

EDUCATION - KEVIN RUDD FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

717. Mr R.C. KUCERA to the Minister for Education and Training:

Will the minister please outline to the house why Western Australian students and families will be far better off under a Kevin Rudd-led federal government?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

Because Kevin Rudd cares about education! Over the past 11 years Prime Minister John Howard has been running down education in this country. We are one of only a few countries in the world whose federal government has reduced expenditure on education. That verifiable fact was documented by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. At the same time, the state government has poured resources into education in Western Australia. Educational resources will receive a significant increase under a Kevin Rudd government. A Kevin Rudd government will provide higher education contribution scheme relief for those studying maths and science. Under a Kevin Rudd government, we will have a very able education minister in Stephen Smith, the federal member for Perth. A Kevin Rudd Labor government will offer a huge training program that will involve trade training centres. There will be additional funding of \$450 000 for skilled training places over the next four years, which is \$200 000 more than the amount promised by the Howard government. Kevin Rudd has pledged a massive increase in apprenticeship support, which will be helpful to Western Australia. In relation to early childhood, a federal Labor government will build 25 new childcare centres in Western Australia to help reduce the chronic shortage of childcare places. In contrast, the Howard government has committed to build a mere 35 new childcare centres across the entire country. There is also the computers in schools program. I look forward to working with Stephen Smith as the federal education minister. He will be a breath of fresh air in education, and although she is a reasonable and nice person, I will no longer have to deal with Julie Bishop's destructive influence on education in this country.