

BER Factsheet

November 2011

Community Use of BER Facilities

Background

As part of the Australian Government's \$42 billion National Building – Economic Stimulus Plan, \$16.2 billion is being invested for the Building the Education Revolution (BER) program to fund infrastructure projects at primary and secondary schools.

The BER is providing \$14.1 billion for *Primary Schools for the 21st Century* (P21), \$821.8 million for *Science and Language Centres for 21st Secondary Schools* and \$1.28 billion for a *National School Pride* program.

Through the BER, the Commonwealth is building learning environments to help children, families and communities participate in activities that will support achievement, develop learning potential and bring communities together.

This factsheet has been developed to provide information on the community use of BER facilities.

Community Use of Facilities

It is a condition of funding under the BER that schools must agree to provide access at no, or low, cost to the community to libraries and multipurpose halls funded under the *Primary Schools for the 21st Century* element of the BER.

This must include reasonable access by any community or not-for-profit groups in the local community.

In providing for the community use of the *Primary Schools for the 21st Century* BER facility:

- Schools must agree to advertise the availability of the infrastructure for use by the community through any avenue available to them which does not incur significant cost to the school (eg. newsletters, school website, free community papers).
- Schools may charge a low fee for the use of the facility where the charge is to cover recurrent costs incurred by the school in providing the community access (e.g. electricity, cleaning, security).

- Schools that have facilities funded under the *Primary Schools for the 21st Century* element of the BER that are not libraries or multipurpose halls must make either their existing library or multipurpose hall (or a comparable facility within the school) available for community use under the same conditions (as if it were funded under the *Primary Schools for the 21st Century* element of the BER), unless they have an exemption from the Commonwealth.

It is understandable that over time recurrent costs may increase or arrangements may change. If this increases the cost for a school to provide community access to the facility schools may choose to increase the fee they charge.

A school is not obliged to incur the cost of community usage of their BER libraries and multipurpose halls (or a comparable facility within the school), however schools should not be seeking to make a profit either.

In making a BER facility available for community use schools are obliged to comply with any relevant local planning and/or council requirements. It is acknowledged that in some circumstances this may impact on a school's ability to make the BER facility available for community use (eg. restrictions on the hours of usage).

More information

In the first instance, individuals, community groups or not-for-profit organisations are encouraged to contact the school in relation to the cost and availability of the BER facility.

If further clarification is required please contact the relevant state or territory government education authority or the catholic or independent schools Block Grant Authority. Contact details can be found at:

[Building the Education Revolution - Program Contacts](#)