

Mr John Day; Dr Elizabeth Constable; Mr David Templeman; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr John Bradshaw; Acting Speaker; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Rob Johnson; Mr Matt Birney; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Colin Barnett; Ms Dianne Guise; Mr Rod Sweetman; Mr Jeremy Edwards; Mr Alan Carpenter

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## WESTERN AUSTRALIAN COLLEGE OF TEACHING BILL 2003

### *Second Reading*

Resumed from 13 August.

**MR J.H.D. DAY** (Darling Range) [5.28 pm]: This is significant legislation for the education system in Western Australia, particularly school education. It is certainly significant for the teaching profession and, ultimately, for students in Western Australian schools. The Opposition supports this legislation, albeit with some reservations about aspects of its detail to which I will refer later. Some amendments will be moved. The Opposition supports the aim and intent of the Bill, the origin of which dates back to the time of the previous Court Government. Therefore, it is not surprising that its intent has bipartisan support.

In essence, the Bill establishes a registration system for teachers, whereby somebody who seeks to teach students in a school and is not registered will be unable to practise as a teacher in Western Australian schools. The Bill does this by creating the Western Australian College of Teaching, which will empower the board of the college to determine what qualifications will entitle a teacher to be registered. The board will also require ongoing professional development for a teacher to renew his or her registration, and appropriate criminal record screening of new entrants to the teaching profession. The Bill provides for the board of the college to have disciplinary powers, including the ability to suspend teachers from registration or to fully deregister teachers.

It is a truism that the teaching profession in our State, as in all western societies, is a very important group in our community. Teachers play a crucial role in the development of young people in our community, particularly between the ages of four years and up to 17 or 18 years of age. They play a crucial role in the academic development of children, in developing communication skills, and literacy and numeracy skills, as well as their development of socialisation skills such as the relationship of children and young adults with the rest of the community. I think most people regard the teaching profession as having a greater influence on young people than any other people in our community outside family members. The role of teachers therefore is absolutely crucial in our society.

I am attracted to a statement made by Justice Robert Nicholson, a judge of the Federal Court of Australia and Chancellor of Edith Cowan University, when he was engaged in the formalities of opening the extended education faculty buildings at the Edith Cowan campus at Joondalup - an opening undertaken by the Minister for Education and Training. He referred to teachers as having a very important role to play in the shaping of the minds of the future. That is a very good summary of one of the most important aspects of the role teachers play in our society.

All of us would have memories, generally fond memories, probably from the earliest time we went to school, of kindergarten or preprimary and of the teachers who were involved in our education and upbringing. I can certainly remember when I first went to kindergarten in Midland in the east metropolitan area, and all the teachers in the primary schools and secondary schools that I attended in the latter years of my education. I have no doubt that I have benefited from the teaching that was provided to me - just as all members will have benefited from their education; and we should all fondly remember and pay tribute to those who were involved in our education and upbringing in that way.

It is also true that the role of teachers in society has changed substantially over the past century, since public education started being offered and since Governments started funding public education and government schools in particular. I do not pretend to be an expert on education - a number of former teachers in this House would be able to speak with much more authority - but it is true that the role of teachers has moved from being a didactic and authoritarian role over the years to being a much more interactive and communicative role and one that is often described these days as a reflective role in the community and in the classroom. As well as the role of teachers having changed, the world as a whole has changed a great deal over the past century. There is much less reliance on manual skills and much more need for young people in our community who are coming out of the school system to have well-developed communication skills and the ability to access and know where to go to find information, to understand it and to interpret it in an appropriate way. All of this tends to be described these days as a knowledge economy, where people rely to a lesser extent on manual skills. They rely on the ability to access and understand information, which leads to a knowledge economy. It is not simply a matter of acquiring knowledge; it is also a matter of knowing how to understand that knowledge and how it relates to the wider community and the environment.

I refer to a very good paper published only last month, in August of this year, by the Australian Council of Deans of Education and entitled "The Transformative Capacity of New Learning", which was prepared as a discussion

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paper by Roslyn Arnold and Maureen Ryan. A couple of brief passages from that paper sum up this move of our society to a knowledge economy. On page 7 of their paper, they comment -

For students, learning means understanding themselves both as individuals and as members of family, social and global communities. Understanding, which subsumes knowledge and embeds it within individuals' thoughts, feelings and values, enhances the potential for learning to be transformative. The students of the 21st century can actively create the communities in which they live and learn, rather than live on the margins of those they inherit.

At page 23, the following observations are made -

At its core new learning emphasizes the need for learners and teachers to engage with the world in which they live, to reflect on it and to develop skills for change and improvement. It emphasizes strongly the function of relationships in learning processes; not only the human relationships so important to effective learning, but the relationships and bonds developed between learners and their embodied experiences of learning.

It continues -

This positions educators as leaders in engaging students with learning and requires such educators to have vision, resilience and enthusiasm for learning. It enables schools to be constructive rehearsal spaces for life.

I pass on these quotations because I think they sum up the role of teachers in the twenty-first century, what this Bill will do and what, hopefully, the College of Teaching will ultimately seek to encourage and facilitate. The paper continues -

Effective teacher education programs have as their goal, teachers who

- are knowledgeable about teaching and learning
- are reflective about their work
- are skilled practitioners
- undertake ongoing professional development
- research and improve their work
- are active in the education and induction of prospective members of the profession
- are advocates for teachers, students and for teaching and learning
- have the capacity to interact with other professionals and with the broader community in a meaningful way.

In conclusion, it states -

In essence teachers are engaged (sometimes unthinkingly) in the creation of the society in which we live and in the nurturance of its members. This means that teacher education programs must expose prospective teachers to historical, sociological, psychological, and political knowledge that enables them to make good judgements and engage actively in the world in which they live with an eye to the 'common good'.

Those comments are expressed in quite an academic way but sum up some aspects of the role of teachers in our community these days. We have a responsibility to do everything within our power to ensure that skilled and appropriately qualified teachers are employed in our schools in Western Australia, who will act professionally and with an understanding that the interests of their students are paramount. The importance of having a high quality of teaching in our society and a high standard of teachers is now very widely recognised.

Another paper published in June this year by the Australian Council of Deans of Education, which is also a very well put together exposition of the role of teachers in society, is titled "*The Role of the 'Teacher' Coming of Age*", and was prepared by Professor Terry Lovat, with the assistance of Dr Chris Mackenzie. In relation to the need for high standards in teaching and high-quality teachers in our schools it makes the following observation -

... modern pedagogical research makes it so plain that the essential difference in student achievement or non-achievement revolves around the personal qualities and capacities of the individual teacher, far more than around the correctness of curriculum or the precisions to be found in the school structure ...

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The paper also draws attention to comments from the 1998 Senate report on education in which the characteristics of professionalism in a general sense were described as, firstly, having a strong motivation or calling; secondly, possession of a specialised body of knowledge and skills acquired during a long period of education and training; thirdly, having control of standards, admissions, career paths and disciplinary issues; fourthly, having autonomy in organising and carrying out their work and the need for the ongoing exercise of professional judgment; and, fifthly, members accepting and applying a professional code of practice. I make those observations because they briefly sum up fairly well the characteristics of a profession that we are seeking to enhance through the formal establishment of a teaching profession.

A final extract on page 11 of the paper, which relates to my reference to a need for high-quality teachers in our schools, states -

There is an abundance of research which affirms that teacher quality plays a greater role in explaining student achievement than other factors associated with teaching, including classroom environmental factors such as resources, curriculum guidelines, and assessment practices, or the broader school environment such as school culture and organisation.

To reiterate, having high-quality teachers in our schools is now widely regarded as paramount.

My final quotation on this issue draws upon a paper published by the Centre for Independent Studies in February 2002 by Dr Kenneth J. Rowe, the principal research fellow at the Australian Council for Educational Research. The summary at the beginning of the article states in part -

When all other sources of variation are taken into account, including gender, social backgrounds of students and differences between schools, the largest differences in student achievement are between classes. That is, by far the most important source of variation in student achievement is teacher quality.

That paper focused on boys' education, which is a subject for another discussion. It is nonetheless an extremely important issue within our education system. It was the subject of a House of Representatives report in the past 12 months or so and it has been the subject of many other considerations. It is very important to consider how we can best provide an education system that will benefit boys and girls and in particular alleviate some of the areas in which boys have fallen behind in recent years.

How do we ensure we have the highest possible quality teachers in our schools? There is no doubt that we need to ensure that we do everything we can to attract motivated students into teaching courses in our universities. All five Western Australian universities offer teaching courses in one form or another. I think it is also widely recognised that salaries are a factor, although by no means the only one, in attracting people into the teaching profession. Nevertheless, salaries are an important consideration when people decide whether they want to enter the teaching profession.

I refer again to the paper by Professor Terry Lovat, published by the Australian Council of Deans of Education. He has drawn attention to the statement by the Council of Deans entitled "New Learning: a Charter for Australian Education" in which it is stated -

... Australian teachers and academics earn significantly less than professionals who require similar levels of training, such as doctors and lawyers, yet their work is just as professionally challenging, and equally important in social and economic terms. If education is to perform effectively the tasks which it is assigned in the 'knowledge economy', teachers need to be paid much higher salaries and at levels of parity with other professions.

Similar comments are made further on in that section of the paper. Salary negotiations are currently taking place between the Government and the State School Teachers Union of WA on behalf of teachers employed in government schools in particular. Although this debate is not about those issues, it is something of an irony that this Bill is being debated on the eve of a strike by teachers in government schools. In no sense do I welcome the fact that a strike is imminent. It is not in the interests of either students or the government school system as a whole. To that extent, it will be somewhat harmful to the perception of the standing of teachers in our community. However, as I have commented previously today, particularly in the public arena, the Government must be realistic in negotiating with the teachers union. It is not an easy process. Although I have not had to deal with those issues as Minister for Education, I have dealt with them as Minister for Health. The process is difficult. However, in the end there must be sufficient flexibility for a realistic outcome. I have little doubt, although it is probably very difficult for him to admit it, that the Minister for Education and Training would like to be able to offer somewhat more than he can at the moment but he is hampered by budgetary constraints. It is a matter of the Government's priorities. I do not doubt that the minister genuinely believes that the package

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being offered is a significant step forward. However, there is no doubt that if the Government were not spending as much as it is in some other areas, particularly the southern metropolitan railway, it may well be possible to bring teachers' salaries more into line with salaries of other comparable professionals. It is not just an issue for current negotiations. If we want to attract well-qualified, capable people into the teaching profession and retain them, they should be awarded an increase that is more than just the rate of inflation. I acknowledge that these things are not easy to deal with from a government perspective. With about 30 000 teachers in government schools, salary costs are high. However, increases provided by the previous Government were above the rate of inflation, although not hugely so. It would have been the coalition's aim - I have discussed this with the Leader of the Opposition - had it been elected to government to continue to pay teachers salary increases above the rate of inflation so that they would be awarded real increases and their salaries would be brought more into line with those of people in comparable professions.

Teachers in our schools must be provided with adequate support to ensure that they are able to do their jobs. There is no doubt that teachers deal with complex and difficult social issues that they were not required to deal with 20 to 30 and certainly 50 to 100 years ago. Teachers need to be provided with sufficient support from psychologists, welfare officers, social workers and other school support staff. The profession is also concerned about the large amount of reporting, paperwork and administrative requirements that teachers must be involved in. It would be highly desirable if we could in some way reduce the amount of time that needs to be spent on that sort of paperwork and reporting. I am referring not to reporting to parents but to some of the internal reporting that I understand is necessary. We must turn our minds to doing whatever we can to reduce that administrative load so that teachers can spend more time and effort on class preparation, teaching and providing instruction to students.

Individual teachers also have a large degree of responsibility. They are ultimately responsible for their own conduct. They are responsible for ensuring that they are actively involved in ongoing learning and professional development. It is one thing for Governments and employers to put in place requirements for involvement in professional development; but teachers themselves have a responsibility to ensure they are meaningfully involved in that professional development and attend courses that will be of benefit to them and their students. I have no doubt that most teachers are very keen to be involved in meaningful ongoing professional development. It needs to be available for them, and I will come back to that a little later. In the end, it is their responsibility. Teachers are also responsible for the way they dress, their behaviour and conduct within schools, and the way they relate to students, other teachers and the wider community. They are important matters for teachers as individuals to consider.

The development of this legislation has a long history. I understand that in one sense or another there have been considerations along these lines for many years. In the 1970s, when Sir Charles Court was Premier, there was at least a proposal, if not legislation, to establish a registration process for teachers. I have not had the opportunity to research the debate in those years in any detail. No doubt some members of the education community have a much greater knowledge about the history of that time. I am at least aware that since the 1970s consideration has been given to the establishment of something similar to what we are now putting in place.

More recently, during the debate on the School Education Bill in 1998 the member for Churchlands moved an amendment to set up a registration process for teachers. The member will make further comments; however, I understand the desire was to at least enable some debate about this issue. The then Minister for Education, now the Leader of the Opposition, did not agree to incorporate a registration system within the legislation at that time. However, he undertook to ensure further consideration and consultation with the teaching profession and the wider community with a view to establishing a registration system if there was broad support to do so. The then Minister for Education established a reference group, chaired by Mr Peter Browne, the then Chief Executive Officer of the Department of Education Services. A discussion paper, "Teacher Registration in Western Australia", was released in June 1999 for public comment. It was circulated throughout the education community and the teaching profession. Feedback was received and a position paper was subsequently prepared. That paper, dated August 2000, was based on the concepts developed in the discussion paper. I was a member of Cabinet at that time, and I recall the Cabinet considering this issue. The then Minister for Education made a brief ministerial statement to this House on 15 November 2000, in which he advised that the Government had decided to establish the recommended Western Australian council of teaching, as it was to be termed. The minister also said that the establishment of that body represented another important step in the then Government's continuing efforts to raise the status of teaching in our community. In February 2001 a change of government occurred and the Labor Party came to power. I am aware that, in opposition, the Labor Party committed to establishing -

Mr A.J. Carpenter: In fact, we put out a paper before August 2000.

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Mr J.H.D. DAY: I must acknowledge that the minister advises that the Labor Party put out a discussion paper -

Mr A.J. Carpenter: Which reappeared as the paper referred to in the ministerial statement, with "college" changed to "council".

Mr J.H.D. DAY: The minister will have ample opportunity to respond. The main point is that there is bipartisan support for this. I am sure the member for Churchlands will be able to comment with greater authority than I about what occurred in 1998-99. At the time I had my hands full dealing with initially police issues and then health issues.

We are now at the point at which the proposal for the College of Teaching is before the House. The proposal reflects much of the development of these ideas over many more years than just the past three or four.

A registration system will be established to ensure that teaching has the highest possible level of professionalism in this State. The college will provide that teachers must undertake ongoing professional development. That is not spelt out in the Bill in any detail. I guess that would be very difficult to do. However, there is provision for the board of the college to require teachers to undertake ongoing professional development. It would be desirable for the minister to indicate either in his response to the second reading debate or during the consideration in detail stage what sort of levels of professional development might be required and how the decisions about what is appropriate will be made. It is important that the college is not overly prescriptive about what is required. School principals or heads of departments, as appropriate, should maintain a significant degree of flexibility about the professional development that is required of their teaching staff. Generally, they should be able to certify that the professional development their staff are undertaking is appropriate. There would also be significant concern if the College of Teaching were able both to prescribe what PD must be undertaken and to provide PD. There would be a significant conflict of interest if the college had both those roles; in other words, if it was in the marketplace providing courses for teachers and deciding what professional development teachers were required to undertake. I also seek some comment from the minister about that aspect.

I make the observation that the Government decided to cease funding to the Centre for Excellence in Teaching from the beginning of this year. That is very unfortunate, particularly given that the Centre for Excellence in Teaching was required to cease operations prior to the full establishment of the College of Teaching. That has left a large hole in the organisation of high-quality professional development courses, and is an indictment on the decision by the minister to cease funding for the organisation.

*Sitting suspended from 6.00 to 7.00 pm*

Mr J.H.D. DAY: Before the dinner break I was commenting on the Western Australian College of Teaching Bill and expressing support for the intentions of the Bill and most of the provisions within it. However, the Opposition has some concern about a number of aspects. For example, it is concerned about the proposal for the chairperson of the board to be elected by the membership of the board. It will be quite a large board - 19 members, as is proposed in the Bill. That in itself is of concern, and I will come back to that aspect. As to the appointment of the chairperson, I believe that to have somebody elected from within that group could lead to the significant possibility of it becoming a mini election campaign, with perhaps not necessarily the most appropriate person, who would be able to act in an independent way, being appointed chairperson. For a board of this nature, it is necessary to have somebody who will be able to act as an independent chairperson. Therefore, in the consideration in detail stage, I will move an amendment that the minister have the power to appoint a person as chair. I do not think it is possible to specify the qualifications of that person. However, clearly the intention is that it should be somebody who has a very high standing within the teaching profession or within the education sector, or maybe more generally within the Western Australian community, and who would have the respect of the teaching profession and would also have the ability to act as the chairperson of the board of the college in an independent way. That would be a more appropriate way in which to appoint a chairperson than is currently provided for in the Bill.

As I said, it is currently intended that the board have 19 members. If the amendment to which I have just referred were successful, it would end up with 20 members. Both of those figures are larger than desirable. I know that the Government has sought to be very inclusive with the membership of the board. At this stage I am not proposing to move an amendment to reduce the size of the board, although that may well be the subject of further debate in the Legislative Council. On balance, I do not think it would have a negative impact to add one additional independent member as chairperson. Overall, it would lead to a better and more desirable situation in which somebody who did not owe anything to anyone would be able to chair the proceedings of the board and to act as the spokesperson for the board in a more independent way.

Mr T.K. Waldron: You will move an amendment that the chairperson be appointed by the minister?

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Mr J.H.D. DAY: Yes. I guess an alternative would be appointment by the Governor in Executive Council, which means that the appointment would go through Cabinet. I am completely open-minded about either of those two processes. The important thing is to have somebody who does not owe anything to any grouping within the board, given that it will be a relatively large group and that 10 people will themselves be on the board by virtue of elections.

