

**Senate Standing Committee on Education Employment and Workplace
Relations**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates 2010-2011**

Outcome 2 - Schools

DEEWR Question No.EW0151_11

Senator Xenophon provided in writing.

Question

**EFFECTIVE AND APPROPRIATE USE OF BUILDING THE EDUCATION
REVOLUTION FUNDS**

Given the example of BasketRange, what steps will the Department be taking to ensure that any BER money spent at the direction of state governments is being used effectively and appropriately?

Answer

Each Education Authority is responsible for delivering their BER projects within the BER Guidelines – including being responsible for ensuring value for money is achieved for each individual project. In their recent audit of the Primary Schools for the 21st Century (P21) element of the BER, the ANAO also noted that it is the responsibility of each Education Authority to implement the program, “including responsibility for ensuring that individual projects achieve value for money”.

Purchasing and procurement activity of State and Territory Education Authorities is typically bound by State and Territory legislation and policy frameworks which require value for money be obtained in the expenditure of public money. In the specific case of Basket Range, the South Australia Department of Education and Children’s Services confirms that all BER project building costs, including the costs of water tanks have also been verified by an independent quantity surveyor.

All state and territory education departments are subject to audit arrangements as a normal part of delivering capital and other funding programs. State and territory audit offices and internal education departments’ audit teams will audit the implementation of the BER as part of each state or territory’s audit program, and each education department’s internal audit team’s work plan. In addition, some states have initiated additional audit or review processes to ensure the implementation of the BER is proceeding effectively and in accordance with the BER Guidelines.

The Department is working with the BER Implementation Taskforce in progressing a contemporary, risk based compliance framework that will not duplicate any requests for information made of Education Authorities.