

**Division 25: School Curriculum and Standards Authority, \$34 740 000 —**

Ms L.L. Baker, Chairman.

Mr J.H.D. Day, Minister for Planning representing the Minister for Education.

Mr A. Blagaich, Chief Executive Officer.

Ms J. Nairn, Director, Corporate Services.

Ms Y. H. Seetoh, Principal Finance Officer.

Ms J. Healy, Director, Policy and Planning.

[Witnesses introduced.]

**The CHAIRMAN:** The member for Armadale.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** I refer the minister to page 298 of budget paper No 2, that is, “Spending Changes”. Under “Program Rationalisation”, I note that the forward estimates for 2014–15 talks about \$25 million savings; for the year after, \$26 million; and the year after, \$27 million. How are these figures calculated and what programs will be rationalised?

**Ms J. Nairn:** Through the minister, the member is referring to the cost savings. The costs have been fully absorbed by the authority. As part of our budget process, we examined every activity and function of the authority and we have been able to absorb the costs by efficiencies in areas—such as, the reduction in paper—we are using more electronic methods now—a reduction in printing consumables; official travel; and legal services. We also have reduced costs in standard settings—we are doing that in a different way—and for practical examinations.

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** I refer the minister to the first dot point on page 299 under the heading “Significant Issues Impacting the Agency”. In 2015, the changes to the Western Australian Certificate of Education take place for year 11. Is the minister on target to have all the materials ready for this financial year?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** I will ask Mr Blagaich to answer that question.

**Mr A. Blagaich:** The adjustments to the WACE have been confirmed and we are on track. We have the implementation of the senior secondary Australian curriculum, which is requiring an alignment of our current courses to the Australian curriculum. We are aligning those to the 14 new courses that have been developed for senior secondary schools. The drafts have been completed and we will be consulting with schools shortly. We are also looking at our existing stage 3 courses to line them up to that new structure, and we are also in the process of adjusting what schools would know as our stage 1 and 2 courses as general courses that are non-examinable. These are the announcements that the Premier made. The changes are to be implemented for 2015 for year 11 and 2016 for year 12. That time frame has worked pretty well, which has allowed us this year to get all the syllabuses in place and well consulted. Our intention is to take the first set of syllabuses to the board in October; the second set in December; and then the third and final set, which is a series of syllabuses for students who have not been able to demonstrate the minimum standard of literacy and numeracy, will be ready to go to the board in February.

The intention is to have everything into schools for March next year. The reason that we have asked for that to come earlier—having learnt from the last reform—is that schools need plenty of time to be able to come to terms with it. We expect that schools will be able to familiarise themselves with the new syllabuses and prepare their handbooks for next year’s year 10s, allowing the kids to have good information on course selection, and enabling the schools to determine their timetables with what they can offer. To answer the question, yes, we are on track so far, all being well.

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** How many students will not be sitting examinations and how many courses will not require exams in the WACE changes from 2015 on?

**Mr A. Blagaich:** We anticipated and wanted to make sure that the students who wish to sit the stage 2 courses could continue to do so this year and next year, in 2014. In 2015, we will reduce from 110 examinable courses to 52 examinable courses, but those exams will not happen until 2016, if that makes sense. The first year 12s through on the reduced syllabuses—on the reduced examinations—will be examined in 2016. The current courses must have the exams written for stage 2 and stage 3 in 2013, 2014 and 2015. Then we will reduce for year 12 in 2016.

[12.40 pm]

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** I return to the table under “Spending Changes” on page 298 and the line item on “Public Sector Workforce Reform”. It says there will be savings of \$338 000 in 2013-14, and I note that we are already two

months into the financial year. In 2014-15 there will be savings of \$265 000, in 2015-16 of \$349 000; and in the year after that, 2016–17, savings of \$585 000. How will those changes be achieved?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** I am advised that in line with the overall public sector wages policy, the authority's salary expenditure has been recalculated to incorporate capped wages and condition increases to projected growth in the Perth CPI. Earlier salary estimates included a growth rate of 4.7 per cent—quite high from my observation. This estimate has been recalculated to a growth rate of 2.5 per cent resulting in adjustments being made across the current and forward years, so it is a lower growth rate of salary increase.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** Thank you.

**The appropriation was recommended.**