

Deputy Chairman; Chairman; Hon Alan Cadby; Hon Graham Giffard; Hon Kate Doust; Hon Dr Chrissy Sharp;
Hon Barbara Scott; Hon Jon Ford; Hon Derrick Tomlinson; Hon Barry House; Hon Sue Ellery; Hon Ken
Travers; [3.20 Pm]; Hon Murray Criddle; Hon Ray Halligan

Division 55: Education and Training, \$2 502 308 000 -

Hon Adele Farina, Deputy Chairman.

Hon Graham Giffard, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Education and Training.

Mr P. Albert, Director General.

Mr M. Goff, Acting Deputy Director General, Training.

Mr P. McCaffrey, Acting Chief Finance Officer.

Mrs N. Jeffery, Chief Executive Officer, Curriculum Council.

Ms. Y.H. Seetoh, Manager, Financial Services, Curriculum Council.

Mr B. Doyle, Chief Information Officer.

Mr A. Huts, Executive Director, People and Organisational Development.

Ms M. Banks, Acting Deputy Director General, Schools.

Mr R. Player, General Manager, Training Group.

Ms G. Mitchell, Director, Training Resource Allocation.

Mr S. Harvey, Director, Facilities and Services.

Mr K. O'Keefe, Executive Director, Aboriginal Education and School and System Performance.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: On behalf of the Legislative Council Estimates Committee, I would like to welcome you to today's hearing. Government agencies and departments have an important role and duty in assisting Parliament to scrutinise the budget papers on behalf of the people of Western Australia. The Committee values that assistance.

It will greatly assist Hansard if, when referring to the *Budget Statements* volumes or the consolidated fund estimates, members give the page number, item, program, amount, and so on in preface to their questions. If supplementary information is to be provided, I ask your cooperation in ensuring that it is delivered to the Committee's clerk within five working days of receipt of the questions. An example of the required Hansard style for the documents has been provided to your advisers.

The Committee reminds agency representatives to respond to questions in a succinct manner and to limit the extent of personal observations. For the benefit of members and Hansard, I ask the parliamentary secretary to introduce his advisers to the Committee, and for each adviser to please state their full name, contact address and the capacity in which they appear before the Committee. At this time, I ask each of the witnesses whether they have read, understood and completed the Information for Witnesses form.

WITNESSES: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: Do the witnesses fully understand the meaning and effect of the provisions of that document?

WITNESSES: Yes.

Hon ALAN CADBY: What effect will the merging of the Departments of Education and Training have on vocational education and training in schools and how does the Curriculum Council intend to moderate between school-based courses and technical and further education-based courses?

Hon GRAHAM GIFFARD: Mr Albert will address the first part of the question and Mrs Jeffery will address the second part.

Mr ALBERT: As a department, we see the merger of education and training as very beneficial to VET in schools. In particular, an opportunity now exists to break some of the bureaucratic barriers that might have existed between the two agencies in the past and for the staff involved in the two agencies to work collaboratively to improve the opportunities for young people. In particular, we see the department focusing on school-based traineeships, in which our State has lagged a little in comparison with other States. We now see an opportunity to open up that agenda. Interestingly, since the merger has been announced, TAFE colleges in the various regions have been working closely with the district offices and are presenting the department with their plans to increase the opportunities for 15 to 19-year-olds, and not just those who are in schools, but also those who have dropped out of school.

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In relation to the second part of the question, I defer to the Chief Executive Officer of the Curriculum Council.

Mrs JEFFERY: As you will be aware, the Curriculum Council secretariat and the Training Accreditation Council secretariat will work much more closely so that we can have a more seamless approach to the quality assurance of the Curriculum Council subjects and the competencies in the training packages. The two teams are working closely together to ensure that we do not ask schools to double up on their processes. However, both TAC and the Curriculum Council have some processes in place for moderation, and the staff of the two organisations are now working closely together to ensure that we meet the standards of the Australian quality training framework as well as the Curriculum Council standards for schools.

Hon ALAN CADBY: My next question relates to the pilot courses. Is the department still on track to have year 11 courses for next year? What will happen to those students in 2005 who do the year 12 pilot courses, and how will their tertiary entrance score equivalent be calculated? The first question is, how many of the proposed year 11 trial courses will take place next year?

Mrs JEFFERY: All the courses are just being completed and a consultation process is in place. However, the Curriculum Council has been in consultation for about two months to reconsider the nature of piloting. There was a view that some students might be disadvantaged if a new chemistry course and an old chemistry course were running in parallel. There has been a lot of consultation with the school system sectors and with teachers, and the council will deliberate on this matter again at its next monthly meeting. It looks as though we will have a slightly different approach to piloting, which will still mean that the courses are testing, but it will not mean that we are trying to get a tertiary entrance score out of two different systems at the one time. This matter is still under debate.

[2.10 pm]

Hon ALAN CADBY: Does the \$560 million allocated under the Australian National Training Authority matching obligation for 2003 to 2007 take account of the proposed new ANTA agreement that will commence in 2004?

Mr ALBERT: The Commonwealth's proposition for the ANTA agreement has only just been put on the table. We are in the process of examining it in detail with a view to advising the Government on how to proceed with the proposition that has been put on the table. I will defer to Mr Goff, who has been involved in the negotiations.

Mr GOFF: I will just add briefly to Mr Albert's comments. Currently, Western Australia and the other States and Territories are in negotiations with our equivalents in the Commonwealth to obtain further details about the offer that was presented to us on the same night as the federal budget was brought down. Until we get those points of clarification, it is very difficult to comment on what will be required of the States and Territories to match some of those funding obligations that have been stated in the draft agreement. The further discussion will take place next week at the ministerial council meeting; that is, at MINCO, which is the peak States', Territories' and commonwealth training ministers' meeting that will take place in Darwin next Friday. However, regardless of that, it is envisaged that further discussions will be held over the next four to five months with a view to reaching some conclusion towards the end of the year.

Hon KATE DOUST: I refer to page 899. Under significant issues and trends, the first dot point states -

National research shows that the need for young people to complete secondary education or its equivalent is more pressing than ever before.

What developments have been occurring to promote the retention of equity groups such as indigenous students and students with special needs?

Hon GRAHAM GIFFARD: Mr O'Keefe will address that for us.

Mr O'KEEFE: The major initiative for Aboriginal students is a program referred to as follow the dream, which is a development of a successful program called the Gumula-Miruwarni program that was run in the Pilbara. Essentially, it provided in-depth, ongoing individual support for students. It was a private and a public partnership under which private industry people were encouraged to support the program, firstly by assisting in providing personnel to provide ongoing mentoring support for students, but also to assist them with scholarships and so on through further education and training after they left school, as well as providing employment opportunities for them. Follow the dream is like the next generation of that, whereby students are given in-depth support provided by groups such as the Smith Family, which provides a wraparound service to not only the student but also the student's family, including siblings.

A range of other opportunities come out of the merger of education and training by providing an extra number of Aboriginal school-based traineeships to support the program. Our intention is to roll it out over a significant

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number of sites in the next three years. At that point we will pause to see what other developments are needed to progress the program. So far it has been a very successful program in increasing the school retention rates for children. For those Aboriginal students who remain engaged in the school system, the merger of education and training provides the opportunity for integrated service provision for students who in previous years would have left school earlier. Therefore, we see some opportunities in various regional centres in particular to ensure that these students stay engaged in the school and training system. We are providing integrated education programs as well as training opportunities for them.

