

RE: ST IVES PRIMARY SCHOOL BER CONSTRUCTION

We are writing to you as members of the St Ives Primary School P&C Association about the BER construction at our school, St Ives Primary School.

When this project was offered there was a genuine level of excitement in our community. That excitement has now turned to disappointment and in many cases frustration and even anger at the near finished product that we have seen.

What seems so incredible to us is how a project with a budget of \$2,500,000 for a Hall, COLA and new Canteen can see so many elements removed or "de-scoped".

We have seen many aspects of this project modified or removed and many vital items that we would have believed should have been included have not.

Relevance to Senate inquiry

We believe our concerns are relevant to the following 3 issues being addressed in this Senate inquiry

- 1) the role of state governments
- 2) timing and budget issues, including duplication
- 3) the management of the program;

We commend the NSW government for its comprehensive website which outlines the information and specific detail about our BER project. According to the website, we see that standard designs are being used for halls, COLA and canteens across NSW.

Whilst we understand the benefits and efficiencies of using standard designs across schools what is very disappointing to us is the acceptance of such inadequate standard designs which presumably was agreed to by the NSW government. In particular the layout and features of the canteen.

Secondly given standard designs are being rolled out across NSW schools it seems that the financial benefits of standard designs are not being realised. According to the NSW BER website (see table below) \$411,326 of our \$2.5 million has been spent on design and related issues.

If all schools are being charged similar design fees this raises potential serious issues regarding management of the project.

Australian Government P21 Funding Allocation (GST excl)			\$2,500,000.00
All Figures are GST exclusive			
IPO Project Management Cost (1.3%)			\$32,500.00
Contingency (5%)			\$125,000.00
Multi Purpose Hall - New Construction	ECS Stage (20/10/2009)	Benchmark Value Stage	Final Cost Stage
Network Substation Allowance	\$100,000.00		
Managing Contractor's Incentive Fee	\$29,959.08		
Managing Contractor's Project Management Cost	\$0.00		
Modular Building Cost	N/A		
Design documentation, field data, site management	\$327,410.74		
Preliminaries	\$339,632.00		
Substructure	\$220,215.00		
Superstructure	\$843,274.26		
Site Works	\$233,678.00		
Site Services	\$138,724.00		
Design and price risk	\$83,916.00		
Sub-total	\$2,474,309.08		
Transfer Amount	0		
Balance (excl GST)	\$25,690.92		

Specific issues with our project are briefly described below:

Canteen Facilities.

As part of this project our canteen is to be replaced. The canteen is a vital school service to our community. Our current canteen is old with aging equipment and probably does not meet current standards.

In seeing the new canteen we have discovered that the only equipment that is supplied is a two-burner hotplate.

In an age where child-hood obesity is becoming an epidemic our community has taken on the challenge and produced a healthy menu where the canteen volunteers produce many of the selections on the canteen premises. This produces a menu, which is low in highly processed items and emphasises fresh choices.

It is ironic that with child-hood obesity the ability to produce this type of menu is virtually impossible without significant modifications to the canteen and we would be forced without modifications to essentially serve processed food that can be simply re-heated.

The primary issues are that there is no oven or proper cook top, and the Canteen power circuits are inadequate to handle such an appliance.

We believe as a community we will need:-

- 1) To alter benchtops to accommodate a proper cooker
- 2) To install a new power circuit to allow a cooker to operate correctly
- 3) To install air-conditioning to provide a comfortable environment for the volunteer workers.
- 4) Install mechanical ventilation to comply with all food handling standards and council regulations

Our current canteen has all these items and yet its replacement has none of them.

All these items are in addition to our community potentially needing to purchase new refrigerators and new freezers that will fit in the space provided.

Solar Panels and Water Tanks.

These items which were originally included have been not included. Our school has worked hard on sustainable practices including growing plants and rubbish mitigation programmes (such as litter free lunch) and our school was making plans for the use of the harvested water. We also felt that the solar panels would have increased our sustainability.

It is ironic that when governments at both State and Federal level are pushing an agenda addressing climate change, items that would make a real difference to sustainability are removed.

Refurbishment of Old Classrooms currently serving as Hall

Our school has for many years used two classrooms for a temporary hall. This has never allowed us to hold whole of school assemblies and we were truly excited when we knew we were to get a purpose built hall. We were told that the makeshift hall would be reinstated as two separate classrooms (Home Bases). This could have meant that a number of demountables that currently exist on our school grounds – including one sitting on the edge of our school oval – could have been removed giving back space to our school.

We learnt many months ago that this would not be the case and the classrooms would be only partially refurbished and could not be used for classrooms. Again it seems ludicrous to us in a time of limited resources that these resources will not be able to be fully used as classrooms because they have not be properly refurbished.

We look forward to the outcome of the Senate inquiry

Yours sincerely,

James Beauchamp
President
St Ives Primary P&C Association