

CURRICULUM CHANGES IN WA SCHOOLS, GOVERNMENT'S MISMANAGEMENT

Motion

HON BARRY HOUSE (South West) [2.01 pm] - without notice: I move -

That the Legislative Council condemns the Minister for Education and Training and the Gallop government for mismanagement of curriculum changes in Western Australian schools and calls for -

- (a) a moratorium on further changes to years 11 and 12, proposed from January 2006; and
- (b) a full, independent review of the Curriculum Council and the merits and implementation of outcomes-based education.

At the outset, we need to recognise that this debate runs for about two hours. I indicate to the house that I intend to try to keep my comments to about 20 minutes, if I can. I hope that the minister, in response, keeps her comments to about the same time. I am aware of three or four other members from this side who want to make some comments. I am sure that some members from the cross benches and some government members also want to make some comments. I hope there will be an opportunity for everybody to have a say in the debate.

I have moved this motion for a variety of reasons that I will outline in the next few minutes. The Minister for Education and Training sits in this house and, regrettably for her, started her reign in that job in a style that has carried through and opened up many of the problems for her and the government that we will deal with in this debate. We might recall that the first comment we heard from the minister, as the Minister for Education and Training, was that she wanted to get rid of tired, old teachers. That was taken as an insult by many valued people in our teaching service who had put in 40 to 50 years in some cases, and felt that their experience and knowledge were being completely disregarded.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: That would make them 70 or 80 years old.

Hon BARRY HOUSE: Some of them have put 40 years service into the education system, and are still valuable contributors to that system. As the minister will know, the profile of the average primary school teacher is that of a 48-year-old female. That is a bit of a problem for the education system, but it does not mean that we should discard their experience and knowledge as worthless. The tragedy of this whole situation is that the minister might achieve her purpose by insisting on the path she has taken on curriculum changes, because I would venture that staff morale in the vast majority of schools is very low. Many teachers are already leaving the system, or are looking forward to the day when they can leave.

The second course of action that characterised the minister's style and the way she runs the portfolio was her unilateral decision on removing the choice that schools had to have their cleaning done by either contract or in-house cleaners. We have had that debate in this house and I do not intend to re-run it. For the 292 government schools that were exercising that choice, the minister's decision had no logic whatsoever, and will impose an extra cost on those school communities and the education system in general, and that is money that could and should be used elsewhere. That, of course, was done at the behest of the Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Union headed by Dave Kelly. That, regrettably, also characterises the minister's attitude to her portfolio. She comes from the union movement, is a servant of the union movement, and will do whatever the union movement demands that she does.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: I do not know about "anything". I draw the line. What does "anything" mean to you? What do I do?

Hon BARRY HOUSE: It means anything in the minister's portfolio area, and her role as the Minister for Education and Training.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: I interpreted that to have a much broader meaning, which I find offensive.

Hon BARRY HOUSE: The minister misinterpreted that. She should not take it like that. The third example I wish to briefly relate is the minister's petulant response to the issue that arose over flagpoles in schools. The federal government had been funding a flagpole program in schools, and we saw a dummy spit from the federal member for Cowan, Hon Graham Edwards, who used to be a member of this Parliament. It turns out that the federal government was merely asking for some involvement in the unveiling of these flagpoles, which is exactly what the state government should do, and has always done whenever it funds a project in a school or the community. We saw an overreaction from the minister, and an instruction was issued to schools that they were no longer to access the federal program. Instead, the state's own flagpole program was set up, which was an extra impost on taxpayers.

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Those instances set the scene for what was unfolding with curriculum changes in Western Australia. We have seen a gathering storm and a public debate about the Curriculum Council and the syllabus changes proposed - the outcomes-based education system, exactly what it is, what its merits are, how it is being implemented and its proposed extension into years 11 and 12. We have seen the minister in this house demonstrate that she cannot give us a concise, adequate definition and explanation of what outcomes-based education is. On Tuesday, in the other place, the Premier - a Rhodes scholar - made a hash of giving an answer to the same question about what it meant. We have seen the federal Minister for Education, Science and Training, Brendan Nelson, reported in the media as saying that he does not know what it means. In the Western Australian education scene, the three most critical leadership figures cannot explain, or do not know, what outcomes-based education means. If they are confused, it is no real surprise that the rest of the community is confused, including teachers, parents and students.