Hon KATE DOUST: My next question is about the sixth dot point from the bottom of page 901, which refers to the First Click program. How effective has the First Click program been in addressing the digital divide?

Mr GOFF: The First Click program has been an outstanding success. Briefly, its background is that the then Department of Training initiated some research into some key directions in which information technology needed to go from an education and training perspective. One of the findings was that an initiative needed to be taken that targeted community IT literacy. To that end, an amount of \$1 million was made available to community-based agencies across the State through a submissions process. That has resulted in more than 12 000 people throughout Western Australia accessing the First Click program, which is really an introduction to the use and understanding of IT. In addition to these individuals, some hundreds of community-based agencies have been involved in the delivery of these programs. It has been budgeted to carry this into the next financial year - that is, 2003-04 - to run a further round of First Click programs to piggyback on the success of what has occurred previously.

Hon KATE DOUST: I will ask a supplementary question. I am interested in finding out whether the department has any information on the age demographics of the people who participate in that First Click program.

Mr GOFF: I do not have the figures with me. However, we would be pleased to provide them. Briefly, the target group is those who would not normally access IT, particularly the older age group in the 40 to 55-year-old range - those who would not normally have access to a computer in the home or perhaps in the work force. If further information is required, we can provide it.

Hon KATE DOUST: Again on page 901, I refer to the fifth dot point from the bottom of the page, which relates to youth retention rates. What initiatives has the training sector put in place to support improved retention rates for 15 to 19-year-olds in this State?

Mr ALBERT: The main initiative that we have put in place is in fact the expansion of school-based traineeships. At the moment we have only 304 school-based traineeships in place. Our intention is to boost that to 1 000 by 2006. A particular target in that is to have at least 350 of those 1 000 as Aboriginal school-based traineeships. That is our major focus at the moment. It is important to note that something like 39 per cent of the total training effort, which is something like 26.5 million hours, is dedicated to 15 to 19-year-olds. That covers the whole gamut from apprenticeships and traineeships generally through to diploma and certificate programs. We have also initiated four local learning and employment initiatives - we are calling them LLEPs - Local Learning and Employment Partnerships - which are really about getting some local solutions in localities where there is youth unemployment, and youth at risk. Those initiatives are just now being put into place. There is one in the mid west, one in the northern corridor, one in the Peel area and one in the great southern.

[2.20 pm]

Hon CHRISTINE SHARP: On page 900, the getting it right literacy and numeracy program is mentioned, with the appointment of 118 additional specially trained teachers, or 66 full-time equivalent teachers. Can we have some more details about that? How are the teachers being deployed in the schools? Is there a difference in the way they are deployed in regional areas, as opposed to the metropolitan area? How does that program interact with the students at risk program?

Mr ALBERT: The getting it right program is a critical part of the department's strategy to address literacy and numeracy issues for some of the children in our schools. It is one part of a six-point strategy, which involves regular testing to identify students at risk. We have taken the initiative of reducing class sizes in the early years, and a range of literacy and numeracy support materials are being developed for students. The strategy involves the placing of up to 200 specialist teachers into the schools. So far, we have placed 118 teachers. Another 40 will go into place at the beginning of 2004. Essentially the teachers are trained in literacy and numeracy expertise, involving the diagnosis of problems with students and strategies to assist teachers. They are then allocated to schools and work directly with classroom teachers and particular students who have significant literacy problems. Around 40 per cent of the teachers have been allocated to rural and regional areas.

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Hon GRAHAM GIFFARD: I have the figures on the spread of specialist teachers. In 2002, under the getting it right strategy, specialist teachers went into 91 schools. Approximately 36 per cent of those went into rural schools and 64 per cent into non-rural schools. This year, teachers will go into 120 schools, and the split is 48 per cent in rural schools and 52 per cent in non-rural schools. Overall, that combined data translates into 43 per cent into rural schools and 56 per cent into non-rural schools.

Hon CHRISTINE SHARP: Are those teachers allocated to specific school teaching posts in regional areas, or do they move around and help on a needs basis?

Mr ALBERT: They do move around. They are attached to a school cluster, so they might spend two or three days in one school and then move to another. They are moved according to need.

Hon CHRISTINE SHARP: How does the getting it right program interact with the students at risk program? How is the students at risk program generally faring? Has the budget gone up or down, or remained the same? Are special teachers now available for that program?

Ms BANKS: The students at educational risk program generally describes a series of strategies used to support students who are at risk of not achieving their maximum possible outcomes. We have, since our district review in response to the Robson report, worked to achieve much better integration between curriculum, student services and Aboriginal education, to bring an integrated approach to supporting classroom teachers. The connection to the getting it right strategy is very important at both district and school levels, as well as at central office policy level. The fundamental principles that underpin both programs are about early identification of the students at risk, the use of strategies such as the literacy net, which are part of the first steps program, and the establishment of special intervention as is required by the student. This, for instance, could mean, for up to four per cent of our students, access to speech and language development centres or the language outreach service we have introduced to enable expansion of the high demand for support in speech and language. The fundamental principle is to keep students in their mainstream classroom, and provide the intervention within that context. The classroom teacher lies at the centre of supporting the students in the at risk program. We draw also on appropriate interagency services and establish close links with parents, which is an important part of the early childhood philosophy.

The other question was about the budget.

Mr ALBERT: The budget for the students at risk program has not altered.

Hon CHRISTINE SHARP: If you are saying that the classroom teachers are at the heart of all this, and support systems are being provided for them, are any special teachers available in particular situations, which have been identified as particularly difficult, whereby a specialist teacher works intensively with one child or more to improve educational outcomes?

Ms BANKS: We have a specialist service, conducted through the centre for inclusive schooling, that provides a visiting teacher service. The visiting teacher works alongside the classroom teacher with students with particular needs. We have specialist support teachers for students with ADD, ADHD, autism spectrum disorder and other areas of learning difficulties and disabilities, who work with the classroom teacher. If a smaller group is drawn together, that is a result of a decision within the school and the allocation of resources to the school and how the school decides to use its resources. With reduced class sizes this year, and the additional teachers in the early years, greater flexibility is possible in a lot of schools.

[2.30 pm]

Hon BARBARA SCOTT: My first question focuses on teachers' salaries. The minister has conceded that budget overruns during the term of the previous Government were partially the result of teacher salary increases. In the light of the enterprise bargaining agreement that is currently being negotiated, which involves the 10 per cent claim by the State School Teachers Union of WA, can the minister rule out such blow-outs in the current financial year?

Hon GRAHAM GIFFARD: The teachers union may well be claiming 10 per cent. The agreement is currently under negotiation. That matter has not been resolved. It is due to be replaced on 31 July this year. I ask Mr Albert to answer that question.

Mr ALBERT: Negotiations for the replacement agreement have commenced and have been under way for a few weeks. An allocation has obviously been made to the department, but that allocation is consistent with the Government's current wages policy, which is three per cent. The money can be found under the item on educational priorities on page 904 of the *Budget Statements*. We are required to get back to the Government once we have reached a stage in the negotiations at which we can indicate what we feel will be the amount

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required to settle the agreement. The Government will need to make a decision at that point on whether there is a need to allocate further funds. At this stage it is too early in the negotiation process to say.

