



## Andrew Barr MLA

MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING  
MINISTER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE  
MINISTER FOR PLANNING  
MINISTER FOR TOURISM, SPORT AND RECREATION

---

MEMBER FOR MOLONGLO

Mr John Carter  
Committee Secretary  
Senate Education, Employment and Workplace Relations Committee  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Carter

Thank you for inviting the ACT Government to provide a submission to the Inquiry into the Primary Schools for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century program. The ACT has welcomed the *Building the Education Revolution* (BER) initiative including the Primary Schools for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (P21) program.

This submission relates to P21 projects in ACT public schools, as governed by the *Bilateral Agreement on the Nation Building and Jobs Plan* between the Commonwealth Minister for Education, Employment and Workplace Relations and the ACT Minister for Education and Training, and associated guidelines.

### **ACT Primary Schools for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

All primary level ACT public schools will benefit from the P21 program.

The ACT government submitted 14 project applications in Round 1 of the P21 program, 53 project applications in Round 2 and 1 application in Round 3. All ACT public school applications were approved to the level of funding sought.

- A list of approved ACT public school projects is at [Attachment A](#).

The program will provide \$138.10 million (excl. GST) to ACT schools for 68 projects. The projects will enable the construction of new libraries and multipurpose halls and the refurbishment of classrooms, older halls and libraries.

All schools will gain new or refurbished facilities, providing a better learning environment for students and teachers. The projects will improve the environmental sustainability of our schools.

### ACT LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

London Circuit, Canberra ACT 2601 GPO Box 1020, Canberra ACT 2601  
Phone (02) 6205 0011 Fax (02) 6205 0157 Email [barr@act.gov.au](mailto:barr@act.gov.au)

The buildings and refurbishments provided through the projects will also provide a better environment for community organisations using school facilities, and increase the range of such facilities available in the ACT.

The ACT Department of Education and Training (the Department) is coordinating each of the projects on behalf of ACT public schools. These schools have worked with the Department and their school communities to develop and prioritise projects so that the timeframes stipulated in the BER Guidelines are met. Significant planning and preparation has occurred to ensure that projects commence as soon as possible after approval by the Australian Government.

The ACT public school projects have progressed well, with construction scheduled to have started on 46 P21 projects by 30 November 2009. Two P21 projects will have been completed. In addition, work will have been completed on 64 of the 84 National School Pride (NSP) projects by 30 November 2009.

All projects are on schedule to be completed within the agreed timeframes.

### **ACT commitments**

The Australian Government's investment in the BER initiative and P21 program complements the ACT Government's significant investment in building new schools and refurbishing older schools. The ACT Government has provided close to \$500 million over the seven year period 2006-07 to 2012-13, including:

- a \$90 million school infrastructure refurbishment program;
- construction of new schools (Harrison High School, Kingsford Smith P-10, Gungahlin College, Tuggeranong P-10);
- establishment of Early Childhood Schools.

Implementation of the BER package maintains the cooperation and collaboration established between the ACT and Australian governments through initiatives such as the National Secondary School Computer Fund and Universal Access to early childhood education.

Under the *Bilateral Agreement on the Nation Building and Jobs Plan*, the ACT is responsible for the ongoing costs of infrastructure provided through the BER program. In its 2009-10 Budget the ACT Government committed \$5.6 million over four years to support additional operational costs on ACT public school sites during the construction phase, and support repairs and maintenance on completion of construction.

### **Supporting local jobs**

The ACT Government has engaged seven construction (building) contractors to manage the delivery of all 68 projects under the P21 program. Six of the building contractors are medium-sized building companies operating in the ACT which typically engage local sub-contractors and tradespeople to undertake project tasks. There is one major ('national') building contractor engaged in the delivery of the ACT's P21 program.

Architects, design teams, engineers, quantity surveyors, cost planners, builders and associated tradespeople have been engaged for the projects. In addition, specialist consultants in occupational health and safety and environmentally sustainable design have been engaged to work with the building contractors for the duration of the projects.

