames were severely compressed. Planning for major capital works takes between six and twenty weeks in this program, and delivery is within 18 months, often sooner, and in a program ten times as large as our existing school building program.

As of the start of June, 2010, 2,370 project briefs had been issued for 1,782 schools in the Primary Schools for the 21st Century (P21) program, with 93% of projects commenced and 20% finished and fit for use. As well, all 2,179 projects in the National School Pride program have commenced and completed. And all 118 projects that are part of the Science and Language Centres for 21st Century Secondary Schools have commenced, with 59% already finished and fit for use.

Table 1: Primary Schools for the 21st Century – Projects in Construction



I. The levels and appropriateness of fees and charges imposed by various NSW government agencies

As described above, there are three separate components to Building the Education Revolution, each with different guidelines for funding, timing and outcomes. To achieve value for money within each of these three components of the program, and throughout the program as a whole, we have developed three separate delivery models, each one appropriate to its size and requirements. As well, we developed an implementation model characterised by the creation of an Integrated Program Office to bring together private and public sector talent and officials from the Department of Education and Training as well as the Department of Services, Technology and Administration, which is charging for its services on a cost-recovery basis only.

National School Pride

National School Pride was conceived as an opportunity for Principals to undertake maintenance and minor capital works programs of their choosing, within funding grants of up to \$200,000 based on the full-time enrolments of a particular school. This program, which was carried out both by local Asset Management Units within the Department of Education and Training as well as by those school Principals who elected to manage some or all of their National School Pride works themselves, is now complete. All 2,179 projects with an approved funding of \$287,475,000 are now finished. By partnering with our existing Asset Management Units, which are responsible for maintenance in schools across NSW, we were able to tap existing expertise within the Department as well as relationships with local suppliers, builders and contractors. This model enabled us to substantially complete the program within the time frames set down by the Commonwealth Government.

It is important to note that this funding is on top of, and does not substitute for, the NSW Government's record spend on maintenance and capital works in schools.

Primary Schools for the 21st Century

By far the largest component of Building the Education Revolution is Primary Schools for the 21st Century, which is being implemented by a team of managing contractors, whose selection processes are detailed in a later section of his submission. However it should be noted that from the start the BER Program Office worked to develop controls to ensure costs were reasonable and that schools received value for money. To do this we moved forward with a "managing contractor model" in which seven managing contractors, selected through a competitive tender process and working across the Department of Education and Training's ten regions, are responsible for the vast majority of projects under this program. The advantages of this model are manifold for the Department of Education and Training in that they transfer many of the risks associated with the program, including those associated with delivering this program of works to high quality, on time, and at a reasonable cost that represents value for money, on to experienced builders.

For example, in line with program guidelines project management fees do not exceed 4%, though this varies from managing contractor to managing contractor based on their tenders and from project to project depending whether a particular project is considered "Fee A" or "Fee B". Under Fee A-style arrangements, which represent the majority of projects in this program, the managing contractor acts as the manager of the project and contracts the work to local builders who in turn call on local suppliers and sub-contractors. In some circumstances however, for example in remote locations without the

requisite building capacity, managing contractors have also had to act as builders, and this extra work is reflected in Fee B arrangements.

Just over half of P21 projects are being delivered through Fee A - the managing contractor appoints a builder to deliver the works and builder hires subcontractors as needed. Fee B includes site supervision and administration and reflects that the managing contractor is also taking on the role of builder. The state-wide average for Fee A is 11 percent, while the average for Fee B is 15 per cent. These percentages exclude incentive payments, and in both cases the actual fee for project management is 2.7 per cent – well in line with Commonwealth Government guidelines.

When Managing Contractors tendered for the managing contracts, they indicated how many projects would be delivered through Fee A and Fee B. The amount of projects being delivered through Fee A and B differs for each region. For greater flexibility, a Managing Contractor can change a project from Fee A to Fee B if at the tender stage a suitable builder cannot be found and with prior approval of the BER PROGRAM OFFICE. Likewise, if an MC believes they can find a suitable builder at the tender stage a project may be changed from Fee B to Fee A subject to BER PROGRAM OFFICE approval. By delivering projects this way we are ensuring they are completed on time and on cost.

