

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

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates 2011-2012**

Outcome 2 - Schools

DEEWR Question No.EW0170_12

Senator Mason provided in writing.

Question

Westmar State School - BER

In respect of the Building the Education Revolution program, and the project located at the Westmar State School (in Queensland), can the Department please advise whether it is aware of the following, and any relevant details relating thereto: (a) reports of numerous problems encountered with the tender process by the school and the Westmar State School P&C Association and a perceived lack of value for money? (b) reports that the school P&C Association has been extremely unhappy with the difficulties experienced by the local builders in being unable to tender for the project due to the large number of times that the plans have been repeatedly altered? (c) reports that the school was advised that their preferred proposal for a building structure incorporating a staffroom with kitchenette and a lock-up store room could not be built for the proposed amount of \$250,000? (d) reports that as a result of this advice, the design for the BER project at the school was scaled down with no lock-up store room and no staff kitchenette? (e) further reports that the P&C Association were initially advised that the end of the building facing the Moonie Highway could be fully enclosed as part of the project design - but that this advice was changed in February 2011 at which stage the P&C Association was then advised that the wall had not been included in the costing for the project and would require an additional contribution of approximately \$3,500 by the P&C Association? (f) reports that the P&C Association was also belatedly informed in February 2011 that the structure would now require power, a water tank and a pump?

Answer

The Queensland Department of Education and Training (QLD DET) has advised the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations that:

- (a) The project at Westmar State School went to tender on 30 June 2010 and closed on 25 August 2010. The project was tendered to five project builders. Two of these tender applications were compliant, while three of the project tender applicants withdrew from the process. The tender recommendations were submitted to QLD DET on 14 October 2010. All tenders received exceeded the school's budget.

The project was re-tendered and the call for tenders opened on 16 November 2010 and closed on 1 December 2010. The project was re-tendered to four project builders, three of which were at the school's

request. Two of the project tender applicants withdrew from the re-tender.

QLD DET appointed Clonskeagh Constructions Pty Ltd as the successful project contractor on 22 February 2011.

- (b) Three local builders, whose names were provided by the school's P&C Association, submitted tenders as part of the re-tender process.
- (c) The building design was reduced in order to meet the school budget allocation.
- (d) Reductions were made to elements of the project, including the kitchenette and storeroom, to ensure the project met the school budget allocation.
- (e) The enclosure of the Moonie Highway end of the building has been incorporated into the project using project contingency funds. No costs associated with this will be paid by the P&C Association.
- (f) As the BER project is a covered outdoor learning area, the project did not include power, water or lighting. These items were additional and requested by the P&C Association and the Principal following building certification. These elements have been included within the scope of works as contingency funds have become available.