Each of the ACT public school P21 projects will involve building site-specific designed facilities rather than the purchase of multi-purpose structures built outside the ACT. This increases the likelihood of local businesses and tradespeople being engaged on the BER projects.

On average, the construction contractors estimate that each of the larger P21 projects will involve 200 workers at various stages, including design teams, office and site administrators and skilled and unskilled trades employees involved in the construction or refurbishment work. It is estimated that the 68 P21 projects will continuously support an average of 915 on-site workers each day, including 179 apprentices.

The ACT Stimulus Taskforce has commissioned a consultant to facilitate, monitor and provide independent validation of industry take-up of apprentices, trainees, cadets and indigenous employees. As part of this process, the consultant is engaging in ongoing consultation with employers and recommending improvement strategies. The mechanism has also been designed to include reporting on upgrading the skills of existing workers engaged on BER projects.

In addition, the ACT Stimulus Taskforce is working with the Construction Industry Training Council (CITC) and Indigenous Success Australia (ISA) to develop Indigenous employment training opportunities on the BER projects. CITC and ISA are providing support to the construction contractors delivering the P21 projects by identifying potential candidates and providing the candidates with the necessary pre-employment training to make them 'site ready'. By working with Group Training providers, ISA will seek to provide sustainable employment extending beyond the P21 projects.

The seven BER construction contractors have agreed to employ, at a minimum, one Indigenous worker each through a Group Training Scheme.

### **Planning changes**

To assist commencement of construction as quickly as possible and generate jobs for ACT construction contractors, building consultants, tradespeople and construction workers, the ACT Government has streamlined the planning processes and regulations.

The *Planning and Development Act 2007* defines 'exempt development' as a development that is exempt from requiring development approval. Schedule 1 of the *Planning and Development Regulation 2008* lists the criteria for exempt developments and this regulation was amended in March 2009 to include a range of developments relating to schools in Schedule 1. Where P21 projects comply with the criteria, they are exempt from requiring development approval. Private certifiers will be responsible to ensure that the developments comply with the criteria for exemptions.

Where a proposal does not comply with the exemption criteria, a development application is required to be submitted to the ACT Planning and Land Authority for approval. As part of the assessment process, the development application is publicly notified for 10 working days (limited public notification where the proposed works are completely or partly funded by a declared funding program) as opposed to 15 working days for other developments. However, these development applications are exempt from third-party ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal review pursuant to Schedule 3 of the Planning and Development Regulation 2008.

The new process allows the delegate to consider and approve development applications in a timely manner so that construction work can commence without delay.

### **Community involvement**

The ACT Government has been careful to ensure that each BER project has the support of its school community.

While the Department has coordinated each of the projects on behalf of ACT public schools, project preferences and priorities for all P21 projects were identified by each school community and were endorsed by the school principal, the school board chairperson, and the school's Parents and Citizens Association president.

The protocols adopted for the design phase of the P21 projects included review and endorsement by the school principal. The principal is responsible for informing the school community of the ongoing progress of design and construction work, including displaying the plans.

### **Environmental sustainability**

The ACT has engaged a specialist Environmental Sustainable Design (ESD) consultant to work with the building contractors. The consultant is reviewing the preliminary and final sketch plans prepared by the design consultants to ensure that these comply with minimum ESD requirements and to suggest improvements that will maximise the benefits of ESD features.

The P21 program funds are also enabling ACT primary schools to upgrade existing facilities. In many cases, the funds have provided the opportunity for schools to install infrastructure that will reduce their operating costs by increasing energy efficiency. The project funds enable the use of new technology and building design features, such as 'Comfort Plus' glass with heat barrier properties, LED and other energy efficient lighting, and designs that allow energy consumption to be minimised in heating and cooling buildings. A number of projects incorporate recycled material (such as concrete and flooring material), rainwater tanks for toilets and irrigating gardens, and photovoltaic cells that can feed energy to the electricity network.

