

Building the Education Revolution (BER) – Project Nomination Advice Science and Language Centres for the 21st Century Secondary Schools

This document provides essential advice and instructions with regard to the Commonwealth Government's program entitled "Science and Language Centres for the 21st Century Secondary Schools".

It relates to the Commonwealth Government's commitment of "\$1 billion for the construction of new science laboratories or language learning centres ... with a notional number of around 500 buildings".

Immediate Action Required

The required action by school Principals will be to complete a Project Nomination Form that has been constructed in the convenient style of a Zoomerang Survey.

This survey must be completed as soon as possible, and **no later than 4.00pm on Friday 1 May 2009 (Friday, Week One, Term 2)**.

Background Information

It is important to remember that the *Building the Education Revolution* program is part of the Commonwealth Government's economic stimulus package. Its first objective is to create jobs; and to do so quickly.

Up to 500 schools nationally will be funded to build science laboratories or language learning centres.

The funds are conditional on adherence to stringent Commonwealth Government guidelines which can be viewed at:

http://www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/BuildingTheEducationRevolution/Documents/09-099%20BER%20guidelines_APPROVED.pdf

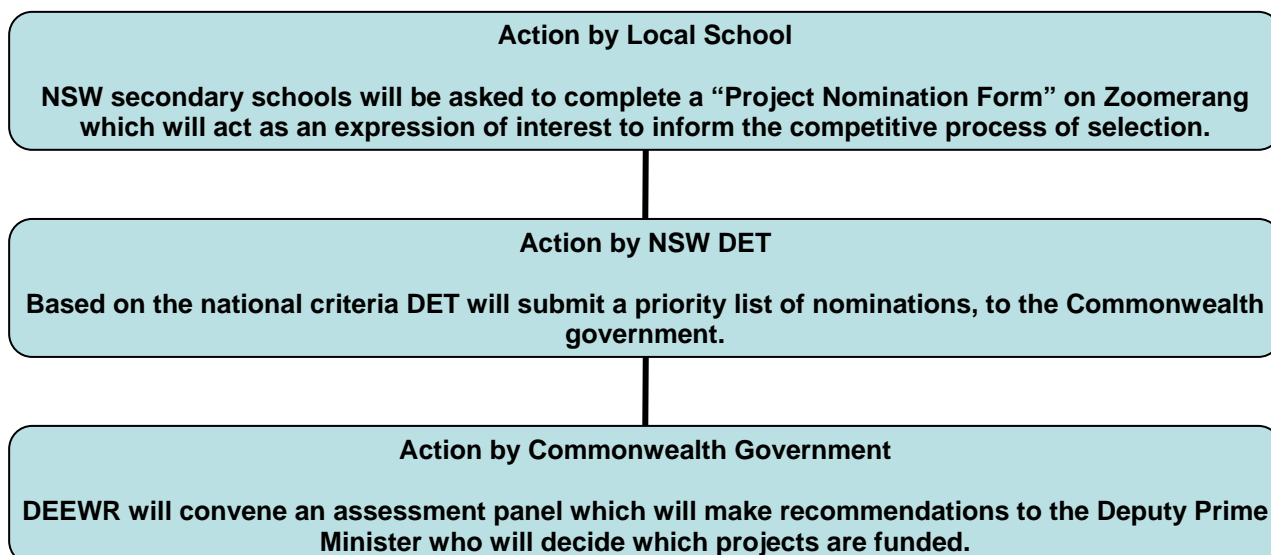
We strongly advise all Principals to read these guidelines. In particular, with regard to this letter, the section that begins on page 8 entitled "*BER Element 2: Science and Language Centres for 21st Century Secondary Schools*".

These Commonwealth Government guidelines make it clear that:

- Schools will **not** be able to nominate for both a Science and a Language Centre.
- Proposals will be subject to a **competitive** application process.
- Projects that cannot be delivered within the 2009 / 2010 financial year will **not** be funded.
- School communities **must** agree to starting and completion dates.

The Commonwealth Government has also made it clear that schools that do not have a permanently enrolled student population are not eligible for funding. Examples of ineligible schools include Detention Centres, hospital schools, some farm and agriculture schools, intensive language schools, circus schools and environmental education centres.

The following diagram illustrates the Commonwealth Government's funding process.



Science Laboratories

The NSW Government is currently undertaking the refurbishment of 800 Science laboratories in 161 schools as part of its *Building Better Schools Program* (BBSP) initiative.