Science and Language Centres for 21st Century Secondary Schools

Science and Language Centres for 21st Century Secondary Schools (SLC) will deliver newly constructed and refurbished science learning centres and language learning centres to eligible secondary schools across NSW.

This program is being delivered through a combined design and construct and managing contractor model.

“Doonside Technology High was chosen for involvement in the BER Science Labs program. Our builder was Bovis LendLease. The project was completed on time with no major issues. It was done with a high level of cooperation, safety was the highest priority and where I had issues they were quickly dealt with. The project came in under budget and our School obtained many other fantastic benefits including three connected classrooms which will be used in the most amazing ways to build engagement levels. Not enough is said about the fact that without this funding, in our case ‘real equity’ funding, our students would not have had the amazing facilities that we have now.” –Principal Joe Begnell, Doonside Technology High School

On June 30 2009, the Australian Government announced \$810 million of funding for the SLC program, including \$151 million of funding for 118 NSW public schools.

The SLC program complements the NSW Government’s Building Better Schools program, a \$145 million program to upgrade 800 science laboratories by 2011.

SLC funding was determined through a nationally competitive assessment process. The BER Program Office prioritised project nominations in line with the following Australian Government guidelines:

- Demonstrated level of disadvantage
- Identified and demonstrated need for the specified building
- Capacity to build the facility within the specified timeframes
- Effective and efficient use of Australian Government funding
- Extent to which the project incorporates sustainable building principles.

NSW Public Schools were able to nominate for either a language centre or science centre – not both. Final funding decisions were made by the Australian Government.

1. Science Centres

The design for the new science centres has been based on research and input from experienced science teachers and curriculum experts, resulting in learning spaces that are more flexible than the traditional designs. Classrooms are designed with a distinct separation between the practical learning space and the general learning space, and can be formatted within these parameters to suit a variety of teaching styles and curricula.

The new science centres utilise modern information and communications technologies, with Interactive Whiteboards, wireless networking facilities and fixed data points included in all designs, providing:

- access to interactive animations and simulations that model scientific concepts,
- access to videos, podcasts, Web casts, live chat sessions and email,
- access to virtual environments and museums,
- opportunities for collaboration in global online science projects

Science centre refurbishments will be delivered as an extension to the NSW Government's Building Better Schools (BBS) program. As with the BBS program, the number of refurbished science centres to be upgraded will be determined by a school's current and projected enrolments (whichever is the greatest).

2. Language Centres

Information and communication technologies are central to the design of the new language learning centres. Each classroom features the Department of Education and Training's own Connected Classrooms standard facilities in the general learning space, plus a second Interactive Whiteboard in a separate seminar room.

The new language centres enable students to experience direct online collaboration with other connected classrooms across the state. Video conferencing facilities present opportunities to engage in virtual foreign language exchanges with other schools and teachers around the world, providing students with language learning experiences in real time or virtual environments.

These new facilities also present opportunities to enhance language learning by providing easy reconfiguration of furniture for a wider range of activities within the one learning space.

The BER Program Office is working closely with the Department of Education and Training's Languages Unit, Curriculum K-12 Directorate to ensure that schools are able to effectively use the equipment in the new language centres and develop strategies that will enhance student outcomes.

"It all looks fantastic and will certainly further enhance the wonderful teaching and learning happening at our school." - Deputy Principal Glynis Bridgwood, Cherrybrook Public School

We are creating language centre networks by connecting new and existing language centres across NSW. NSW is leading the way with the creation of these networking relationships and we are working with other States and Territories to expand these networks Australia-wide.

Among other benefits, these networks have the potential for geographically isolated students to access languages that may not be offered at the school.

The language learning centres include an interactive whiteboard, video conferencing equipment and desktop sharing software, providing new and unique opportunities to enhance teaching and learning, linking teachers and students with peers, experts and places within the classroom and beyond.

NSW is the only state to have a dedicated BER Languages Curriculum Advisor to work with teachers in this way. This professional support, along with the new infrastructure, will ensure real long-term benefits for students, teachers and the broader school community.

A competitive tender process was undertaken to determine the contractors to deliver the newly constructed elements of the program.