In addition to reducing the environmental impact and operating costs of schools, such features can be incorporated into the curriculum as learning tools. For example, the installation of smart energy meters will enable students and teachers to monitor energy consumption, and in some cases compare consumption between a school's new energy efficient buildings and its older buildings.

## **Providing facilities for the community**

The P21 program will provide school facilities that the broader community can use out of school hours. School halls are commonly used by community organisations and sporting groups. In addition, the ACT's Early Childhood Schools are a hub for families with children from birth to eight years of age, and seminars and social gatherings for parents are held in those school halls.

P21 projects are increasing the number of facilities available for community use, not only by constructing new buildings, but also by making existing facilities more appropriate for such use by providing kitchens, storage spaces, toilets and/or other facilities.

## **Issues**

When combined with the ACT's own ambitious capital works program for its public schools, the increased funding and tight timelines required under the BER program have posed a significant challenge. The ACT Government has placed the highest priority on meeting this challenge, and as a result of streamlined processes and high level of cooperation between school communities, government agencies and employers, is confident of meeting its commitments under the BER.

While the ACT Government understands the importance of monitoring the implementation of this important Commonwealth initiative, it has urged the Commonwealth to carefully consider the level of reporting required by Commonwealth agencies, particularly in the start-up phase of the program.

The ACT, along with other jurisdictions, has also expressed the need for a greater level of flexibility in relation to project variation approvals. We note that recent changes to the guidelines are a significant improvement.

Nevertheless, the ACT wishes to place on record its appreciation of the high level of commitment and professionalism displayed by Commonwealth officials in seeking to implement this significant program in a very short timeframe.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to this inquiry.

Yours sincerely



Andrew Barr MLA  
Minister for Education and Training

18 NOV 2009

Approved Primary Schools for the 21st Century Projects

Round 1

School	Suburb	Project Name	Amount Funded
Bonython Primary	BONYTHON	Bonython Primary School - Refurbish library	\$2,500,000.00
Fraser Primary	FRASER	Fraser Primary School - Multipurpose building	\$2,500,000.00
Garran Primary	GARRAN	Garran Primary School - Multi purpose hall	\$3,000,000.00
Isabella Plains Early Childhood School	ISABELLA PLAINS	Isabella Plains Primary School - Refurbish assembly hall	\$250,000.00
Lyneham Primary	LYNEHAM	Lyneham Primary School - Multipurpose building	\$2,500,000.00
Macgregor Primary	MACGREGOR	Macgregor Primary School - Multipurpose building	\$2,000,000.00
Miles Franklin Primary	EVATT	Miles Franklin Primary School - New library	\$2,500,000.00
Monash Primary	MONASH	Monash Primary School - Multi purpose building	\$3,000,000.00
Richardson Primary	RICHARDSON	Richardson Primary School - Multi purpose building	\$2,000,000.00
Southern Cross Early Childhood School	SCULLIN	Southern Cross Primary School - Refurbish assembly hall	\$250,000.00
Stromlo High	WARAMANGA	Stromlo School (Yr 6 - 10) - Covered outdoor learning area	\$250,000.00
Telopea Park School	BARTON	Telopea Park School - Multipurpose building	\$3,000,000.00
Turner School	TURNER	Turner School - New library	\$3,000,000.00
Wanniassa Hills Primary	WANNIASSA	Wanniassa Hills Primary School - Multi purpose building	\$2,500,000.00

Round 2

School	Suburb	Project Name	Amount Funded
Ainslie North Primary	AINSLIE	New library	\$2,500,000.00
Ainslie School	BRADDON	New multi purpose building	\$2,500,000.00
Amaroo School	AMAROO	Extension of library	\$3,000,000.00
Aranda Primary	ARANDA	New library	\$2,500,000.00
Arawang Primary	WARAMANGA	New multi purpose building	\$2,500,000.00
Black Mountain School	O'CONNOR	Extension of multi purpose hall	\$850,000.00

