

**BELDON PRIMARY SCHOOL — BUILDING THE EDUCATION REVOLUTION PROJECT**

*Grievance*

**MR A.P. O’GORMAN (Joondalup)** [9.15 am]: My grievance this morning is to the Minister for Education. I raise an issue with regard to Beldon Primary School’s Building the Education Revolution building program and its undercover area upgrade. I will quote from a letter that was written to Toni Tonkin on 22 September on behalf of the students and P&C of Beldon Primary School. It reads —

Dear Toni

I am writing to you on behalf of the students and P&C of Beldon Primary School. You will be aware that the Principal of Beldon Primary, Mary Blechynden, has repeatedly expressed her concerns regarding the status of the BER Building Program with regards to the undercover area. We, as a school community, are disappointed that those concerns are not being addressed.

The original scope of works for the undercover area included a ceiling and roller doors to replace the current roller doors which were in such a bad state that it was no longer a viable option to continue repairing them. The intention for the area was to be able to make it conducive to carrying out activities where light could be regulated and the elements kept out. The undercover area is designed so that in summer the sun streams in and in winter the rain. It is the only suitable area for assemblies and performances. Unfortunately the ceiling was too expensive and so was knocked back. Ms Blechynden agreed on alternative options with the architect including that the roller doors be operated by an electric mechanism. This would enable the doors to be opened and closed easily and silently as required during assemblies and or performances.

Contrary to the discussions with the architect, the roller doors which have been fitted are not electric and cannot be used in the capacity for which they were intended. The locking mechanism is difficult to operate and situated very high making it awkward for many potential users. We have several issues, as follows, regarding the way in which this matter has been dealt with:

1. The only time the scope of works was shown to Ms Blechynden was in the initial planning stages two years ago. All other discussions have been of a verbal nature only. Based on the discussions Ms Blechynden had with the architect, she expected that Beldon Primary would get electric roller doors.
2. The decision that we were not to get the electric roller doors was never communicated to Ms Blechynden. Only after Ms Blechynden queried the installation of non-electric roller doors was she advised that the electric doors had been knocked back.
3. Ms Blechynden has since been advised that there is no more money. We find it difficult to believe that what has been completed to date can possibly amount to the \$150,000 allocated to the undercover area. We certainly hope that the errors which have occurred to date have not been funded with this money.

The P&C would like a breakdown of the costings and what has been spent to date on the undercover area upgrade. This can be forwarded to the school for the attention of the P&C. All we are asking in order to finalise this matter is to have electric roller doors fitted, and, as has been done at Eddystone primary School. We understand that we have been fortunate in other areas of the Building Program but do not believe that this should preclude us from expecting the undercover area to be completed as was expected. Our children are being disadvantaged in the current situation and we intend to see this through to a satisfactory conclusion.

That is signed by Rennaye Bonolo, on behalf of the Beldon Primary School P&C.

As the minister can see, the school’s community is very active; they like to get value for money and they like to get what they were told they were getting. This is a school in the northern suburbs, in my electorate, that has done very well with inclusion; it received awards last year for inclusion of young Indigenous people in its programs, and it is a very progressive school. This is a great school that has had some unfortunate occurrences in the past. It has been burnt down on two occasions and has been rebuilt. On both those occasions the school managed to recover and maintain—in fact, increase—its enrolments.

I have another BER funding issue; I know that I did not give the minister notice of this, but I ask her to take it on board as well. It is about the Heathridge Primary School. It is education department policy that a school is able to be locked down in an emergency; that means students and teachers need to be able to lock themselves in a classroom in the case of an emergency. The school had a block of classrooms, with two access doors, built with BER funding; however, neither door can be locked from the inside. Earlier in the year, the school had to go into

lockdown while Department for Child Protection staff forcibly removed children from a family. It had been expected that the parents would react adversely, and they did. This issue has been raised with both the architect and the builder, but they consider the works to have been completed and have told the school that it will need to pay should it wish to have the locks replaced.