Before the minister tries to imply during question time that I have not been to any schools or consulted with anybody - which she always does - I will explain to her that I have been a member of this place for almost 18 years. I have had a constant association with at least 40 schools in my electorate. During the time I have been shadow Minister for Education and Training, I have had extensive consultation with primary and secondary schools, primary and secondary teachers from country and city schools and the government and private school sectors. I have had countless approaches from people who have expressed their views to me via mail, telephone and every other means accessible to them. I have met with organisations involved in education and I can also read newspapers, watch television and listen to the radio, through which this debate has been raging.

Another thing the minister does not fully appreciate is that in the conversations I have with people from across the board in the community, they will tell me things they will not tell the minister. People are very polite and courteous. If the minister or I go to schools, people will very rarely front the minister directly and tell her to her face what they feel. We all know that. We have all fallen for the three-card trick in our early days of politics of doorknocking the electorate and coming away feeling great and believing that we had gotten a good reception. However, we know that 50 per cent of the people do not vote for us. In this situation people will be polite to the minister, to me and to virtually everybody else in the world. However, they will more openly express what they really feel to a member of the opposition than they will to government members because, regrettably, there is a climate of fear attached to government employees in the education system in particular.

Early in the piece I recognised, and have highlighted in this house for some time, that the implementation of the proposed curriculum changes had gone off the rails over the past four years.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: Since Peter Browne left, according to you. That is what you said yesterday. The whole thing has again off the rail since your mate Peter Browne left as director general. Get real.

Hon BARRY HOUSE: We can trace it back to whenever the minister likes.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: I have read *Hansard*.

Hon BARRY HOUSE: The minister can use that as a time frame if she wishes.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: You obviously do. It is Peter Browne or nothing. That is how you would run the education system. It is a case of Peter Browne or nothing. You are a disgrace.

Hon BARRY HOUSE: I cannot help but notice the different climate in which the debate on education has been held over the past four years. If that coincides with the end of Peter Browne's employment in the education system, that is a remarkable coincidence - perhaps it is more than a coincidence.

The fact is that the direction of the Curriculum Council's preparation of these changes and their implementation have produced a few things. Firstly, it has produced massive confusion and concern as a result of the Curriculum Council's insistence on a purist model of outcomes-based education system.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: That is a lie.

Hon BARRY HOUSE: Is that a lie? I will expect to hear the minister stand and say it is a lie.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: It demonstrates how out of touch you really are and how little you know. We know you have never gone into a classroom, so there you go.

Hon BARRY HOUSE: I think the minister should be very careful about what she brands a lie.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: It is not a purist model, and you don't know what you're talking about.

Hon BARRY HOUSE: The fact is that nowhere else in Australia or in the world has an educational authority tried to implement an outcomes-based system in the way it is to be implemented in Western Australia.

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Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: In what way is that?

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order! Hon Barry House has the call. The Minister for Education and Training will have an opportunity to respond in due course. Hon Barry House should be given a chance to continue his speech.

Hon BARRY HOUSE: The fact is that the architects of this system were from the United States, and the US school system has moved away from it. The United States jurisdictions that employed a purist outcomes-based education system have moved away from it. Asian countries that head this part of the world will not touch it, particularly for the critical areas of science and maths. They will not go near it.

Secondly, it has produced a massive teacher work burden. It has forced a concentration of the practitioners in the classroom on administration and assessment. It has forced them to move away from what they consider to be their primary duties: teaching and learning. That has contributed to a low level of morale throughout the state's education system. Many people in it are totally fed up. I have constantly said that the minister has totally underestimated the depth of feeling among the teachers in the classroom, the general community and parents. The minister has publicly claimed that she has 90 per cent support for this. I will not have time to go through them -

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: I said 95 per cent.

Hon BARRY HOUSE: I will get it right. The minister has claimed there is 95 per cent support for the changes among the teaching fraternity. I will show members - I do not have time to go through it now - correspondence I have received from schoolteachers who are absolutely irate about that statement. They have used very unparliamentary language. They have said that the minister has lied - how dare she? They have requested me to force the minister to retract that statement in Parliament. I can only bring it to the attention of the Parliament. The fact is that no comprehensive, objective survey has been conducted into the attitudes teachers have to these changes. I believe the State School Teachers' Union of WA attempted to conduct a survey a few years ago but the results were never published and nobody seems to know what happened to them. I think the situation is almost the reverse. I believe that between 80 to 90 per cent of people in the education system do not approve of these changes and in fact oppose them.