Hon BARBARA SCOTT: The EBA has been factored into the budget at three per cent. The previous EBA provided a 4.5 per cent increase over three years. Does this mean that there will be a smaller salary increase for teachers under Labor? What is the total expected cost of the EBA, and is it likely to exceed the increase in the department's appropriation?

Hon GRAHAM GIFFARD: The answer to the first part of the question is that the current wages policy is an increase of three per cent. I refer the second part of the question to Mr Albert.

Hon BARBARA SCOTT: To simplify it, does it mean that there will be a smaller salary increase for teachers under Labor?

Mr ALBERT: The Government would not factor anything higher than its current wages policy, which is three per cent, into the department's budget. That is all that has been factored into the department's budget at this time. We will have to see how the negotiations progress before a determination can be made on exactly what salary increase teachers will get.

Hon BARBARA SCOTT: My second question relates to staffing. With the merger of the two departments of training and education, 200 positions were to be identified within the central office for abolition to achieve savings. A claim has been made that 100 positions have so far been identified. Can a list be provided of the identified positions that will disappear?

Mr ALBERT: The 100 positions will be identified by the end of June. We have a notional identification of 100 so far. We are obviously going through a process with staff and providing an opportunity for the areas affected to have some input before the positions to be abolished are finalised. Our intention at this stage is to indicate the positions that will be abolished by the end of June.

Hon JON FORD: I refer to the first dot point on page 904 of the *Budget Statements*, which refers to Aboriginal school-based traineeships. Is this program aimed at specific gaps in the training sector for training opportunities for indigenous young people?

Mr O'KEEFE: Yes, it is. There are some particular issues for Aboriginal students who seek employment, not the least of which is a number of contextual factors in their families and the need for a greater number of role models and, therefore, a wider understanding of the employment opportunities that exist for them. It is also clear that, for a number of Aboriginal students, school in its traditional sense does not always meet their needs. Many feel disengaged by it and leave. For that reason the former Department of Training in particular had been negotiating with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission to put in place Aboriginal school-based traineeships. Although there were some hiccups at the start in getting students engaged in the process, it has begun to gather momentum. The Aboriginal school-based traineeships are now seen as a substantial retention opportunity for Aboriginal students, giving them the opportunity while still at school to get a sense of what the labour market looks like. As Mr Albert said, we are expecting a rapid increase in that program. As at May 2003, there were in excess of 114 traineeships. We expect a substantial rollout of that program. This represents, along with the follow the dream program, an increasing opportunity to maintain students in the education and training systems and to cover the gaps that previously existed and which prevented those students from either completing school or finding work.

Hon JON FORD: I refer to the sixth dot point from the bottom on page 903 on the skills requirements for the Burrup projects. Is this initiative aimed at specific projects on the Burrup, or is it general in nature? Does it include a component for indigenous traineeships?

Mr GOFF: About six months ago, or perhaps a little longer, the previous Minister for Training, Hon John Kobelke, established a peak committee chaired by Norm Marlborough MLA and comprising representatives from the major resource developers that either are or will be involved in the Burrup development. Earlier this year Minister Carpenter launched the report of that group, which announced a number of initiatives including some just in time skills strategies involving upskilling, retraining and new entry training to ensure the State is well placed in terms of having a skilled work force to meet the emerging skills needs as developments take place over the coming years. In regard to opportunities for the Aboriginal community in the Burrup, specific strategies relate to the take up of Aboriginal people, both young and old, as part of those retraining opportunities. Those strategies will be rolled out over the next couple of years with that target group in mind.

[2.40 pm]

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Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: This is a follow-up to the question by Hon Jon Ford and the answer given by Mr O'Keefe. Page 904 mentions that the Aboriginal school-based traineeship program will target 350 students statewide over the next two years. Table 43 on page 105 of the annual report for 2001-02 indicates an attrition rate in this program of about 50 per cent in the first year - 1999 - and 75 per cent in the second year. What strategies are in train to address that unacceptable attrition rate?

Mr O'KEEFE: Some of the dilemmas related to communication between schools, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission and the continuing community development employee program. Students who were originally identified as part of the program, and therefore counted as being in it, were kept waiting for the details of funding to come through. A number dropped out because of that disconnection. Part of the reason for the attrition rate was problems relating to bureaucracies getting together with a new program. The program is the first of its kind in Australia. There certainly were teething problems. Those details have now been sorted out. We also recognise that it would be insufficient to provide students with a school and work-based program without providing additional support. We will build into the program a number of the features of the follow the dream program. We will provide mentor support, coordination for the studies the students do at the school and the opportunity for students to be supported in their home environment. A number of issues relating to case-managing the students and making sure bureaucracies are talking clearly and easily have been resolved, and that will improve the program.

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: I refer to the statement of financial performance on page 920. Under the heading expenses from ordinary activities are the items direct schools expenses and school support expenses. There was a reduction in direct schools expenses from \$177 million in 2001-02 to a budget of \$174 million in 2002-03, although there was an actual estimated expenditure of \$192 million in that financial year. There is a further estimated reduction in direct schools expenses to \$189 million in 2003-04, the coming financial year. There is an increase for school support services as the expenditure of \$136 million in 2002-03 exceeded the budget allocation of \$127 million. However, the forward estimates after 2004-05 show a continuing decrease in expenditure in that area. What are direct schools expenses and school support services, and what are the trends in the financing of those over the period 2001-02 to 2006-07?

Mr McCAFFREY: The major expense items in the area of direct schools expenses are the administration costs, including utilities management, incurred at the school site; that is, gas, electricity and water expenses and faculty and subject area expenses. We receive advice from the schools on their expected expenditure and load into our financial statements the actual expenses incurred on a school-by-school basis. In many respects, the decisions made at the school level are reflected in the statements and projections. We expect a steady growth in direct schools expenses over the next four or five years, mainly because of the growth of computers in schools and the type of technology that is used. The electricity and running costs of schools need to keep pace with that growth. The major items in the category of school support services are insurance; maintenance of schools; minor upgrades and improvements, including gardening, lawn mowing and rubbish removal; and contracts for cleaning. The trends are fairly stable, although it is difficult to predict what will be the effect of the transition from contract cleaning to day labour and how schools will choose which type of cleaning arrangements they want. Based on the information we have been given, we do not expect any major variations in those areas.

Hon CHRISTINE SHARP: Could the department provide details on the behaviour management and discipline initiative? How many additional staff will be employed for that purpose? How will the secondary schools be selected? Are they subject to the same constraints that Ms Banks outlined about another program, whereby if a particular school opts for support in that area, it is required to spend some of its overall budget and must miss out in other areas? I want to know how these different programs for kids who play up interact. It is very confusing to try to understand how they work in practice as the programs have different names.

Ms BANKS: The behaviour management initiative provides \$7 million, which is targeted to high schools that meet certain criteria. Those schools have a larger percentage of challenging students.

Hon CHRISTINE SHARP: How do they know that?

