

From the Executive Director of Schools

In recent months, there has been significant community concern regarding some projects under the Australian Government's Building the Education Revolution (BER) program.

The media has reported numerous complaints from school principals and parents across Australia citing concerns over value-for-money, overpriced construction costs and lack of input into building decisions.

The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Education, Julia Gillard has responded to these concerns by establishing a taskforce that will have an initial \$14 million budget to investigate and manage the complaints from schools and their local communities.

From the outset, the Parramatta diocese has engaged its school communities in the design and planning process to ensure that the new facilities would effectively support learning and teaching now and in the future. We have worked with our suppliers to seek the best value for money, while delivering customised facilities for our schools. As you will see in this edition, I am pleased to report that school building projects in the Parramatta diocese are progressing well.

Yours sincerely,



Gregory B Whitby
Executive Director of Schools



UPDATE

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Update from the news desk

- News updates, floorplans, concept designs and photos are available to view on the Project Genesis website at www.parra.catholic.edu.au/projectgenesis

Primary Schools for the 21st Century

- About 80 per cent of P21 projects have commenced onsite construction
- Projects at St Monica's Primary, North Parramatta and St Monica's Primary, Richmond have been completed
- At least a further 12 projects are due for completion by the end of May 2010, with the remaining 38 proceeding to plan.
- In total, 54 primary schools in the Parramatta diocese received between \$850,000 and \$3 million in funding to build contemporary libraries, multipurpose halls, learning spaces or covered outdoor learning areas

National School Pride

- All 76 projects are now complete
- In total, 76 primary and secondary schools in the Parramatta diocese received between \$75,000 and \$200,00 to upgrade minor infrastructure

Science and Language Centres in 21st Century Secondary Schools

- Construction works for all four SLC projects have commenced
- The schools that have received \$1.97 million to build language learning centres are St Paul's Catholic College, Greystanes; Patrician Brothers' College, Blacktown; Cerdon College, Merrylands; and Clare Catholic High School, Hassall Grove

Project Genesis in brief

Primary Schools for the 21st Century	
Projects approved	54
Projects commenced	45
Projects completed	2
National School Pride	
Projects approved	76
Projects completed	76
Science & Language Centres in 21st Century Secondary Schools	
Projects approved	4
Projects commenced	4

What is happening in our schools?

Profiled here, are some of the Project Genesis developments in progress.

Primary Schools for the 21st Century (P21)

Students and teachers at St Monica's Primary, North Parramatta started the school year in their contemporary new learning centre that was part-funded by the P21 program. The centre contains brightly decorated open-plan learning spaces for all Stage groups in the one space as well as a library, kitchen, AV studio and bathrooms so students don't need leave the space. A new administration block and after school care centre are located on the ground floor. All students have access to interactive whiteboards, laptops and audio equipment, and the audio visual studio allows students to record audio or video interviews that can be streamed through to screens in the school foyer so parents can watch the videos live.

Principal Michael Hopley said the new facilities will greatly assist in enhancing the learning and teaching at St Monica's Primary. 'It has been a really significant journey for the St Monica's community,' said Michael. 'The school has been transformed into a world-class learning environment that is really welcoming and exciting for the whole school community. We are extremely thankful for the support of the Australian Government.'



National School Pride (NSP)

St Finbar's Primary, Glenbrook has completed its \$125,000 National School Pride program upgrade. As a result of the Building the Education Revolution funding, St Finbar's was able to build a shade structure, resurface the playground and upgrade their PA system.

The large shade structure now covers the bottom playground eating area providing sun protection all year round. It also serves as a shaded outdoor learning space. The shaded area can now be used more regularly as an outdoor learning area, regardless of weather conditions. A third of the playground has been resurfaced with grass. The newly surfaced area has given the school another space that children can use for recreation and activities.

'The NSP money has helped our school to revitalise and upgrade our existing resources,' said principal Kevin Etherington. 'The grant has certainly been a 'windfall' for us, allowing us to make significant improvements for the benefit of our students.'

