

MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING — REGIONAL AREAS

41. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Premier:

Premier, I refer to section 321 of WA Labor's 2017 platform, which states that WALabor will —

- a) Improve agricultural education opportunities in regional and rural centres;
 - b) Develop an integrated and well structured system of agricultural education from primary to tertiary level; ...
- (1) Why has the Premier's bungling education minister abolished the agricultural education directorate in the Department of Education?
- (2) Why is the minister raiding funding from our agricultural colleges?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

- (1)–(2) As I have explained on a number of occasions in here, we are investing heavily in regional education in a range of areas that were cut by the former government.

Ms M.J. Davies interjected.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the National Party, just listen.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Across the regions, whether it is education assistants, regional learning specialists, Aboriginal Islander education officers or additional specialist teachers, this government is putting additional effort into regional schools across the state. We announced as part of the state budget a voluntary targeted separation scheme. That means that some people who are in back-office functions —

Ms M.J. Davies interjected.

Mr M. McGOWAN: — will be offered a voluntary redundancy.

Ms M.J. Davies interjected.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the National Party!

Mr M. McGOWAN: Honestly! Can I answer the question?

Ms M.J. Davies interjected.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the National Party, I call you to order for the first time. You asked a question. Maybe you would learn something if you listened.

Mr M. McGOWAN: We have offered targeted separation scheme redundancies to people in back-office functions across many government departments across the state of Western Australia, and education is playing its role in that regard. In regard to the specifics of whichever people the member is referring to in whichever directorate inside the Department of Education, I request the member put a question on notice about that because I am not aware of the exact details in relation to that.

I am going to close my answer by saying I am a strong supporter of regional kids. I did go to regional public schools. We are supporting a range of agricultural colleges and residential colleges across Western Australia. As we have said, and as I have explained to the member—I think she understands it—we are ensuring that those students who will transition from Moora, because of the \$8.7 million that is needed to be spent on 27 students, will have other opportunities at other residential colleges.