

**Submission
No 127**

INQUIRY INTO THE BUILDING THE EDUCATION REVOLUTION PROGRAM

Organisation: Evans River K-12 School Council
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Evans River K-12 School Council

President: Todd Yourell

R/Secretary: Christina Towers

Submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into the Building the Education Revolution (BER) Program

The Evans River K-12 School Council would like to express concerns about the implementation of the BER program within the State of NSW, specifically:

When schools were asked by the NSW Department of Education to identify whether they sought to have science or language facilities enhanced, restrictions on the works were not advised and as a consequence serious issues were experienced in the BER Science program at the Evans River school. As a consequence the school community remain highly dissatisfied with the works undertaken at the school.

Background

The school was previously known as Woodburn Central School and located on a site at Woodburn NSW. This school was equipped with three type-1 laboratories. To the displeasure of the school community at the time, when the school moved to Evans Head only two laboratories were constructed (Note: the NSW Department agreed at a public meeting to construct two laboratories and a half laboratory to address the concerns but only erected two laboratories and a classroom with a demonstration point). This restricted markedly the science programs of the school.

When the BER program was announced, the school community elected to have the classroom with the demonstration point modified to have the third laboratory constructed. The Federal Government allocated sufficient funding for this to occur. The school community were pleased the facilities would at last return to the pre-2000 standard (of three laboratories).

Some months later the NSW Department advised that the school were not going to be permitted to construct a third laboratory to type-1 standard after all as it had determined this was beyond the school's entitlement for a school of its size (a type-2 laboratory – significantly lower equipment levels is proposed despite funding being available for the type-1 facility). This entitlement restriction was not advised to the school community at the time of making a decision about whether to proceed with science or language enhancements, ie the goal posts been moved late in the game.

While the school community remain steadfast in their desire to have the third laboratory constructed (for which sufficient funds have been allocated), alternate programs have been submitted in line with the program requirements to see that the funding allocated to the children of this area is spent on our children. The school community is now being advised these works cannot be completed as the works cannot be completed prior to the end of June 2010 and the NSW Department will not apply or an extension to see the works completed.

Outcome

The school community requests the type-1 laboratory be installed and any remaining funds allocated to the other works already specified by the school community (a listing of these works is available upon request) so that the budgeted amount for the school is spent of the young children of the area. An extension in time is granted for these works to be completed.

Thank you for your consideration of our submission.

Todd Yourell

President