

# Adrian's gall over blowout

**EXCLUSIVE**

**ANDREW CLENNELL  
STATE POLITICAL EDITOR**

THE cost overrun in the disastrous computer management system being rolled out across schools in NSW looks set to get even worse.

Embattled Education Minister Adrian Piccoli has confirmed he has altered the government's contract with the private operator of the controversial Learning Management Business Reform computer project, but is refusing to say how many more tens of millions it will cost the taxpayer.

Mr Piccoli's office has confirmed a



**Adrian Piccoli.**

recent "contract variation" of the terms of the private company Tribal Group's agreement with the Education Department to work on the system.

The Daily Telegraph has already revealed the cost of the LMBR project has blown out to more than \$576 million — even though it has been rolled out to only 10 per cent of the state's 2218 schools.

The program was supposed to cost less than that to roll out to all schools.

The LMBR has been called a "disaster" by principals, with glitches

leading to schools missing out on money and staff being put on stress leave or extra staff having to be hired to cope with the new system.

Continuing the recent secrecy from the government on the botched project, a spokeswoman for Mr Piccoli said: "A variation on the existing contract has been signed and its provisions are commercial in confidence."

An Education Department spokesman said: "Negotiations were for a variation of an ongoing contract so it was not appropriate for the department to seek alternative service providers."

An Auditor-General's report last year criticised the department's relationships with contracts over the LMBR, arguing

that "commercial risks were overly weighted towards the department".

The Daily Telegraph has also learned the former LMBR business director in the education department, Nick Churchman, earlier this year went to work for Tribal. Mr Churchman and the department have denied any of his work relates to the LMBR.

Mr Piccoli has denied the project will cost \$1 billion but refuses to say how much the government has allocated for it above \$500 million.

The Public Service Association met Mr Piccoli a fortnight ago to ask for more money for schools to employ extra administrative staff to cope with the program but the minister refused.

Acting PSA secretary Steve Turner

said Mr Piccoli had agreed to visit a school having problems with the program, but the minister had said he believed the LMBR was "satisfactory" and it would be rolled out to a further 60 schools next term, before being rolled out to another 1000 next year.

"Considering the hundreds of millions of dollars wasted on the LMBR the minister must urgently release details of its contract variation with its IT providers," the opposition's Waste Watch chairman Chris Minns said.

"Adrian Piccoli is hiding behind the mantra of commercial in confidence but considering the LMBR has cost up to \$1 billion (\$500 million over budget) the public has a right to know what this minister is up to."