It is also important to have a time limit on membership of the board. I will suggest that a maximum of three terms of three years apply to membership. The Opposition believes that it is desirable to have a degree of turnover of faces on the board. It would not be desirable to have people on the board for, say, 20 years or so who are making something of a career out of board membership. Therefore, I will move an amendment along those lines as well.

At the moment the Bill provides for reviews of board decisions to be undertaken by the District Court. That leads to some concerns about the cost that people who were aggrieved by board decisions would incur in making appeals to the District Court. The District Court is the second most senior court in the State. By necessity, I guess, it operates in a legalistic way. There is every likelihood that people who were forced to go to the District Court for a review of a decision of the board would incur a very large expense. Most teachers would probably find that prohibitive. Therefore, I will move an amendment, if it is technically possible, that the State Administrative Tribunal review decisions of the Western Australian College of Teaching board, as opposed to the District Court. Of course, the Bill to establish the State Administrative Tribunal, first, has not passed the Legislative Council and, secondly, is being opposed by the Opposition. However, we are of the view that if that tribunal is established, it would be a more appropriate body to deal with these sorts of issues than the District Court.

The Opposition is also concerned that the period specified under clause 89 for a review of the Act to occur - that is, after the expiration of five years - is excessively long. I will move an amendment that a review be undertaken after three years. I believe it is unlikely, once the college is established, that any serious consideration would be given to bringing its activities to an end. However, if changes need to be made or if there are concerns about the operations or the role of the college in some way, it would be more appropriate for those issues to be brought to attention with a review after three years, rather than wait for a significantly longer period of five years.

It is also important to observe that the establishment of this body will not be a panacea for a range of issues that exist within the teaching profession, nor will it be a guarantee that teachers will, by virtue of registration with the board or with the college, be of high quality because of that fact. Their abilities, on the basis of their experience, will still need to be assessed by employers. As with all the other professions that are currently subject to regulation by boards, whether they be doctors, dentists, psychologists, physiotherapists or whatever, there is no guarantee that any of those professionals will necessarily practise in either an ethical or a high-quality way. However, we are of the view that there would be a greater likelihood of that occurring, and if people transgressed, there would be a greater ability to call them to account. It is largely for those reasons that we are supporting the Bill. However, as I said, people should not have a false expectation that establishing a college of teaching will in itself lead to a huge transformation or act as a guarantee in relation to some of those issues I have just identified. It is also important that the College of Teaching not act as a de facto industrial body or as a pseudo union. There are two teachers unions in Western Australia, which both play a valid role. I am sure that all members agree with what they say from time to time and on other occasions disagree with what they say. The College of Teaching should not seek to replicate the activities of a union.

Ten members of the board will be elected. Seven will be elected from the government school system, two will be elected from the Catholic school system and one member will be elected from the independent school system. There is a degree of concern within the Liberal Party that, because of the election process, there is a possibility that there may be a significant degree of union influence and input to the operation of the board. It is important that teachers and the community realise that it is not being set up as a pseudo industrial body and it should not act in that way. I have confidence that the teaching profession will ensure that that will not occur. However, people need to be cautious about the election process that is used. The system must not be abused. People should not be elected to the board on the basis of tickets because they are or are not members of a teaching union. People must be elected to the board on the basis of their merit as teachers and because of the respect they have within the teaching profession. It must be noted that the role of the College of Teaching is separate from the valid role that teachers unions play in this State.

A number of other issues concern me, including the quality of education that is provided in our schools. I have concerns about the general education environment in Western Australia, over and above the teaching profession, and about the quality of the teaching that is provided. As I said in my earlier remarks, the quality of teachers is

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probably the single most important determinant in the outcomes that students achieve. However, other aspects are involved. I will take this opportunity to briefly comment on those matters.

The debate about funding of non-government schools in Western Australia and indeed in Australia has attracted attention. The Minister for Education and Training drew attention to it recently. For example, on 1 September this year the minister issued a media statement, which was divisive and simplistic. It was designed for political purposes to rev up those who oppose the funding of non-government schools. I was present at the WA Council of State School Organisations conference that the minister addressed last month. A number of people and I thought that the minister addressed the conference as though he were addressing a Labor Party election rally rather than a serious meeting of parents of children from state schools. It is valid to debate these issues and it is valid to debate the level of funding that goes to non-government schools. However, it must be done in a non-divisive way.

In my view, Western Australia has one education system, which has a number of components. The government school education system is the largest sector, followed by the Catholic education system and the independent schools. In addition, a number of students participate in home education. They all make up Western Australia's education system. We should not act divisively and the whole story must be told.

In his media statement, the minister drew attention to the fact that Penrhos College and Wesley College have received from the Commonwealth Government a significant increase in funding per student. I assume that the figures used in the minister's statement are correct. Indeed, they show a significant increase. However, the reason for that increase is the change in the method of determining grants to non-government schools that was put in place by the Commonwealth Government following a lot of discussion. A new system was put in place to ensure that a fairer system operated than was previously the case. It means that some schools have been significant winners, in relative terms. However, it is also the case that all non-government schools in Western Australia received less taxpayers' funding per student than government schools in Western Australia. The level of funding from taxpayers for non-government schools varies substantially. Some of the non-government schools that are regarded as better off get a much lower level of funding from taxpayers than do some of the less well off non-government schools. As I said, all non-government schools receive a lesser amount of funding from taxpayers than do government schools.

For example, the minister drew attention to the fact that Penrhos College apparently receives \$1 907 in commonwealth funding per primary school student and Wesley College receives \$1 839 per primary school student. The minister should also state that, according to this year's budget papers, the cost of educating primary school students in government schools in Western Australia is \$8 882 and it costs \$11 713 per secondary student per year. Non-government schools, including Penrhos and Wesley Colleges, for example, receive a grant from the State Government in addition to the amount they receive from the Commonwealth Government. I am not sure how much that is exactly; it is probably around \$1 000 a student. If commonwealth and state funding were added to these particular schools, for example - even if they received \$3 000 or \$4 000 in total from both government sources - that is still far less than the cost of educating students in government schools in Western Australia.

The Opposition believes that people should have a choice. Many people in the government school system in Western Australia, including teachers and other staff, regard themselves as being in competition with non-government schools. I had a conversation with a staff member of a school in the eastern metropolitan area who said he regarded his school as being in competition with a non-government school in the same district. That is a good thing because it helps the schools to lift their standards. Equally, there is a flow of students from the non-government sector to government schools, which is good. When people have choice, it puts pressure on schools to lift their standards. All those issues must be pointed out when these matters are discussed. We should not act in a divisive manner for base political purposes. We must consider these issues in a rational way and tell the whole story rather than just part of it.

It is the case that the primary source of funding for government schools comes from the State Government, which provides around 90 per cent of the funding in round figures for the operation of government schools. The Commonwealth provides about 10 per cent of funding. On average, the State provides about 20 per cent of funding for non-government schools, the Commonwealth provides about 40 per cent and parents also provide about 40 per cent through fees. The point has been made many times in the past, and it is worth making again, that if all the students who are currently attending non-government schools in Western Australia moved to the government system, it would cost taxpayers a lot more. Of course, that does not mean that non-government schools should be given preferential treatment or receive the same level of funding as students in government schools. However, all those issues must be considered when debating these matters. Whoever is in government has the responsibility of ensuring that the government system in particular is well funded and that the best

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possible facilities are provided in government schools. Newer government schools are constructed to a very high standard. They compete very well with the facilities of most non-government schools, and in many cases their facilities exceed them. The biggest problems are in schools that were constructed in the 1950s and 1960s in which significant refurbishment or a large amount of maintenance needs to be undertaken. Whoever is in government needs to direct a great deal of attention to that problem.

As a result of a question on notice that I asked earlier this year, I know that the cost for maintenance needed in government schools is estimated to be about \$60 million. I have a question on notice asking what is available for maintenance in this year's budget. I can confidently say that it will be nothing like \$60 million. I accept that there will always be a degree of backlog, but the Government needs to give much higher priority to ensuring that adequate funds are available for maintenance and upgrading in some of the older government schools in this State. Hopefully when we are back in government in the not too distant future, we will very much want to address that.

I also draw attention to the fact that, for the government school system, the budget of the Department of Education and Training will be reduced by \$30 million a year as from July next year. I accept that some savings will be made as a result of the merger of the two departments, but they will be nothing like \$30 million. In the Estimates Committee earlier this year the minister said that 200 positions in the department will be abolished, which will provide about \$12 million a year in savings, leaving \$18 million a year to be found. The minister quite appropriately wants to take action to increase retention rates in years 11 and 12. When salary increases flow through, whether they be three per cent per annum or more, a significant degree of pressure will ultimately be placed on the education budget. I believe that currently no additional allocation has been made to assist the aim of increasing retention rates in years 11 and 12. That needs to be appropriately funded and addressed by this Government. If students are to be attracted to staying in school for those extra two years, appropriate courses, opportunities, workplace experience or whatever the case may be will need to be provided for those students who would otherwise leave the school education system. That will cost money; there is no doubt about that. On three or four occasions the minister has announced his intention of increasing the minimum school leaving age, but we have seen no concrete proposals for how that will be achieved. The Government also needs to address that issue.

I refer to a final quotation from the paper of Professor Terry Lovat, who wrote in his concluding remarks -

... that teaching is a highly skilled and complex art and science that requires a rare grasp of content knowledge conjoined with an even rarer skill of disseminating that knowledge within the limitations and constraints of bulk learning in the average, not overly-conducive classroom.

I place on record my tribute to teachers in Western Australia who are doing their job well and working hard. That applies to the overwhelming majority of teachers who are inspiring students, engaging them, encouraging them and assisting them to learn and to take their place in a modern society. Teachers who are playing that role are doing a fantastic job, which is absolutely crucial to the future of young people in Western Australia, to the economy of Western Australia and to having a civilised, informed and high-quality community in Western Australia. With those comments, I support the Bill, but during the consideration in detail stage, as I foreshadowed earlier, we will be moving a number of amendments.

**DR E. CONSTABLE** (Churchlands) [7.25 pm]: It will come as no surprise that I support this Bill. I agree with the comment of the member for Darling Range that it is a very significant piece of legislation. The member for Darling Range also talked about the history of this Bill. I would like to add to his comments. This Parliament passed a Bill in the 1970s, I think when Hon Peter Jones was Minister for Education, but it was never proclaimed. We had legislation about 30 years ago, but we have had to wait quite a long time to get to this point. I am sure that the current minister intends that the Bill be put into operation as soon as possible.

The genesis of this Bill goes back to the School Education Bill debated in June 1998. I had extensive amendments to that Bill in which I proposed a system of teacher registration in Western Australia. However, there was a step before that which I think should be placed on record. It was not my idea but an idea brought to me by members of the State School Teachers Union of WA. I was very impressed with what they had to say, especially with the fact that a professional group wanted to take steps to enhance the status of their profession and have a teacher registration system in Western Australia. They asked me if I would be interested in sponsoring a private member's Bill. I agreed to that. As I thought it through over a period, I decided that the best way to get the issue debated was to propose amendments to the School Education Bill 1998. Indeed, the history of the past five years shows that it was a very successful strategy to highlight the issue and to get to where we are today. I am quite delighted that I am able to make a contribution to this debate. The idea of teacher registration was embraced early on by all sectors: the teachers union, the Catholic Education Office, the

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Australian Council of Deans of Education, the Association of Independent Schools and many senior members of the Department of Education and Training. That agreement on the need for teacher registration stands today.

During the debate in June 1998 the member for Belmont, who was the Deputy Leader of the Opposition at the time, supported my amendments. There was therefore support from the then Opposition, the current Government, five years ago. At the time of the debate the then minister, Hon Colin Barnett, obviously did not support my amendments but agreed - this was the first step forward I think - to commission a discussion paper to explore the issue. I knew then that we had got somewhere or at least we had taken the first step in the community and professional debate about this issue. Sure enough, the discussion paper promised by the then Minister for Education was prepared. I commend Peter Browne who was very involved in that, and other members of the Department of Education for the work that they put into the paper. It was a superb exercise in extensive consultation. That is one reason we are here today. They did such a good job laying the groundwork for teacher registration. Consultation occurred on what was seen to be an important issue for teachers. We are where we are today because it was so thorough. At one stage the Department of Education initiated a forum, and a lot of people who were interested in the issue were invited to attend. I was very pleased to be part of the panel. Therefore, congratulations for this legislation need to be extended not only to the Government, but also to many people, although I congratulate the Government for taking the steps it has taken since it came to office.

The creation of the interim board of the College of Teaching meant that a group of people representing teachers from all sectors and all interests was put together. Under the chairmanship of Brian Lindberg, their job was to draft the Bill and discuss the issues relating to teacher registration and this legislation. They did a magnificent job in getting us to the point we are at today. It is very unusual for there to be such an incredible collaborative effort, involving so many interests and sectors, that reaches the point of having a Bill debated in Parliament. I have no doubt it will be passed, albeit with some minor amendments during consideration in detail. The need for teacher registration has had an extraordinary history of agreement across all sectors in the past two years. It has involved agreement by two Governments and two Oppositions, as well as by Independent members.

During the debate in 1998 I pointed out that there are three reasons teacher registration is important. I will go through them again briefly tonight. The three reasons are just as important today as they were five years ago. During the debate in 1998 I stated -

The principle of registration is intended to balance the right of people to practise their profession freely in the community against the right of the public to be protected in certain circumstances.

In this case we are talking about the protection of children. There are three main reasons for teacher registration. Firstly, we want to ensure that fit and proper people are registered to teach children. The protection of children is the most important reason for teacher registration. The other two reasons are very important as well. Secondly, it is to ensure the quality of teacher education; to set standards in teacher education and ongoing professional development. Thirdly, it is to formulate and maintain professional standards for teachers. I will go through each reason. Let us start with the protection of children. We want to protect children from untrained or poorly trained teachers. We want to protect children from those people who might be considered undesirable or inappropriate or just plain bad teachers. Given that children are one of the most vulnerable groups of the community, they must be protected. When members think about it, it is quite extraordinary that teachers are not registered. Approximately 145 other professions and trades groups require registration or licensing. It is not before time that we take steps to register teachers. Many children spend more time with their teachers than they do with their parents. Children attend school for a minimum of 10 years. Many children attend for 12 or 14 years. That represents a large part of their lives at a time when they are vulnerable. There is so much that we want children to learn; we want them prepared for adulthood. Teachers are a major source of care for children as well as imparting knowledge and educating them. Teachers are the professional group in the community to which children have the most exposure. It is interesting to remember that parents rarely have a choice about who will teach their child. A child turns up at school and is assigned to a class and a teacher teaches the child. People often have a choice of doctors, dentists and others who will be a part of their children's lives but they rarely have a choice of teacher. The protection of children is extremely important when considering teacher registration.

In recent years police checks on teachers have been introduced. In answer to a question I asked the minister in October last year, the checks go back to only 1997, when they were first put in place. A large number of teachers in schools have not been checked in this way because they have been employed since 1997. An article in *The Australian* in the past few weeks stated that Queensland will deal with teachers who have not been checked. It will put in place a very comprehensive system of checks. I believe that is on the cards for Western Australia. In my view, the sooner it happens the better. Many thousands of teachers have not been through the process of police checks.

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The second important reason for teacher registration is the quality of teacher education, training and ongoing professional development. The member for Darling Range quite properly pointed out that the work of teachers has changed dramatically in recent years and that teachers have an incredibly complex task. Teachers face demands from the education sector, parents and the community that have increased enormously, certainly since I first stood in front of a class in 1966. Teachers now deal with things such as outcome-based assessments - which are far more complex than in previous years - the growing expectations of the community, social issues that involve teachers with children, and programs of inclusion for children with disabilities. It has made the task of teaching much more complex. Registration is very important in maintaining and setting standards. It is very important that we ensure standards are set and maintained during times of teacher shortages. We certainly do not want a return to the circumstances of the 1960s in which there were major shortages of teachers. That was certainly the case in the eastern States and, I assume, in Western Australia.

I will digress for a moment and tell members about my experience when I was first employed as a teacher in New South Wales. I had completed an undergraduate degree in history, English and psychology and a master's degree in clinical psychology. At the time, there was a major shortage of teachers and I wanted to work part-time as I was married with one small child. I decided that teaching was for me. During that time plane loads of teachers were being brought in from overseas to teach in Australia for a few years at a time. I kid the House not, I got my job in this way: I went to the education department in New South Wales and filled in a form. As it did not contact me I telephoned the department the day before second term was about to start in May. I told officers I had not heard from them. They told me to go to such and such school the next day. I did not have an interview or a teaching qualification. I was sent to a school quite close to home and I was given part-time work. Because there was such a shortage of teachers they were taking anyone. I arrived at the school and the acting principal did not even know I was coming. He pointed to a classroom and said, "Go and teach those boys." It was a boys junior high school and my class had 48 boys, most of whom did not speak English. That was my introduction to teaching. As it turned out, I loved it. I received quite a lot of support and went on to complete a Diploma of Education part-time from the University of New England as an external student. I tell that story to illustrate that in the past we have had large shortages of teachers in this country and there are many predictions that we are heading for that situation again.

We must ensure that we maintain standards and have well qualified people teaching. I will dwell for a moment on the predictions of teacher shortages. An article in *The Australian* of Saturday, 23 August 2003 is headed "Wanted: 30,000 teachers". I will quote a few paragraphs from the article, which states -

The nation's schools could be left with a shortage of 30,000 teachers within a decade as the public system struggles to counter an imminent wave of retirements.

More than a quarter of the teacher population will be eligible for retirement in 2007, and a further 50,000 could be lost soon afterwards, adding to the desperate shortage that most states already face in public schools.

...

The federal president of the Australian Education Union, Pat Byrne, said the profession was reaching crisis point, with almost 30 per cent of graduates leaving teaching within five years.

"They come out of uni and they're very idealistic and very enthusiastic," Ms Byrne said.

"But ... you come very quickly to the end of the line. There would be very few of your friends (in other careers) carrying the same workload for the same amount of reward."