Thirdly, the proposed changes have produced a meaningless reporting system. Parents cannot understand what is in their children's reports. There has been a huge teacher input into the assessment and marking procedures that have produced that report, which involves ticking boxes. At the end of the day, it does not produce a very comprehensive report about what stage children are at in their learning or how they compare with their peers in their own classroom, across the state and around the nation.

Four months ago I called for a moratorium on further changes and suggested that a review be conducted into the merits of the changes. We have seen a massive community backlash to some of the developments. A parliamentary inquiry of the Legislative Assembly, chaired by Hon Tom Stephens, has been established to look into this matter. I have previously mentioned what might be some of the motivations of Hon Tom Stephens' involvement in that inquiry. However, that inquiry will not report until June next year. The minister has consistently been asked to at least delay the implementation of the courses that are scheduled to begin next year in January, pending the result of that parliamentary inquiry. I have been forwarded copies of many of the submissions - not all - that have been made to that inquiry. I am not sure whether they have been made public. Each of the submissions I have received expresses very vehement opposition to the direction and pace of the changes that are currently occurring. I venture to estimate that 90 per cent of those submissions are running contrary to the directions being made by the government.

We have seen a growing community voice from teachers, parents, the public and education experts. This issue has been taken up by all major media in Western Australia. I have read some letters to the editor in support but they have been outnumbered at least 20 to one by letters opposing the changes. There have been at least four editorials in *The West Australian* on this matter. The *Sunday Times* has also carried editorials and major articles. Radio talkback programs on the ABC and 6PR have carried a constant theme that the general public does not understand the changes and does not approve of the direction and pace of the changes and how they are being implemented.

In July this year, the alarm bells started ringing when the 2003 national benchmark test results were released. They indicated some clear trends in numeracy and literacy. Regrettably, those clear trends put Western Australia in a pretty poor position. I know there are conditions with some of the age groups -

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: Students in this state are a year younger.

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Hon BARRY HOUSE: They are not a year younger; they are about nine months younger than students in a couple of other states.

Nevertheless, in 2002 or thereabouts, the government signed up to the national benchmark testing program and agreed to take notice of the results at the end of the process. The trend indicates very clearly that Western Australian students have slipped behind other states in Australia. In particular, Western Australian country students, whom I have an interest in, are lagging behind their city counterparts and those in other states. That is just another aspect of the whole debate.

We have also heard about developments within the State School Teachers' Union of WA. The teachers have bought into the matter through professional development and the implementation of the changes. They have also bought into the matter through reporting. If a coalition government were in power exercising these changes, there would be a massive rallying of the troops from the state school teachers hierarchy and we could well have seen strikes given the degree of anger, confusion and concern that exists.

Private school principals have come out on this issue. Let us not forget that private schools cater for more than 30 per cent of education in Western Australia. The Minister for Education and Training is not just the minister for government education; she is the Minister for Education and Training across the board. The private school sector is very significant; however, that is another debate. We are not talking exclusively about high fee-paying schools; we are talking about the range of private providers who do an outstanding job across the board in Western Australia. Some private school principals have come out individually. One gave evidence yesterday at a hearing of the Education and Health Standing Committee. Many principals object to the direction being taken. Collectively, we heard through the media the other day that the Catholic school principals are also expressing their concerns.

We have also seen the emergence of web sites.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: I would like to know who they are funded by.

Hon BARRY HOUSE: Funded by? I have no idea.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: Are you sure you don't?

Hon BARRY HOUSE: I have met one of the proponents of the web sites, Mr Greg Williams, who put together People Lobbying Against Teaching Outcomes. I met him about four months ago.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: Who provides the funding for the web site?

Hon BARRY HOUSE: I have no idea; you had better ask Mr Williams.

The PLATO web site emerged about a month ago and took off at a phenomenal rate. Only a few days ago we heard the minister berate PLATO in this house. She stated some statistics that there were only 450 contributors to PLATO, which amounts to two per cent of people objecting. Another web site called Pluto is supportive of outcomes-based education. Is the minister aware of it? The last time I looked at the Pluto web site there was only one name attributed to articles on the site. If the minister wants to use that as a basis for measuring her support, it is 450 to one! That indicates to me that the minister and the government have grossly underestimated the feeling in the community and are not prepared to listen. They are prepared to listen, unfortunately, only to the bureaucrats, advisers and administrators in the Curriculum Council and the Department of Education and Training who have a vested professional interest in these changes and who are refusing to budge from the line that they have been promoting for the past four to five years.