Ms BANKS: We use data based on the number of critical incidents, suspensions and exclusions from the school. We look at the attendance data and utilise the collective wisdom of the people - there are quite a few - involved in the process of selecting the schools. It is a deliberate strategy to target the funds to the point of greatest need rather than to use the more traditional approach, which is to have an amount of money that is distributed on a per capita basis. This is money over and above the other resources the school receives. One of the important principles is that once the resource goes to the school, whether through a school grant or special strategies such as that for students of educational risk or the behaviour management initiative, the school can apply the funds in a way that is meaningful to its local setting. Although the funding comes from different sources, it can be

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aggregated into a set of strategies that will work at the school for the school. A requirement of the behaviour management money, which is targeted to years 8 and 9, is a reduction in class sizes. That has been one of the outcomes. However, the school has flexibility in the way it uses additional money. Schools have employed a variety of strategies such as social workers, additional teacher aides, further reductions in class sizes or different groupings of students. Schools can also access retention and participation funds to set up additional support programs. They can be off-campus-type programs or special classes that provide particular support for students with behavioural difficulties.

[2.50 pm]

Hon CHRISTINE SHARP: How many schools have been selected for the specialist areas?

Mr ALBERT: Forty-four schools have been selected.

Hon CHRISTINE SHARP: I probably should know the answer to my next question because it relates to last year's expenditure under the line item on page 916 of the *Budget Statements*, regarding the Busselton Senior High School. Almost \$1.5 million has been spent at that school. How has that money been spent? Has any further relief been planned for that horrendously overcrowded high school?

Hon GRAHAM GIFFARD: I ask Mr Harvey to address that.

Mr HARVEY: The Busselton project is complete. We are currently conducting a local area planning exercise at Busselton. We are considering future options for providing relief to the Busselton Senior High School, bearing in mind the significant growth that has occurred in Busselton. We are doing that in association with the needs of training. In the future, we hope to provide capital works relief in the upcoming years for Busselton. The exact nature of that relief is not known at this stage and is subject to planning exercises that are currently being conducted.

Hon CHRISTINE SHARP: Will the parliamentary secretary provide me with the other information for which I asked?

Mr HARVEY: I can find out that information now or provide it as supplementary information.

[*Supplementary Information No 30.*]

Hon BARRY HOUSE: This question follows the last question. The Busselton Senior High School is a good school. Some good students and teachers have gone there. I refer to the secondary school refurbishment program on page 913 of the *Budget Statements*. What is the total budget for that? How much of that money is an overhang from the original allocation from the sale of AlintaGas about five years ago, which has not been spent to date? What schools are involved?

Hon GRAHAM GIFFARD: I ask Mr Harvey to address that.

Mr HARVEY: It is all part of the \$40 million provided from the sale of AlintaGas. In this year's program, the completed works include the Armadale Senior High School, Beverley District High School, Bunbury Senior High School, Busselton Senior High School, Exmouth District High School, and the Gosnells, Swan View, Hamilton, Harvey, Katanning, Kwinana, Morley and Newton Moore Senior High Schools and Geraldton Senior College. The new works program will undertake works at Esperance Senior High School, Fitzroy Crossing District High School, and the Girrawheen, Hampton, Karratha, Kent Street and Safety Bay Senior High Schools. That will complete the expenditure on new works. There are also additional works in progress. In 2004-05, works in progress will include the Bullsbrook District High School and the Hedland, Kalamunda, Mirrabooka, Thornlie and Wanneroo Senior High Schools. They will complete the program.

Hon BARRY HOUSE: Has no new money been allocated to that program? Is the original \$40 million from the sale of AlintaGas still funding these programs?

Mr HARVEY: That is correct.

Hon BARRY HOUSE: Prior to the last state election, I was indirectly involved in the initial work with the Hedland Senior High School, the local TAFE and Pundulmurra College to establish a program to motivate Aboriginal students through sport and to improve retention rates and education. Has that program lapsed or has it continued?

Mr O'KEEFE: The program has not lapsed, it is continuing. It has been rejigged as the follow the dream program. Some additional support has been given to it. I described that when I talked about the program earlier. The school has since strengthened the program by adding to its staff a specialist teacher who teaches English as a second language. A number of students at the school speak strong Aboriginal English or an Aboriginal

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language. One of the dilemmas has been to not only strengthen the program by providing individual support to students, but also make sure their literacy skills are enhanced by ensuring that the teachers have a greater understanding of the language the students speak. The program has not lapsed; it has been strengthened. In a sense, it is a model for the future rollout of the follow the dream program.

Hon SUE ELLERY: My question follows Hon Chrissy Sharp's question about behaviour management and discipline initiatives. I refer to the bottom of page 900 of the *Budget Statements*. One of the strategies the Government has implemented is an increase in the number of teachers to reduce class sizes. Is there any evidence to show that that component of the strategy is making a difference? If so, how is it being measured?

Hon GRAHAM GIFFARD: In June and December each year, the schools involved in this program provide data and the outlines of the programs that they have implemented. An interim report and a final report have been prepared, which give qualitative and quantitative evidence that the program has made a difference. I will provide the member with some of the examples of the outcomes of reduced class sizes. The average class size of years 8 and 9 for all schools that have received funding was 26 students in 2001 and they will receive funding for 23 students in 2003. Ninety-three per cent of year 8 class sizes had 25 or fewer students and 89 per cent of the average year 9 classes had 25 or fewer students. Eighty-seven and a half per cent of schools that received full-time equivalents and/or funding reduced their class sizes. Some 74 per cent of the schools have demonstrated either improved student attendance or a reduction in the number of unexplained absences for 2002 compared with 2001, and 25 per cent of schools have reported an improvement in both attendance and unexplained absences in 2002 compared with 2001. Twenty-two schools have achieved a reduction of 50 per cent or more in the number of year 8 or 9 suspensions. Some 53 per cent of schools have reported a reduction in the number of suspension notices issued, the number of students suspended, and the total number of days of suspension for years 8 and 9 students in 2002 compared with 2001. The total number of days of suspension per school for year 8 students decreased by six per cent in 2002 and the number decreased by 25 per cent for year 9 students who are in their second year of schooling with the initiative. Many schools have also reported a significant decrease in referrals for inappropriate class behaviour. Indeed, one metropolitan senior high school reported a 70 per cent decrease and another reported a 92 per cent reduction. They are pretty clear indications of the effectiveness of the program so far.

Hon SUE ELLERY: I refer to the fourth dot point from the bottom of page 900 under major achievements of the *Budget Statements*, regarding the rollout of broadband telecommunications. What does that mean schools can practically do in the classroom?

[3.00 pm]

Mr DOYLE: The bandwidth that we are rolling out to the schools in the metropolitan area is based on relatively new technology known as wide-band Internet protocol. It will provide 10 megabit connections to the schools. When that is compared with the current connections that schools have it is like comparing a garden hose with the Mundaring pipeline. We are talking about two megabit connections in regional areas, so it is the quantum of size. That is due only to the infrastructure that is available in the bush. We are working with a number of initiatives, including the national communications fund, to increase the bandwidth that is available in regional Western Australia. The purpose of that bandwidth is to provide the mechanisms through which a number of activities can be delivered to schools. We are proposing to deliver centralised Internet services to all schools. At the moment each school accesses the Internet through an individual arrangement with an Internet service provider. We want to channel that through the central office and obviously gain the economies of scale that will come with that and have some very low rates of Internet usage costs across the schools. The bandwidth will also be used to provide access to online material and services so that teachers can access, through the web and beyond the Internet, curriculum resources and online services or materials that may be stored in various locations across the State. The bandwidth will also provide them with the opportunity to collaborate online. The network we are rolling out is a meshed network, which means that schools can connect directly with other schools and people can collaborate with their peers. It is very important in regional parts of the State that they can communicate with peers online. That is done through videoconferencing-type facilities. A lot of e-mail chat and other forums will be set up. Another service is online professional development for teachers. We are working on the modes of delivery of PD. Again, that is important in a regional setting so that people are not always travelling to districts. Face-to-face professional development is always one of the modes, but an online mode is an option under this bandwidth. There is a variety of services. As we are rolling this out to all schools, our emphasis moves to delivering those sorts of services to schools and providing that access and the mechanisms through which students also can use many of the same facilities.