These are very important statements. We must enhance the profession of teaching, maintain its standards and recognise that we must face major issues on many fronts to maintain the supply and quality of teachers. We need to support new teachers in the profession so that they make it a lifelong career, rather than them finding that after a few years they have had enough, it is too hard and they are not provided with support. We need to restructure the first two or three years of teaching in schools to provide that support to teachers, so that they develop as professionals and want to stay within the profession.

When this crisis hits I have no doubt that teachers will go to the employing authority that offers the best conditions. Although the minister might be able to counter what I have said by saying that we do not really have shortages in Western Australia and that every job is filled, it is probably the case that not every job is filled with a teacher who is qualified to the extent that we would like him or her to be qualified. Perhaps Western Australia is not yet facing the situation that is being faced by other Australian States. However, if departments and employing authorities in other Australian States offer teachers better conditions and pay than they are offered in

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Western Australia, we will lose good, qualified teachers to other employing authorities. We must be very careful to make sure that that does not happen.

[Leave granted for the member's time to be extended.]

Dr E. CONSTABLE: An editorial in *The Australian* of Tuesday, 29 January 2002 also made some really important statements -

Getting teachers into classrooms is not the only problem though. There is also a well-documented shortage of qualified specialist professional teachers. A study released last year revealed that one in 10 high school maths and science classes in public schools are being taught by teachers who have no qualifications in those subjects.

The editorial also states -

Some universities have boosted teaching places and offered degrees combined with arts or science. The renaissance shows society is again recognising teaching as a high-status skilled profession that is central to the health of a society.

What a wonderful comment that is; so it is. The editorial continued -

But this doesn't solve the immediate teacher shortage, or the longer-term task of retaining talented staff who leave the profession for jobs with higher salaries and greater career opportunities. More money is needed to lure the best and the brightest into teaching - and keep them there, through competitive work conditions, training and professional development.

It is timely that we are debating this Bill at the moment, because these issues have been highlighted by the teachers union this week and in previous weeks. It will take some creativity to get this right. We need to wrap our minds around the issues that are facing the teaching profession.

The Science Teachers Association of Western Australia conducted a review of the quality and supply of science teachers in 2000 that underlined some of these issues. The association estimated that at the time there were 1 430 science teachers in Western Australia. It is interesting that the survey defined a qualified teacher as one who had completed second year units at university in his subject area. When we look beneath the surface we will probably find that many people who are teaching maths and science have not completed second year units in the subject area in which they are teaching. I have spoken to some of those teachers; they have been to see me. To be a physics teacher a person must have completed second year units in physics. The survey found that the percentage of unqualified subject teachers in 2000 was 10.7 per cent in biology, 15 per cent in chemistry and 16.7 per cent in physics. I am sure that every parent in Western Australia wants to be assured that his or her child is taught upper school physics by someone who is qualified to teach that subject; that the teacher studied second-year units in the subject at university. At the time this survey was undertaken the average age of science teachers was 43 years, the average age of physics teachers was 46 years and the average age of chemistry teachers was 44 years. Most importantly, it was estimated that over the next 10 years approximately 20 per cent of science teachers would retire. It is an ageing profession. The average age of teachers across Australia is 49 years. We are struggling to keep good, bright, young people in the profession.

Much has been reported about the shortage of male primary school teachers, through both the estimates committees over the past couple of years and the media. There is a huge problem with attracting men into primary school teaching. In this State 18.4 per cent of teachers in government primary schools are male. That figure puts Western Australia behind every other State. That is a terrible situation. This issue of the shortage of male teachers has been glossed over. One need only look at that figure of male teachers in primary schools to know that we have a major problem in Western Australia. This shortage is a major issue in government schools. I asked some questions on notice on this issue. I want to underline this problem. On 10 August 2001, 84 government primary schools in Western Australia had no male teacher staff member, excluding principals. Those schools might have had a male principal - in fact, it is likely that they did. On the same day 33 government primary schools had no male teaching staff, including the principal. At least one of those schools was in my electorate. On the same day 103 government primary schools had only one male teacher, excluding the principal, and 86 government primary schools had one male teaching staff member, including the principal. That is a huge number of schools with either no male member of staff or only one. Given the importance of boys' education and the things we are learning more and more about the needs of boys in their education, they must have male role models during their primary school years.

Mr T.K. Waldron: Is it important for girls to have male teachers as well?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: It is important to have both. There needs to be a balance for everybody.

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I have one further comment to make on the issue of teacher shortages. A paper recently published by the Australian Education Union is headed "A National Teacher Shortage - A Solution from the Australian Education Union" and states -

Each state and territory is experiencing the problem in slightly different ways. The differences between each place in wages, opportunities for job security and careers has led to an increase in the mobility of teachers across the country in search of the best situation. There is already "poaching" occurring across state and national boundaries with some systems actively recruiting from others. International teacher demand has meant that lucrative packages are being offered to teachers trained in Australia.

That underlines the point I made before; that if we are not careful, we will lose our good teachers to other systems with better pay and conditions.

The third reason for teacher registration, which I want to touch on tonight, is to formulate and maintain professional standards for teachers. The Western Australian College of Teaching will provide a system to monitor those standards and make sure they are maintained. This is especially important during times of teacher shortages, as I pointed out before.

In recent years there has been an increase in the pressure placed on teachers. There has been an increase in violence against teachers in schools. Figures were recently published on that issue. There has been an increase in demands on teachers in general. There has been an increased demand on teachers to deal with children with behavioural problems. Policies such as the inclusion policy for children with disabilities have been embraced by the community. All this has placed great pressure on teachers. This is a timely debate. Given the teacher strike that will be held in a number of States tomorrow, including Western Australia, there is no doubt that the salaries of teachers need urgent review. Some other things go with that as well. Pressure needs to be taken off first-year teachers. Perhaps a mentoring system could be established under which teachers could be given a lighter load in their first year and then could work their way into the profession, rather than being dropped into the deep end, often without supervision and often in smaller schools in rural and remote areas. The job has changed and we need to think about it differently. Salaries have not kept up with the changes in the demands of the job.

The community faces many challenges in the coming years in relation to schools and the teaching profession. It is important for whoever is the Minister for Education and Training to recognise those challenges. The College of Teaching will have a very special role to play in monitoring the trends, providing advice and making sure that standards are maintained and enhanced. The College of Teaching will make a difference in the maintenance of standards. This is a comprehensive Bill. I have not dealt with many aspects of it because the underlying issues are very important, and I am looking forward to contributing during the consideration in detail and seeking explanation from the minister on a number of points. That can wait until we reach that point. I commend the minister for picking up this issue and carrying it through to this point. I also once again commend Brian Lindberg and the interim board of the College of Teaching for the work they have done.

**MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN** (Mandurah) [7.51 pm]: I will not go over a number of the issues raised by the member for Churchlands and others, but I will underpin a couple of important points that the House needs to recognise. This Bill will have an important impact on the teaching profession in Western Australia into the future. A huge amount of work has been done to bring the Bill to this place to be debated. I am sure it will be supported by both sides of the House. The key element of this Bill is the assurance that the Western Australian College of Teaching will be a professional body made up of teachers. The status of teaching must continue to be promoted and enhanced. The comments made by the member for Churchlands in particular draw attention to a range of issues facing the teaching profession, with wide implications for both the profession and the community.

The member for Churchlands mentioned the working conditions under which teachers operate, and will be operating into the future, including the issue of an ageing work force. Members must understand the implications of a teaching force that is getting older. How do we encourage new people into the teaching profession? It is a noble profession that should be encouraged and nurtured. As a former primary schoolteacher, I consider the issue of male teachers in our schools to be important. The community as whole needs to address this issue. There is no doubt that the profession needs a range of people of both sexes, with a range of experience, providing quality education to our young people. One of the important aspects of the Bill is the role it gives to the college in researching and developing professional standards and values in teaching. This is very important, given the changing nature of society.

I acknowledge the work of the minister in bringing this legislation before the House, and also the work done through the Department of Education and Training, the independent schools, the education stakeholder groups and the Western Australian teachers who have had input to the consultation process. I also acknowledge Mr

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Lindberg, whom I remember as a very effective president of the State School Teachers Union when I was a member of the profession and of the union, and the 19 members of the interim board. A Mandurah person on that board has made a significant contribution to its work; I refer to Valerie Applegate who is a good friend of mine and also a fantastic educator. She and the other members of the board have really believed in this process and in what the whole college will create for Western Australia. I congratulate all those people under the chairmanship of Mr Lindberg for their contribution.

We are debating a very important issue tonight, because the quality of education will underpin the sort of community we leave to those who come after us. I urge all members to support the Bill. It is an important piece of legislation that enables a very important college to be established to influence the education profession in Western Australia for years to come.

**MR T.K. WALDRON** (Wagin) [7.57 pm]: This Bill establishes the Western Australian College of Teaching, and the National Party will be supporting it, as the establishment of this college is a good thing. The college is intended to be a professional body of and for teachers. The minister stated in his second reading speech that the role of the college is to promote and enhance the teaching profession, to research and develop professional standards and values for teaching in schools, to ensure ongoing professional development for all teachers and to administer the registration of teachers for all schools in Western Australia. I am sure the existence of this college will help raise community awareness of the important role teachers play, and lift the status of teachers. We need to raise the status of the teaching profession by setting quality standards in teaching - the ongoing professional development is important, and I will talk about that a bit later - and regulating entry to the profession. I am sure that the Western Australian College of Teaching will go a long way towards assisting that development.

Our teachers are not held in the esteem that they deserve in most cases. They play a vital role in the community and in everyone's lives. Their importance to children is crucial. Someone mentioned tonight that often children spend more time with their teachers than they do with their parents, particularly in the younger age groups when children are so easily influenced. I have been involved with a preschool program called Smart Start, developed out of a little school at Broomehill, which works with health professionals, teachers and the community to identify problems before children get to school. When children start school the teachers and the school can deal with the problems better, for the benefit of the school, the teachers, the local community and, most importantly, the children. It is a fantastic program that the minister is aware of. I am promoting it a lot, and it is growing in our area. A forum was held recently, attracting people from Perth, Northampton and across the State, to examine that program. Those people identify the importance of teachers in those early years.

People always remember their teachers and their sports coaches because those people tend to have a huge influence. In the sports industry I have seen measures and steps taken to ensure the quality of coaches, and checking on coaches. It is obviously even more important in the education area, and this college will go a long way towards achieving that. Between 95 per cent and 99 per cent of our teachers are terrific and work very hard and, therefore, deserve a fair bit of praise. Most of them try to be as professional as they possibly can. I have worked fairly closely with teachers. My wife and sister have long been teachers and my daughter is training to be a teacher, so I get to view teachers fairly closely. Having worked quite a lot in schools in the past, I know that the odd teacher is probably not up to scratch, but most of them are professional, take their job seriously and work hard. That must be recognised, and the college will assist in giving that recognition. We need to recognise and assist our teachers and we must try to lift their status in the public eye. On Sunday, comments were made about teachers as a result of the dispute. Some people feel that they are asking for too much, and that view may be right. I think teachers' total ask is too much. However, I am sure there is a happy medium, which, no doubt, the minister is trying to achieve.

Mr A.J. Carpenter: I have achieved it.

Mr T.K. WALDRON: Good. I hope the minister has achieved it.

Some of the comments that have been made about our teachers indicate that some people do not regard them in the way they should be regarded. Teachers must also meet their responsibilities. Teachers' dress is one area that could be improved. Sometimes it is just not up to standard. I am not saying that they should wear a suit and tie; however, they should wear neat and presentable clothes. I think it is fantastic to see kids nicely presented in their uniforms. It is the responsibility of teachers also to be nicely presented, and I call on them to do that.

Teachers enhance their own status when they become involved in the community and carry out duties that are not required of them. The minister would understand that when teachers become involved in the community, particularly in the country, they receive acceptance and recognition, and that does a great deal for them and their profession. Of course, I realise that there are limits to what they can do in the community and that they are being

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placed under more and more pressure. When it comes to issues of pay, promotional opportunities and selection criteria, we can do a lot more to enhance the status of teachers. I will run through a few of those things in a moment.

I again refer to the Bill itself - I will probably raise more issues during the consideration in detail stage - and the board, which will comprise 19 members. I do not have too many problems with the make-up of the board. I note the member for Darling Range's point about a chairman being appointed by the minister. I will probably need to think about that before I debate it further. Given its size, I wonder how efficient the board will be. That point may need to be reviewed, because 19 members could be a bit unwieldy. Of course, those members must take on the college's responsibilities. The board does not necessarily need country representation, but it must have members who have a good knowledge of country issues. That is very important. At the moment, there are no country members on the Road Safety Council and yet a lot of our problems with road safety are in the country. I spoke to Grant Dorrington about that. Christine Hardwick is still on the council, but probably will not be for much longer. Such people bring a heap of expertise to the board. It is important that the 19-member board - I think it will have to be cut back later - comprise people who are either from the country or who have excellent country experience. There are a lot of people in the country who have that knowledge. Many issues that come up in country teaching are specific to country teaching.

I refer to the four categories. The notion of a limited authority to teach has been raised with me. Some specialist teachers who provide their services on a casual or emergency basis, but who do not have formal teaching qualifications, will be granted a limited authority to teach. That is a good thing, because we will be able to control those who come in, rather than having people whom we do not know much about. The member for Churchlands referred to that being the case when she was employed. I am not saying that that applies to her; obviously she was very good. I could get myself into trouble here! That is a good part of the Bill, and I commend it.

One of the other points is the checking of people to ascertain whether they have been convicted of an offence or have engaged in serious misconduct that renders them unfit to be a teacher. This is important, and another check and balance on those who are teaching our children. An issue of this sort occurred in my electorate today, and it was not a very nice incident. It is important that the college look at that side of teaching.

The Bill also states that teachers will be required to achieve certain standards of professional practice. That practice is not defined in the Bill; perhaps it will be defined in the regulations.

Mr A.J. Carpenter interjected.

Mr T.K. WALDRON: I bring to the minister's attention the fact that standard professional practice will have to be outlined in the Bill.

The main trust of the college will be to support and represent teachers and to improve their status. One of the points with the current pay dispute and the other issues that go with it - it has been mentioned before - is that if we are to attract teachers we must pay them well, but not exorbitantly. Further, teaching conditions must be attractive. Those factors can be big issues in the country. Tomorrow's strike will not raise the status of teachers and it may even put some people offside. As a minister of the Government, it is the Minister for Education and Training's responsibility to finalise that agreement on a fair basis. A shortage of teachers has been mentioned and predicted. That shortage could be exacerbated, particularly with new teachers. It is really important that the base level of pay and conditions be relatively good so that we attract and keep our teachers. That issue goes beyond pay conditions; we must give a lot of support to our new teachers. The member for Churchlands mentioned mentoring and the like. We should look at all those areas, because if there is a shortage - the figures I have indicate that there will be a shortage - we must ensure that we attract and keep our newer teachers. We have an ageing teaching population. A 1999 survey revealed that only 16 per cent of teachers were under 30 years of age and that 60 per cent were over 40. Therefore, we will soon have to replace a lot of teachers who will be lost through natural attrition. If a gap exists between the pay and conditions of teachers in Western Australia and those in the eastern States, we must ensure that it does not reach the point where we lose some of the newer, younger and single teachers because they are attracted to the east. We are always trying to attract people to country WA, and that gap would certainly compound the problem. We cannot afford to allow new teachers to abandon their jobs because of pay conditions, workloads, class sizes and the like. If we do not meet those challenges, the situation in country WA will get worse.

I will refer to some of the issues that the National Party has identified with regards to attracting teachers and recognising their status. Obviously one issue is teachers' workload and the paperwork that they have to do. That issue is continually raised with me by union people and teachers in general. We must look at teacher workloads, particularly the non-teaching paperwork side of it. If we can streamline that in some way, I am sure we will

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attract better people, raise standards and meet the aims of the Bill. One of the roles of the college is to raise professional standards and the professional development of teachers, which is important. I believe the minister referred to the professional development of teachers in the country and the use of technology and the like, which is a good thing. However, one of the big problems with professional development in country areas is the cost of getting to places for that professional development, whether it be in Bunbury, Northam or Perth. More professional development should be done locally in district education offices. A certain amount is, but we need to do more and utilise some of the experience of staff members out there to assist in the professional development of teachers.

The process by which promotions are carried out is another issue that has been highlighted to me, and one that I have raised with the minister before. He has tried to streamline that process to a certain degree but I do not think it is perfect yet. There have been instances in which a school, such as Kojonup Primary School, has had a real problem but has had a good acting principal. The acting principal was outstanding at that school and put it back on its feet winning the support of teachers, students and parents. However, he did not get the position of principal because of the selection criteria etc. Those same problems are now resurfacing in that school again. If this process had involved a private enterprise, I am sure the minister would not have let it happen. There were huge problems at that school and also at a Narrogin primary school, which were solved by having the right teachers there, but because of the way the selection process was carried out, those teachers missed out on those positions. We create another problem by not recognising that that happens. A pilot program was conducted in Katanning in which one community P&C member, who did not have the final say on the process, was on the selection panel. That program may have been shelved. I know the Katanning people have sent a letter to Mr Albert about that program, and it is a good idea. However, some people in the Department of Education and Training may think it is not appropriate as the wrong people could get onto the panel. I would give a P&C association enough credit to be able to select the right person to go on the panel. A person like that could assist greatly in the selection process.

Incentives are needed to attract good people into the teaching profession. The minister can correct me if I am wrong but I understand that pay for relief teachers is one issue currently being argued. Quite often there is a shortage of relief teachers in country Western Australia. It is important that relief teachers in country areas in particular have a pay incentive to continue to help schools out when teachers are away, otherwise we might run into some problems in that area.

I have also raised the issue of permanency options with the minister before. There should be more incentives for permanency in teaching positions, particularly for those teachers who have done their time in country schools. I ask that the minister pursue that matter because it is a real opportunity.

I will now talk about teacher responsibilities. We want our teachers to be more professional etc and we are asking them to do a lot more. Some of the problems that teachers must deal with in the area of behaviour management are pretty onerous and teachers must be rewarded for that.

