

**Submission  
No 133**

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

**Organisation:** Goonengerry Public School P&C Committee  
**Name:** Ms Eliza Wills  
**Position:** Member  
**Date received:** 7/06/2010

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RE: Enquiry into BER Scheme

As a representative of the Goonengerry Public School P & C Committee, I would like to voice discontent at the allocation of funding our school received through the BER Scheme. The Scheme was a good idea in concept, but unfortunately the manner in which it was put into practice for our school almost entirely negated its potential benefits.

The regulation of this scheme severely curtailed our input on what our school most clearly required. As a small school it is the local community, staff and parents who are most aware of the ways in which our school could benefit from funding such as this. But the restrictions simply disallowed our input. What we have ended up with, in effect, has not really benefited the school at all. We have 2 extra classrooms built, but eventually we will lose 2 demountables we already had. Thus we have effectively no extra classrooms at great expense. What our school actually required was something else altogether, which we have not been able to do, because of the restrictions imposed through the BER Scheme.

The building we were allocated has been situated in a manner which is environmentally unsustainable, not taking into consideration solar passive considerations at all, just to name one aspect. This will mean we require heating the building in winter and air conditioning in summer; at great environmental and financial cost in the long run that would have been unnecessary if we had been able to consider these environmental factors before the construction and placement of the building.

In addition, the entire project was out sourced away from our local community. Workers were brought in from

afar, when we live in an area with a high unemployment rate. There are many people in our local community with skills and professions that could have built what we needed for much less money. We had a pool of local professionals willing and able to be involved, but they were excluded by the government restrictions and centralised control of the scheme. Local involvement would have supported our community and addressed the needs of our school in alignment with our school's commitment to environmental care and community. The entire project has been environmentally unsustainable and unsupportive of our community.

In a nutshell, the BER Scheme has been a negligent squandering of funds that has not appreciably benefited our school. The scheme needed to be designed to suit the individual needs of each school, without so much rigid centralised control and restrictions.

We would like this matter looked into further on both a state and federal level (the NSW Parliamentary Enquiry and the Federal Task Force into the BER scheme), and the Law and Justice Committee.

Please feel free to contact me in regards to this matter in the future.

Regards,