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Hon ALAN CADBY: In the 2001-02 budget there was a target of 1 600 new apprenticeships and traineeships. Last year we heard from the minister that there had been a net loss somewhere in the region of 100 places. Page 903 indicates that that target has now been reduced to 1 250. Why the change in target? Is it for financial reasons or is it that the initial 1 600 target was too optimistic, or maybe there is another reason? Can the parliamentary secretary please enlighten me?

Mr GOFF: There is one aggregate figure for the number of apprenticeships and traineeships. Over the past 12 months there has been a very significant and pleasing take-up of apprenticeships and traineeships in the State. Briefly, in the past - indeed, it will do so into the future - this State has taken what we refer to as a managed approach to the take-up of apprenticeships and traineeships, in which we support as much as possible apprenticeships and traineeships when there is a strong likelihood of a job occurring at the end of the training or, at least, a demand in the labour market. The evidence is there. Other States have taken a different approach and have concentrated just on the take-up and not necessarily on the job prospects at the end of the training. As a consequence, attrition rates and noncompletion rates in other States and Territories - a number of reports have been commissioned by State Governments on this issue - are generally not as high as those in this State. Regardless of that, the take-up from December 2001 to December 2002 in this State had increased by some 23 per cent. At the end of that time frame - that is, the end of 2002 - the number of apprenticeships and traineeships in training totalled 22 700, which is a record level for this State. It is roughly a 50 per cent split between apprenticeships and traineeships. The minister has set a revised target of 25 000 apprenticeships and traineeships by 2006. With that in mind, the revised target of 1 250 for the immediate out year has been set. The projected figures that are at hand to date indicate that we are well on the way to achieving that target by 2006.

Mr ALBERT: In relation to the revision of the goal from 1 600 to 1 250, the international circumstances and projected growth of the Australian economy overall has moderated that target. However, we are pretty confident that we will exceed the target.

Hon ALAN CADBY: In discussions I have had with industry representatives, one of their concerns is that, because of the amalgamation of education and training, their input into the training curriculum will decrease even further. On page 911 under output performance measures, the target of 56 per cent on relevance is a concern to me, as, I am sure, it is to the parliamentary secretary. What will the Government do to increase this level of satisfaction?

Mr ALBERT: The key strategy of the department is to boost the profile of the State Training Board, because that is essentially the peak body for liaison with employers. Unless we understand employers' views about the quality of the training system, it is very difficult to know what sort of strategies should be put in place. The State Training Board has completed a review of apprenticeships and traineeships and has provided advice on what the department should be doing to improve the quality and quantity of apprentices and trainees. It has also undertaken a review of small business and is currently developing a strategic plan for re-engaging employer interest in the training system. Obviously, as a department we are very concerned about that as well. Mr Goff might like to add some further information.

[3.10 pm]

Mr GOFF: The national training curriculum is set by industry through a very comprehensive process, whereby the skill competencies required for industry are set through state and national industry bodies, which then goes through an endorsement process by ministers. The genesis of the competency standards was very much with industry. Those industry bodies have a review built into the development of the training curriculum to ensure that they maintain their relevance to the current and future needs of industry.

My other comment is specifically about the percentages in the table. The figure that is reported at 56 per cent is in fact, in part, an aberration. The percentage is based on those employers who responded by agreeing strongly to this question: the vocational education and training system is providing graduates with skills appropriate to employer needs. This question is part of a national survey of employers. In the 2001-02 budget papers, the figure for apprenticeships and traineeships from the 1999 survey was incorrectly reported at 79 per cent. The target for 2002-03 of 80 per cent was overestimated as a result. Notwithstanding that, as Mr Albert indicated, we are not satisfied with the figure, and we are working together with the State Training Board and the industry advisory bodies at the state and national levels to do something about it.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: Hon Alan Cadby stole my first question about apprenticeships, so I will not worry about that. It sounds like it is very good news. The hospitality centre at the West Coast College of TAFE in Joondalup and the Joondalup site realignment with the education precinct are referred to on page 915. How is the department going with the time lines for the hospitality centre and integrating it with the other education institutions in the area, and what exactly is meant by the site realignment with the education precinct?

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Mr HARVEY: There is an allocation in the budget of \$5.5 million for the hospitality training institute. Construction is scheduled to begin in 2004, so it is on time and on budget. In respect of the Joondalup site realignment, the campus security, visibility and traffic flow are to be improved by realigning the campus entry and reconfiguring the site master plan following the disposal of land to the Police Service for a new academy, and to encompass the new hospitality skills training centre. The project is to be completed in 2003-04 at a cost of \$1.2 million.

Hon BARBARA SCOTT: My first question relates to the second dot point of major achievements on page 900, which refers to the additional 350 primary school teachers who were appointed in 2003 to bring down class sizes to a maximum of 24 students in years 1 to 3. I ask, as parents would ask, how many classes in years 1 to 3 exceed 24 children, and what guarantee can parents have about these class sizes when my continuing questions to the minister on this issue are answered by the department saying that schools are given flexibility? The class sizes of 24 children are meant to be achieved with the 350 additional primary school teachers. However, there is no guarantee that that can be delivered because schools are given flexibility. I know that parents cannot be guaranteed that there will be a maximum of 24 children in classes in years 1 to 3, because I have put questions to the minister before that indicated the number of classes in those years that exceeded 24. How many classes this year in years 1 to 3 have in excess of 24 children?

Hon GRAHAM GIFFARD: I will ask Mr Albert to answer that question.

Mr ALBERT: Overall, we have 2 157 classes in years 1 to 3. The great majority of them - 60.7 per cent - had fewer than 24 students. We had 16.8 per cent with 24 students, but 22.4 per cent had more than 24 students. The way the staffing formula works is that each school is allocated staffing to ensure that it need have no more than 24 students in each class. We allow a bit of flexibility in the way in which a principal in a school staffs the school. However, we require that if there are any variations from the recommended class size, they are negotiated within the school. The agreement that we have with the State School Teachers Union of WA - because, of course, this initiative came from the enterprise bargaining agreement - is that if a teacher feels aggrieved about being required to have more than 24 students in his or her class, if it is in years 1 to 3, that person can lodge a grievance, and that will be dealt with in accordance with the department's grievance procedures. Basically, all the schools have been staffed to allow them to have no more than 24 students in those classes. As I indicated, the majority of schools have chosen that path. However, 22.4 per cent have varied from that.

Hon BARBARA SCOTT: That does not answer my question on behalf of parents, because there is no guarantee for parents that their views will be acted upon. How many preprimary classes exceed 24, and how many kindergarten classes have 20 or fewer children in them? Now that there is no director of early childhood, who in the department oversees that early childhood area to guarantee that the early intervention that has been spoken about by a number of people is maintained by the department, as is the quality of early intervention in that early childhood area?