The attraction of male teachers into the profession is also an issue. If this college operates as we hope it will, it should be able to help in that area. We need to return to a situation in which men see a future in the teaching profession.

[Leave granted for the member's time to be extended.]

Mr T.K. WALDRON: One of the good things about this college is that it will check out people with regard to criminal offences and those types of things. Some men have been loath to go into the teaching profession because of the fear that that sort of thing might happen to them inadvertently. We must try to enhance the role that a male teacher can have, and the member for Churchlands has already referred to that matter. It is important that there be male role models in schools for not only male students but also female students. I have four daughters - like me, the minister has lots of daughters - and females also like to have male teachers and a male influence in their lives; it is very important.

Mr R.C. Kucera: My daughter is a teacher.

Mr T.K. WALDRON: That is good.

Mr R.C. Kucera: And a great teacher I must say.

Mr T.K. WALDRON: I am sure she is. However, we also need some male teachers. We have referred to the quality of teachers and teachers having status. Teachers sometimes lose respect in some of the smaller district high schools because they are required to teach outside their area of specialty. That causes communities and

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people to lose confidence in a teacher if they do not feel that the teacher is qualified to teach their children in a particular subject. It is a hard problem to overcome but we must try to do whatever we can to resolve it.

Another favourite area of mine - I have raised it with the minister before - is that of teachers teaching languages other than English. Due to shortages of suitably qualified teachers, others sometimes teach in that area. I know we are utilising technology a lot more, which is great, but we must still look after those classes. When other teachers step in, it does not do those teachers' credibility a world of good.

Those are my main points. The National Party supports the Bill. Some issues will come up in the consideration in detail stage. In conclusion, I will mention two other things. The issue of teacher housing and rentals is raised with me on a regular basis. It is an issue that is covered by the Government Employees Housing Authority but I will mention it to the minister so he is aware of the problem. In some cases the comparative rent that a teacher pays when living in a small place such as Wandering, which has no store or other facilities, or Tincurrin where there is a transportable home, one shop and nothing else -

Mr A.J. Carpenter: Sounds good.

Mr T.K. WALDRON: It is a nice, quiet life and there are not many kids at the school. However, the rental that teachers in those situations pay is all out of whack. A teacher living in what is considered to be the principal's house, pays rent similar to that paid by a teacher living in Narrogin where there is a recreation centre, a hospital on the doorstep and all the facilities in the world. We must be aware of that issue. The other issue is that schools need to be maintained. We cannot expect to raise the standards of teaching and have an excellent Western Australian College of Teaching, which will do a good job, if we let the maintenance standards of schools slip away. It is an area about which we should be very careful.

**MR J.L. BRADSHAW** (Murray-Wellington) [8.17 pm]: I support the Bill and will say a few words about it and the teaching profession. Like most members of Parliament, I visit schools in my electorate on a regular basis. In general I find that teachers are keen and eager to teach the children in their schools. However, it seems to be getting harder to work as a teacher. There are more disruptive students and students with learning difficulties in schools these days. One of the issues that needs to be addressed, and the registration board will probably do so, is professional development. Teachers need more assistance to deal with disruptive students and those with learning difficulties or disabilities.

I pay tribute to the Minister for Education and Training for what he has done in the education system by giving more assistance to schools to deal with difficult students. One of the big problems in schools today is that, because of the disruptive element, a lot of people are taking their children out of government schools and putting them into private schools.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr A.J. Dean): Order members! Madam Government Whip, you are being noisy and can be heard from the other end of the Chamber - the acoustics are good. I ask you to give your attention to the member for Murray-Wellington.

Mr J.L. BRADSHAW: I will repeat what I said, because I do not think the minister was listening when I paid him a compliment.

Mr A.J. Carpenter: I apologise.

Mr J.L. BRADSHAW: I can understand how that occurred, because he was being distracted by one of our members, so that is -

Mr A.J. Carpenter: Your Whip.

Mr J.L. BRADSHAW: No, I am the Whip.

Mr P.G. Pendal: If you were paying him a compliment, say it again; he needs one.

Mr J.L. BRADSHAW: I was paying him a compliment, but later I am also going to give him a bit of a backhander.

Mr A.J. Carpenter: I don't mind if you do. Step outside and I'll sort you out!

Mr J.L. BRADSHAW: As I said, one of the difficulties in the government school system today is the number of disruptive students and the number of students with learning disabilities. The minister has told us that he has put more resources into the schools to deal with this. That is important, because we must try to get those kids back on the straight and narrow. A few years ago when the Waroona District High School was having trouble, I tried to get a range of people together to try to overcome the difficulty. I said to the district director of education at the time, Peter Short, that we needed to get somebody into the school to deal with these students on a more

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personal or one-to-one basis. He said, "If you think you've got troubles in Waroona, I can tell you that Mandurah has a lot more problems than you guys have got in Waroona." It is one of those matters that needs to be addressed. When these people come out of school, it is important that they have learnt and that they are more disciplined so that they will be better citizens in our community, because many of those people who are not educated will probably be the ones who go off the rails and become the bad people in our community. It is important to provide those schools with that help. As I said before, one of the reasons that people take their children away from government schools is the presence of these disruptive students. These people want to send their children to schools in which they believe they will get the best education because they will not be disrupted by those sorts of students. If we can get those schools and those disruptive students back on track, it will go a long way towards keeping students in the government school system, rather than running off to the private schools.

The professional development that should result from the establishment of this new registration board will go a long way towards helping teachers in the teaching profession deal with some of the situations that are becoming increasingly evident in our schools; that is, students with learning disabilities and students who are disruptive.

I believe the size of the board is ridiculous. It is crazy to have 19 people on a board. There should be a maximum of seven or nine members. The board will be overburdened with 19 members. If everybody spoke, people would never get out of a board meeting. I do not believe it is necessary to have that many people on the board. The minister should look at the number of people on the board and bring it down to a more manageable size.

What will happen if a teacher says he does not want to undertake professional development? Will there be a penalty for those teachers, or will they just keep going along in the system? With the number of teachers there are, I am sure that not everybody will want to undertake professional development, even though I believe it is very important. Most professions these days have professional development courses for people to upgrade their skills. It is important for teachers to do the same thing. However, we must make sure that teachers are adequately reimbursed. I am talking now about reimbursing them in different ways. One way is to reimburse them in the pay packet in a reasonable way so that the top students will be attracted to take up the teaching profession. The profession seems to be slipping behind. Even though the minister says that teachers are well paid, compared with some of the other jobs that are around, they are not that well paid. It is a pretty onerous job, and probably one of the most important jobs in our society, because these teachers are training people in our country to be leaders of the future. That is in the hands of the teaching profession. Therefore, it is important that the best people are in the job, and they must be adequately recompensed for doing it. I can understand the Government's problem with budgets and trying to make it fit the bill. On the other hand, we must attract the best people into the job. Therefore, the remuneration for the teaching profession must be increased to a reasonable level. Also, if there is to be professional development, there must be a system under which teachers in the country who may need to come to Perth are looked after and receive some funding to offset the costs involved in doing that. With professional development, it is important to go down that route.

I have some problems philosophically with setting up more boards and more bureaucracy. These boards are set up. I believe it has been said that it will cost about \$50 or \$60 for each teacher to be registered with the board. However, these bureaucracies grow, and the next thing the cost increases from \$50 or \$60 to \$80 or \$100; it keeps growing like Topsy. Therefore, I have a concern in that respect.

Another problem that I have is that the minister keeps talking about funding for private schools and government schools. I get the impression that for some reason the minister hates private schools. He goes down the route of using selective figures to attack private schools about their funding. He cannot just say that the federal Government gives too much money to private schools; he must look at what the State Government gives them as well. Unfortunately, I could not find the figures before this speech today. However, if the minister looks at what the private schools get -

Mr A.J. Carpenter: I am looking very hard. You invited me to look, and I am looking.

Mr J.L. BRADSHAW: At what?

Mr A.J. Carpenter: At what the State Government gives them. I am looking very hard.

Mr J.L. BRADSHAW: Okay. That is good.

Mr R.F. Johnson: That means it won't be much - for the private schools, that is.

Mr J.H.D. Day: No, it means that he is thinking about a reduction, and the independent schools system would be very interested in that policy.

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Mr J.L. BRADSHAW: Is the minister looking at decreasing the amount paid to the private schools?

Mr A.J. Carpenter: I didn't say that.

Mr R.F. Johnson: He said he is looking very hard.

Mr J.H.D. Day: What did the minister mean?

Mr A.J. Carpenter: I was responding to a semi-inane comment.

Mr J.L. BRADSHAW: Whose - mine?

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr A.J. Dean): Will the member for Murray-Wellington address his comments through the Chair, please.

Mr J.L. BRADSHAW: The minister is using selective figures to say that the private schools are getting too much money out of the system, when in fact my memory of it is - I am going only from memory - that the private schools get something like \$2 000 per student per year from the Government, compared with about \$6 000 or \$8 000 for a government school student. From memory, it is in that vicinity, but the situation may be even worse.

Mr J.H.D. Day: I mentioned the figures earlier. The cost of educating a student each year in a government primary school is nearly \$9 000, and nearly \$12 000 a year in a government secondary school.

Mr J.L. BRADSHAW: The Government pays about \$2 000 or less per student to the private schools. When the minister goes to other places and talks about funding, he talks about federal funding. I do not know whether the federal funding is out of kilter. However, I believe it is probably time that the two figures were put together and one person administered the funds that go to the schools.

Mr A.J. Carpenter: Fair go!

Mr J.L. BRADSHAW: What does the minister mean by saying "Fair go"? The idea of the feds coming in and there being an education department and all that sort of rubbish is duplication and a waste of funding.

Mr A.J. Carpenter: They should give it all to the State; I agree.

Mr J.L. BRADSHAW: That is what I am saying.

Mr R.F. Johnson: But then the private schools wouldn't get any more, because the Labor Government is not prepared to give them any more.

Mr J.L. BRADSHAW: Of course they would not, but at least the minister would not run around telling untruths about how much more the private schools get than the government schools, because one set of figures would go out.

Mr M. McGowan: Fair go!

Mr J.L. BRADSHAW: That is a fact. Letters from Laurie Eastwood, who I think is the Catholic schools association chief executive officer -

Mr A.J. Carpenter: No, he is with the Parents and Friends Federation of Western Australia - not the CEO. The CEO is embarrassed by those people and dissociates herself from them.

Mr J.H.D. Day: He is the director of that federation.

Mr A.J. Carpenter: Yes.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members, this is not the time for a private conversation. Comments should be addressed to the Chair.

Mr J.L. BRADSHAW: I need to ask the minister: he is saying that Laurie Eastwood's figures are wrong.

Mr A.J. Carpenter: Absolutely.

Mr J.L. BRADSHAW: That is interesting. Okay. I will chase that one up.

Mr A.J. Carpenter: Everybody acknowledges, year after year, that his figures are wrong, but it does not stop him, so what's the point?

Mr J.L. BRADSHAW: Why would Laurie Eastwood want to tell lies?

Mr A.J. Carpenter: Why would anyone else want to tell lies?

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Mr J.L. BRADSHAW: I have never heard anyone else refute it. Another problem I have with the minister is his not visiting schools in Liberal members' electorates. He rabbits on in this Chamber that the member for Perth is a great guy and that he invited the minister to Highgate Primary School. The minister says that he visited other members' schools, but when I invited him to a school in my electorate he said he might visit it at the end of the year. That year has come and gone. I wrote to him again this year, but is he coming? No.

Mr A.J. Carpenter: My children go to a school in an electorate held by an Independent Liberal member. I go there frequently.

Mr J.L. BRADSHAW: So the minister should - as a parent.

Mr J.H.D. Day: Did you say that Harvey is too far to go?

Mr J.L. BRADSHAW: I did not ask him to go as far as Harvey; I asked him to go to Pinjarra.

Mr A.J. Carpenter: I have been to the Harvey Agricultural College.

Mr J.L. BRADSHAW: I did not ask the minister to visit Harvey; I asked him to visit Pinjarra.

Mr A.J. Carpenter: In fairness, the previous Minister for Education attended a lot of schools. My record is about 100 a year. I am getting up towards 300. I will get there. If you guarantee that I will be the education minister for another eight years, I will visit every government school in Western Australia.

Mr J.L. BRADSHAW: When Carmen Lawrence was the Minister for Education, I asked her to visit the schools in my electorate. I asked her to travel further than I have asked the current Minister for Education and Training to travel; I asked her to go to Boyanup and Capel, and she was there in a flash.

Mr A.J. Carpenter: It must say something about our respective workloads.

Mr J.L. BRADSHAW: That is right. One of the problems I have is that the Pinjarra Primary School -

Mr A.J. Carpenter: You were able to influence her more than you can influence me, my friend.

Mr J.L. BRADSHAW: The minister is right. I wonder what he does all day. It is important that the minister visit Pinjarra Primary School because some of the classrooms are a disgrace. I am surprised that some of the teachers have not revolted and refused to teach in the classrooms.

Mr A.J. Carpenter: I will give the member another little titbit. I think I am right in saying that I get regular feedback from Pinjarra Primary School because my nephew is a teacher there.

Mr R.F. Johnson: Isn't it about time you visited him?

Mr A.J. Carpenter: I don't like him.

Mr R.F. Johnson: The member for Murray-Wellington might pass on that message!

Mr A.J. Carpenter: I said I do not like him enough.

Mr J.L. BRADSHAW: He obviously is not teaching in the classrooms to which I refer. Some of the classrooms are bad there, but -

Mr A.J. Carpenter: He reckons it's paradise.

Mr J.L. BRADSHAW: The teachers at the school are fantastic and do a great job. I was there this morning and talked to go the acting principal, Rob Davis. He told me this morning that he did not get the substantive position and will probably go back to Darkan next year.

Mr A.J. Carpenter: To make sure I have the right school, what is the substantive principal's name?

Mr J.L. BRADSHAW: I do not know; he has not been there yet.

Mr A.J. Carpenter: I mean the previous principal.

Mr J.L. BRADSHAW: His name is Allan Morcom.

Mr A.J. Carpenter: My nephew definitely teaches there. I do not want to embarrass them all by turning up.

Mr R.F. Johnson: Does he have the same name as you?

Mr A.J. Carpenter: I think he might be on strike tomorrow.

Mr J.L. BRADSHAW: I was told this morning when I was at the primary school that probably two-thirds of the teachers would go on strike. I do not know whether he is part of the two-thirds or the one-third. The minister will find out in due course.

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Pinjarra Primary School is a great school. Another problem with the school is that its numbers are growing like crazy. Currently, it has about 640 students. There are a heap of transportables as well as third-grade classrooms. The library and the play areas are too small for the 640 students. The school should be knocked down and a new school built in Pinjarra and the Yunderup-Ravenswood area because that area is growing substantially and a new primary school is overdue.

The Opposition supports this Bill. However, the size of the board is too big. It is ridiculous for it to have 19 members. I cannot imagine that anybody with half a brain would even consider having 19 members on the board; it is crazy. It will take days for the board to make any decisions. It is about time some commonsense came to the fore and the board membership was reduced to a reasonable size.

**MR M. McGOWAN** (Rockingham - Parliamentary Secretary) [8.34 pm]: In making a few remarks about the Western Australian College of Teaching Bill, I congratulate the minister on an excellent piece of legislation. It is landmark reform. I am pleased that the Opposition supports this Bill because the Bill deserves the support of this Parliament on behalf of the teaching community and the students of this State.

I come to this debate with some bias. My mother, wife, brother, sister-in-law, father-in-law and mother-in-law have either worked or are working in schools. I grew up in a family of teachers. I attended a public school at which my mother taught, which I would not wish upon anybody - not the fact that it was a public school, but attending the school at which one's mother is a teacher is not the most pleasant experience. I have some knowledge of the teaching profession.

It has always struck me that the teaching profession has not had a professional body, as have other professions. Members of this Chamber include dentists, lawyers, pharmacists, engineers and members of the armed forces. All those professions have professional bodies that guide their conduct, provide them with ethical standards and advice, and monitor the profession to ensure that standards are upheld for the benefit of the customers of the profession.

The key to this Bill is the pursuit of excellence in education. It is not just for teachers, although they are an important component of the education system. The Bill is for the benefit of the students, who are the most important part of the education system. Lifting the standard of the profession is about lifting the standard of teaching for students. The pursuit of excellence, particularly in education in public schools, which more than 70 per cent of the school population attend, is one of the most important things that a Government can do. Any Government that pursues this issue is doing its job on behalf of the people of the State. The pursuit of excellence has been a hallmark of this Government. The pursuit of making standards better for kids at school is the essence of what a modern Government should be about. If members ask anyone around the world what is the most important issue for Governments and what defines a good Government, a good society and a good community, they will be told that it is education. The British Government talks about knowledge and education. The smart people in the Australian Commonwealth Parliament talk about knowledge and education. The Japanese, who have a successful economy, talk about knowledge and education. That is what matters for the future. In 100 years much of what we do here will have been forgotten and superseded. However, creating a good education system upon which to build is crucial for future generations. It is not about the next election; it is about the next generation. That pursuit of excellence through the College of Teaching, through literacy and numeracy programs, the reduction in class sizes, and discipline and behaviour management, is one of the most important things we can do.

Parental involvement in the education of their children is also tied to the pursuit of excellence. If we do not address these matters in public schools, Australia will end up with a situation similar to that in the United States. The eastern and western seaboard of the United States have a two-tiered education system. Public education is not universal. Families with means on the east or west coasts of the United States do not send their kids to public schools; they send them to private schools. That has been the trend in the big cities of the United States and Britain. We must put in place measures to ensure that our system of education concentrates on excellence and is admired throughout the world. The Japanese have made sure that Japan has a universal system of education to which everyone can go to receive a high standard of education. That is why this reform is so important. It will ensure that teaching is an admired profession and that teachers have ethical and professional standards. This is such an important reform for creating a universal and decent education system that is admired around the world.

