



Media Release

August 6, 2010

Building the Education Revolution Implementation Taskforce interim report released

The Chairman of the Building the Education Revolution (BER) Implementation Taskforce, Brad Orgill, today released the Taskforce's interim report into the BER program.

The Taskforce was established to receive, investigate and respond to complaints about the administration of the BER Program as well as to ascertain whether schools and education authorities are achieving 'value for money' from their BER projects. The Taskforce was also asked to make recommendations to the Australian Government about any changes to BER Program policy, contracts or projects it thinks could improve the remaining delivery of school buildings and refurbishments.

To date, the Taskforce has received complaints in respect of 254 schools; approximately 2.7% of all schools involved in the BER program, and of these over half relate to value for money. NSW Government schools accounted for 56% of complaints and Victorian Government schools for 20%.

From our investigations to date, the majority of complaints raise very valid concerns, particularly about value for money and the approach to school level involvement in decision making.

Over the past three months the Taskforce has visited 110 schools across five states. The Taskforce is working with the educational authorities and especially NSW to investigate and where possible resolve complaints to achieve better school outcomes.

Our analysis suggests BER P21 is delivering quality infrastructure within the timeframe constraints set. For some of the 22 education authorities' project costs are materially higher than would have been obtained pre-BER in a business as usual environment. For some education authorities however the costs do not appear to be higher.

Notwithstanding the validity of issues raised in the complaints which are concentrated in the NSW Government system, our overall observation is that this Australia wide program is delivering much needed infrastructure to school communities while achieving the primary goal of economic activity across the nation.

The Taskforce has developed a cost analysis model which contains the details from over 400 BER P21 projects from all over the country. This enables us to compare the costs of projects in the non-government and government sectors and the difference in the cost of delivery of projects between states and territories. Further detail is provided in our report.

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