Mr ALBERT: I cannot answer the question about the preprimary and kindergarten classes. I will have to get the precise information for the member. In relation to early childhood, we have appointed Jean Rice as a principal consultant on early childhood. She works across the department on early childhood issues. Our intention is to continue with that position.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Before we proceed, I understand that Mr Albert has offered to provide supplementary information on the first part of the question.

[Supplementary Information No 31.]

Hon BARBARA SCOTT: Following the line of early intervention, I am particularly interested in the area of Aboriginal education. The four-year-old health check is not being done. I wonder why and whether the educational people in the early intervention areas support just the five-year-old check and not the four-year-old check, when we know that sight, speech and hearing are the main things that hold back young children in the early years.

Hon GRAHAM GIFFARD: I am not sure how much of that Mr O'Keefe can answer. I think it is a question for the Department of Health. However, I will defer to Mr O'Keefe.

Mr O'KEEFE: We have appointed a person in Aboriginal education who is responsible for health issues. However, I do not have that information at my fingertips. I could certainly provide that as supplementary information.

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Hon BARBARA SCOTT: I notice that a health consultant is referred to on page 901, but that person was appointed to provide professional development. In the area of early childhood education and early intervention, why does the department support a five-year-old health check and not a four-year-old health check? There are 16 752 students, plus those in community kindergartens, under the education department's control. One would have thought that early intervention would start when children began the kindergarten years and that it would not be left for a year. There is a five-year-old health check but not the four-year-old health check that we had previously.

[3.20 pm]

Hon GRAHAM GIFFARD: The answer to the question that was asked will be provided through supplementary information to the extent that we are able to give it. Perhaps that question would be better asked in relation to the health portfolio.

Hon BARBARA SCOTT: I would hate to think that the Department of Health would not share that information.

Hon GRAHAM GIFFARD: It is probably a question best put to the Department of Health. Mr Albert has indicated that he may be able to assist with some more information.

Mr ALBERT: The department makes a \$4 million contribution to the provision of school nurses and for health checks. We are reviewing our arrangement with the Department of Health because of a number of issues, including the change in school starting age and, as the member pointed out, the provision of kindergarten for four sessions. There are significant health issues in remote communities, particularly with indigenous children, and we have a very active otitis media program. However, I cannot answer the specific questions.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Hon Adele Farina): That information will be provided as supplementary information.

[Supplementary Information No 32.]

Hon KATE DOUST: I refer to the major initiatives for 2003-04 on page 903. The third dot point refers to the introduction of explicit standards in English, mathematics and science. Can the department explain what this initiative involves?

Mr ALBERT: In order to strengthen the outcomes for students in our schools, the department has decided to establish standards that particularly focus on English and mathematics in year 3; moving to English, mathematics and science in year 5; on to English, mathematics, science and society and environment in year 7; and finally to standards across the board in year 9. The purpose of these standards is to supplement the literacy and numeracy benchmarks, which have been very popular. As the member is probably aware, we do literacy and numeracy testing in years 3, 5 and 7, but that gives a very narrow view of the curriculum. We plan to provide a richer set of standards, which are more about the ability of students to progress through their next stage of schooling. The literacy and numeracy benchmarks tend to be focused on a minimum benchmark. A student exceeding the minimum does not necessarily mean that that student is positioned to progress successfully through the next stage of learning. That is why the broader standard agenda that has been put in place.

Hon KATE DOUST: I notice on page 917 that several new primary schools are listed among the new works. One particular school that stood out for me is the east Marangaroo primary school. It is not in my electorate, but I have a very keen interest in seeing that school built. When is that school due to open, and how many students will it cater for? Considering the location of a number of new schools, what thought has been given to general community use of those schools? Some are in fairly new areas, or areas that do not have access to other facilities.

Mr HARVEY: East Marangaroo primary school was an election promise. It is estimated to cost \$5 million, and will be opened for the 2005 school year. It will be quite a large school, with something in the order of 450 students. With all new schools in the program, we look very comprehensively at whether we can undertake collaborative work with the local government authority. As part of the briefing process and getting the details of what will be provided, we undertake discussions with the local government authorities to gauge their interest and determine the extent to which facilities can be jointly developed. Those facilities, typically, are sports grounds. We are also interested in the degree to which we can look at traffic management and safety around schools, particularly with road embayments and the like. That is done as part of the construction of the school.

Hon MURRAY CRIDDLE: I refer to division 56 on page 924, and the third dot point under significant issues and trends, which reads, in part -

In the medium term any resultant loss of local secondary school services will maintain, if not increase, the demand on boarding facilities.

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Can the department advise of any regional secondary schools that are under threat of closure? If so, which are they, and what is the process the Government will adopt to make that decision?

Mr HARVEY: No regional high schools are under threat of closure at the moment. As a matter of course, we undertake a process of local area education planning, which examines our resources in clusters of areas. That is an ongoing planning process, looking at both primary schools and high schools across the State, with a view to achieving better educational outcomes through better use of resources. In some cases that results in school amalgamations and closures. At this point, however, no high school has been identified for closure in regional areas.

Hon MURRAY CRIDDLE: I refer to the seventh dot point on page 903. A number of principals have approached me on the issue of behavioural management and discipline initiatives in schools. Because of the disruption caused in schools, what processes have been put in place to alleviate or fix that problem?

Ms BANKS: I spoke previously about the behaviour management and discipline strategy, but there is a series of other strategies. I will just mention some of the areas specially designed to assist with the management of difficult behaviour across all age groups. It is not confined to secondary students.

Hon MURRAY CRIDDLE: Many of the people who have come to me have spoken about primary school students, which is most disturbing.

[3.30 pm]

Ms BANKS: We are seeing a younger age group of students than we had in the past. Retention and participation program funding of \$1.9 million goes to district offices to allow allocation of additional support. It is often used for specialist staff to work with schools, and to set up specialist programs to support challenging students. A psychological health trial also provides additional resources to students with severe emotional disturbances who are enrolled in mainstream schooling. This is aimed at helping students adjust their behaviour. We also have five socio-psycho educational resource, or SPER, centres that provide an outreach service to support teachers. The psychologists work with the classroom teachers and with teachers' assistants and parents to manage extreme behaviours. That is one of the major strategies within the primary school - to work within the classroom, although it may require withdrawal occasionally.

We have professional assault response training for our psychologists to assist where restraint of conflict and violence is necessary. We are about to undertake a partnership of multi-systemic therapy, which is a whole-of-government approach to the management and support of young people aged between 12 and 16 years with offending behaviour, mental health, substance abuse and attendance and participation problems. Each of our district offices contains highly trained school psychologists who work with all schools. They are generally the first port of call for a school in seeking assistance. These school psychologists are receiving upgraded training in autism spectrum disorder, which is an area in which the behaviour of students with disabilities can be particularly challenging.

We also have a trial for early intervention with students with autism spectrum disorder in three areas in the kindergarten and pre-primary level to assist with early intervention of disruptive behaviour. We have training for teachers in applied behaviour analysis, which is our specialist support program for the Centre of Inclusive Schooling. We require all schools to have a behaviour management in schools policy, which is part of the students at educational risk program. Schools have their own student support in response to the challenging behaviours.

Essentially, behaviour management happens at many levels with attempts to work at early intervention right through to high-resource support programs for the most challenging behaviours.

Hon MURRAY CRIDDLE: Could I have that document tabled?

Ms BANKS: They are my notes I was working from, but I am happy to provide them.