It needs to be acknowledged that this is an achievement of this Government. I noted that in one or two of the earlier speeches there was a little rewriting of history. It was said that it was other people's doing. I recall the history of this. I was here during the last term of government. This is an idea of this minister and this Government. This mechanism will put in place the best college of teaching in Australia. It will be replicated in

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other States because it is the best model and best arrangement. This legislation deserves our support. It will dramatically increase the status of teaching and therefore the quality of education for our children. We should congratulate this minister on this fine piece of work.

**MR R.F. JOHNSON** (Hillarys) [8.42 pm]: I shall try to be brief, but I do want to make some comments on this Bill. It was very interesting listening to the member for Rockingham. He accused people on this side of the House of rewriting history, but I think some of the comments he made did that. The essence of this Bill goes back to the coalition Government days.

Mr M. McGowan: Rubbish! It does not; that is wrong.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: The member should talk to the bureaucrats who are in the Speaker's gallery. They will tell him that the essence of this Bill came from the Department of Education to the previous Minister for Education in the coalition Government, who is now the Leader of the Opposition. The previous Minister for Education was looking to introduce the legislation. He put the idea out for public consultation and for consultation in the education sector. Had he had the opportunity, he would have introduced the legislation. As I understand it, the legislation before the House today has been changed quite dramatically in some areas. I will not oppose the Bill, but I do not support it 100 per cent, because I believe the Government has made some changes which are not in the best interest of education. Education is supposed to be there for the pupils and students.

The member for Rockingham referred to the parents' contribution to education. They play an important role, which I will come to in a moment. First, I want to express some concern that we may end up with a Labor Government, union-dominated quango. At the end of the day, the unions will be represented in the majority. I believe there will be nine ministerial appointees. As there is a Labor Government and a Labor minister, some of those will be members of the State School Teachers Union of WA or unionists from some other area.

Ms A.J. MacTiernan: Reds under the bed, reds on the board!

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: There will be reds under the bed for sure. There will be 10 other elected members. The members of the two unions involved will be far more organised than the other members of the board. They will ensure that the board is inundated with union members. It will be another union organisation at the end of the day because the unions will have the majority of members on the board.

I believe that the shadow Minister for Education has said that the chairman of the board should be an independent person who is appointed by the minister. He should appoint -

Mr A.J. Carpenter: Is that not inconsistent with what you have just said?

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: Not at all, because I would hope that a decent minister would appoint a credible chairman, not somebody selected by the unions. For the minister to retain credibility, he must appoint the best person for the job and, ideally, somebody who is independent from the union movement but who has a lot of expertise in education. I believe that would be a bonus for the board.

The member for Rockingham spoke of an important issue earlier, when he said that parents have an important role to play in education. There are some excellent teachers in Western Australia. Some friends of mine are teachers. I believe they do a tremendous job. The overwhelming majority of teachers do an excellent job. However, the odd duff one does not do a very good job. Such teachers have been to university and have graduated, so they automatically get a teaching job through "Silver City". My youngest two children, who went to a school in the northern suburbs, had great difficulty with one of their subjects because the teacher could hardly speak English, or an English that could be understood by the students. My children used to come home and say that the teacher used to get cross because they could not understand her.

Mr A.J. Carpenter: She didn't have a Cockney accent?

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: That is a very flippant remark. The minister goes to England looking for teachers to come here. At least they speak English. It may be with a Cockney accent, but that is nothing to be ashamed of. The problem is that if some teachers have difficulty speaking English, they provide no service to our children. It was very difficult to get that teacher moved.

Mr A.J. Carpenter: Under the provisions of the Bill teachers are required to be proficient in English.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: To whose standard? There are different degrees of proficiency. I want Western Australia to have the best possible teachers. I believe that teachers who excel in their subjects and work very hard should be paid more. Maths and science teachers are in short supply and always have been. How could we attract more maths and science teachers? It would be by paying them more. However, that is not acceptable to the teachers

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unions. Both the minister and I know that. They believe there should be one level for teachers, whether they be maths and science teachers or cookery class teachers. I say that with no disrespect to cookery class teachers, but they do not undergo the intense training or have the university degrees that are required by maths or science teachers. We lose maths and science teachers because they are paid more money in the commercial world. I believe that levels must be raised and that there must be different levels for different teachers, but that is not Labor Party or union philosophy. The Labor Party and the union movement like to bring everybody down to the same level rather than move some people up. It has always been the same. We are looking at communism, because socialism is a mild form of communism. The minister needs to look at trying to raise the standards. He is saying that he is doing that with this Bill, but he is not prepared to put his money where his mouth is; he is not prepared to pay maths and science teachers the money that they should be getting.

We want to be the clever country. We can be clever at cookery, needlework and other skills - I say that with no disrespect to those teachers, because they do a good job - but if we want to be the clever country, we must be clever in maths, science and information technology. That is where there will be more and more job opportunities in the future. That is where we have problems. We should be looking at those areas and at engineers, planners and so forth. My concern is whether people who have that sort of expertise will come into the education profession. Unless they are accredited by the board that will be established under this legislation, they will not be employed. They may be experts in one of the areas I have mentioned. Even in the sports world there may be a fantastic cricket coach, but unless he has appropriate qualifications, he will not be accredited under this legislation unless he gets a special dispensation. However, if somebody down the road is a teacher and he is just okay at teaching cricket, he will get the job first. Is that the best thing for our children? Surely we want the best possible teachers for the Department of Education.

I will return to something that the member for Rockingham said. He brought up a very important point about parents' involvement in education. I am a firm believer that if we want the best principals and teachers, we must let parents have some involvement. I am a great believer in a system that has governing bodies for schools. It does not have to be for one school; a governing body can cover two or three primary schools or high schools in an area. That requires involvement from parents, teachers and active people prepared to serve on the body. The governing bodies draw from people who live in an area. The system is still used in the United Kingdom. It works very well. A governing body is responsible for employing a school principal. As such, it wants the best possible principal for a school. It is not prepared to take a substandard principal who might have done a few years in the country and all the rest of it. Parents play a very important role in the governing bodies because they want the best possible principal. The best person to instigate professional development for teachers in a school is the principal. After talking to the deputy principal and heads of department, a principal will very often say that teacher A or B needs professional development in a specific area. The principals are hands-on; they are there every day of the week when a school is open. They are the people who should recommend professional development for teachers, not someone in "Silver City" or a board that will have 19 members. A board with 19 members reminds me of the committee that tried to design a horse and ended up with a camel! It is too many people. As my colleague the member for Murray-Wellington said, I would not want to be on a board of 19 members. A person would be there all day and night if everyone wanted some input. The board meetings would go forever. The board does not need that number of people. Boards of that size do not work; it is too many people. I suggest a board half that size would be better because it will get far more work done and get far better outcomes than a board of 19 people. I suggest that the national union of teachers has had quite a bit of input to this Bill. Am I correct in saying that?

Mr A.J. Carpenter: All the stakeholders have been consulted about the board and the representatives on it, including the teachers union, parents and the Catholic Education Commission - everybody.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: The teachers union obviously speaks to you as the Minister for Education and Training.

Mr A.J. Carpenter: In relation to this Bill?

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: Yes.

Mr A.J. Carpenter: No, I do not believe they have.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: Have union representatives not spoken to the minister?

Mr A.J. Carpenter: I do not believe they have. As the member can appreciate, we have talked about lots of other things.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: But not this Bill? I find that amazing.

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Mr A.J. Carpenter: I have tried to give the member an accurate and direct response. I have spoken to the interim chair and the people on the interim board. When we were in opposition I talked to a lot of people at that stage. I will get to that later when I explain the origins of this legislation.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: I hope that when the minister does he will reflect that the origins of this legislation were under the previous Government, but in a different Bill from the one before the House today. I have laid out my concerns clearly. There is nothing wrong with having a place of excellence for teachers; we need one. However, I believe the minister is not going about it the right way. He is creating a massive board of 19 people that will be dominated by union members. The minister will inherently have problems with it, whether it is a Liberal minister or a Labor minister. We have a Labor Government with the biggest problems I have seen since I have been a member of this place. There are strikes and pay demands everywhere. There is so much anti-Labor Government feeling at the moment that it is about as welcome as something quite unpleasant. The minister will have problems in the future.

The other point touched on is that the register will ensure that no paedophiles get through the net; there will be checks on every teacher. A register of teachers with a tick against their name will be kept, whether they originate from this or another State. It will be a very expensive exercise just to ensure that paedophiles or any teachers who should not be teaching for whatever reason - such as allegations of paedophilia or whatever - do not teach. The Department of Education and Training in "Silver City" could do that. There is no need to set up a board just to do that. I accept that it is extremely important to have in our primary and high schools only teachers who are well qualified and are the types of teachers we want in our schools. We cannot ever allow the situation in which children are at risk from teachers who have black marks against their name in that area.

Another area of concern that will be unpopular with teachers in the future is the cost of registration. However, I believe that the first two years of registration will be free. Is that correct?

Mr A.J. Carpenter: Until 2006.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: Two more years. After that, the cost will be between \$50 and \$75. That is the optimum cost of registration. That is another impost on teachers. Teachers complain that they do not have enough money to live on today. If they must pay between \$50 and \$75 - it may be \$100 to \$150 by the time it comes into play, as such costs never go down - that will generate a heck of a lot of money. It will be very interesting to see where the money goes. In other areas in which there have been problems, such as the Hairdressers Registration Board, it has been shown that they do not work. That is why ministers from both sides have looked at abolishing them. That is why the Attorney General has introduced the SAT Bill.

Mr A.J. Carpenter: The member has reservations, but does he agree that setting up the college is a positive thing in general terms?

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: In general terms, I think that the board is too big.

Mr A.J. Carpenter: What you think should be the cost of registration? Is \$50 too much? Throw a figure at me.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: I do not necessarily think there should be any charge for registration.

[Leave granted for the member's time to be extended.]

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: Ideally, registration for our teachers should be free. Alternatively, there should be a nominal fee. A fee between \$50 and \$75 does not sound too bad now, but it will be more than that when it comes in. It will go up to \$150 or \$200 as time goes by. That is the problem with quangos that Governments set up. If the quango is too big - this one will have 19 members - the cost of servicing the members will be paid for by the teachers. The minister will find that the teachers will not be very happy about that. It might be good from the union point of view but teachers who are not hardened union members and just want to get on with the job of teaching children to the best of their ability in a conscientious way will not want to spend \$50 to \$75 or \$100 to \$150 or more as time goes on. They will not like that, and they will not like the minister for doing it. My suggestion to the minister is that he should consider some amendments to the Bill. I am not sure whether the shadow minister in this House or a member of the Opposition in the other House will move some amendments to this legislation that will cover some of these issues. The number of board members should be reduced, which would reduce the union influence within the board and the cost of the board. Will the chairman of the board be paid in accordance with the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal?

Mr A.J. Carpenter: I think that the details of the chairman's or the director's remuneration will be established by the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal.

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Mr R.F. JOHNSON: Exactly. That is how I presumed it would happen. I suggest that the chairman of a board such as this would probably be on quite a reasonable salary. Once again, that will be a cost to the taxpayer and to teachers. For the first two years that cost will be borne by taxpayers, because teachers will not pay any money for registration. After that, I assume teachers will cover the cost of the board in some roundabout way. It will be very interesting.

My final point is that I am concerned about the provision for teachers to appeal any action that the board might take against them. In line with the Government's policy of introducing the State Administrative Tribunal as a place to which people can take their appeals, I suggest that that is probably the most appropriate place for people to take their appeals against decisions of the Western Australian College of Teaching. If the College of Teaching were to make a ruling against a teacher that adversely affected that teacher, there must be a line of appeal. At the moment I think it would go to the judicial system, at a cost to the teacher. It would be far more appropriate for teachers to have access to the State Administrative Tribunal. Everyone else who wants to appeal against the decision of a government organisation will go to the State Administrative Tribunal. Why not be consistent and have those appeals go to the same place as those concerning other government organisations?

I do not intend to oppose the Bill but I do not support it 100 per cent in its current form. I hope that the minister will accept some amendments that will be made by opposition members, either in this or the other Chamber. At the end of the day, we want what is best for our children, students and indeed also for our teachers, because they deserve the support that this Government is not giving them at the moment.

Mr A.J. Carpenter: Before you sit down, I may have misled you on the salary of the chair. The proposed salary is \$12 000 and is to be paid by the College of Teaching. I will give as much detail as I can about the salaries during the consideration in detail stage.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: It is not a be-all and end-all matter. If the chair is doing a lot of work, he should be paid commensurate remuneration for doing that job. What concerns me is that someone must pay for that. The cost of members who attend board meetings and incur expenses will have to be met. Nineteen members will incur a lot more expense than nine or 10 members. Initially, the taxpayer will meet that cost. Eventually, one assumes that teachers will pay for that through their registration fee.

Mr A.J. Carpenter: It will be self-funding.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: Because it will be self-funding. I do not have a problem with it being self-funding, but we should not put what could be a large impost on our teachers, the vast majority of whom already do a great job. We should not be strapping them up for the sorts of fees that I believe are not appropriate for them to pay. They have gone to university and done all the hard yakka to get where they are. If they become good teachers, we should reward them and not charge them for the fact that they are teachers.

**MR M.J. BIRNEY** (Kalgoorlie) [9.04 pm]: I am pleased to add my comments to the Western Australian College of Teaching Bill 2003. Unlike most members in this place, in relative terms it was not all that long ago that I went to school, so I guess I feel mildly qualified to say a few words about this Bill.

I would like to pay the Minister for Education and Training a rather rare compliment. I compliment the minister for the way in which he is dealing with this Bill. I have noticed the minister watching very carefully and intently and listening to opposition members while they make their speeches. From time to time he has taken the odd note or two. At least at face value, the Minister for Education and Training appears to be taking a keen interest in the words that are being expressed by members of the Opposition. I congratulate the minister for that. As I said, I have noticed that he has taken down a few notes.

Mr A.J. Carpenter: I have written down that bit!

Mr M.J. BIRNEY: I am sure the minister has. That is good. Some ministers in this place from time to time simply want to ram through their legislation and are not interested in taking on board any comments from anyone, regardless of their political persuasion. At face value at least, it appears that the Minister for Education and Training is not one of those ministers.

This Bill provides members with an opportunity to speak rather broadly about the education system and some of the trials and tribulations that are faced by teachers in Western Australia today. One issue that concerns me greatly is the resources that are provided to teachers to actually teach children on a day-to-day basis. I refer particularly to the resources provided to teachers who are new to the game; that is, those who are in their first year of teaching. I am absolutely astounded and even shocked to some extent that first-year teachers, who are new to the game, are largely left to their own devices. I speak from personal experience because I know a number of people who are first-year teachers. A common thread comes through when one speaks to them. They have done all their schooling and have their degrees - they are qualified teachers - yet that does not necessarily

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hold them in good stead to properly conduct a class. They are largely left to their own devices. They front up on day one and ask themselves what to do; how will they teach the kids today? That surprises me. I thought that a new teacher would front up to work on day one and be given a heap of resources - things that a teacher can use on a day-to-day basis, whether they be multiple choice or overhead projector sheets, or ideas for essays or whatever. I do not know. I am not a teacher. I am astounded by the lack of support given to first-year teachers.

How do we know that some of those teachers are teaching the right things? They are given a broad curriculum to follow. I use the word broad advisedly. It is terribly broad. From time to time some people in the profession do not have the capability to teach children adequately. If the only requirement is that they must follow a broad curriculum structure, I fear that we might be turning out kids who have been taught less than adequately. Those first-year teachers need to be given a heap of resources. Every day they should be able to walk into the classroom and pull out one of these resources to use as that day's lesson. They should be able to do that in the knowledge that that resource is well and truly within the broad guidelines and that they are moving forward generally in providing the education of the kids they are teaching. Sadly, that does not happen. First-year teachers are left largely to their own devices, and must think up innovative ways in which to teach kids. What if they do not have the capacity to do that? Why does somebody not pool all the resources from around the State? The new Western Australian College of Teaching may well be able to do just that. The new College of Teaching could contact, over a long period, all the teachers it possibly could, and ask for their best three classroom resources. It might be a quiz, it might be an essay; I do not know. The best three resources from every teacher around the State could be collected into a library and put together into an easy-to-use pack for first-year teachers. The system at the moment is broken. Unless a teacher is fairly intelligent and on the ball, there is the risk of the children not being taught adequately as a result of teachers not being provided with adequate resources.

Another issue I have with teaching relates to my observation of some young people in my electorate, who have been turned out by the high school system. In my former business, I interviewed a lot of young people for the job of delivery driver or storeman. I was astounded over that time. Whenever I placed an advertisement for a young person, I would invariably get 15 or 16 applicants. Invariably, they would show up in thongs and board shorts, with earrings hanging out of their noses. They would never look me in the eye; they would look at the desk, or the roof, or somewhere else when they were applying for that job. Why are these young kids not being taught life skills? Why are they not being taught good solid English, and how to string together a good solid sentence? Why are they not being taught to look people in the eye when addressing them? Why are they not being taught to interact properly with people? As an employer, that means more to me than any academic record. Why are young people not being taught the basic skills of life? Why are we not saying to them that they should not front up to job interviews wearing board shorts and thongs? When I interviewed people for jobs in my business over a 10-year period, applicants were fronting up inappropriately dressed. They could not look me in the eye or string a good solid sentence together. It is a problem that needs to be addressed by our education system. We need desperately to arm our young people with life skills. It is all very well teaching them about ancient Egypt, and about sines, cosines and all that kind of thing, but if we do not teach them life skills, we are not teaching them anything. If a kid fronts up to my business dressed in board shorts and a pair of thongs and cannot look me in the eye and cannot string a sentence together, I do not care if he got straight A's; I will not be employing him. It is as simple as that. We need to look very closely at these things in our education system.