II. Whether costs charged for construction of BER projects are in line with industry standards (a.k.a. Value for Money)

Early on in the program the decision was made that buildings constructed in NSW government schools under Building the Education Revolution would be built to the same high standards of all other government school constructions, as outlined in our School Facilities Standards. This means that school buildings and refurbishment projects adhere to guidelines that meet and in many cases exceed those set down by the Building Code of Australia. There are two primary advantages to this approach: firstly, it means that our schools are safe and durable spaces in which our students and teachers can work, learn and play.

Secondly, it means that the buildings we build and refurbish now will not place an undue burden on future maintenance budgets and divert funding that could be used for teaching and learning.

This is why it is difficult to make simplistic comparisons between the cost of buildings built for primary schools by the NSW Department of Education and Training and other types of constructions, be they residential, commercial,

A list of features in our constructions would include:

- Masonry to 2100mm to absorb the wear and tear of normal student movement
- 48 oz broadloom 100% wool or 90% wool 10% space dyed nylon carpet for wear and general performance
- 2 layers of insulation in the ceiling space for temperature moderation
- Pinboard wall lining for durability and display areas
- Sprung timber floors in halls to protect young bones and joints
- Heavy gauge roofing (0.48 BMT not 0.42BMT) for long life
- Terrazo wall panelling in toilets, which is robust and easily repaired

- Galvanised steel sleeves to downpipes to negate impacts and breakages
- Non slip floor finishes eg industrial sheet vinyl or ceramic tiles
- Hot dipped galvanised balustrades, grilles and gates and hand rails for low maintenance and long life at lower cost
- Heavy duty fittings and finishes (ie non-domestic) eg taps, bubblers, fans
- High performances lighting as a better teaching space
- Heavy-duty roof ventilators to keep buildings cool
- Specialised window frames that are of special design and allow safer operation

We made the choice early on to build sophisticated education facilities that will last for generations.

The Benchmark Value process

One of the many unique features built into NSW’s implementation of Building the Education Revolution is the Benchmark Value process, which further ensures that projects are delivered which represent value for money and that contractors assume the risks associated with cost over-runs.

The contract between the Department of Education and Training and the Managing Contractors is designed to enable very fast delivery and effective cost testing at key stages to ensure value for money is achieved on each school project.

School projects are approved to start construction based on an **Estimated Construction Sum (ECS)** provided by the Managing

“The BER work has enabled WCG to develop the business to higher levels of professionalism and systems management. Richard Crookes Constructions has assisted WCG in implementing the changes required to deliver a quality project in an accelerated timeframe. This has been recently proven with the handover of the Coledale Public School Library - one of the first BER projects in the Illawarra region. Since commencing the BER work we have been able to engage over 30 local companies giving a much needed boost to the local economy. Including those indirectly employed manufacturing windows, frames and trusses etc, we have also engaged over 180 workers on our BER sites. Prior to the BER work we were often forced to chase work outside the local area, but being able to localise our work and workforce has resulted in many savings including keeping jobs in the Illawarra, time and associated travelling costs.” Mark Waldock, Waldock Construction Group.

Contractor. Some 98% of ECS's have been accepted, and 97% of planning consents have been received. The ECS is based on detailed pre-construction investigations and is the Managing Contractor's best estimate of the full cost of developing and delivering the project using their expertise, market experience and knowledge. Projects are approved to start construction, in line with our budget management strategy, when the ECS scope aligns with the school budget.

The ECS is *not* the amount that is actually paid to the Managing Contractor for the works undertaken. The figures on the BER NSW website (www.ber.nsw.gov.au) are Estimated Construction Sums, which is an *estimate only* of the costs of developing and delivering that school's project. The ECS is not the final cost of the project. The final cost will be determined by comparing the benchmark value for the school's project to the actual costs incurred by the MC. The MC will be paid the lesser of either the actual costs incurred or up to 105% of the benchmark value. The MC has to cover any costs that exceed 105% of the benchmark value.

The amount actually paid is determined through the **Benchmark Value (BMV)** process where the BER Program Office compares the tendered cost of the project to the tendered cost of similar projects and sets the project's Benchmark Value. The Managing Contractor is only entitled to be paid the lesser of either the actual costs incurred in delivering the project or a maximum of 105% of the Benchmark Value. This is a real incentive to keep costs down for the life of the program.