A task force under the direction of Mr Greg Robson has reported. The presentation of the recommendations, regrettably, turned into a pretty bizarre event. All secondary principals were summoned to a meeting; I believe it was at the InterContinental Burswood Resort. Some of them were from far-flung places like Kununurra. They had every reason to question the need for them to be at the meeting. They had to fund their attendance from their own school resources. They were leant on quite heavily by various people from the department. They were subject to veiled threats such as, "How long has it been since your school had a thorough audit?" That is the way to get compulsory attendance. At the meeting there was an attempt by a handful of principals, led by the acting principal of Belmont Senior High School, to put together a supportive media release and have it signed by all the principals at the meeting. I have documentary evidence that much of the information contained in the media release came from the Department of Education and Training. That information leaked very quickly to the media and me. It is an indication that something is rotten in the barrel. The attempt was very quickly spiked because many other principals were quite outraged at that attempt at bullying. They reacted to it very quickly.

The government made some concessions to the recommendations of the report in areas such as resourcing and professional development. However, I suggest that all the money in the world will not make any difference at this stage unless the direction is right. Another test was announced. There were also concessions concerning

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reporting; announcements were made about changes to the reporting system. The announcement was made in the pages of the *Sunday Times*. That, in itself, is a gross insult. People in the education system saw that as insulting; there had been no consultation or input from them. It was cobbled together and they were told that information packages would be sent to their schools in a few weeks. There was no promotion of a trial system. It was also sold by the minister as being a response to the demands made on her by federal education minister Nelson. That may be partly true. However, it indicates a politicisation of the reporting system. Minister Nelson was hung out as the bully boy and the person to blame.

The system that is now being proposed promotes two models of assessment that are incompatible. It promotes both an outcomes-based assessment model and a standards-based assessment model. Those two models are at opposite ends of the spectrum. The minister has rebadged the terms that are being used from OBE to OSE; that is, from outcomes-based education to outcomes and standards education. However, the fact of the matter is that in education methodology, outcomes based and standards based are at opposite ends of the spectrum and are incompatible.

Regrettably, this situation has become a bit of an object of ridicule in some professional development courses. As a bit of a commentary on how seriously this matter is being taken at some levels, I will describe to the house a game that is being played at many of these professional development courses. The game is called “EDU WANK Words”. The sheet that accompanies that game is headed -

Do you keep falling asleep in meetings? Here's something to change all of that.

It then says -

How to play: Simply tick off 5 WANK Words in one meeting and shout out BINGO!

It's that easy!

The sheet then lists a host of words, such as curriculum framework, curriculum leader, portfolios, outcomes, embedded, revisit, accountability and professional development, pizza charts, open-ended investigations, deep consultation, conceptual outcomes, points of clarification, very wide teacher consultation, pairing and sharing, rubric, and reflective journal. It also lists a host of acronyms, such as BMIS, MSE, CIP, IEP, SBDMG, MIS and CIS. I could go on and on.

The sheet also contains some testimonials from other players. One of the testimonials states -

The facilitator was gobsmacked as we all screamed bingo for the 3rd time in 2 hours

Regrettably, that is a commentary on what is happening in the education system.

I have a host of material, and I will not read all of it, but I do want to refer members to an article in *The Sunday Times* of 14 August.

The article is written by “Phil from the Burbs” and is titled -

Dumb and dumber

Teachers force rethink on pursuit of excellence.

Hon Kim Chance: I did not understand that article.

Hon BARRY HOUSE: The minister would not want to, because it does not actually portray in glowing terms the direction in which the government is heading.

Hon Kim Chance: I could not work out whether he meant what he said literally or whether it was tongue-in-cheek. I just did not get it.

Hon BARRY HOUSE: I will give the minister a copy and he can go through it again.

Hon Kim Chance: I have read it twice already and I still have not got it.

Hon BARRY HOUSE: I recommend members read that article. Members should also read the editorial in *The West Australian* of Friday, 12 August. If they do not want to read the editorial, they should at least look at Dean Alston's cartoon next to it. Dean Alston has a fantastic knack of summing up a situation in a cartoon. He can say in a couple of pictures what it would take a million words to portray.

Hon Kim Chance: I liked his cow the other day. Did you see that?

Hon BARRY HOUSE: Yes. The top of the cartoon is headed “Outcomes based cartoon”. The first part of the cartoon is headed “1965 - Woodwork”, and it depicts a lad showing the teacher his model, to which the teacher replies -

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Fonebone! . . . Bring that heap of garbage here . . . It's not worth two bob! . . . Now, bend over and I'll teach you to listen!!

