

SOLAR SCHOOLS PROGRAM — CLOSURE

**368. Hon SALLY TALBOT to the Minister for Energy:**

My question has been redirected to the Minister for Energy from the Minister for Finance, and is about the Western Australian Solar Schools program. I am not sure why that happened because all the correspondence we have is from Finance.

I refer to the closure of the WA Solar Schools program.

- (1) When was the decision made to close the program?
- (2) What date was announced for the closure?
- (3) How was the closure decision communicated to schools?
- (4) Is the minister aware that his department has effectively closed the scheme before the date expected by schools by telling applicants that submissions made well before the expected closing date will not be considered for funding?
- (5) Does the minister think that apologising for this extraordinary move will satisfy the schools that have devoted a great deal of time and energy to preparing plans to help teach children about environmental sustainability and to help schools manage their energy costs?

**Hon PETER COLLIER replied:**

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

- (1) The decision was made as part of the budget process.
- (2) On 18 May.
- (3) Schools were informed by telephone and/or by letter.
- (4) In keeping with the government's commitment to good economic management, it was determined that schools that had received approval to enter into a contract with a supplier before 18 May would remain eligible for a rebate. Similarly, it was decided that applications that had not reached that stage in the process would not proceed.
- (5) No.