



VPA Position Paper

Building the Education Revolution Primary Schools for the 21st Century

The Victorian Principals Association (VPA) is concerned with the process of distribution of *Building the Education Revolution* (BER) funds. The short time frame has created undue pressure on PCOs to submit applications for consideration. In addition, the process currently in place relating to BER funds is not uniform and lacking in transparency.

Purpose

The VPA aspires to transparency of DEECD processes, equal opportunities for schools not dependant on immediate preparedness for a project, better timing of release of major projects or moving of time frames so that major processes do not coincide with other DEECD deadlines creating undue pressure for PCOs.

Background to the VPA Position

- Transparency lacking with reports of 'bargaining' taking place between RNLs and PCOs.
- Incomplete processes leading to interpretation and non-uniform opportunity for schools.
- Fast tracking of BER funds for some regeneration projects.
- Applications slow to be disseminated to schools.
- RNLs are not fully qualified in the process due to minimal implementation timelines creating inconsistencies across networks and regions.
- Fast tracking of BER money for independent and Catholic schools.
- Greenfield sites have specific issues that are not being fully considered in eligibility.
- Restriction on templates available.
- Success of application may be dependant on ticking all the boxes rather than individual school's needs.

VPA Position

- Updated clear, concise Federal Government direction disseminated through DEECD to schools.
- Solid application co-ordination implemented by DEECD with Federal Government to make final decision.
- Schools to receive the Federal indicative cap unless an individual school community has agreed otherwise, example adopting a Network approach.
- Multi campus schools have a full allocation for each setting rather than one allocation for the entire school.
- Non traditional settings with no enrolments on the first day e.g. Somers, are eligible for inclusion in the BER funding.
- Increased timeframes from release of application to closing date allowing consultation with building surveyors etc prior to application.
- Schools can apply for projects beyond the facilities entitlement with agreement that maintenance, cleaning and insurance will be a local responsibility.
- Within the BER allocation are the costs of fitting templates with school conditions and in particular circumstances, providing non template designs to accommodate school needs unless otherwise agreed by School Council.
- Full transparency with public declaration of programs funded noting additional monies coming from state funding.

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- Reduction of undue stress on PCO's with timelines for other imperatives shifted e.g. Performance Plans, AIP.
 - Additional staff to support PCO in implementation of the BER - Primary Schools for the 21st Century.
 - Identification of DEECD liaison person to resolve disputes, address concerns throughout the BER process.

Suggested process to support implementation by PCO

Preliminary stage should include:

- Schools invited to nominate a project according to Federal Government guidelines
- DEECD appoint/approve the appointment of an architect (paid for by DEECD) to work with school to:
 - Determine whether the template/s provided by DEECD is compatible with the school site. If not an architect be used to draw up a new plan
 - Prepare preliminary drawings & site plan based on the template or architect's drawing
 - Estimate of cost
 - Develop description of project & scope of work required
 - Provide timeline for the project
 - Identify DEECD liaison person to resolve disputes, address concerns etc
- School to submit proposal to DEECD

Project Implementation

- DEECD
 - Approve project and notify school
 - Appoint/approve the appointment of project manager, architect and builder
 - Provide timeline for completion of project
 - Project manager to work and support Principal throughout the building process.

The VPA *Building the Education Revolution Primary Schools for the 21st Century* position paper was initiated by VPA Council Members March 2009. Further work on this document was undertaken by VPA Board, President and Executive Officer.