

Primary Schools for the 21st Century - Managing the program

Building the Education Revolution is part of the Australian Government's \$42 billion Nation Building Economic Stimulus Plan and is first and foremost about stimulating the economy and supporting jobs, especially in local communities. A component of Building the Education Revolution is Primary Schools for the 21st Century (P21).

The P21 program is very large and complex, with tight timeframes. In NSW P21 will deliver \$2.982 billion of investment across 1,785 public schools by no later than March 2011. The Australian Government has confirmed that there is no additional funding available for the program.

Throughout the project nomination process the BER Program Office made sure that we drew down the maximum amount of funding for each public school. This means that the majority of schools' projects are affordable within their school's funding allocation; however there are always some projects that cost more.

Working within each school's P21 allocation

The BER Program Office is managing affordability across the total P21 program by making sure that projects are not approved to start construction until the estimated cost is within the school's funding allocation.

To bring school projects within the school's funding allocation, we sometimes need to work with the school Principal and explore ways of reducing the project's cost. For instance, in some cases we look at reducing the building's footprint or moving it to a lower risk site, such as a more level site or one with no or less underground defects. In other cases, we talk to the Principal about the key priorities for the school and the local community and re-focus the project's scope to meet these key priorities. This can mean dropping the school's second project.

The majority of schools' projects are affordable within the school's funding allocation. At either end of the spectrum there are schools where the total cost of their full project is less than their funding allocation and schools whose project costs more despite all reasonable cost saving measures being taken.

When it's not possible to make a school project fit into the school's funding allocation we have to put the school on a waiting list until we identify funding that is left over from another public school whose full project costs less than their funding allocation.

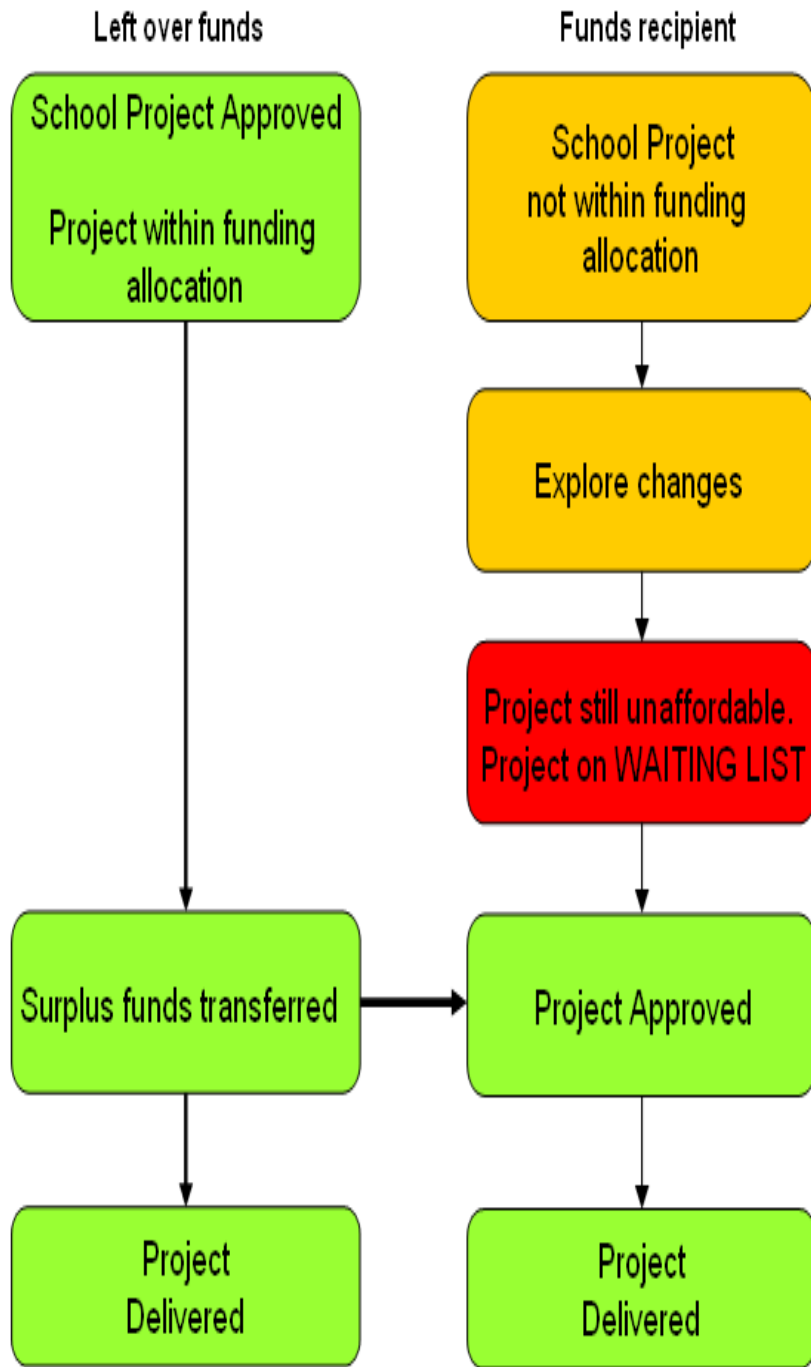
We are only talking to those schools that will have money left over because the cost of their full P21 project is less than their school's funding allocation. We are asking these schools to allow the BER Program Office to use the left over money to top up another public school in NSW whose P21 project can't be delivered within the school's funding allocation despite all reasonable efforts.

The Primary Principals Association and the NSW Federation of Parents and Citizens Associations supports this approach to managing affordability across the total P21 program and transferring left-over funds between P21 schools.

Transferring funding between schools

The BER Program Office has to manage the state-wide P21 program within the total amount of funding provided by the Australian Government. To do this effectively we need to be able to transfer funds between schools at the either end of the spectrum – schools whose full project costs less and have money left over and schools whose project costs more despite all reasonable cost saving measures being taken.

The process of transferring money between these schools needs to be efficient and fast. This will help us make sure that no P21 funding is put in jeopardy because it isn't spent within the tight timeframes set by the Australian Government.



The majority of school projects are affordable within the school’s funding allocation. We are asking *only* those schools that have funds left over to allow these funds to be used to top up another public school in NSW whose P21 project can’t be delivered within the school’s funding allocation, despite all reasonable cost saving measures being taken.