

## Building the Education Revolution Bulletin No. 4

SEPTEMBER 2009

### (1) BER program status

Congratulations to everyone for the significant progress we have made across the Building the Education Revolution (BER) program – Managing Contractors, Regional Program Directors, Principal Liaison Officers, Asset Management Units, and of course all Principals for your ongoing cooperation.

With the announcement of round 3 Primary Schools for the 21st Century (P21) funding, the scope of the whole BER program is now final: **\$3.421 billion** of investment will be delivered across all eligible government schools in NSW. A total of 1,784 NSW public primary schools will benefit from **\$2.982 billion** of investment under P21. Construction has already started at 69 schools.

By February next year, **\$287 million** of National School Pride (NSP) works will have been delivered in 2,185 schools across NSW. Work has commenced on all projects, significant activity is underway at 1,219 schools and orders are in place to begin works at the remaining 962 schools.

The Science and Language Centres for 21st Century Secondary Schools (SLC) program will deliver **\$151 million** of investment across 118 schools. Works at these schools are expected to start in the coming school holidays.

### NSW Building the Education Revolution website goes live

The NSW Building the Education Revolution [website](#) has been launched! The website is a source of information for everyone and contains information on the three BER components: Primary Schools for the 21st Century, National School Pride and Science and Language Centres for 21st Century Secondary Schools.

A key feature of the site is the *Find a School* function that allows school communities to search for their school's BER webpage and find out how projects are tracking. The estimated construction cost will be made available on the school's page after it has been provided to the school. The pages will continue to grow throughout the program, and you can find your school here: <http://www.ber.nsw.gov.au/index.php/find-a-school/>

The site is packed with some great new web tools such as blogs, vodcasts and Twitter, which allow us to keep you frequently updated on the program's progress, and also allow you to make comments across the site. We will be using blogs for new updates, and vodcasts for short video messages and tutorials. Twitter will allow us to quickly post information on the latest BER milestones. You can read more about these features on the website.

You will also find program information and downloadable resources such as fact sheets and bulletins, as well as other information that you would be familiar with from the Department's intranet site for BER.

We encourage all Principals to let their school communities know about the site. We'd love to hear your views as more information is added.

Visit the website at: <http://www.ber.nsw.gov.au>

Follow us on Twitter at: <http://www.twitter.com/nswber>

## (2) Primary Schools for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

### Round 3 funding announced

On Thursday 27 August, the Australian Government announced the third and final round of P21 funding, with \$994 million approved to fund 729 projects in 539 NSW public schools.

The deadlines for round 3 are even tighter than the rest of the program, with construction needing to start in all these schools by 1 December 2009. The Managing Contractors will be visiting round 3 schools very soon to confirm your school's project scope, as approved by the Australian Government and nominated by you.

### P21 delivery

The Australian Government's revised BER guidelines, released last week, include firm deadlines for starting and finishing every P21 project, and also require projects funded in round 3 to be in construction by 1 December 2009.

To meet these deadlines we need to make sure that all schools funded in round 3 have approved their project scope by mid September.

Most schools funded in round 1 have already agreed their school project scope with the Managing Contractor. Over the next few months schools funded in round 2 should have their project scope agreed with their Managing Contractor. The Australian Government is clear: where projects do not meet delivery deadlines, funding is automatically at risk.

These are challenging deadlines designed to deliver a quick economic stimulus. To meet them we need to work together, and work quickly. The amount of time available for discussing options is finite, and your project cannot be put "on hold". The Managing Contractor will liaise with you to set this timeframe.

### Getting help

The Managing Contractor is the Principal's first point of contact on all issues. We encourage Principals and Managing Contractors to develop close working relationships from the outset - if we are able to agree solutions fast and progress projects then we can reduce the risk of delays. This also reduces the cost of additional design work, repeated school visits, and

ground investigations of multiple sites, which means more money will be available for construction.