Teachers invariably become role models for young people, and it is vital that our teachers act accordingly. The overwhelming majority of teachers in our system do just that - they become excellent role models for young people. As I travel around schools, from time to time I see teachers who are inappropriately dressed. Some do not lend themselves to being role models. The member for Wagin alluded to it earlier. He said that the level of professionalism in some teachers has dropped away. I hope that the Western Australian College of Teaching will provide a new level of professionalism for teachers. All teachers should be required to wear a uniform. There are varying views about whether teachers would want to wear a uniform, but members should think of the professionalism and the patriotism that would exude from those teachers every day if they fronted up for work in uniforms, emblazoned with the logo of their school. I am sure the Minister for Education and Training would not disagree with me. It would simply be a matter of deciding whether teachers or the Government should pay for the uniforms. I know many people want to be individual in the way they dress, but there are also many people who do not like wearing their regular clothes to work. If they were given uniforms, it would take away the decision of what to wear to work, and preserve their normal clothes for other outings.

Ms A.J. MacTiernan: Have you considered that perhaps members of Parliament might benefit from wearing uniforms? Do you think it would be a good thing for members of Parliament?

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Mr M.J. BIRNEY: It might be helpful for the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure to wear a uniform. I can understand why she might want to wear a uniform. I can understand the minister's comment. If she wants to wear a uniform, I suggest she go right ahead and do so.

Ms A.J. MacTiernan: If teachers need to wear uniforms to be role models, should it also be necessary for members of Parliament?

Mr M.J. BIRNEY: Maybe it should. Just about every other work force around the country is required to wear uniforms. I employed 12 people and if any one of them showed up to my business on a Monday morning without a uniform, I would send him home. It exudes professionalism. It makes a statement in itself, and creates a team image and pride in the company. Why should that not apply to teachers? It would be fantastic. Most teachers are appropriately dressed, but there are some who are less than professional, and a uniform would rectify that immediately, not to mention that they would not need to wear their normal clothing. It is a good idea.

Probably the biggest single issue facing teachers in Western Australia is the issue of behavioural problems. Some teachers spend 90 per cent of their day dealing with disruptive kids at the expense of those who are actually there to learn. Some teachers are being abused daily. Some children simply will not follow the instructions of their teachers. Teachers are expending massive amounts of time and energy on those disruptive kids, and it must have an effect on the kids who are there to simply learn and get on with life. Something must happen in that area. A teacher cannot be required to spend 90 per cent of his or her time on five per cent of the children - those children who are determined to disrupt the class, are not interested in learning and are simply there to upset the teachers. Something must be done. The only way forward is to remove those children from the classrooms. I can tell all sorts of horror stories that have been related to me. A teacher would walk up to a young child and say "You are causing far too much trouble; I want you to go and sit outside". The child turns around and simply says no. There is just about no recourse for the teachers. The cane is gone. Teachers are required to jump over all of the bureaucratic hurdles these days to make these children see the error of their ways. The best thing that can happen for that class is for that disruptive kid to be taken out and put into a class for disruptive children, taught by a good, experienced, tough teacher; somebody capable of dealing with those disruptive children. They cannot be allowed to continually disrupt classes. That will be to the detriment of other kids in those classes.

I am happy to go on record and say right here and now that the cane should be reintroduced into Western Australian schools. When I was at school, I was scared stiff of getting the cane. These days some kids do not respect their teachers and the school environment. Some kids do not respect anything. However, they would respect the cane. A good touch up with the cane would sort them out fairly quickly. We have gone down the warm and fuzzy path of teaching kids the error of their ways. However, some kids simply cannot see the error of their ways. They have to be dealt with strongly and harshly and must be removed from their class. Perhaps a teacher should have the option of picking up the phone on his desk and ringing whoever it may be to say, "Come and get little Johnny out of my class because he is driving me and the rest of the kids mad and disrupting the class to the point that nobody can learn." All of a sudden someone would show up, collar little Johnny and take him to the disruptive kids' class, where kids can disrupt each other if that is what they want to do. That would give the other kids an opportunity to learn, which is why they attend school. That is the biggest single issue facing teachers today.

The pay dispute has been interesting to watch. A couple of days ago when I gave a talk to the kids at the Eastern Goldfields Senior High School, I spoke to a couple of teachers. Their feelings about the second offer that was made to teachers by the Government came through loud and clear. It has become very clear that the Government is attempting to buy off those in the upper echelons of the education system. Although it is holding firm on its three per cent wage offer, it has agreed to include a number of pay increments at the senior levels. Although senior teachers may have seven or eight increments, the Government has agreed to include another two or three pay increments - I will stand corrected if I am wrong - for senior teachers, presumably in the hope that once the senior teachers accept the pay offer, the junior teachers will follow suit. That offer is being seen for what it is - that is, inappropriate. I am sure that -

Mr A.J. Carpenter: Is it inappropriate to provide a better school environment?

Mr M.J. BIRNEY: It is inappropriate to buy off senior teachers in the hope that junior teachers will simply fall into line. That cannot be done. Given the difficulties faced by a first-year-out teacher, if anybody should be paid more, it is a first-year-out teacher, because he or she is thrown in blind. As I said earlier, those teachers are expected to teach a class without resources and backup. Teachers can do all the university courses in the world, but if solid resources are not available on a daily basis, they cannot teach classes adequately.

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I think teachers are probably more concerned with their working conditions than their pay conditions. They want more time to prepare lessons. I know teachers who spend hour after hour on a Saturday and Sunday preparing lessons for the next couple of days. They do the same thing hour after hour on Tuesday and Wednesday nights. That in itself is a significant issue. Some people begrudge teachers 12 weeks annual leave. I am happy to admit that I used to be one of those people. However, I am no longer one of those people because I know that many teachers spend the majority of those 12 weeks preparing lessons for the next term. Not too many of us spend the majority of our holiday period thinking about work.

[Leave granted for the member's time to be extended.]

Mr M.J. BIRNEY: I want to finish on the issue of public and private school funding. For some reason, the Labor Party is out on the hustings trying to paint the Liberal Party as the party that ploughs money into private schooling. Although the federal Government puts money into private schooling, figures reveal that it is a minimal amount. Notwithstanding that, if the federal Government pulled money out of the private school system, what would happen? There would be a massive influx into the state school system. Presumably, the Labor Party is looking to paint the federal Liberal Government as the pro private-school party because it thinks that everybody who sends their kids to a private school is rich and can afford to do so. Many parents simply want the best in life for their children and they are prepared to forgo other luxuries so that their kids have what they consider to be the best education. They are not necessarily rich and affluent people. They are hardworking parents who want the best for their kids. I leave members with that thought once again: if we were to pull every cent out of the private school system, there would be a massive influx into the public school system, to the point that it would simply collapse. Notwithstanding that, I am happy to support the Bill. The broad thrust of the Bill is good.

I congratulate the minister for the Bill and for his attentive attitude during the second reading debate. I know that some members have points of difference with some of the more technical aspects of the Bill. I will be very pleased to listen to those during the consideration in detail stage. This Bill is long overdue. Teachers should have a professional body. I am not sure that college is quite the right word for that body. Perhaps it should be called an association or a directorate. The term college conjures up an image of another school or a teachers' college. Nonetheless, I understand the broad thrust of the Bill, and it has my support.

**DR J.M. WOOLLARD** (Alfred Cove) [9.27 pm]: I give general support to this Bill. I am pleased that there was wide consultation with educational stakeholder groups and Western Australian teachers in the development of the Bill. I look forward to the minister giving the history of the Bill, because the Nurses Act 1992 and the Western Australian College of Teaching Bill are very similar. Although the minister stated that there has been wide consultation, I am a little disappointed that when the Bill got to the Government, that consultation fell down. The adoption of the State Administrative Tribunal Bill, which the Attorney General put on the Table a few weeks ago, will mean that this Bill will have to come back to this House for changes because it does not meet the standards that are now required by the various boards. It was not put together thoroughly.

The minister's second reading speech states that the Bill will promote and enhance the teaching profession, develop professional standards and values for teaching and ensure ongoing professional development. Unlike some members who have spoken on this Bill, I am pleased there was union involvement in the development of the Bill and that the board will comprise union members. The \$0.5 million that will be spent in this area by the Government until 2006 represents \$19 a teacher. Although it is hoped that the Bill will set standards in teaching, will teachers support and enforce those standards? Retention rates in the teaching profession, like the nursing and policing professions, are not there. Why are the retention rates not there? They are not there because the salaries are low and there is a lack of job satisfaction. Why is there a lack of job satisfaction? Let us consider the environment in which teachers work. It is all very well if teachers work at a new school in a newly developed area. However, some of the schools in my electorate submit to the Department of Education and Training the same lists of things to be developed and upgraded year after year. Those lists go to the department in the hope that a more appropriate teaching environment will be developed at the schools. However, the lists are sent back and the problems are not addressed. The basic requirements for some of those schools include, for example, covered assembly areas, decent toilet blocks, proper classrooms, art classrooms and music classrooms. Some of the schools in my electorate do not have all of those facilities.

Now, when a school requires some investment, this minister's solution is to sell off some of the school land and put that money back into the school. I believe that 19 schools are on the hit list to have their land sold so that the minister can, prior to the next election, build a few new classrooms or provide some facilities at the schools. However, the community does not want school land to be sold, especially the Melville Primary School site, because the suburb of Melville has something like three per cent public open space. That land was given to the Department of Education many years ago and now the minister wants to sell and develop it. After school, where

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will the children go to kick a football? The public open space will not be available at the school and the public open space for the community will not be there either. It is very sad that when a Government such as this comes into office on a platform of improving education, it does not indicate that it will do so by selling off school ovals. It is not happening to school land just in my electorate, because I have spoken to people from other areas and have been told that the hit list targets about 21 different schools.

It is good that this legislation has come to the Parliament and that registration standards will be set. However, the people in the Department of Education and Training have probably been working on this for many years. This Bill is similar to many of the other Bills that have come into this Parliament recently and been put on the Table without being finished off. I wonder how long it will be before this Bill comes back to the Parliament to be amended to fit in with the provisions of the State Administrative Tribunal.

This legislation will do some good things, but we must ensure that the teachers who are currently in the system stay in the system and that we attract more teachers to enter it. To do that we must ensure that the environment in which teachers work and students study is safe. That applies to not only the school environment but also the trip to and from school. A catholic primary school in my electorate had to fight very hard with this Government to get a 40 kilometre an hour speed zone on a main road outside the school so that parents would feel it was safe for their children to go to school. That school has the speed zone and it is now trying to get Main Roads Western Australia to monitor the speed of the traffic going past. I thought that that issue had been resolved. Another local primary school parent group contacted me this week to say that it has a problem. That school is situated on one side of Canning Highway and currently, before and after school, a traffic control warden is in attendance. I do not know whether you, Mr Acting Speaker, have driven along Canning Highway, but the traffic in the morning during the rush hour is very busy. It may not be quite as busy in the afternoon. The only reason cars stop where the children cross Canning Highway to get to this school is the traffic warden. Children who live in a suburb on the opposite side of the highway attend this catholic primary school. Those children have to cross Canning Highway where the traffic warden is situated, yet this Government is going to take that warden away. If you have not seen the situation yet, Mr Acting Speaker, come down and have a look. I have crossed the highway there at those times and I know that the cars will not stop for the children. There might be a hold-up because of a traffic jam further down the road, but if a child walks out onto the road when another car is coming from behind, there will be an accident.

The promises this Government has made with regard to education have not been met. The minister has also talked about increasing the school leaving age, yet we have not heard about the resources that will go into that area. We have not heard about new classrooms or money that will be set aside for new facilities for those children who will be asked or forced to stay on at school against their wishes. It is no good expecting them to stay in the same school environment that they have been in up to years 10 or 11 because many of them will not want to stay there. Unless the Government ensures there is some flexibility so that those children can do a certain amount of work as well as schooling, and unless facilities are available for them at the school where they can relax together when not in class, there will be big problems. Where will the money come from for these children who will be asked to stay at school? These are questions that I am sure this College of Teaching will be putting to this Parliament within the next year. As soon as the college becomes functional, it will say that it is all very well for the minister to talk about raising the age at which children can leave school, but where will the money come from? The Government is not putting the money into schools now. Teachers are not paid well, which is why they are leaving the profession, and they do not have job satisfaction because of the conditions under which they work. When children who do not want to stay at school are required to stay at school, that will cause more aggravation for the teachers. Yes, it is good to see a Bill that supports one aspect of teaching. However, it does not address the real issues confronting all those people who have children at school at the moment, such as the state of disrepair of and the satisfaction of teachers at these schools.

I will listen with interest to the minister's description of the history of this Bill. Although this Bill was one of the Government's pre-election commitments, like most of its pre-election commitments, it would have been as a result of meeting with various groups such as the Australian Education Union, which has probably been trying to get a Bill like this into the Parliament for many years. It is very disappointing that this Bill has come onto the Table before the Government has finished doing its homework on it, knowing that it will need to come back very soon for amendment.

**MR C.J. BARNETT** (Cottesloe - Leader of the Opposition) [9.42 pm]: I will not repeat much of what has been said. However, as the member for Darling Range stated at the beginning of this debate, the Liberal Opposition will support this Bill. The minister's second reading speech was deficient in the sense that it did not portray some of the history of this issue. I know that has been referred to, but I want to make sure that it is clearly placed on the public record. First, the concept of registration does have merit. It is common in all sorts of

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professional bodies to have some form of registration and recognition. It is true that in professions such as dentistry, psychology, nursing, architecture, auctioneering, building, land valuing and at one stage even beekeeping - I am not sure whether it still applies - people were required to be registered; so why not teachers?

Teachers registration is relatively common within Australia. Queensland and South Australia both have registration bodies. Victoria has a registration body for non-government teachers only. There is also a history in this State. In 1976, under the Government of Sir Charles Court, with Peter Jones as the then Minister for Education, the Teachers' Registration Act was passed by the Parliament, but it was repealed two years later. It did not succeed because there were all sorts of problems with definition, particularly over issues such as competence and public interest.

The issue had its renaissance when the School Education Bill was debated in this Chamber in June 1998. That Bill was replacing the previous legislation, which dated from 1928. During that debate the member for Churchlands presented a case in favour of the creation of a body for teacher registration, and in fact moved a number of amendments. At that stage I was not convinced by the argument. However, I maintained an open mind and, as Minister for Education, I undertook that I would review the position objectively and set up a process to examine the merits or otherwise of teacher registration. In keeping with that, a reference group was formed through the then Department of Education Services. It included government and non-government teachers, and staff from TAFE and the university sector. They prepared a discussion paper that provided the background to the issue, canvassed issues, and was designed to stimulate debate. That process in itself was effective. Something like 350 submissions were received, culminating in a panel discussion that I remember introducing. The panellists were Elizabeth Constable, member for Churchlands; Brian Lindberg, the then President of the State School Teachers Union of WA; Ron Dullard, who was the acting director of Catholic education; and some members of the reference committee were also involved. The point is that it was a process initiated by the member for Churchlands. I took it on as the Minister for Education without having made up my mind. However, I invited the education sector to form a reference group to put down the arguments for and against, and to then debate it within the education sector. Out of that there was broad consensus. There was a high degree of cooperation between government and non-government schools, teachers, school administrators and the university sector.

I do not think I need to state the benefits. However, it is important that we recognise the experience and qualifications of teachers, that we ensure the portability of qualifications, and that there is a consistency between schools across States and, indeed, internationally. It is also important that we promote the profession of teaching itself and that we help to build status, pride and community respect for teachers. Indeed, we should be talking more about careers in education rather than simply careers in teaching. Employers also have an important role in this. Indeed, they participated in the process. It is important that employers of teachers have a desire to promote standards and professional development, and to ensure that applicants and those employed are suitable in all respects.

There were also some other issues at the time. The issue of paedophilia had gained national prominence. No school system was free of that. As an anecdotal observation, in this State there were probably more serious problems within the non-government school sector than within the government school sector. However, the government school sector had good records of current and previous teachers. Indeed, during that period there was, firstly, the introduction of police checks for all new appointees to government schools, which was then followed by the non-government sector. There was then a review of all the files of existing and former teachers. Accusations and complaints that had been made were reviewed and monitored. That was an exhaustive task, with some 25 000 people on the state education payroll. The independent schools undertook the same sort of process.

I guess it was a three-pronged approach. There was a desire to recognise and enhance the status of teaching, to do practical things such as professional development, with uniformity and portability of qualifications, and also to deal with the safety and protection of children through a consistent and thorough process of checking for people who were unsuitable to be associated with and caring for children, given the paedophilia issues which had been around, particularly at that time, and which unfortunately have continued.

As part of it, there were some negatives, such as the cost to teachers or to employers, and concerns about whether there would be a layer of bureaucracy. Always in my mind - I know it has been raised in this debate - was the concern that although set up in good faith, a teacher registration body could become a de facto forum for industrial relations disputes. That is still a real danger, and I am concerned about that. If this body becomes a forum for arguing about issues such as this week's wage negotiation, it will not serve its purpose. The success or otherwise of this body will be determined by whether it raises the standard of teaching, the professionalism of teachers and the respect that the wider community has for the teaching profession. This must be all about

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making teaching more appealing to young people and in every sense raising the professionalism and community view of teaching and education as a whole. That is how it must be judged. I hope it succeeds. It has taken longer than I thought was necessary, given that a discussion panel had been formed and there was broad agreement about the nature of it. The previous Cabinet decided in November 2000 that it would proceed with what the then Government termed “the council of teaching”. Under our timetable, it would have been in place by 2002. The Government is some time behind that schedule. However, that does not matter as long as it is done well and correctly.

We must ensure that the college does not become an industrial forum. I agree with other members that this Government made a serious mistake by closing down the Centre for Excellence in Teaching before this body was established. The Centre for Excellence in Teaching was established and operated in Fremantle from the old Warden’s House outside the old Fremantle Prison. It was a modest organisation. It was designed to gradually develop professional development. It was not a big bang organisation. It helped teachers to commit to professional development and to engage the professional associations and provide cooperation between the Curriculum Council and the different sectors of the education system. It was about growing the culture of ongoing professional development. It was doing well. Thousands of teachers participated in it and it was gaining respect and recognition.

