

KEEP AUSTRALIA WORKING INTRODUCTION - OVERVIEW

While Australia's economy has outperformed many other OECD countries, the labour market continues to remain fragile. The unemployment rate in Australia reached 5.8 per cent in June, remained steady in July and August and dropped slightly to 5.7 per cent in September. This is 1.8 percentage points higher than its level in February last year.

The outlook is for unemployment to rise further. Treasury Budget forecasts indicate that Australian unemployment will peak at 8.5 per cent in 2010 although Treasury Secretary, Ken Henry has indicated that these levels may not be reached.

Recovery in jobs can take longer than recovery in the economy in general and in addition, specific groups and regions remain vulnerable in the downturn and may take some time longer to recover.

The identification of the 20 Priority Employment Areas including SW Perth (Kwinana, Cockburn, Rockingham and Mandurah) was based on an in-depth analysis of around 70 labour market indicators. These indicators have been used to assess a region's likelihood of experiencing labour market disadvantage now or in the future. They include:

- high unemployment rates;
- increasing numbers of unemployment beneficiaries;
- a high proportion of their population on Centrelink income support;
- low educational attainment; and
- industry structure vulnerability to cyclical weakness.

All of the Employment Priority Areas have had either high unemployment, falling employment or a high proportion of people on income support. We also need current initiatives to ensure we are prepared for greater demand for skills to support a long period of sustained growth following the slow-down.

Since July the Government has been listening to issues arising from the Keep Australia Working forums, reviewing the evidence from past recessions, monitoring economic developments and considering potential options. Based on this work the Government has considered and will implement targeted responses to provide continued support for jobs and to prepare the Australian economy for recovery and beyond.

In order to support outcomes now and build long term capacity, major initiatives as part of this report to build job and training opportunities include:

- A new *Apprentice Kickstart Package* to accelerate the take-up of apprenticeships in order to support the availability of trade skills in crucial sectors of the economy;
- a second round of the Local Jobs Stream of the Jobs Fund, targeted specifically at green jobs to support the transition to the economy of the future;
- a second round of the Get Communities Working Stream of the Jobs Fund to give priority to intermediate labour market models of social enterprise;
- setting up an Office of Employment Co-ordination to build further opportunities to connect job seekers with employment opportunities;
- expanding Keep Australia Working financial information seminars and job expos; and
- improving information for people and organisations affected by the global recession



Building the Education Revolution (BER)

Building the Education Revolution (BER) is a \$16.2 billion investment over three financial years – 2008/09, 2009/10, 2010/11 and a critical component in the Australian Government’s Nation Building – Economic Stimulus Plan.

This investment will provide all eligible schools across Australia with world-class educational infrastructure that will meet the needs of our students to move into and compete in the 21st century.

This much needed boost into our schools will also help support jobs at both a local and national level through new construction and maintenance work which will commence as quickly as possible.

The three key elements of BER are:

- **Primary Schools for the 21st Century:** \$14.1 billion to build or refurbish large scale infrastructure in primary schools, K–12s (primary component) and special schools, including libraries, halls and classrooms.
- **Science and Language Centres for 21st Century Secondary Schools:** \$821.8 million to build science laboratories or language learning centres in our secondary schools. Funding will be allocated on the basis of demonstrated need.
- **National School Pride Program:** \$1.3 billion to refurbish and renew existing infrastructure and build minor infrastructure in all schools.

BER will also assist in developing and supporting local communities. Under the program, major facilities that are built or renewed in primary schools, special schools or K-12s, such as halls or libraries, will be made available for community use at no or low cost.

BER complements the existing and planned investments by the states, territories and the non-government system. The program will be delivered through cooperation between Commonwealth, state and territory governments and the non-government school sector.

Do I need to be pre-qualified to participate in the BER program?

The **National School Pride Program** comprises an estimated total of \$100 million of BER funding across approximately 800 primary and secondary schools, with each school receiving between \$50,000 and \$200,000. **Prequalification for this program of work is not required.**

Primary Schools for the 21st Century comprises an estimated total of \$1 billion of BER funding across approximately 650 primary schools, with each primary school receiving between \$250,000 and \$3 million of BER funding. **The BER Taskforce will accept tenders from builders for these works, whether or not they are prequalified with BMW.**

However, at the time of tender assessment, all builders, whether prequalified or not, will be required to undergo a business risk assessment which will include an analysis of a contractor’s:

- corporate structure;
- financial information;
- current workload information;
- internal contractor performance reports;
- external contractor performance reports; and
- external credit risk reports.

Primary Schools for the 21st Century - Registration of Interest

The BER program is a stimulus package that is being fast tracked by the BER Taskforce and they have commenced awarding tenders as quickly and efficiently as possible.

In order to gauge the construction industry's capacity the BER Taskforce has been asking builders to register their interest to participate in this element of the BER Program.

Builders will be able to assist in expediting the awarding of tenders, by completing the [Registration of Interest](#) and at the same time provide as much information as possible for the business risk assessment to be initiated.

The BER Program is a federally funded stimulus package. In parallel with the BER program, the Western Australian Government is also delivering the State's capital works program. In order to tender for these projects, builders are encouraged to undergo the prescribed BMW prequalification process. Click here to download the: "[Builder's Prequalification Scheme Information Pack and Application Form](#)" (PDF 973 kB).



Advertised tenders

All current tenders can be downloaded from Tenders WA at www.tenders.wa.gov.au/

Primary Schools for the 21st Century

Non Standard Pattern Design Buildings – Currently 12 tenders advertised.

Tenders Commenced – 7 October 2009.

Tenders Closing – 5 November 2009

Miscellaneous and Loose Furnishings – Currently 3 tenders advertised.

- Metal Shelving

Tender Commenced – 7 October 2009.

Tender Closing – 30 October 2009

- Pottery Kilns

Tender Commenced – 21 October 2009

Tender Closing – 20 November 2009

- Children's Furniture

Tender Commenced – 21 October 2009

Tender Closing – 20 November 2009

Tenders under assessment

Science and Language Centres for 21st Century Secondary Schools

Now closed - 19 tenders were advertised.

Tenders Commenced – 9 September 2009

Tenders Closed – 8 October 2009.

Currently under evaluation - No further tenders will be accepted.

Now available for tender on the Tenders WA website (<http://www.tender.wa.gov.au/>)

For further information and advice:

Email

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