The BER Program Office is here to provide Principals with additional support if they need it. The Regional Program Directors or the Principal Liaison Officers can help Principals make decisions on what can be complex construction issues. We can also support Principals in their communications with their broader community. A fact sheet providing more information on P21 deadlines will be posted on the website.

### P21 project budgets

Each school's project needs to fit within the school's indicative funding allocation. To achieve this it can be necessary for the Principal to work with the Managing Contractor to identify project savings or make changes. This is already working successfully in every region across the State. Our Managing Contractors have the construction experience and skill to maximise what can be delivered with each school's indicative funding allocation.

While many projects will fit within the school's indicative funding allocation, in a program as large as P21 there are going to be some projects that don't. The presence of poor ground conditions, a sloping site or asbestos can cause a school's project to go over its indicative funding allocation. The remoteness of a school site can also impact on cost.

The Managing Contractors and Principals will work hard to bring projects within the school's indicative funding allocation, but in some cases it simply isn't possible despite all reasonable efforts. In these situations, the project cannot proceed until we find another public school that has money left over from their P21 project.

Over the coming weeks the Principal Liaison Officers will be contacting Principals who are getting their P21 projects, as approved by the Australian Government, delivered without any changes and within their indicative funding allocation. These Principals will be asked to allow a transfer of any leftover funding to another NSW public school whose project is at risk if top-up funding isn't identified.

The aim is to make sure that all public schools in NSW benefit fairly from the P21 program, and that no Australian Government funding is lost to our school system. School communities will be kept informed of any decision to transfer funding to or from their project.

### (3) National School Pride

The NSP program has passed the halfway point, and is moving very quickly. Works are happening at 1,219 schools and over 30 schools have already finished their NSP projects.

The BER Program Office would like to thank the Department of Education and Training's regional Asset Management Units for the level of dedication and commitment they have shown to the NSP program.

A new fact sheet highlighting how the regional Asset Management Units are delivering the NSP program will soon be available on [www.ber.nsw.gov.au](http://www.ber.nsw.gov.au). The fact sheet also outlines the project management role of the Department of Commerce on some condition based assessment works and project type works such as security fencing and covered outdoor learning areas. The fact sheet will also explain the process for ordering interactive whiteboards through the BER Program Office.

Significant progress is being made by Principals who are locally managing their NSP projects. The BER Program Office's most recent newsletter to locally managing NSP Principals celebrated the schools that have finished, or are very close to finishing, their NSP project. Congratulations!

The newsletter also contained important information on statutory planning requirements, project insurances and the role of the Asset Management Unit.

Locally managing Principals can check the BER website to view vodcast tutorials, which can help them accurately complete the monthly report and their project's final monthly report.

#### (4) Science and Language Centres

The Australian Government has announced that funding for the SLC program has been reduced and the 141 schools in the supplementary funding round have not be approved. For NSW, this means 26 government schools were not approved for supplementary funding by the Australian Government.

The 118 NSW public schools whose SLC projects were approved in the initial funding announcement are not affected by this decision – projects in these schools will proceed as planned.

#### Principal briefings

The BER Program Office's SLC Team is making good progress with the Principal briefing schedule, having now visited around half of the 118 schools. The briefings are designed to confirm and explain project briefs, establish communication channels and offer some guidance on how to adapt the teaching curriculum to best utilise the new science or language facilities.

If you have not had a Principal briefing yet, don't worry – the Program Office will be in touch with you shortly.

#### (5) Updated contact details

You can always access the most up to date contact information for Principal Liaison Officers, the Regional Program Directors and the Managing Contractors on the BER intranet site or by using the following links:



Building the Education Revolution

NSW Integrated Program Office

T: (02) 9561 1654  
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Sydney NSW 2000

- [P21 Principal Liaison Officers](#) and [Managing Contractors](#)
- [NSP Principal Liaison Officers](#)
- [SLC Principal Liaison Officers](#)