Welcome to the BER Update for Schools, which aims keep you informed about the latest BER news and events across Victoria.

In this edition

Events  Page 2
- Forum for schools receiving BER science and dual science/language centres
- Recognition ceremony reminder

Q&A  Page 3
- The BER team speaks with Dr Julia Atkin about learning spaces for the 21st century

ICT update  Page 4
- ICT rollout and interactive whiteboard preferences

Spotlight on schools  Page 4
- Latest online videos

Grant update  Page 4

Further information  Page 4

BER progress in Victoria
as at 31 October 2010

Primary Schools for the 21st Century (P21)
Number of projects 1253
Projects started 1253
Construction finished 317

Science and Language Centres (SLC)
Number of projects 70
Projects started 70
Construction finished 3

Completed P21 and SLC projects in Victoria

Thank you to schools with completed projects that have taken the time to show their peers through their new buildings.

With the construction of 320 projects now complete, the forethought of schools in planning how they use their spaces is bringing these buildings to life.
Upcoming events

Forum for schools receiving BER science and dual science/language centres

Principals and science leadership teams from schools receiving science centres under the Science and Language Centres for 21st Century Secondary Schools (SLC) program are invited to a forum being held on Wednesday, 1 December 2010 at the MCG.

The forum, being run by the Education, Policy and Research Division, will provide information and support for centres with a science focus, and consider the connections to Victoria’s network of Specialist Science Centres.

This is the first in a series of forums designed to support schools with SLC projects to receive maximum benefit from these exciting new facilities. A similar forum focused on language centres will take place in the coming months.

Recognition ceremony reminder

Schools receiving projects under the Primary Schools for the 21st Century (P21) and Science and Language Centres for 21st Century Secondary Schools (SLC) programs are reminded that holding a recognition ceremony within three months of project completion remains a condition of funding.

Given that schools are required to provide the federal government with at least two months notice of a ceremony, the earliest a recognition ceremony can now be held is early in Term One 2011.

The BER team will be contacting schools with projects nearing completion to explain the guidelines and provide advice regarding recognition ceremonies.
Q&A with Dr Julia Atkin

Dr Julia Atkin is a social researcher whose expertise was instrumental in the development of the BER standard designs. Named in *The Bulletin* as one of Australia’s Smart 100 for making a difference to Australian society through innovation, we sat down with her to discuss designs for learning in the 21st century.

**Q** A lot of thought went into planning these buildings, about the future of teaching and future learning... In the discussions that you had during planning what were the key points that came up?

There were many points but a key one was that we wanted to make sure there was enough in the actual structure and design that hinted at what the learning could be and should be, but not so much that schools couldn’t make it their own.

**Q** What did you hope your involvement would achieve for learning in Victoria?

I’ve had the luxury over the last 25 years of working with educators from all over Australia and New Zealand. The work of teachers is constantly enriching what I understand about learning and teaching and I hope that has been expressed in the designs.

Victoria has developed a range of frameworks around effective schools, principles of learning and teaching and VELS which are, by far, the most comprehensive and coherent set of frameworks that exist in Australia. I hope that the designs are true to the principles within these frameworks, and that the learning spaces provide a tangible way of taking the Department’s principles into reality.

**Q** How can the learning spaces be used to reflect schools’ values?

What a school does with its spaces is very much a reflection on what they believe about, and value for learning. For example, if they believe that humans learn more effectively through doing than simply sitting and listening, then the spaces need to make it easy for students to move seamlessly into investigating, creating and making activities.

**Q** Can you give me some other examples of how principles of learning drove the design?

The designs were very much about the key principles that support human learning and learning in a contemporary context. One of the universal principles of learning is that it is relational. Through collaboration with others you can talk your ideas through and actually understand things more deeply. It is also relational in the sense that a significant other person (eg. a teacher) challenges you and supports your learning. So apart from the ease with which collaboration can happen easily between learners in the spaces, it is also a feature of the design that teacher work spaces are integrated into the learning environment. And for the 21st century, the spaces must feature ubiquitous ICT!
How do these new learning spaces encourage students to have more control of their own education?

Human learning is all about humans responding to their environment, their circumstances and their own desire to learn. We wanted to build spaces where the learner drives the learning, rather than the learner being ‘processed’ in batches like in a factory. To drive their own learning they need to be able to negotiate some choices – choices about what, where, and how to learn.

Looking ahead, what do you hope to see happening in education in Victoria?

Our hope for schools is that students, parents and teachers will talk a lot about what type of learning they value and why they value it, and work together to determine how these new spaces can reflect their values.

ICT update

Schools receiving standard design (template) buildings will be equipped with ICT infrastructure and equipment to support the implementation of the Department’s eduSTAR.net enterprise wireless network. These schools are reminded that they need to complete the online survey to select their interactive whiteboard preferences.

Grant update

All schools receiving P21 and SLC projects are encouraged to visit the BER website to view grant arrangements.

Schools need to complete the relevant declaration in order to receive landscaping, furniture and equipment and ICT grants. Information regarding this requirement will be emailed to relevant schools.

Spotlight on schools

Watch the latest online videos on the BER website, including a feature on Bairnsdale Secondary College which is receiving a science centre.

Further information

While the first point of contact for schools regarding projects is your project manager, the Department has a team of stakeholder relations officers also available to answer queries and support you throughout your BER project.

For more information on BER in Victoria, contact the information line on 1800 679 938, email ber@edumail.vic.gov.au or visit www.education.vic.gov.au/buildingrevolution

www.australia.gov.au/economicstimulus