This program has been designed to upgrade a number of existing science laboratories to create a broader range of teaching/learning spaces and includes the infrastructure for integrated wireless technology and fixed data points in each upgraded learning area.

The development of these new facilities in line with current Secondary Schools Facilities Standards has been undertaken in consultation with Curriculum Support and current Science Head Teachers. Plans and further information about the upgrades can be viewed at:

www.curriculumsupport.education.nsw.gov.au/secondary/science/learning/upgrade/index.htm

The good news is that schools that were not included in the refurbishment of Science Laboratories under the NSW *Building Better Schools Program* (BBSP) will be eligible to nominate under the Commonwealth's *Building the Education Revolution* program.

As with the *Building Better Schools Program* the number of refurbished laboratories (learning spaces) to be upgraded will be determined by a school's current and projected enrolments (whichever is the greatest). This data is held by the DET.

If you wish your school community to be considered for a science laboratory, you will need to nominate for inclusion on the program. To do this you will need to select the Science option on the Zoomerang form and provide a detailed justification for inclusion.

The 161 secondary schools whose Science laboratories will be refurbished under the NSW *Building Better Schools Program* should not reapply for this Commonwealth funding.

Language Centres

Languages, in NSW schools, have traditionally been taught in general learning classrooms. There is currently no relevant Secondary Schools Facilities Standard for a Language

Centre. Extensive discussions have therefore taken place with the Languages Unit within the Curriculum K-12 Directorate to develop a standard for a Language Learning Centre.

The facility that is being recommended would envisage an existing learning space being refurbished to maximise the use of the latest modern technology.

A plan detailing the inclusions in this refurbishment is available at:

<http://www.curriculumsupport.education.nsw.gov.au/secondary/languages/ber/index.htm>

Whilst it is envisaged that there would be one such room provided per secondary school, particular schools that can demonstrate an emphasis on language teaching within their Strategic Planning, may apply for more than one room to be refurbished. This request should be indicated and justified in the *Justification – “Need for the Specified Building”* section of the Zoomerang survey.

If you wish your school community to be considered for a Language Centre, you will need to nominate for inclusion on the program. To do this you will need to select the Language Centre option on the Zoomerang form and provide detailed justification for inclusion.

Eligibility Requirements and Processes

The Commonwealth Government insists in its guidelines on a competitive selection process and they have provided a number of eligibility requirements. It is important that your application address these and that appropriate detail is included.

Justification – “Need or Disadvantage”

The DET has available sophisticated measures of school socioeconomic status using the indicators required by the Commonwealth. The Educational Measurement and School Accountability Directorate (EMSAD) has developed these for allocating schools to Like School Groups.

These and other indicators of disadvantage which are held centrally, such as measures of remoteness, proportions of Aboriginal students and students from non-English speaking backgrounds, (as well as mid-year 2008 enrolment numbers) will be used by DET in forming the priority list of nominations, to the Commonwealth government.

Schools need not provide this type information unless they wish to do so. Schools that wish to add **additional quantitative** and important **qualitative** information are given the opportunity to write up to 300 words in the Zoomerang application. Your school’s strategic planning document and context statement may well inform this section of the survey.

Justification – “Need for the Specified Building”

Schools will be required to justify their school community’s “need” for the particular building or refurbishment.

The guidelines state that the nomination will have to indicate that:

“... the school does not already have a contemporary science building/laboratory or a language learning centre, or any existing facilities of that kind or they are inadequate for the school’s current or emerging needs.”

There is an opportunity in the Zoomerang survey to respond in up to 300 words to this issue

What You Need to Do Now

1. Submit nominations for your school for the *Science and Language Centres for 21st Century Secondary Schools* component of the *Building the Education Revolution* program as outlined above. Nominations should be submitted using the project nominations link below. The application will be in the familiar form of a Zoomerang survey. It is anticipated that the survey should take no more than 20 minutes to complete.
2. Secondary schools are able to apply for either a Science Laboratory refurbishment or a Language Centre.
3. Nominations are to be discussed with your Asset Management Unit, School Education Director and your Parents and Citizens Association.
4. Project nominations need to be submitted as soon as possible, and no later than 4.00pm on Friday 1 May 2009 (Friday, Week One, Term 2).
5. Late nominations unfortunately cannot be considered. The Commonwealth Governments timelines are strict and inflexible.

If you have further questions regarding your proposed nominations, please check the Department's Frequently Asked Questions at:

<https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/deptresources/majorprojects/ber>.

The Program Office will update the FAQ page on a daily basis.

If you cannot find a response to your issue, please email your question to BER@det.nsw.edu.au.