The funding also allowed the school to upgrade the PA system which provides a vital communication between the office and the teachers.

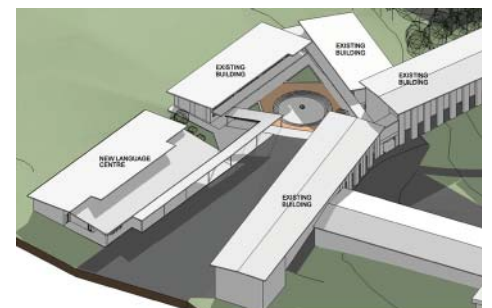


Science and Language Centres for 21st Secondary Schools (SLC)

Building works are underway for the \$1.97 million language learning centre at Cerdon College, Merrylands. Of the 1,049 students currently enrolled at Cerdon, 65 percent are students with language backgrounds other than English (LBOTE).

'The provision of language learning facilities will support the large number of LBOTE students who receive specialist teacher assistance as well as groups who receive specific literacy assistance and the teaching of the existing English curriculum,' said principal Trish Baker.

The technology-rich language learning centre will have the flexibility to allow teachers to combine rooms for cross-curricular teaching and the different room styles can cater for small groups, large classes, combined grade classes and whole year groups. The smaller rooms, with access to digital technologies, can be used by senior students studying languages offered by external language providers. Two outdoor learning spaces will be used for differentiated learning groups and informal lessons, and several breakout areas can be used for small group work for language projects.



Partner Profile

ThomsonAdsett is an architectural practice that has been engaged by the Diocese of Parramatta to design many of the multi-purpose halls, libraries and learning spaces that have been funded under the P21 program. ThomsonAdsett is one of Australia's leading firms in school and schooling master planning, design and project management and are well known for their innovation and environmentally-sustainable designs.

ThomsonAdsett recently merged with Glanville Architects, a well known architectural firm that was initially established in Penrith in 1976. With its beginnings in western Sydney, Glanville were very familiar with school facilities in that rapidly growing region of Sydney. With more than 300 educational projects throughout NSW in their portfolio, ThomsonAdsett follow design principles that successfully marry the way teachers teach, with the spaces in which they teach.

'ThomsonAdsett has been involved with the BER program on school projects for both the government and non-government sectors throughout Australia,' said Thomson Adsett's managing director, Charles Glanville. 'The nature of program procurement in the Diocese of Parramatta with its unique collaboration between educators, facilities officers and technical advisors has, I believe, produced exceptional results,' Charles said.

For information visit www.thomsonadsett.com.au

Diocese of Wilcannia-Forbes Update

School communities in the Diocese of Wilcannia-Forbes are busy completing the final National School Pride projects and planning the commencement of their P21 projects.

Seventeen schools in the diocese received a total of \$1.45 million under the NSP program to upgrade minor infrastructure around the school. All 17 projects are expected to be completed by the end of May 2010. Eighteen schools have received a total of \$17.5 million under the P21 program to build much needed facilities such as multi-purpose halls, libraries or learning spaces. Five P21 projects have commenced and a further 12 projects are expected to commence within the next three months.

The P21 and NSP projects at St Patrick's Primary, Trundle is nearing completion. The school has utilised the funds well by building a covered outdoor learning area (COLA) along with new student amenities and storage facilities.

'In the extreme heat of summer in central west NSW it is impossible to conduct any outside learning activities so this covered learning area will allow daily PE lessons, and the gymnastics and dance components of Sport to be conducted in a shaded area,' said principal Sharon Phipps. 'It will also be used for the more practical activities of maths, science and art lessons and provide an alternative venue for small group work such as the peer support program and reading groups.'

The shaded area also extends over a section of the playground containing static play equipment which means the students can utilise this area in summer as well.



Constructing the COLA so it covers part of the playground



St Patrick's students enjoying their new shaded learning area

www.parra.catholic.edu.au/projectgenesis

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