Why construction handbooks are not always an accurate guide to costs

It is also important to note that it is not fair or accurate to make comparisons between NSW's BER projects and the costs of building projects indicated in construction handbooks such as Rawlinsons, which has frequently been used to make spurious claims about cost overruns in the program.

"BER got Ichor out of a hole. Pre economic downturn we had a fulltime workforce of 20 people. When things started to turn sour we were looking at the prospect of having to reduce that by a third. "Now we have a fulltime staff of 40, of which 27 - including two apprentices engaged under the Aboriginal/Indigenous program - are assigned totally to primary school works." – George Kandylas, Ichor Construction

Rawlinsons Construction Handbook is best described as a Quantity Surveyor's compendium and as such should really only be used by those in the construction industry who have the expertise and are experienced in the vagaries of this industry.

When used by an experienced person, the handbook can be quite useful in the early stages of a project to prepare an indicative estimate or budget. At this stage in a project's life there will be a number of unknowns which need to be identified and resolved, and the experienced professional will make provision for these unknowns based on whatever information is available or can be assumed. This particularly applies to the client brief and the site conditions. However even in this context the handbook is still only a guide and should never be relied upon in isolation.

For example, a recent article in *The Australian* correctly quoted the 2010 edition of Rawlinsons at \$1,300 to \$1,400/m² of gross floor area [gfa] for a single storey Primary (Public) School building in Sydney. The problem is that the basis of these figures is unknown to anyone outside of the publisher. A school, even a primary school, comprises a number of functions usually housed in purpose designed buildings requiring different construction methods, materials and fit-out. There is also a significant difference in building size for the same function depending on the school size which in turn is based on enrolment numbers.

For most projects, and particularly for those in the state-wide BER program, other costs need to be factored in. These may include demolitions, reactive soils, flood plains, and environmental issues. It should also be noted that the BER project costings include design and project management fees which are not included in Rawlinsons building cost indicators. Design and documentation costs cover things such as design development by an architect and site condition surveys to identify soil, underground water and other environmental issues that may impact construction. It also covers the cost of statutory planning approval and the initial site visit and any subsequent site visits required to finalise the project scope and siting. Project management fees cover the costs of developing programs for each school and scheduling all P21 projects to meet the tight timeframes set by the Australian Government. They also covers the costs of reporting on progress, expenditure and project risks as well as ensuring that child protection and OH&S requirements are met on every school project. Rawlinsons cost estimates also do not include concrete aprons, walkways, electrical upgrades and many other features that are often present in Department of Education and Training works.

"[The school's hall] is now a feature of our village and will be a fantastic resource for the school and community. Groups and organisations are busy enquiring about bookings. It really is an impressive building - the sprung blackbutt floor is outstanding. It looks to have been designed for our school site.

"We now have a resource that no one thought would possibly be available in our community." - School Principal Don Mackenzie, Tinonee Public School

At the commencement of the BER budgeting phase the BER Program Office prepared a schedule comprising all the building types and sizes in the portfolio. The "Construction Cost" in this schedule comprises the base building with an

allowance for an 'easy site' ie slight cross-fall, no rock or loose sand foundations, together with the site works, site services, furniture and equipment [the latter not normally part of a DET construction contract], and allowances for 'new' features such as photovoltaic cells, rainwater harvesting tanks, and if necessary sub-station upgrades. On a green-field site, the cost of site works and site services alone is frequently in the order of 30 - 40% of the building's cost. In the case of a campus augmentation this component then reduces to around 15 - 25%. Construction handbooks do not account for this, because every project is unique and the full cost can only be determined by the above variables and the allowances set against them. It isn't possible for Rawlinsons to quote a generic total cost for a project because of these site specific variables.

It should be recognised that every construction project is in essence a prototype, and even for identical designs the cost will vary because a variety of conditions will apply, eg. foundation material, degree of slope, access to the site, weather, industrial relations, team efficiency. A publication such as Rawlinsons cannot take these variables into account and so must adopt a broad-brush approach and simply indicate a likely base building cost. To quote from Rawlinsons' own introduction to the section on 'Building Costs per Square Metre' - "Costs can provide no more than a rough guide to the probable cost of a building,...."

