

# SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Australia



## Building the Education Revolution, NSW

The \$16.2 billion Building the Education Revolution (BER) program aimed to modernise schools through the delivery of necessary infrastructure in 9540 schools across Australia, and by doing so, support local jobs and stimulate investment.

In NSW, the BER funding was approximately \$3.46 billion across 1603 state primary schools with each school, depending on the student population, receiving funding ranging from \$250,000 to \$3 million. The works included construction of or improvement to community halls, libraries, home bases (classrooms), canteens and administration buildings.

The primary purpose of the program was economic stimulus so the work in the schools needed to be rolled out quickly to stimulate their local economies.

The program stipulated that 20% of projects had to start construction by end June 2009 and be completed by end December 2010, 60% had to start by July 2009 and be completed by end January 2011 and the remaining 20% had to start by September 2009 and be completed by the end of March 2011.

### Evans & Peck's role

Evans & Peck worked as part of the Integrated Program Office (IPO) with the Department of Education and Training and Department of Commerce to develop strategies for the Expression of Interest (EOI) and the subsequent tender process to deliver the works to schools across NSW.

The team had to move very quickly. The stimulus package was announced in February 2009 and the EOI and tenders were released in March. The regional managing contractor roles were selected and signed up in mid April and construction was scheduled to start in June 2009.

After playing a central role in the tender and award of the managing contracts, Evans & Peck took on the role of Regional Program Director for the Riverina and the Western New South Wales regions managing a small direct team which protected the client's interests in the work of Laing O'Rourke, managing contractor for the regions.

The task was to deliver 440 projects in 330 schools in remote locations from the Blue Mountains to Tibooburra in the northwest, Khancoban in the south east and Gol Gol on the Murray near the South Australian border..

The task was challenged by the massive quantity of data. Every school project was treated in its own right with a deal of care throughout the iterative design phases, cost estimates, construction approvals, benchmarking and variations. Evans & Peck developed a relational database solution to manage the multiple transactions in the Riverina and the Western NSW region and it was rolled out across all regions in the State and used to determine fair market value.

### Results

Despite some bad press, between 90 and 95 per cent of school Principals and community members are pleased about their new school facilities.

The BER program in NSW has delivered buildings that are fine teaching spaces, safe, well equipped and durable. They will last 20 to 30 years with minimal maintenance and will not be a drain on future budgets. New buildings have been delivered at schools which have not had any real improvements for many years.

### FACTS AND FIGURES

**Client:** NSW Departments of Education and Commerce

**Project value:** \$3.4 billion

**E&P involvement:** 2009 - 2011

The new buildings have excellent information technology with electronic whiteboards and many with video conferencing; they are robust enough to cope with the hard wear and tear of generations of school children to come. The designs were also strongly informed by sustainability principles – with rainwater tanks and photovoltaic power which can be used as both an energy source and teaching resource.

Delivering new education facilities at primary schools, many of which hadn't had any major capital expenditure in almost a century



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