It was premature of the Government to get rid of that centre. I suspect it got rid of it because the previous Government had established it. It would have been more logical to have allowed that centre to continue and to become part of this College of Teaching. That was always the intention. It was an interim step towards the establishment of this body. It was a petty and short-sighted decision to close it. The Government has simply lost ground and time because of that. However, I hope this college succeeds. Teachers are broadly supportive of it. I hope it ultimately succeeds in its long-term objective of raising the status of teaching and the professionalism of teachers in Western Australia.

**MRS D.J. GUISE** (Wanneroo - Deputy Speaker) [9.51 pm]: As a former President of the WA Council of State School Organisations and as a former senior vice-president of the Australian parent body, I cannot begin to tell members how pleased I am to support this Bill. The Western Australian and Australian parent bodies had clauses in their policies regarding teacher registration long before the School Education Bill was debated in this place. We were passionate about the acknowledgment of teacher registration in this country. It was not a new concept; it was mooted in 1976 but was later repealed because it did not work at that time.

I am very happy to support the Western Australian College of Teaching Bill 2003, which will establish the Western Australian College of Teaching. It will provide membership for that college and it will recognise, promote and regulate the teaching profession in Western Australia. This is indeed a very happy day.

Members may well remember that the Senate Employment, Education and Training References Committee undertook an inquiry into the status of the teaching profession. It produced a report in March 1998 called “A Class Act”. I will refer to two parts of the report. At that time, teachers around the nation gave rather telling evidence to the committee about their perception of the status of the profession. The report says that there was a contradiction among teachers about their status at that time. On the one hand, they believed their work was important and they valued and strove for teaching excellence. However, on the other hand, they believed their skills were neither understood nor valued in the community, which accorded them a low status. This is an indictment of the status of the teaching profession at that time.

This excellent report made many recommendations, one of which was about the registration of teachers and the way forward. The committee believed that registration should provide a legal benchmark for the employment of teachers, whether in the government or non-government sector, because Governments have an obligation to all students, regardless of their location, to ensure that they are taught by properly qualified teachers. The committee also believed that serious attention needed to be given to the standards of professional practice and that particular concern should be given to those working in the area. I will not go into that in detail other than to say it was an excellent report that highlighted the need for us to do something about the teaching profession. It highlighted the need for teachers to regroup and for recognition of the work that goes on in our schools. There is a need to recognise the excellent work of the teachers in our schools and to regain the status of the profession, which is so important.

In those days, the parent body and the teachers union undertook a series of discussions and serious debate about those concerns and about the status of the profession. We encouraged the debate about teacher registration. In light of the need for teacher registration, it was indeed fortuitous that during the debate on the School Education Bill the member for Churchlands moved her amendment. As the Leader of the Opposition has quite rightly alluded to, although at that time there was some lukewarm feeling about how that would be established, at least

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the Government of the day conceded the point and provided an opportunity for a discussion paper to be commissioned. I was fortunate enough to serve on that reference group - the Teacher Registration Cross-sectoral Reference Committee. It had a rather varied membership. Its members did not always agree and they put forward different views. However, at the end of the day there was consensus. I commend the work of that group at that time. I very happily served on the committee.

The issue of paedophilia was prominent at that time. However, there was agreement among the committee members that it was a very narrow approach to deal only with a database that dealt with that issue. I am pleased to say that the committee's work was about a lot more than that issue. The Government is moving in a very good direction by establishing this college, which will recognise all the issues that are involved in the teaching profession.

The Bill deals with the important matters: the establishment of the college, the board of management, its functions and powers, the financial provisions and membership, who may teach in our schools, the registration of teachers, the limited authority to teach, and associate membership. They are all issues that the committee discussed and grappled with in its report. I will not go into that in detail because I am aware of the time. I was fortunate to be given this brief opportunity to speak.

I commend the minister for the work involved in taking this on board. I also commend all the people involved, including the union and the parent body in the early days, who hung on to the belief that this matter was important. I thank them for their contribution. I ask them to keep up their good work. I commend this Bill to the community; I hope it gets behind it and supports it 100 per cent.

**MR R.N. SWEETMAN** (Ningaloo) [9.57 pm]: I will be brief. I am the last member to speak before the minister replies. This is the last item we are dealing with tonight and many members are keen to go home. I agree with comments that have been made by other members during the debate. Certainly, we hope that the legislation works. We are all fair-minded and objective and hope it succeeds.

I rise to bring a country perspective to the debate. Undoubtedly other members, particularly the member for Wagin, have made points about country schoolteachers. I will not retrace some of the things he said. I will refer to circumstances which I consider unique but which are probably typical of situations in schools in small country towns throughout Western Australia.

If the minister is able to, in his summing up I would like him to give me some examples of how he thinks the college might advantage some of the country schools in Western Australia. Perhaps the minister could provide examples of schools in electorates other than mine, although I am very keen for him to highlight a school in my electorate. The minister has been to several schools in my electorate, which has 21 schools. Although schools in rural locations have their own degrees of difficulties or problems, they are not identical in each town. The minister is aware of that. Recently a brief reference was made to the situation at Meekatharra District High School. Many of the problems that teachers must endure are not specific to the classroom or the schoolyard. They apply to security at home and things like that. Whether they are teaching at the School of the Air or at Meekatharra, many teachers do not bother to unpack or completely unpack because they feel so threatened and intimidated by the environment that they cannot get out of the place quick enough. It is one thing to be idealistic, as the member for Rockingham said in his contribution, but we must be realistic as well. Few people in this Chamber are more idealistic than I. I am quite often whacked over the head in my electorate with a five-day old salmon called reality. People bring me back to earth and make me understand that we can all theorise and hypothesise as much as we like, but at the end of the day we must be practical in the way we go about business.

The Bill and the memorandum are silent on the very issues that we deal with on an almost day-to-day basis in most of the schools throughout my electorate. The second paragraph of the second reading speech reads -

The main emphasis in the Western Australian College of Teaching Bill 2003 is on its advocacy role on behalf of all teachers and the teaching profession.

I am keen to get a better interpretation of what the minister means by that. For example, will this Bill facilitate the employment of more male teachers? In many schools in my electorate, out of a complement of 20 teachers, 17 or 18 will be female teachers. It is not because male teachers do not want to go to the country, but because they are not in the system. If the proposed college achieves the desired outcome of lifting the status of the teaching profession, I guess the knock-on effect would be to make the profession more attractive to more people, including males, so that, hopefully, we can get more male teachers into country areas.

Five or six years ago an objection was lodged with the Equal Opportunity Commission. It related to incentives, accelerated promotion, salaries and things like that which were given to teachers who took country placements.

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The Equal Opportunity Commission upheld the objection. It was an enormous blow to people taking postings in country Western Australia, because many of the teachers thought that they would get stranded in the country if they accepted a placement. Many of the teachers who graduated from university were not in the queue of people who were prepared to accept country postings because they feared being ultimately isolated. Some of that fear has been overcome because the country incentives program has been repackaged to some extent.

How will the college register or not register a teacher? Who will it deem to be fit and proper people for the teaching profession? I have the greatest admiration for teachers generally, having met so many of them as a result of travelling around my electorate during my time as a member of this Parliament. Different teachers have different skills and different qualities. Before I was in this place, my two kids went to Carnarvon Primary School. A teacher there ended up leaving the profession. I admired him greatly; he had been a very good teacher who taught both of our kids two years apart but for the full year. I think it was in year 4 or 5 in the primary school. It was at a crucial time for our kids. Each also had another teacher who was highly qualified and of whom both his peers and other parents spoke highly. Our kids did not do quite as well with that teacher, but each was fortunate enough to jag in their next year of schooling the teacher who was not regarded anywhere near as highly and who, as I said earlier, ultimately resigned from the school. They were two very good teachers, but one was harassed to the point where he quit the profession because he was seen as a square peg in a round hole. That person is now driving a taxi in Carnarvon and has been for 10 or 11 years. It is a waste of a very good teacher. He is someone who did a great job and someone who, it would be said by parents, is a very good person. However, he would turn up at school in a T-shirt and board shorts. He was rough around the edges. He was a bit of a Barry Hall or a David Rhys-Jones. He was regularly before the tribunal, because he regularly had parents say that he spoke down to their child or he did something quite silly for a teacher, if we pigeonhole all teachers and have them stereotyped as certain types of people in the classroom and outside of it. He is a very decent person. I am not saying that he said anything inappropriate or that he assaulted or abused kids or acted aggressively towards them. On the face of it he was a very casual character, but he was a very competent teacher.

This is a very drawn out way of asking how those teachers will be looked after. I guess that the minister will say that it is up to the administration and such a teacher's peers to judge whether his performance is appropriate. From my point of view as a parent, he was a very gifted person. Our kids thrived under his tuition. I believe that even though he resigned, he was driven to do it. I wonder whether this college will come up with a similar scenario in the name of progress, lifting the status of teachers and being more professional. People like that need to be managed a little better. Perhaps at the end of the day, as with David Rhys-Jones and people like that, even their own team is entitled to give up on them if they have been reported too many times. However, I am questioning what measures and instruments are in place for ensuring that those types of teachers will be better looked after. Different schools quite often require teachers with different skills. People like the person to whom I am referring could fit a unique position in an education system, and under them kids could thrive. We cannot be too clinical and prescriptive in the way in which teachers will be assessed for registration.

What part will the college play in the evolutionary process in country areas? I have previously spoken to the minister about Carnarvon Senior High School. In brief, Carnarvon has a population of 7 000. It has all types of schools, including two private or independent schools and government schools. Around 100 to 120 kids graduate from year 7, but in the government senior high school in Carnarvon less than 20 full-time enrolled students are in year 12. Usually around three or four of those are studying TEE subjects. In Newman, where the population is less than half that of Carnarvon, just less than 70 students graduate from year 7 each year, but between 45 and 50 graduate from year 12. I want to know how this college will assist in the evolution and further development of country education, not just the personal development of the staff, which may mean that they fly to Perth for personal development during a holiday period or at designated times throughout the year. How will the college improve the circumstances of parents of students in Carnarvon? Quite often families leave Carnarvon after a student graduates from year 7. Many more leave when the kids are between years 8 and 10. Those parents who do not take their children away to put them into secondary education elsewhere will quite often send their kids away after year 7 or during years 8 to 10. How will the college arrest or intercept that cycle? In many country towns secondary education culminates in graduation from year 12. How will we recondition students and their parents through the primary school years? They are being conditioned from years 4, 5 and 6 on to leave the country after graduating from year 7 or shortly thereafter in order to get the best educational opportunities. It is far more than simply setting up a board of 19 people and saying that it will improve teaching as a profession and the status of teaching to make it more appealing for more people to go into it. It needs to do more than that. It must be more things to more people. I can see this being very convenient and helpful as far as schooling - primary, secondary and tertiary - goes in the metropolitan area and, perhaps, some of the major regional centres. There needs to be a mechanism built into the structure of nominating and

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electing people to the 19-member board that ensures there is adequate country representation or a mechanism by which the very real and unique situations in country Western Australia can be fed through to enable the board to deliberate on them. Members will be aware that groups of principals and deputy principals in regional Western Australia, particularly northern Western Australia, take comfort from each other's advice. There may be four or five schools within 400 or 500 kilometres of each other. It is a fairly regular occurrence for teachers, deputies and principals to talk to teachers in other schools to see how they are getting on. They tend to support each other. Quite often, usually on a term-by-term basis, they will drive to a common point to meet and talk through a range of personal development-related issues and things they want to take back to their schools and the department to address with the minister and the Government. There should be a weighting on the 19-member board to ensure that country teachers have the very real opportunity to feed information to the board.

I will speak about something I take great delight in doing in my electorate. I enjoy attending graduations and presentation nights. It tells me a lot about a school. I can visit schools during the year and attend assemblies and speak to staff, deputies and principals and have a great time. However, that does not always give the feel of what is going on. If I want to know how a school is going, I can do no better than attend a presentation or graduation night to see how well it is organised, the different types of things that are put on, and observe and speak to the students. That gives me some insight into how a school is operating and how efficiently it is functioning. Separate to that, it gives me the chance to meet the parents and citizens association. Almost without fail, a successful and viable school will have a very active parents and citizens association. There will be good parental support underpinning the efforts of teachers in a school. Something I used to do quite regularly, but not as much these days, was to drive past a school 30 minutes or an hour after a school had risen for the day. It is absolutely staggering to see the correlation between the schools that are doing well and the number of cars in the staff car park some time after school has finished for the day. It is a small thing, but interesting nonetheless, to see how quickly teachers want to leave the school environment at the end of the day. For a whole lot of different reasons in many areas, I can understand why some teachers want to be gone five minutes after school has finished. It is testament to the discipline and commitment that many teachers make to country areas that, quite often, an hour or an hour and a half after school has risen for the day, their cars are still in the car park. The teachers are still working on programs and providing extra tuition to students. Some of them work on the next day's program and things like that. Certainly country people are very grateful to have many of those teachers there. The communities in these various towns without fail support the staff and appreciate the contribution that teachers make not only to the schools but also to the community in general.

**MR J.P.D. EDWARDS** (Greenough) [10.14 pm]: I did not intend to speak in this debate but, having listened to other members, including my colleagues, I have decided to speak for two or three minutes. The member for Ningaloo has spoken very eloquently about many areas that I want to mention. As a country member, I hasten to add that I support the Bill and I congratulate the minister for bringing it into the Parliament. Obviously a lot of work on the Bill has been going on in the background for some years. The Western Australian College of Teaching is an excellent idea. However, I ask the minister to consider carefully the matter of country teachers and the importance of giving all the support that can be given to young people who go to the country to teach. There is no doubt that they are given support, but a few issues need to be considered and kept in mind in trying to attract people to country areas. Particularly important, as the member for Ningaloo mentioned, is the very strong support provided by the parents and citizens system. It helps enormously when teachers have a strong support group in the families of schoolchildren in country areas. The P&C association of a town in my electorate, Mingenew, has developed a way of attracting young schoolteachers. It comprises simple things such as having green grass on the lawn of the house that is provided to a teacher in country areas and, obviously, airconditioning in the house. An added attraction in Mingenew is the availability of fresh fruit and vegetables without having to go to the back of beyond for them. It is important that teachers are made aware of those services and that they will have good living conditions. Perhaps there is a role for local government to play. I am not sure whether it is envisaged that a member of local government will play a part on the board of management proposed in the Bill - to be honest I have not looked at it - but a local government representative on the board would not go amiss. Discipline was mentioned a little earlier, which is currently one of the greatest difficulties for teachers. I guess there is no easy answer to that difficulty; however, it is an issue that should be addressed. As I said, I am generalising because I intend to speak for only two or three minutes.

Not only is the teaching profession important to children in country areas but also it contributes very much to the growth in those areas. Perhaps it is a little tongue-in-cheek to say that many young female schoolteachers become the wives of farmers or businesspeople in those towns, consequently there is growth! Young male teachers who go to country areas also become sporting and football coaches. There is no doubt that it is of enormous importance to have those teachers in country areas and it is important in the view of country people that they get quality teachers.

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My reason for standing tonight and speaking briefly on the Bill is to say that every consideration and initiative that the Western Australian College of Teaching can develop to encourage young people to go to the country and be involved in teaching must only be a good thing for country areas. Again, I am aware that some very good schools have found it hard to attract teachers simply because of distance. It is also possible that a very important part of the message that is not getting across to young people is the availability of such things as fresh fruit and vegetables. With those very few brief words, I support the Bill.

**MR A.J. CARPENTER** (Willagee - Minister for Education and Training) [10.19 pm]: First, I thank all members who have contributed to this debate. Many issues were raised, and it may be advisable to address many of those as we go through the consideration in detail stage. However, to be fair to those who have contributed to the debate, I will try as best as I can to reflect upon and address the issues that have been raised, particularly those that are most pertinent to the legislation. The debate was an opportunity for members to talk in broad and general terms about education, and many issues that are extraneous to the central points of this legislation were raised. I am grateful that so many members contributed to the second reading debate. I am grateful for the cross-party and Independent support for this legislation, although there were varying versions of that support and different suggestions were made. In general terms, this legislation is broadly supported by all members of the Chamber.

It was an interesting sociological experience to listen to this debate and reflect on the history of events and so on. It is amazing how the effluxion of time colours one's memory of events and how the vantage point from which one has observed events impacts upon one's perception of them. We tend to place ourselves in the centre of events. I am one person who does that. When the School Education Bill came into this Parliament in 1998 I was not the spokesperson for education but I was an interested participant in the debate. I was a shadow minister for something else. I recall the contribution of the member for Churchlands, which related specifically to teacher registration. This legislation is much broader and is a bigger attempt to do something for the teaching profession than merely to provide teacher registration. When I became shadow Minister for Education I was interested in the positive impacts of teacher registration. I looked on the Internet for different versions of teacher registration around the world and came across the Ontario model. Essentially, that is the model before us. The relevant body is called the College of Teachers in Ontario. A couple of years later a discussion process was set up by the previous Government that involved all the different stakeholders. Of course, I was not a party to that. As shadow ministers we had to produce direction statements. I produced a direction statement directly relevant to this issue. Effectively, that is what we have here. The direction statement proposed a college of teaching. Shortly thereafter, following the process that the previous Government had set in place, it produced its own model, which was called a council of teaching. They were quite similar models. A couple of parallel processes have come together. There were different vantage points, contributions and objectives. It was an interesting process. From both sides and from groups and individuals from both inside and outside the Parliament, we have arrived at the point at which everybody thinks this is worth a go. Obviously, attempts will be made to amend the Bill and so on. Criticisms have been made of particular aspects of the legislation.

