

STATE WAGE CASE DECISION, IMPACT ON MINIMUM WAGES FOR ADULT APPRENTICES

868. Mrs C.L. EDWARDES to the Minister for Education and Training:

I refer to the recent state wage case decision and its impact on minimum wages for adult apprentices.

- (1) Is the minister aware that as a result of the wage case decision, the cost of employing a first-year apprentice of 21 years of age or over will almost double from around \$224 a week to around \$406 a week?
- (2) Is the minister aware that as a result of this decision, the four major group training schemes in Western Australia will experience increased operating costs over the next two years in excess of \$1.1 million?
- (3) Is the minister further aware that this decision is not only a significant disincentive to taking on adult apprentices but also may force group training schemes to suspend 150 existing apprenticeships if host hirers are unable to afford the increased hire-out costs and choose to not continue with those apprentices?

Mr A.J. CARPENTER replied:

I thank the member for Kingsley for her question and her interest in this issue.

- (1)-(3) A representative of those group training schemes came to see me at Parliament House last Thursday to discuss the impact the state wage case will have on those schemes and mature-age apprentices in the way the member outlined. I urged the schemes to put a case to the Building and Construction Industry Training Fund. The schemes are seeking financial support from the fund but have not formally approached the executive or chair of the fund, although they have spoken with people over the phone. They had not made a formal submission. At least one scheme has sought my intervention in the absence of that formal approach in the first instance and without asking the host employers of the apprentices what impact they believed the state wage case decision would have on them and whether they would be able to absorb that impact.

We are in discussion with the group training schemes. I recognise the potential impact the case will have upon them. I told the training schemes that other industries have historically accommodated this change. The building industry is now confronting this issue. Once the group training schemes have approached the Building and Construction Industry Training Fund, it can engage in further dialogue with me about various options.