Hon MURRAY CRIDDLE: That is very useful, thank you. I have two other questions that I would like to place on notice.

Hon SUE ELLERY: I notice that the third dot point from the bottom of page 899 of the *Budget Statements*, under significant issues and trends, refers to a need to ensure that retirements from an ageing work force are balanced by the recruitment of quality entrants. What are the flow-on effects of having an ageing work force for education?

Mr HUTS: The department has closely monitored the age profile of its teaching work force. The modal age of teachers is 47 years. In some areas like science and mathematics, it is higher at 55 years. Although we consider

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teacher supply to be adequate, particularly in the primary area and the metropolitan area, we have some shortages. Consequently, some targeted programs exist. Recent initiatives have seen scholarships offered, particularly in the science and mathematics area. People will receive \$20 000 as an incentive, and we can appoint these people to areas of need. Graduates enter the work force at an average age of 28 years. This does not have a significant impact on the overall reduction of the demographic and average age of teachers, but it has some impact. Mature and young teachers have been surveyed to give the department information to better understand their needs and aspirations. This will assist the department to develop further strategies to retain teachers and to rejuvenate careers and provide options, such as phased retirement for mature teachers and administrators.

Hon RAY HALLIGAN: I refer to output three on page 911 of the *Budget Statements*, vocational and education training services. I note under the output performance measures that the student curriculum hours for apprentices, trainees and other students have altered between the budget for this current year and the estimated actual. It appears to have decreased by eight per cent for apprentices and trainees, and increased by 1.8 per cent for other students. I note in the total cost of outputs that what is normally termed an “anticipated overrun” of \$3.6 million has occurred. For next year, an additional \$17.5 million is allocated. The FTEs appear to have increased this year by 41. That is an increase of 41 FTEs with no apparent increase in productivity but certainly an increase in costs. What were those 41 additional FTEs used for?

Ms MITCHELL: The total student curriculum hours figures indicates no change across the year. Part of what drives our budget and our estimates is the overall bottom line target of delivery in the number of hours of training. With the apprenticeship and traineeship actuals for 2001-02, the original estimated budget was a stretch target we established for ourselves to reflect the targeted growth in apprenticeships and traineeships. The estimate is a more realistic reflection of what we expect to achieve. The figures relate to calendar years, so the estimate for 2002-03 relates to the 2002 calendar year. In real terms, there has been growth across 2001 and 2002. That is reflected in the figures.

Hon RAY HALLIGAN: I am afraid my question was not answered. You said that the total hours had not increased or decreased - that I accept. However, the department added 41 FTEs for no apparent increase in productivity. What are those 41 FTEs doing?

Ms MITCHELL: Many of the FTEs reflect an in-sourcing of the apprenticeship and traineeship support service network, which was previously an outsourced service. It was brought back to the department. That network monitors the quality of apprenticeship and traineeship delivery. That explains 35 of the 41 FTEs. Also, some of the other additional FTEs relate to our first click program, which delivers not student curriculum hours but services to the community. We can provide more accurate information on the change in the number of FTEs on notice.

Mr ALBERT: Regarding the apprenticeship support network, the appointment of the additional 35 FTEs to which Ms Mitchell referred was in response to industry concerns about the quality of monitoring of apprenticeships out in the field, and the quality of the program itself. Based on employer concerns, a decision was made to bring the service back in-house. Certainly, since the department has made that move, the satisfaction rating among employers has increased. The recently completed State Training Board review on apprenticeship and traineeship training strongly endorsed the decision to bring the service back in-house.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: It was suggested that the specifics sought will be provided as supplementary information.

[*Supplementary Information No 33.*]

[3.40 pm]

Hon RAY HALLIGAN: I refer to output four, employment programs, on page 912 of the *Budget Statements* and to the workers assistance package that has been provided to people in the south west who have been dislocated by the Government's regional forest program. Have any surveys been conducted to determine whether the assistance package has in fact assisted those people; and, if so, in what way?

Mr GOFF: The workers assistance program is a major component of the “protecting our old-growth forests” policy. A budget of \$30.6 million has been allocated over the life of the program to support a range of entitlements and support services to assist redundant hardwood timber industry workers who lost their jobs as a result of the old-growth forest policy. In relation to the member's question about displaced workers, the workers assistance program has operated since June 2001. When the budget documentation was finalised for 2003-04, the estimated number of workers who would access the service in 2002-03 was 600. This figure has increased since that date. At the end of March 2003, 653 workers had accessed the service and the number of top-up

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redundancy payments totalled 464. In the same time frame, the number of displaced timber workers who had accessed employment was 335. The balance of the workers who have not engaged in retraining or been placed in employment totals 69 out of the 1 000 workers affected. They are seeking re-employment and continue to receive employment development assistance through the assistance program.

Hon RAY HALLIGAN: I thank Mr Goff for that answer; however, I asked whether a survey had been conducted to determine whether what was being provided was in fact assisting those people.

Mr GOFF: A follow-up survey has not been conducted. The success of the program so far has been measured in terms of outcomes. No longitudinal survey has been undertaken.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: In view of the time and the number of members who have indicated that they have further questions to ask, I will restrict members to one question each. We will hopefully get through the list.

Hon JON FORD: I refer to the major initiatives for 2003-04 on page 903. The final dot point states that the number of apprentices and trainees in training will increase by at least 1 250. Will those apprenticeships or traineeships be targeted at particular vocations or skills?

Hon GRAHAM GIFFARD: Mr Player is best placed to answer that question.

Mr PLAYER: The State's training strategy, which is made up of a number of components, including the state training profile, is built around skills needs and skills analysis. It is based on fairly comprehensive industry training plans that the industry training councils have developed for us. Consequently, a number of areas in which there are particular skills shortages are targeted for apprenticeships, such as the automotive industry, and particularly the heavy automotive industry. We have also included traineeships in the transport and distribution area, warehousing and so on. Particular areas have been identified in the state training profile.

Hon ALAN CADBY: I refer to the tenth dot point on page 903 on the provision of 300 notebook computers to Geraldton Secondary College. If the program is a success, will those computers follow the students through from year 8 to year 12? If so, how will it be financed? Mr Albert has indicated that the answer is no. That is interesting. Can I change my question, as it has been answered?

Hon GRAHAM GIFFARD: He has not answered on the record.

Hon ALAN CADBY: Will the computers go with the students to year 9? If not, what does the Government hope to achieve by making a one-off allocation to year 8 students at Geraldton Secondary College?

Mr ALBERT: The computers will go with the students from year 8 to year 9, but they will not go with them to upper school. The reason for that is that under the current post-compulsory schooling situation, laptops are not used. It is more a matter of using pen and paper and the practical demonstration of skills. There would be no point in taking the laptops into upper school. They will go from year 8 to year 9.

Hon ALAN CADBY: To year 10?

Mr ALBERT: No, year 10 is conducted on a different campus.

Hon ALAN CADBY: You would be aware that since 1991 students from other schools in the independent sector have had notebook computers through to year 12.

Mr ALBERT: They do not use them in years 11 and 12. It is voluntary for students to take them forward.

Hon ALAN CADBY: Not true.

