

PROPOSED YEARS 11 AND 12 CURRICULUM CHANGES, TASK FORCE

**346. Hon BARRY HOUSE to the Minister for Education and Training:**

- (1) What is the membership of the task force recently appointed to review the proposed curriculum changes to years 11 and 12?
- (2) What are its terms of reference?
- (3) Why has a public relations firm, Mills Wilson Media Consultants, also been appointed?
- (4) What is the firm's role, and how will Mills Wilson work with the task force, the Curriculum Council, schools and teachers?
- (5) What is the total cost of this exercise?

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH replied:**

I understand that this question is without notice.

**Hon Barry House:** I gave some notice.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** Yes; I am sorry.

**Hon Simon O'Brien:** There goes the speech!

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** I was just about to embark on a speech, actually.

Several members interjected.

**The PRESIDENT:** Order, members! The minister is about to answer the question.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** The honourable member would be aware that some criticism has been made of the Curriculum Council and the implementation of the changes to years 11 and 12. Unfortunately, some of that criticism has possibly resulted from communication that may not have been as effective as it might have been between the Curriculum Council and schools. I took it upon myself to make a decision some time ago - I did not go to the media at the time - to minimise any of the risks, and, certainly, the risks to the initiative. It was important that I set up a task force to work with the Curriculum Council to address some issues causing problems at that time. I refer specifically to issues with assessment, moderation and, certainly, the communication strategy. A difficulty was that it did not appear as though the council had undertaken sufficient communication about these changes to schools and parents, and the electronic information available was not kept regularly up to date.

Having said all of that, Marie Mills has a long history working with the Curriculum Council. In fact, she had been with the council periodically undertaking work for the past five years, and she had undertaken work for the Department of Education and Training on and off for an extended period. A problem can arise when hiring consultants, particularly when a rapid response is needed. Therefore, I did not want someone to be appointed who would take the best part of the remainder of the year to understand the language of the Curriculum Council and the changes to be made. Basically, we needed somebody who was job-ready as a result of his or her qualification and experience and able to provide an efficient communication strategy. That is what I was after - that has been put in place as part of the task force process. I thank the member for his specific question.

- (1) The task force comprises Greg Robson, chair, from the Department of Education and Training; Rees Barrett from the Curriculum Council; John Nelson from the Catholic Education Office; Valerie Gould from the Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia; Lois Joll from the Department of Education and Training; and Marie Mills from Mills Wilson Media Consultants.
- (2) The terms of reference are to recommend -
  - ☐• processes for resolving support issues; in particular the provision of support materials and professional development;
  - ☐• options to resolve outstanding policy issues, such as assessment, external examinations and moderation; and
  - ☐• improved communication strategies.
- (3)-(4) To assist in communicating strategies to the public for the new Western Australian Certificate of Education.
- (5) Each sector or system is funding its own representatives. Marie Mills is being paid sitting fees of \$110 an hour, plus goods and services tax.