Differences in tender pricing also need to be taken into account when examining building costs since tenders received by the Department of Services, Technology and Administration. may typically range from 8 - 25% within the one tender panel. Construction estimating and construction itself is not an exact science and the very nature of the industry means that it can never be as consistent as a factory production line.

The section of Rawlinsons that deals with building cost rates is quite a small part of the handbook, and would suggest that in industry probably more use is made of the remainder of the publication such as the detailed item pricing [as a check, or as a first pass for uncommon items].

III. The effectiveness of government oversight and review of contracts signed between Head Contracts and the NSW Government

As indicated previously, Primary Schools for the 21st Century is by far the largest component of Building the Education Revolution, accounting for nearly \$3 billion of approved funding.

To best manage the risks associated with delivering the 2,370 projects approved under this program, which include making sure that projects are completed on-time, that they represent value for money, that schools are left with quality constructions that are safe and do not place an excessive burden on future maintenance budgets, the NSW Government developed a Managing Contractor model. The benefits of this model are clear: it allows the NSW Government the ability to transfer these risks to third parties while still retaining control and oversight of the program. This has allowed us to manage costs and quality and ensure that any defects are fixed at builders' expense.

In terms of cost management this has been particularly effective, especially as projects constructed under this program have essentially been tendered a number of times – compared to “business as usual”, which sees projects tendered only once. Managing Contractors won the right to implement projects in various regions of the state as the result of a competitive tender process, and builders responsible for each project have again had to call tenders for works to ensure value for money. All of this is backed up by the robust Benchmark Value Tests described above, as well as internal and external audits, which further ensure that NSW is receiving value for money.

Likewise, we chose a similar contractor model

to implement Science and Language Centres for the 21st Century, but scaled it to the size of the program – i.e., 118 schools.

Finally, in the National School Pride program, oversight and review occurred through the Department of Education and Training's regional asset management units.

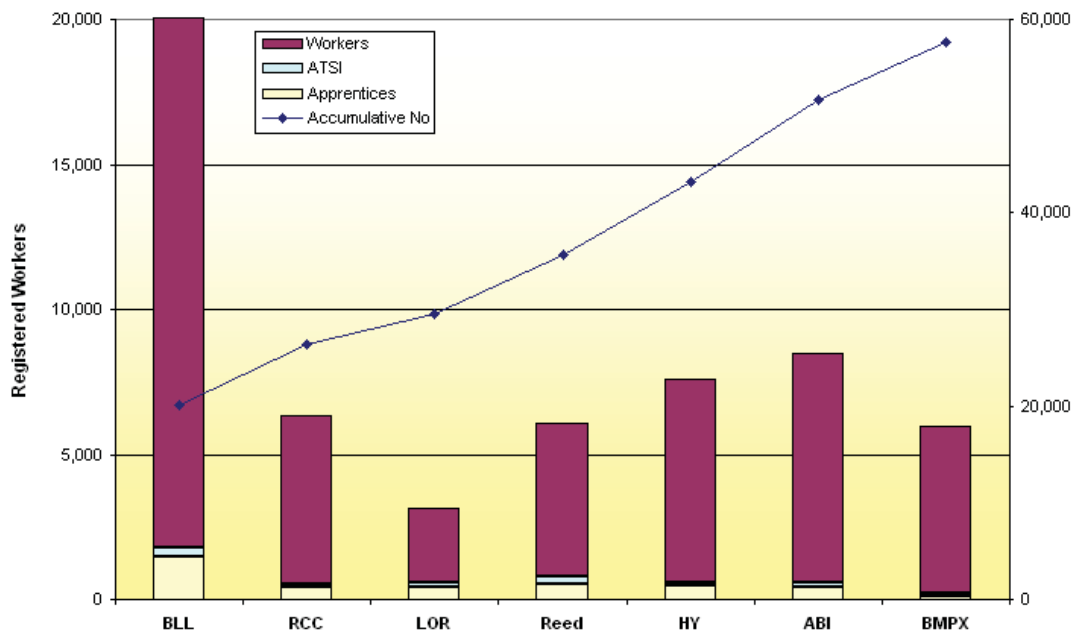
Managing Contractor Bovis Lend Lease estimates around 50 people worked on the BER project at New Lambton South Public School. Carpentry apprentice Jacob Marks, employed by Newcastle builder Stronach Constructions, has worked on this and around six school BER projects after searching for work for six months.

