

Senate Enquiry

Primary Schools for the 21st Century

To Whom It May Concern,

We are writing on behalf of the Hyden Primary School's P & C, concerning the BER program currently being undertaken by the Federal Government. As a body actively involved in the schools operation, we have some grave concerns as to how the program was administered, specifically regarding:

1. The time frame in which to access our choices
2. The rigid templates of the structures which offered no flexibility
3. The local school's priorities were not considered
4. Excessive allocation of cost's

We were given approximately 2 weeks to consult the school community and make a decision on what structure the school would most benefit from. Not nearly enough time for the parents to evaluate the program and give feedback so that an informed decision could be made.

The buildings design had a fixed template that offered no scope for flexibility to accommodate the local site. We enquired to change dimensions of the building so to fit within the school's current structures. While these changes would have had minimal effect on the cost and size of the building they were not allowed, therefore other more costly preparation work had to be undertaken to move the schools bus drop-off zone and the senior play ground. Both of these were unnecessary if the plans could have been altered.

The school community was not consulted on what upgrade of infrastructure would be of most benefit to the students and staff at the Hyden Primary School. Even though the current new structure will be an asset to the school, more benefit would have been gained if the funds were directed towards more urgent infrastructure needs, in our case an early childhood centre that would replace the current outdated and dysfunctional structure or an administration block. This would've resulted in the school gaining a much needed extra classroom out of the current administration block at minimal cost.

The estimated cost of the C.O.L.A building being built in Hyden is at least 50% more than the cost of other recently completed structures in the area. There seems to be a duplication of fees, especially in the administration phase of the program, e.g. The architect fee being charged on every project, even though the design for the buildings is a fixed template.

The perimeters associated with the tendering process were so demanding they discouraged local builders from tendering for the project, so diminishing the benefit of the BER in stimulating the local economy.

We look forward to hearing the outcome of the senate enquiry.

Yours sincerely,

Jeremy James

P&C President

Hyden Primary School

Gerard Lynch

P&C Vice President