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Minister shelves school building programme

■ \$500 MILLION OF PROJECTS STALLED FOR ONE YEAR

BY GEMMA BATTENBOUGH

The federal government has been forced to stall \$500 million worth of school building projects slated for the financial year 2010-11.

The funding will be pushed back by one year, affecting projects in the Primary Schools for the 21st Century element of the BER.

The government has blamed labour and material shortages for pushing up costs. However, the change comes amid criticism that the programme's tight schedules were responsible for both inflating prices and leading state governments to impose unsuitable buildings on schools.

Schools will be able to request a project extension if the extra time allows them to glean better value for money, further consultation, stronger environmental benefits or better programme outcomes. Extensions will be granted on a case-by-case basis.

The changes will ensure "value for money", federal minister for education, Julia Gillard, said.



The Opposition is claiming that this delay is a sign that the school stimulus package has led to waste and profiteering.

Gillard also announced yesterday that the federal government would be cutting \$200 million from the third round pay out from the Education Investment Fund, which has been reduced from \$550 million to \$350 million. The \$200 million will be returned to the Education Investment Fund for disbursement in the future.

Universities Australia has decried the funding pull, condemning it as misplaced. The

body representing universities said that the funding would have helped ease economic pressure by providing the infrastructure to boost skills and productivity in the future.

While the EIF Round 3 application process has closed, the successful projects are yet to be determined. The final allocation to each round depends on the quality of proposals received and on the advice of the independent advisory board. Successful projects will be announced in 2010.

YOUR COMMENT...

Take off for Perth Airport's masterplan

THE FEDERAL government has approved Perth Airport's 2009 masterplan, which sets out its immediate multi-billion dollar investment plans, as well as strategic direction for the next 20 years.

The masterplan maps a 10-year, \$2.4 billion plan, which includes moving domestic passengers to the International Precinct.

While federal minister for infrastructure, Anthony Albanese, gave the project the thumbs up yesterday, he was critical of the airport's

lack of public consultation.

"In giving my approval, I have made clear my expectation that the operators are to take a number of steps to improve the way they engage with nearby communities and respond to their concerns, particularly in relation to aircraft noise," he said.

"In future, residents must be informed and consulted about all major changes to the airport's operations and significant construction projects. This communi-

cation should involve direct mail, community leaflets, briefings to local councils, improved website information and provision of contact details for public enquiries."

A \$3.5 million study into how road and public transport links to and from the airport can be improved is also underway and is due to be finalized next year.

Perth Airport now has 50 business days to make its latest masterplan publicly available.

YOUR COMMENT ...

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"The problem is not that too much consultation inhibits great design, but that too much consultation today is a box-ticking exercise, carried out in name alone. Worse, some is verging on the actively corrupt. Among the most hair-raising examples I've come across was the use of actors to pack a council meeting and the forging of letters supporting a scheme by residents who did not exist."

BD Online

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"The death of beauty in America over a couple of decades was in historical terms almost instantaneous. A revival could be just as swift if architects would re-examine outmoded and wrongheaded thinking that puts innovation ahead of beauty as the primary aesthetic purpose of architecture."

Projo

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"And that's not to even mention the ridiculous turfing of the Sydney Harbour Bridge on Sunday, which caused traffic pile-ups of two to three hours of delay on the north shore. This was one of Nathan Rees's most memorable achievements: to close down one of Australia's busiest routes at huge expense to the taxpayer. To lay tens of thousands of metres of kikuyu grass so a few people could have a picnic (with no view) in the middle of the bridge rather than at any number of beautiful natural parklands around Sydney."

Sydney Morning Herald

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"Some of Australia's recent "high architecture" takes itself very seriously. Rectilinear, somewhat rigid, lacking colour and movement - one is surprised that almost classical approaches to planning, language and structure remain dominant in the face of emergent computer/digital technologies. Where are the new-age buildings that are clearly available to the 21st century?"

Sydney Morning Herald

[FULL ARTICLE ...](#)

BPN Sustainability Award winners announced

THE WORLD'S first 6 star Green Star rated convention centre in the world has been awarded top honours in the 2009 BPN Sustainability Awards.

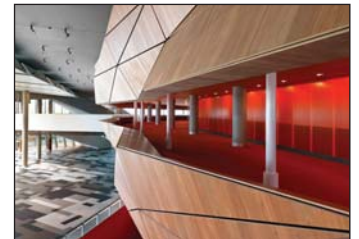
The Melbourne Convention Centre (pictured) took out the Overall Winner category, in addition to the Public Building & Urban Design award.

Judges said: "This project provides positive urban design outcomes, including improved connectivity. It avoids the typical black box concept of a convention centre and opens up the surrounds to include mixed uses to better activate the precinct."

A two-bedroom home in Melbourne by Zen Architects won the Single Dwelling (New) category, with judges saying Brunswick Lane Solar House has excellent passive and active strategies which were achieved on a tight urban site and within a modest budget.

The new building for Blackmores in Sydney by Watermark Architecture & Interiors took out the Small Commercial award, which allows natural cooling for nearly 50 per cent of the year.

The Large Commercial category was won by HASSELL for SA Water



- VS1, the first building in SA to achieve a 6 star Green Star rating.

Office Fitout was won by Smart Design Studio for its Australasian Performing Rights Association and the Australasian Mechanical Copyright Owners Society project. Judges said: "This project achieved sustainable outcomes while maintaining the character of the existing building."

McGregor Coxall took out the Landscape Design category for its Ballast Point Park project, which included 34,000 species of endemic plants and recycled timber for all decking.

Innovation of the Year for services and products was won by Caroma Dorf for its Caroma Flex Invisi Series II Toilet Suite, which deals with the problem of replacing inefficient wall hung toilets in commercial buildings.

[FULL LIST OF WINNERS ...](#)

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