I will comment quickly on the different issues that were raised. I sincerely thank the shadow Minister for Education and Training. I thought his contribution was thoughtful - it reflected his personality - considered, well researched and, thankfully, essentially supportive. I am grateful for that. Everybody appreciates that the member for Darling Range has a genuine interest in education. He goes about his work meticulously and thoroughly. We disagree on some things, but that is life. He said that this is a significant piece of legislation. He proposes to move some amendments to the Bill, which we will get to during the consideration in detail stage. It is perhaps better to leave discussion on those points until then. In essence, he broadly led the Opposition's support for the Bill. I am very grateful to him. He said a couple of things about what the Western Australian College of Teaching should not try to be. I totally agree with him. This should not be a de facto industrial unit or union. If that devolves from the model the Government will put in place, it will have failed. That is the challenge for the people who will be on this board. It has to work. I am glad the Opposition supports this. We have created an organisation for teachers; it is all about teaching and it will be done by teachers. Other educators will be involved, but essentially it will be a professional organisation for teachers, about teaching, and done by teachers. The challenge is there for those people to make it work, now. They may fail, but I hope they do not. If they do fail, a five-year review clause permits us to come back and perhaps amend it.

I am not a supporter of the minister appointing the chair. That was suggested to me by a lot of people. My view is that this is their organisation; this is an organisation for educators. Let us give them the challenge of making it work. I will not be the Minister for Education ad infinitum and I do not want the responsibility for appointing a chair. It is much better that it be an independent chair. At the moment I have appointed people because an interim board is in place. I thank the members of the interim board, under the direction of Brian Lindberg. They have done a superb job. I will reflect upon the staff at the end of the whole process. I do not want to set up an

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organisation that the minister ultimately controls. That is the significant difference between this and other models. I guess I am foreshadowing to the member for Darling Range a lack of support for that amendment. It is important that we give some confidence to the profession. It needs to be uplifted. At the moment there is the Government or members of Parliament, the WA Council of State School Organisations, the parents' organisations and so on, and the State School Teachers Union. Who else advocates for education; who else advocates for teachers? The teachers union is an industrial organisation, as we are seeing at the moment. Every now and then ministers from both sides of Parliament get in, shout and bang the drum in support of education, but ministers and Governments come and go. We need to establish an organisation with longevity, which will survive the coming and going of different individuals. It is there for the purpose of uplifting education, promoting it, raising its status, raising the standards and qualifications of teachers, and doing all that sort of stuff that is much bigger than mere politics. A minister does not need to be overseeing it all. However, that is my view and I am pleased that that is the way the legislation has emerged in its final form.

I do not think there will be too much union influence. The member for Darling Range commented that he had that fear but that he had confidence in the people. I do not think it will happen. There are 19 board members - some people said that number will be unwieldy - but some will be appointed on the recommendation of the various stakeholders and the remainder will be elected. That is about the best we could do to ensure that one group of people did not control the board. However, some people might try.

I thank the member for Churchlands for her contribution and acknowledge that she was the first person to bring this to my attention during the debates in 1998. The then shadow Minister for Education, now the Treasurer, supported the member's views, as I recall. The member spoke about registration. This facilitates registration, but it is much bigger. The expectation is much greater and it touches on all the areas that just about every member has spoken about. The member thanked the interim board. I agree that they have done a great job. She spoke about the need to protect children and that this protection could be enhanced by registration. She said that we need to ensure the quality of teaching - yes, that is at the heart of this.

The member for Churchlands and others referred to the shortage of teachers. We actually do not have a shortage of teachers. We have shortages in particular areas. This Government recognises that and it has in place a series of initiatives to draw people into teaching, and particularly into maths and science. All sorts of incentives and scholarships are in place to attract men. We are working in an equal opportunity environment. Incentives are in place to draw men into primary teaching in particular, because that is where the critical shortage is.

This legislation does not provide for the issue of police clearances. I agree that we will get to that point one day. I took close note of what happened in Queensland. All sorts of other forces outside of the education domain impact here. They are more in the domain of the Minister for Community Development. We will reach a point in our society, sooner rather than later, at which everybody who works with children will need to have police clearance. It is unfortunate, but that is where we will be. When that moment arrives, this legislation will be consistent with it, because it allows the board to require a police clearance. I thank the member for Churchlands for her contribution and her involvement in the early stages of the debate.

As a former teacher, the member for Mandurah made some very good comments. He spoke of the necessity of enhancing the status of teaching and of encouraging more young people into the profession. He paid tribute to the interim board and the staff who have done so much to bring this legislation to fruition. I am very grateful for his support and for some of the commentary he has provided me with on this legislation. I am always prepared to accept advice.

The member for Wagin, like the member for Darling Range, does not have an education background. In this, he is like me. However, he comes up with some great ideas for education, in some areas that are not particularly related to this legislation. I have listened to some of his ideas, and we will try to bring them about. I thank him for his support. He also talked about the need to raise the status of teaching, and to ensure professional development. I agree with all that. Along with the member for Ningaloo, the member for Wagin acknowledged the special role that teachers play in country areas. The member for Wagin mentioned that Smart Start initiative in Broomehill, which is fantastic. There is so much talent in the teaching community. If it can be liberated and allowed to spread its wings, it can do fantastic things. Those people won a national award.

Some members raised the issue of the size of the board. It has 19 members. It is potentially unwieldy but there are so many stakeholders involved. I wanted to make it for teachers, so I wanted it to consist of a majority of practising teachers. Then there is the Department of Education and Training, the Catholic Education Office, the other non-government schools, the parents and friends and parents and citizens associations and the universities. I wanted to bring them all in because, as the Leader of the Opposition said, it is more about education than just narrowly about teaching. One of the functions of these 19 board members will be to bring their perspectives to

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bear on what is going on in the general teaching and education area. I did not want to exclude people. Indeed, some members began to suggest other people to include on the board. The trouble is, where do we stop? We were very aware of the issue of making the board too big, but 19 was the smallest number we could nail it down to without compromising what we were trying to achieve.

With regard to the universities' representation, one of the functions of this board - this applies to what the member for Kalgoorlie was saying - is preparing teachers in a better way for the environment they will go into. This organisation can draw feedback from the schools, via the teachers, and advise the universities on what they should be doing. That can happen at the moment, but this legislation creates a structure through which it can happen. I want to see very significant changes in teacher preparation by universities, and much more engagement with people in the field, in country locations obviously. A bit of that is going on. We are trying to do it. We have all sorts of little schemes and clever ideas, but a structure like this one would facilitate it outside of government. I thank the member for Wagin for his support. I take on board his other issues, such as maintenance. It is not really related to this legislation, but it can be pursued at other times. He also mentioned housing and rental issues. I agree that they are real, live issues, but they are outside of the parameters of what is being talked about here.

I ask the member for Murray-Wellington to pass on my regards to my nephew at Pinjarra, and I thank him for raising the fact that Pinjarra is a great school but needs some attention. He raised a very good point - not specifically related to this legislation - about the change that has happened as a result of the education system having to accommodate more children with disabilities, and children who are more disruptive. The member for Kalgoorlie never mentioned that. It is easy to talk about disruptive children who must be removed, but many children are not disruptive because they are bad children. We now accommodate in the mainstream many children with autism and all sorts of learning difficulties. It is very complicated. Caning those children is not the answer; nor is throwing them out. Their parents would not allow that. We must accommodate them. The commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act demands that of us.

Mr M.J. Birney: Special education schools are attached to main schools.

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: If parents demand that their child becomes part of mainstream education, that child must be allowed to access it, otherwise the Department of Education and Training will face the Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission. One example of the difficulties is a little Aboriginal child at, I think, Wingellina, who has a physical disability. Owing to his attendance at the school there, the department has had to spend large amounts of money to change the layout of the school. The member for Ningaloo is aware of the mobility of Aboriginal students. That young lad could go to another school next week. This is an enormous issue for government education. That boy could go to 10 schools in two years. It is a big issue. The member for Ningaloo is familiar with the Mt Newman school, which I visited recently. It has been built on two levels in three blocks, and children with disabilities will be attending who must be accommodated. How will we do that? It will be very expensive.

I thank the member for Murray-Wellington for his contribution. He said that the membership of the board was too big. However, he referred to remuneration and the requirement for better pay for teachers. I am trying to restructure teaching careers so that teachers who put in effort and undertake more personal development work have the opportunity to earn better pay, which is the sort of thing that the member for Kalgoorlie talked about. That offer is now on the table. It goes to the heart of the whole nature of the teaching profession and its present very archaic career structure. No Government will be able to break through these barriers and pay large amounts of money while the present very flat career structure is in place that demands that everybody be paid the same amount. It is impossible. I swear that I am not buying off the people at the top. I am trying to provide them with a better career structure that is related to professional development and the willingness to become better teachers. I am trying to address that point.

The member for Rockingham said many good things about the vital role of education and the pivotal function of government in facilitating the pursuit of excellence, and I agree with him.

Mr M.J. Birney: It was mostly rhetoric.

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: I agree with the member for Kalgoorlie; it was a marvellous speech! The member for Hillarys was less than 100 per cent supportive. Unfortunately, he had not read the Bill. That is okay; I used to be guilty of the same thing! Most of the issues he raised are addressed in the Bill. When I became a member of Parliament the member for Hillarys sort of befriended me, so I have a bit of a soft spot for him even though our philosophies grate against each other. In 1997 he told me the story about his two boys in a school in the northern suburbs and that the science teacher was difficult to understand. He told that story again tonight, so he is consistent. I do not know whether he has picked up any information about education during his six years as a

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member of Parliament other than that. However, he still has that story. This Bill requires teachers to have proficiency in written and spoken English. That is a step forward for the member for Hillarys! He argued strongly against the very nature of the Bill in many ways but he said he supported it. He said that we do not need to set up a board to screen paedophiles. We will not have a board for that reason. He said that the college should be cost free to teachers. Someone must always pay. I think the member for Darling Range will agree that the prospective fee, which the Government will not set, is modest. We want the college to be self-funding. We do not want the Government to carry the cost of it. If that happens, it will fail. In 10 years someone will ask what can be done away with and it will be the college.

The member for Kalgoorlie paid me his first compliment, for which I thank him very much. It was very kind of him.

Mr M.J. Birney interjected.

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: It is great to be in Parliament. The member for Kalgoorlie referred to resources for teachers and the lack of support for first-year teachers. I am very aware of that issue. We are now making some significant headway in how we support our first-year graduate teachers. Part of the whole philosophy I try to imbue in the department is about mentoring, induction programs and using experienced teachers to help young, new teachers. We are dealing with imperfection and the various willingness levels of people, but there is recognition of that need.

Mr M.J. Birney: I was referring specifically to information on hard copy, which teachers need to use to teach children, whether it is for overheads or essays. They must go in every day as new teachers and think about how they do things, and they don't know what to do.

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: I appreciate that. Those sorts of resources for teachers are not in short supply. We need to clarify what needs to be taught. At the moment the curriculum framework is quite broad and there is not a lot of clarity about what needs to be taught at particular points in time along the child's progression. The teaching community is concerned about that and has various views on the matter. I have discussed this with the director general and we are working on it, so the member will be pleased about that, especially if we can effect some positive change.

The member for Kalgoorlie talked about the need to arm children with better life skills. Again, work is going on to address that issue. I agree with the member; the system is imperfect at the moment. We need to equip young people for the world into which they are moving. For example, the simple scenario to which the member referred - if a person is applying for a job, he should turn up to the interview smartly dressed. I agree with the member. The member reflected upon behavioural issues in schools and professional standards. We may have variations of opinion on those issues but work is going on in that regard.

Mr M.J. Birney: Apart from the kids you talked about with autism, there are purely disruptive kids who should be put into a disruptive kids class to let the other class get on with its work.

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: That does not really relate to this but I will say this: when I got into government, I had written a policy piece called "Behaviour, Management and Discipline." I wanted to put it into place and the people who were running the Department of Education at the time said, "We cannot call it 'Behaviour, Management and Discipline'. We have to talk about warm and secure environments." I said, "No, use the words 'behaviour, management and discipline' because the parents want to know that you recognise that it is an issue and that you will deal with it." I tore up the first version of the paper that those people sent me because those words were not used. We slapped behaviour, management and discipline into our policy implementation and used those very words. We spent \$28 million on putting that program into high schools. It is in there now and it is working and we are expanding it -

Mr M.J. Birney: But what are you doing?

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: Perhaps the member and I can have a debate about that tomorrow. There is a chance to do so in private members' business tomorrow. We have basically said to schools, "You have difficult kids. You know how to deal with them. You come up with the ideas and we will support and resource them." Rather than Alan Carpenter saying, "I know the answer; the answer is flog the little so and so." That is not the way because each child is different.

Mr M.J. Birney: Or put them in a separate class.

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: If the school thinks that is the best way of dealing with the problem, it can use that option rather than our providing it with a template and doing the same thing in every school in Western

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Australia. It will not work that way. As the member knows, his area is different to from mine so we need that flexibility, and that is the approach.

By the way, in this current enterprise bargaining agreement, a big extra dollop of money - \$25 million - is on offer for more behaviour, management and discipline in high schools and 200 primary schools. It does not get much of a mention in these negotiations but it is there and it is a real step forward prospectively for teachers.

The member for Alfred Cove talked about the very low retention rates for teachers. It is an urban myth, if members do not mind me saying that. I am continually told that 30 per cent of graduate teachers have gone by the third or fourth year. Where do those figures come from? I have figures showing that in the first 10 years - between 1990 and 2000 - 25 per cent of the graduates left the system. That does not equate to 30 per cent in three years no matter how the figures are jiggled! In fact, I would challenge those figures to be worse than those of any other profession, including my old one. We must make teaching exciting, attractive and all that sort of thing. That is not achieved by peddling absolute tripe that everyone is flocking out of the system. If everybody is flocking out of the system, why are at least half of the teachers in the system aged 45 years or more? They are still there. Why have we got more graduates than we can place? We need to encourage a whole new group of young people to join the teaching profession because the age profile tells us that many teachers will be leaving soon. It takes up to four years to create a teacher so we must do that. We have to target teachers working in the areas of maths, science, languages other than English, physical education, design and technology and those sorts of things. There are specific areas of shortage but we do not have masses of teachers running out of the education system, no matter who says it, and I have the figures to prove it.

The member for Alfred Cove made a lot of other bizarre claims about me, which is sort of consistent -

Mr M.J. Birney: You are inclined to get a lot of them.

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: I do get a lot of them and it troubles me because she operates in my area. It disturbs me that all these bizarre things are being said about me and peddled in the local newspaper. My children are reading what a terrible man I am. It is just nonsense. How does the Parliament put up with it? How do the guys opposite put up with it? What is going on here? The member says that I have a hit list of 21 schools. What is going on? All I can say to the member for Alfred Cove about that sort of approach to politics is that sooner or later the day of reckoning will arrive. People will make their judgment about me and about the members for Kalgoorlie and Wagin - everybody. If they are convinced that I am a twisted monster who is doing all these evil things in the Melville area, I guess they will throw me out, and I can go and do something else.

I thank the member for Cottesloe for his support for this legislation. I recognise the role he played in the previous Government in setting up the discussion process, which culminated in the paper on a Western Australian council of teaching shortly after I produced one on the Western Australian College of Teaching. That was very good. However, the member for Cottesloe reflected upon the need to enhance the status of the profession; the portability of qualifications, which is important; the need to protect children; and the need to avoid the organisation becoming a de facto union body. His contribution was positive, and I am grateful for that.

I thank the member for Wanneroo for the role she played when she was with the Western Australian Council of State School Organisations. Despite the flippant comments I just made about the before-Carpenter era, she did all right. I thank her for the support she has given to the legislation and for her recognition of the teachers union in another role.

I thank the member for Ningaloo, who is supportive of this legislation. He raised a large number of specific questions, many of which did not relate specifically to this legislation. In general terms, I think he was asking how this legislation would improve the situation for people in the schools in his area. All I can say is that at the moment there is a lack of continuity, depth or whatever for the promotion of education. It is in fits and starts. It bangs its head up against industrial conflict and all that sort of stuff. I hope that this organisation will raise the status and the professional qualifications of teachers and the standard of teaching. It will support and facilitate the professional development of teachers in schools in the member's area, as well as in other schools. It will not weed out people who act and talk a bit roughly. If they are good teachers, they are good teachers. The employer might not want them, but the College of Teaching will not kick out people because they are what I would call rough diamonds. In fact, these people can play vital roles. This organisation is all about improving the status, standard and quality of the profession. That must be a benefit.

The member referred to the advocacy role. I mentioned that ministers and other people advocate from time to time. This organisation will be an advocate for education - externally to the wider world and internally to the participants. It will help people in country schools access and facilitate their professional development. I hope that it will put pressure on universities to better prepare young people for the sorts of schools that we know the

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member has in his area. He mentioned Meekatharra. It will not solve the Meekatharra issues. However, with what can be done by this organisation, it will be a big, positive step for them. For a start, how about some support for advocacy? A few other members mentioned ensuring country representation. We thought about and discussed that: should we set aside positions for country people? In the end, in which parts of the country should it be - the Kimberley, Albany?

Mr T.K. Waldron interjected.

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: I will get to that. It should be borne in mind that people are drawn from a system. Invariably, many of the people who have been in the system for a while have been in country locations and have good experience. Many of them have been the central figure in country towns because of the role they have played. The government education system and the Catholic education system, in particular, have deep, historical, rich experience in providing education in country locations in every part of the State. It will also be to their advantage to make sure that that knowledge and rich experience are brought to bear in this organisation and help enhance its outcomes. That will happen without our specifically assigning places on the board for country teachers.

I also thank the member for Greenough for his support. The same comments I made about the general issues raised by the member for Ningaloo apply to the issues raised by the member for Greenough. Many of us attended country schools. We all appreciate the need to make country schools dynamic, brilliant places where the kids receive just as good an education as they would receive if they attended Hale School, Shenton College, Gosnells Senior High School or Melville Senior High School. We all want that, and the structure and input provided by the Bill will help facilitate that outcome. I thank the member for Greenough for his contribution.

I thank all members who have contributed to the debate. I appreciate the cross-party support, including from the Independents and those from my side who spoke. It is great. This is a really good piece of legislation, although I do not think we will get any political kudos for it. I do not think anybody will say, "Ripper! We have a College of Teaching. I am voting Labor". However, this Parliament is creating something that will be of great advantage to the Western Australian community through the development of education, and that is a good thing. Everybody has played a small role, and I thank them for that. I also thank my staff, who are yawning at the back of the Chamber. I will thank them individually during the third reading stage.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.