

Committee Secretary  
Senate Education, Employment and Workplace Relations Committee

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to you in relation to my position as President, School Council, Royal Far West School in Manly with focus on:

(1) the conditions and criteria for project funding

\*The School missed out on funding for the Building the Education Revolution (BER) program because it was deemed ineligible for funding. This was because it does not have any permanent students. The School caters for disadvantaged children from rural and regional areas of N.S.W who come to the Royal Far West for short term stays for physical, emotional and developmental reasons.

\*A quarter of the students are indigenous. They attend our School in Manly while their educational issues are assessed and programs developed for them when they return to their home schools. There is an ongoing follow-up through the innovative use of technology such as video conferencing. The School has established an outreach literacy program providing, through computers and webcams , 1:1 support for students with intractable literacy difficulties. The program is being undertaken in liaison with the Centre for Learning Innovation at Macquarie University to develop a digital version of the reading program. Through such innovative programs the School maintains contact with students with an ongoing monitoring of their progress.

\*The School Council is concerned that the criteria used for the BER program may be used for the Primary Schools for the 21st Century program because , by its very nature, the School cannot be pigeonholed into the conventional categories. The School should not miss out in the allocation of resources because students physically attend for a short period of time. Whilst they are at the School they are entitled to the same sorts of decent facilities that students benefit from at other schools. For example the School does not have proper shaded playground facilities. As indicated the students have, through the outreach program, an ongoing relationship with the School, so their relationship with the School is long term.

\*The School has been working with disadvantaged children from the country areas since 1938. Since then many thousands of children have benefitted from the personalised support they have received. We are a public school committed to assisting each and every student to achieve his or her potential, despite often overwhelming difficulties. The School Council is strongly committed to the view that the best investment society can make is in its children. All we ask is that when there is a determination of project funding that we do not miss out as we did under the BER criteria.

Thankyou for accepting this submission.

David Barr  
President, School Council  
Royal Far West School  
Manly