“Working on the BER projects has been good as I’m seeing jobs at different stages. Every project is different and I’m getting a better understanding of my trade through the variety of projects I’m involved in.” – Carpentry apprentice Jacob Marks.

IV. The use of local builders and tradespeople during the construction of BER projects

The Commonwealth has repeatedly said that economic stimulus efforts such as BER are all about job creation. The NSW Government endorses these efforts and is making this goal a reality.

Table 2: Breakdown of workforce in P21 program



Building the Education Revolution is having a real impact on local employment with hundreds of employment opportunities being created, small builders no longer needing to put people off and a renewed focus on apprenticeships and Aboriginal employment. The NSW Master Builders Association has recognised this through its ramp up of its own apprenticeship training programs. As of the beginning of June this year, 30,414 workers have undertaken some work on the Primary Schools for the 21st Century program, recording over 14,659 days of work – exceeding our target by 356 days.

Local employment is, of course, not just about numbers. It is about community. The BER Program Office routinely hears stories of workers and builders such as Peter Maneas, who today owns a building company that worked on his alma mater of Woollahra Public School in Sydney’s eastern suburbs.

“I was born and raised in Bondi and I was a student at Woollahra from kindergarten in 1969 to year 6 in 1975,” Mr Maneas has told the BER Program Office.

“The school hasn’t changed all that much over the years and I’m proud to be back there now helping to provide staff and students with new facilities.”

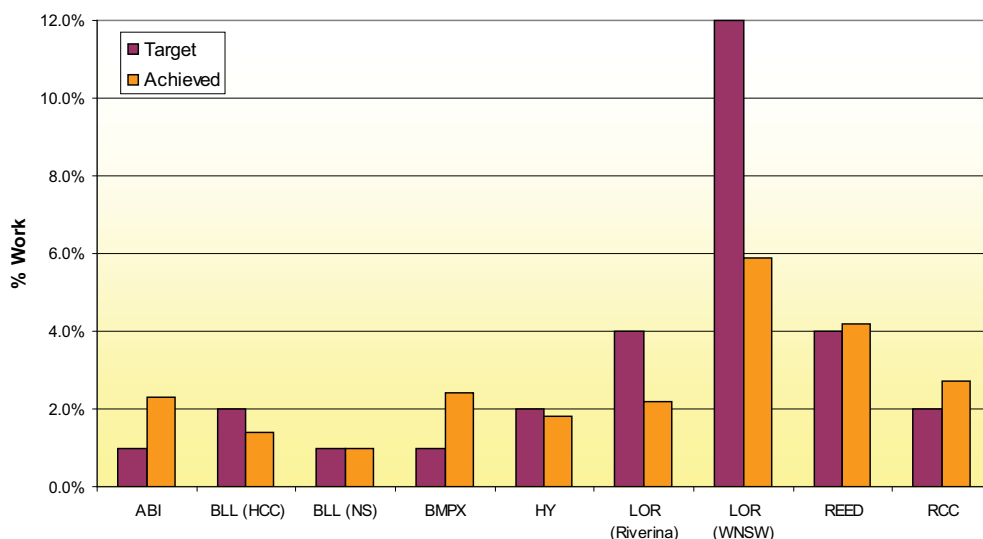
Mr Maneas believes the BER program has numerous benefits beyond providing much needed new facilities to school communities like Woollahra Public.

“The stimulus program has helped the economy generally as well as having created new employment opportunities,” Mr Maneas says.

“At Ganellen, we have been able to employ a site manager, eight project coordinators, nine foremen, two labourers and two apprentice carpenters one of whom is Aboriginal.

“That’s an additional 22 staff and all because of the BER program,” he says.