Calwell Primary	CALWELL	Refurbish library	\$2,500,000.00
Campbell Primary	CAMPBELL	New multi purpose building	\$2,000,000.00
Caroline Chisholm School	CHISHOLM	New multi purpose building	\$2,000,000.00
Chapman Primary	CHAPMAN	New library	\$3,000,000.00
Charles Conder Primary	CONDER	Extension of multi purpose hall	\$2,500,000.00
Charnwood-Dunlop School	CHARWOOD	New multi purpose building	\$2,000,000.00
Cranleigh School	HOLT	Refurbish classrooms	\$250,000.00
Curtin Primary	CURTIN	New multi purpose building	\$2,500,000.00
Duffy Primary	DUFFY	Refurbish library	\$2,000,000.00
Evatt Primary	EVATT	New multi purpose building	\$2,000,000.00
Fadden Primary	FADDEN	Refurbish classrooms	\$2,000,000.00
Farrer Primary	FARRER	Refurbish multi purpose hall	\$2,000,000.00
Florey Primary	FLOREY	New multi purpose building	\$2,500,000.00
Forrest Primary	FORREST	New multi purpose building	\$1,800,000.00
Forrest Primary	FORREST	New multi purpose hall	\$1,200,000.00
Gilmore Primary	GILMORE	Extension of the library	\$2,000,000.00
Giralang Primary	GIRALANG	Refurbish multi purpose hall	\$850,000.00
Gold Creek School	NICHOLLS	New multi purpose building	\$3,000,000.00
Gordon Primary	GORDON	Covered outdoor learning area	\$1,300,000.00
Gordon Primary	GORDON	Refurbish library	\$1,700,000.00
Gowrie Primary	GOWRIE	New multi purpose building	\$2,000,000.00
Harrison School	HARRISON	New multi purpose building	\$3,000,000.00
Hawker Primary	HAWKER	New multi purpose hall	\$2,000,000.00
Hughes Primary	HUGHES	New library	\$2,000,000.00
Jervis Bay Primary	JERVIS BAY	Refurbish classrooms	\$850,000.00
Kaleen Primary	KALEEN	New multi purpose hall	\$3,000,000.00
Kingsford Smith School	HOLT	New multi purpose hall	\$3,000,000.00
Latham Primary	LATHAM	New multi purpose building	\$2,000,000.00
Lyons Early Childhood School	LYONS	Refurbish multi purpose hall	\$250,000.00
Macquarie Primary	MACQUARIE	Extension of the library	\$2,000,000.00
Majura Primary	WATSON	New COLA	\$2,500,000.00

Malika School	GARRAN	Extend and extension of classrooms	\$850,000.00
Maribyrnong Primary	KALEEN	Refurbish multi purpose hall	\$2,000,000.00
Mawson Primary	MAWSON	Refurbish library	\$2,000,000.00
Mt Rogers Primary School	MELBA	Refurbish multi purpose hall	\$2,000,000.00
Narrabundah Early Childhood School	NARRABUNDAH	Refurbish multi purpose hall	\$250,000.00
Ngunnawal Primary	NGUNNAWAL	Extension of multi purpose hall	\$3,000,000.00
O'Connor Co-operative School	O'CONNOR	New multi purpose building	\$850,000.00
Palmerston District Primary	PALMERSTON	New multi purpose building	\$2,500,000.00
Red Hill Primary	RED HILL	New multi purpose hall	\$3,000,000.00
Taylor Primary	KAMBAH	Refurbish multi purpose hall	\$2,000,000.00
Theodore Primary	THEODORE	New multi purpose building	\$2,500,000.00
Torrens Primary	TORRENS	New multi purpose building	\$3,000,000.00
Wanniassa School Senior Campus	WANNIASSA	New covered outdoor learning area	\$2,000,000.00
Weetangera Primary	WEETANGERA	New multi purpose building	\$2,500,000.00
Woden School (The)	DEAKIN	New classrooms	\$850,000.00
Yarralumla Primary	YARRALUMLA	Extend library	\$2,000,000.00

### Round 3

School	Suburb	Project Name	Amount Funded
Urambi Primary	KAMBAH	New environmental Centre	\$2,000,000.00