**Dr E. Constable:** I am sorry, what was that last bit? They were told—what?

**Mr A.P. O'GORMAN:** The school has been told that it will need to pay should it wish to have the locks replaced.

The final issue that I wish to raise—I am aware that I have not given the minister notice of this matter—is about Joondalup Primary School. It had seven extra classrooms built and that was great. But the school is still waiting for final maintenance to be completed and for the school oval to be returned to the state it was in prior to the commencement of construction. Work vehicles and trucks used the oval during the construction phase. The oval was also dug up for cabling et cetera and is now not in a very good state. The school has contacted the architect, which liaises with the builder, John Holland, and told the architect that the school is not happy with the state the oval was left in. To date, the school has heard nothing. Russell Hahn, the school principal, is considering fixing the oval and, once the works are completed, following up the matter of compensation with the builder. The school receives no notice when workmen will attend the school site and the workmen just roll in and roll out. It is just one of those unfortunate things.

I know that there are always teething problems with building programs, but the oval is vital to the school. It is vital for health and fitness to get the students out on the oval, but that cannot be done if great holes have been dug in the oval and it has not been put back to a standard. I ask the minister to address these issues and to let us know whether they can be fixed in the near future.

**DR E. CONSTABLE (Churchlands — Minister for Education)** [9.21 am]: I thank the member for Joondalup for the information that he has presented this morning.

I will quickly deal with the last two issues first. I will seek some information about the issue of the locking doors today and get back to the member about that. I agree totally with the member that someone needs to go out to look at the Joondalup Primary School oval. Obviously it needs to be safe for and useable by students. I will have both those matters looked at and will get back to the member on them.

With regard to Beldon Primary School, I would like to provide members with a little of the history of the Building the Education Revolution program at that school. Beldon Primary School and Beldon Education Support Centre are co-located and quite sensibly amalgamated their BER funds, as the member spoke about, for reasons of inclusion and because it is, in a sense, one campus. That was a very sensible decision.

However, the original BER funding entitlement was \$250 000 for the ed support centre and \$2 million for the primary school. The original submissions, for which funding was approved, were for \$300 000 for the ed support centre and \$1.4 million for the school. The application was looked at again and the department put in a successful bid to combine the applications and the final application, a three-classroom early childhood facility, the upgrading of the covered assembly area and a two-room multipurpose block that both schools could use was for a combined total of \$2.3 million, which was slightly above the original allocation.

I understand that the upgrade to the covered assembly area included a sound system, lighting and a digital projector—items that, I should mention, are not always included in undercover areas. The early childhood block was completed early this year. The multipurpose classroom construction commenced in July 2010 and was completed in February, so from the beginning of the year, the school had access to those facilities. The final works for the covered assembly area were completed in June. I understand that the school accepted that the building was practically complete as of those dates and that a 12-month defect period for the buildings was put in place. The buildings are now all being used, although with this one problem.

An issue that has been brought to my attention is that, although the final combined funding allocation was for \$2.3 million, in fact \$2.6 million has been spent on the school. I imagine, given the careful BER program processes put in place, that savings were found and the extra money was spent at the two schools. I am told this morning that that included a request for playground equipment, a replacement shade shelter and garrison fencing. I understand the final total could be higher than \$2.6 million because Building Management and Works costs have not yet been finalised.

The department and the school have worked together to accommodate as many as possible of the additional requests that came in—and there were additional requests. In a sense, the school has done well and has received a great number of extra items for its BER funding.

The original design for the covered assembly areas included mechanically assisted doors—that is, the new doors are mechanically assisted in the same way the old doors were. Is that correct? Some schools have automatic doors and some, I suspect because of the cost factor, do not. No matter what the architect has said—architects often say things to schools that do not fit within the cost parameters; that is not unusual—I can understand why the school wanted the automatic doors. The school continues to have an issue because although an architect can say that it can be done, when the department looks at the costings, the two do not fit together.

All BER program funds have been expended. I think it would be a good idea if I go out to the school with the member to talk to the people at the school. It will be very difficult to visit the school before the end of this year, but perhaps I can go out with the member at the very beginning of next year to see for myself what can be done and we can take it from there. I understand why the school is not happy with this, but I can confirm that in a sense the school has done well because it has received more than its original allocation and many of the extra items it requested. If the member is happy, I will go out to the school and, in the meantime, I will get the information about Joondalup and Heathridge schools for him.

**Mr A.P. O’Gorman:** Thank you.