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: I refer to the statement of cash flows on page 922. Under receipts is the item for user charges and fees. Sums are shown for the previous financial year of \$19 million, for the current financial year of \$19.7 million, for the coming financial year of \$20.2 million and for the forward estimates of up to \$21.1 million in 2006-07. I am aware of the note on page 920 that the sum or sums include resources received free of charge, and, most importantly, that this treatment may differ from the agency's annual report. I refer to the statement of cash flows for the year ended 30 June 2002 on page 186 of the Department of Education's annual report for 2001-02. Under the heading receipts it lists the user charges and fees for 2000-01 as \$32.722 million, and for 2001-02 as \$35.107 million. Note 11 on the user charges and fees on page 195 of the annual report states that the charges and fees collected by schools in 2000-01 amounted to \$26.132 million. In 2001-02, the amount was \$26.508 million. The forward estimates in the budget statements up to 2006-07 do not reach the audited amounts for schools indicated in the annual report for 2001-02. To what extent does the difference reflect accounting practices, and to what extent does it reflect the real reduction in school incomes which has been occasioned by the policy decision to not enforce compulsory school fees?

[3.50 pm]

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Mr McCAFFREY: I will first address the part of the question about fee collections in schools, as that will provide an indicator of where the changes have occurred. In the 2001 school year, \$29.9 million was collected for school fees and charges; and in 2002, \$31.4 million was collected. Those details were provided by each school. The aberration between the two statements relates to accounting treatments. We are guided by the Department of Treasury and Finance's directions on how to treat these issues. There are on occasions timing differences with the preparation of reports. The figures we have today reflect the current accounting practices we are required to deal with. I am confident that the issue is not one of dropping revenue in schools.

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: Would Mr McCaffrey, through the parliamentary secretary, be willing to table the information to which he just referred?

Mr McCAFFREY: It is very detailed.

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: That is why I want it.

Mr McCAFFREY: It is a statement to aid me in getting a handle on it. I do not feel that there is anything in here that should not be provided.

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: Especially to the Parliament.

Mr McCAFFREY: Absolutely.

Hon GRAHAM GIFFARD: What is it?

Mr McCAFFREY: It is a summary of cash balances and expenditure trends in each of the education sectors.

Hon GRAHAM GIFFARD: We do not object to tabling it.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Those documents will be tabled.

Hon KATE DOUST: One of the major achievements for 2002-03 on page 900 is the appointment of an additional 350 primary teachers in 2003. I am curious about the employment practices of the department. This is a topical issue. What strategies is the department developing to address the gender gap that appears to exist in the teaching profession? In more simple terms, what is the department planning to do to attract and retain male teachers in both the primary and secondary sectors to rectify the current gender imbalance?

Mr HUTS: We have a recruitment strategy, called shaping young lives, under which two officers visit schools and tertiary institutions. Part of the purpose of their presentation is to attract males into teaching. As at term one, 1 188 graduates had applied to teach in our State. Of the 610 we appointed, 135, or 22.13 per cent, were male. That proportion is a touch higher than that which exists in the primary sector. Only 18.4 per cent of primary teachers are male. Although the recruitment of male teachers is important, our particular focus is to ensure that we recruit competent and highly skilled teachers. We are doing that through targeted strategies like scholarships in areas of need, including mathematics, science, and design and technologies, areas are still more inclined to attract males. We are hopeful that we will increase the number of males in our schools.

Hon BARBARA SCOTT: I refer to the significant issues and trends on page 899 and the differences between the performance and participation of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students. I refer to the results from the national benchmark testing for years 3, 5 and 7. Aboriginal children in year 3 scored a numeracy level of 70 per cent against the benchmark, a reading level of 76 per cent, a writing level of 52 per cent and a spelling level of 48 per cent. Aboriginal children in year 5 were found to have a reading level of 72 per cent; a spelling level of 50 per cent; a numeracy level of 50 per cent - which dropped to 48 per cent in some cases - and a writing level of 50 per cent. Aboriginal children in year 7 achieved a reading level of 40 per cent; a writing level of 39 per cent, a spelling level of 47 per cent and a numeracy level of 37 per cent. Those are not very good results for Aboriginal children. How many Aboriginal students are in years 3, 5 and 7? How many of the 66 full-time equivalents in the getting it right program, outlined on page 900, are dedicated to or trained to apply their skills to early intervention strategies specifically targeted at Aboriginal children? Are any of those teachers trained in Aboriginal English language acquisition so that they can help young children acquire basic literacy and numeracy skills?

Mr O'KEEFE: I do not have specific numbers. As the member identified, the literacy and numeracy outcomes for Aboriginal students are appalling. Despite it being a priority area for us, the results remain unacceptably low.

Hon BARBARA SCOTT: They are getting lower in some instances.

Mr O'KEEFE: One of the dilemmas is that the figures do not reflect results from our most recent initiatives. This year we told all schools that this area is no longer optional. Every school in the State needs to have a plan for the education of Aboriginal students that focuses on our priority areas of literacy and numeracy as well as attendance and retention. Every school in the State is developing programs focused on local targets. They are

Deputy Chairman; Chairman; Hon Alan Cadby; Hon Graham Giffard; Hon Kate Doust; Hon Dr Chrissy Sharp;
Hon Barbara Scott; Hon Jon Ford; Hon Derrick Tomlinson; Hon Barry House; Hon Sue Ellery; Hon Ken
Travers; [3.20 Pm]; Hon Murray Criddle; Hon Ray Halligan

being forced to think in much more creative and persistent ways about how they can improve outcomes for Aboriginal students. A dilemma is that sometimes schools think they need extra resources to do this. Those resources are provided, and some of them have been described in this session. However, we are urging schools to use a number of the mainstream resources that are available to improve literacy and numeracy skills. However, some considerable top-ups have been made. We have made sure that those schools with Aboriginal students are included in the getting it right strategy, which has been mentioned. Additional early literacy and numeracy - ELAN - teachers work with the getting it right teachers. There is an additional program for Aboriginal youngsters called the English as a second language - indigenous language-speaking students program, or ESL-ILSS. A number of teachers from those and the getting it right program are provided around the State to assist schools increase the literacy outcomes for students. We have also identified the bidialectal issues the member described. Aboriginal students who bring to school a strong Aboriginal English or language have particular needs. There is often a "miss" between the messages that kids send and the messages teachers receive. Over the past decade we have developed within our system a number of programs focusing on bidialectal issues, through which Aboriginal people work with non-Aboriginal people. That has occurred in a number of our districts and will be the focus of a program encouraging increased understanding among teachers. Students who work with those teachers who understand the difference show a much greater engagement and an improvement in their results. We need to roll out this program in much greater detail. There is a greater need to ensure that the getting it right, ELAN and ESL-ILSS teachers work much more closely to provide a coordinated program. Schools are now required to have a school-wide program to improve literacy outcomes. We expect that the results of that, combined with better coordination of the range of pedagogical programs, will be evident in the results of students.

Hon GRAHAM GIFFARD: Mr Albert wanted to add a final point.

Mr ALBERT: Approximately 12 000 Aboriginal students attend primary schools, which means there are probably around 1 800 per year -

Hon BARBARA SCOTT: Will the parliamentary secretary provide the specific details regarding the 118 specially trained teachers? I want to know whether any of them have been specially trained in a dedicated way to deal with Aboriginal literacy issues.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Is any of that information subject to privacy provisions?

Hon GRAHAM GIFFARD: We will provide that as supplementary information.

[*Supplementary Information No 34.*]

Sitting suspended from 4.00 to 4.15 pm