Table 3: Aboriginal Employment



V: Whether outcomes were of acceptable quality and suitable to the needs of each school

The Commonwealth Government set the *Building the Education Revolution* Guidelines. The Guidelines state that:

“... all eligible Australian primary schools will receive a funding allocation under this program (although there may be some exceptions to this, e.g. where a school has just been constructed and has no need for any new facilities).”

These guidelines also called for funding allocations for all primary and secondary schools through the National School Pride program, and funding for certain secondary schools through the Science and Language Centres for 21st Century secondary schools program.

The BER Guidelines have a range of strict conditions which include timeframes, definitions around project commencement and project completion, funding eligibility criteria, conditions for funding, use of funding and payment of funding.

These guidelines also prioritise funding. Under the Primary Schools for the 21st Century component of the program, "Funding can be used for capital expenditure on the following items (in order of priority):

1. construction of new libraries;
2. construction of new multipurpose halls (e.g. gymnasium, indoor sporting centre, assembly area or performing arts centre) or, in the case of smaller schools, covered outdoor learning areas;
3. construction of classrooms, replacement of demountables or other building to be approved by the Commonwealth; or
4. refurbishment of existing facilities."

To determine funding needs for schools on 25 February 2009, the BER Program Office embarked on a process in which every government school Principal in the state was asked to identify capital works projects for consideration for funding under *Building the Education Revolution* program under the three programs, ie Primary Schools for the 21st Century, National School Pride and Science and Language Centres for 21st Century Secondary Schools.

To expedite this process and meet the Commonwealth's timelines for lodging Round 1 applications, the Department of Education and Training pre-identified government schools with more than 150 students that did not have a library or hall for possible inclusion in the program.

Principals were invited to submit their project nominations based on the Commonwealth's priorities for Primary Schools for the 21st Century through an on-line survey service called Zoomerang.com. The NSW Department of Education and Training has successfully used this service in the past to collect data and submissions from school communities.

This data was subsequently analysed by the BER Integrated Program Office, in particular Principal Liaison Officers. Principal Liaison Officers are school Principals who have been seconded to work with their colleagues to explain guidelines, offer advice and negotiate suitable nominations. The Principal Liaison Officers discussed each school's nomination with that School Principal. Each Principal was required to consult with their P & C and school community before nominations were finalised. They were required to confirm in writing that this consultation had taken place.

Applications were then lodged with the Commonwealth in line with timeframes outlined in the program guidelines.

Every government school project receiving funding under the P21 program has achieved financial commencement within the definition of the BER Guidelines.

The construction and refurbishment of eligible facilities including halls, libraries, classrooms, and administration blocks has well and truly begun with the program nearing the period when there will be peak production with approximately 80 projects entering construction every week.

This is having a real impact on local employment with hundreds of employment opportunities being created, small builders no longer needing to put people off and a renewed focus on apprenticeships and Aboriginal employment. The NSW Master Builders Association has recognised this through its ramp up of its own apprenticeship training programs.

The Australian Primary Principals Association surveyed 2,438 Principals in March 2010 on issues relating to the P21 and National School Pride (NSP) programs.

Of the Principals surveyed, 801 – or 33% – were from NSW. The majority (78%) of respondents were from Government schools. The following statistics include Government, Catholic and Independent schools, unless indicated.

The survey clearly shows the success of the BER program in NSW – 97.4% of NSW schools say their students will benefit from P21 and 94.2% say their students will benefit from NSP.

Nearly 87% of NSW schools agreed their school is receiving projects that they and their community want within the Australian Government guidelines.

Open questions were analysed for positive or negative responses. Nearly 54% of those surveyed in NSW were positive about P21 and over 77% of NSW Principals were satisfied with NSP.

In conclusion, the APPA states:

- The survey confirms the value that primary school leaders place on the BER program in contributing to the capacity of their schools.
- Rural and small schools report significant approval of the funding stream enabling projects formerly beyond their reach.

- Significant emphasis was placed on the fact that the program will provide funds to schools that would not have been able to access these funds in any other way.
- Principals were not only aware of the educational implications of the scheme but were also cognisant of its potential stimulus to the national economy and to their local communities.

The NSW Department of Education and Training is pleased to provide this submission.

Number of Projects per Electorate in Greater NSW for P21, SLC, & NSP