The second part of the cartoon is headed "2005 - Design and Technology", and it depicts a similar scenario, with the student presenting his model to the teacher, to which the teacher in replies -

Mister M^cNab . . . Your strategic inability to connect with the design and technology convention leads me to speculate that your skills-based competence is worth less than a silver coin of the generic currency model . . . Consequently, your inefficacy to critically analyse and project laterally in the genre leaves me no alternative than to reprimand your person vis-a-vis desired outcomes!

At the same time as the teacher is saying that, one of the lad's mates is whispering behind his hands, "He reckons you're crap!" That sums up the situation.

The Curriculum Council was introduced in the 1990s. However, regrettably, as I am sure my colleague Hon Norman Moore will outline, the direction that the Curriculum Council took was not the intended direction. It was filled with bureaucrats and administrators, and practising teachers and educators in schools were locked out of the process. The model that they insisted on was the purest OBE model. The curriculum changes were introduced with the best advice at the time. However, cracks have certainly appeared in the implementation, and questions have arisen about the merits of those changes. Rather than slow down the process and delay its introduction into years 11 and 12, the minister has barged on relentlessly, and we now have a major problem. The whole issue needs to be re-assessed. The minister should not paint the opposition as believing in and wanting to go back to a 1950s classroom chalk-and-talk system.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: So what would you go back to?

Hon BARRY HOUSE: I have said consistently that many of the principles associated with the curriculum changes that started to take place in the 1990s are supported and will be supported. The major problems that have been identified are the implementation and assessment processes.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: So you have no problems?

Hon BARRY HOUSE: That does not mean to say I have no problems. I do have some problems. The major problems that have emerged are the implementation and assessment processes. That is why I have moved this motion in the house today. I want the minister and the Gallop Labor government to delay the further introduction of these curriculum changes to years 11 and 12. As a first step, I want the government to put a moratorium on the process and institute a full and independent review, conducted by someone like the Australian Council for Educational Research, into where we are going in education and the merits and the implementation of the proposed changes. I urge members to support the motion.

HON LJILJANNA RAVLICH (East Metropolitan - Minister for Education and Training) [2.36 pm]: Boy, oh boy! How times have changed! I am amazed that this motion is before the house. I am particularly disappointed that the opposition has chosen to use education to play politics. I am particularly saddened by the fact that Hon Barry House, together with Minister Nelson, has chosen to use education as a battering ram. All that does is disappoint a whole lot of teachers, a whole lot of students and a whole lot of parents who want to have confidence and certainty in our education system.

I will give members some history. As we know, this curriculum framework was legislated for in this Parliament in 1997 and driven by Colin Barnett. At that time Colin Barnett made it clear that rather than be prescriptive about what must be taught, the curriculum framework would be used by schools to develop and implement their teaching and learning programs according to the needs and characteristics of the students. This framework had been in development for quite some time. As I understand it, almost 10 000 teachers, students, parents, academics, Curriculum Council officers and members of the community contributed to its development. If the system prior to the introduction of the curriculum framework had been working so well, why was it changed? If that system was so great, why were the Court government and the then Minister for Education, Colin Barnett, and the then Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Education, Hon Barry House, so keen to move in another direction? Why did they bother to go down the path of having input from almost 10 000 people on the proposed changes to the former education system as we know it? I asked Hon Barry House - he has been a two-bit player in this debate because its genesis is pure party politics - what system he would have us go back to. Of course, he could not answer that question because the simple fact is that the system that we moved away from simply did not serve the needs of all students. That is why the system was changed in the first place and why the Liberal Party's former leader Richard Court embraced this as a policy objective. It is also why Colin Barnett brought the Curriculum Council Bill before Parliament in 1997, why the curriculum framework was developed and why the outcomes and standards framework was rolled out in 1998. It seems to me -

Hon Barry House interjected.

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Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: No, no, no, no! Hon Barry House was the parliamentary secretary -

Hon Barry House interjected.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Hon Barry House has changed his mind and contributes to the uncertainty of this issue. However, he has not explained to me and to the mums and dads who fund our education system and whose children attend our schools what system he would have us go back to. Rather than spooking the horses and running around and saying that outcomes-based education is no good, Hon Barry House should explain himself to the mums and dads of our students because they deserve an explanation. Hon Barry House is now changing his tune and shifting his position.

Hon Barry House: I have been reflecting the public's view.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Dear, oh dear! The honourable member has some accounting to do. Hon Barry House told me that he does not understand it. However, he understood it clearly in 1997 when the outcomes were clearly specified in the curriculum framework. The curriculum framework stated what students should know, understand, value and be able to do as a result of the curriculum experience. This issue is about children learning. The focus should not be on teachers. It is about what is best for the children because, at the end of the day, there is no point students having knowledge if they cannot understand or apply it.

Hon Barry House: I do not disagree.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Hon Barry House agrees now! I have not finished with Hon Barry House. I have something to say to you, sport. Quite frankly, Hon Barry House owes an apology to the parents who send their children to our schools and to the people who work hard in our schools and provide the taxes to fund our schools. Every two days, Hon Barry House changes his mind about an issue as important as education. He thinks he can flippantly play with education because it is not important. I have to tell you, sport; education is the most important thing in the lives of young people, students and their parents. Hon Barry House owes us all a big apology.

I have been asked why the government is rushing it through. Hon Barry House was the parliamentary secretary in 1998.

Hon Barry House: You are wrong.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: That is right; I take that back.

In terms of the timing of the implementation of the new courses, in 2003 it was proposed that three new courses would be introduced next year. I do not want there to be any mistake about this. The three courses are English, engineering studies and media production and analysis. The next lot of new courses are not due for implementation until 2007. That is one year and a number of months away so there will be lead-up time before the introduction of the new courses. Originally, there were 30 courses in phase two. However, I made some concessions and instead of having 30 courses in phase two, I decided that there should be 20 courses in phase two and 20 in phase three, rather than three, 30 and 10. I split them up to achieve a better balance. I want to explain that because in terms of the implementation of the courses, Clause 14 of the 1998 Teachers, Principals and District Directors Agreement - this is how far back this issues stems - states -

The parties acknowledge that with respect to the implementation of the Curriculum Framework, Curriculum Policies and Guidelines and Outcomes and Standards Framework each school will be required to develop an implementation plan by 31 December 1998 and full implementation is to occur by 31 December 2003.

We have not rushed this issue. Full implementation was due to be finalised by 31 December 2003. Hon Barry House has said that we are rushing this. I will tell the member what I am not prepared to do. I am not prepared -

Hon Barbara Scott: To eat humble pie.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Hon Barbara Scott has been here way too long and makes a poor contribution to this place. She has made a poor contribution to this debate, as she does to most debates. Given that she knows so little, I advise her to sit quietly because she might learn something.

What I am not prepared to do is to deny students an opportunity so that Hon Barry House can get his political fix. I will not deprive the students of this state their educational entitlements and what should be theirs because Hon Barry House needs a political fix, a shot in the arm or a boost to his ego. I will not sacrifice the education of students in this state and I will not disappoint their parents. I will not give Hon Barry House the power to continue to cause uncertainty and instability for his own political motives at the expense of what is in the best interests of the students of this state. He knows as well as I do that 66 per cent of students have no intention of

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going to university. If Hon Barry House had done any work, he would know what this system will achieve. However, he has not done any work. He wants to stop this change because, according to yesterday's *Hansard*, Peter Browne is no longer the Director General of Education.

Hon Barry House: That is a stupid comment.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Hon Barry House made it and it is in *Hansard*.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon Graham Giffard) Order, members! There will be plenty of opportunity for Hon Simon O'Brien to make a contribution to this debate. If the minister wants fewer interjections, she should refer her comments to me. I remind the minister that there is a correct form of address when referring to other members in this place, and "sport" is not on the list.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: I want to assure the house that I certainly did not mean to be rude or show disrespect to anyone.

I do not want to deny students and I do not intend to deny them. The member opposite knows quite well that 66 per cent of students do not intend to go to university. The limited number of courses in years 11 and 12 simply makes it almost impossible for students who are not university oriented to go back into years 11 or 12 and find a more suitable range of subjects. Once upon a time that was okay; because once upon a time certain skills were required out in the community. However, society has changed and we have to make sure we change with it. The subjects that will be introduced into year 11 for the first time next year include, engineering studies - aviation has already been introduced - and media production and analysis. The schedule of subjects for phase two is very comprehensive and will provide a greater breadth of opportunities for students in years 11 and 12.

Quite frankly, I will not deny those students opportunities, because that is not the right thing for an education minister to do. My primary interest in this debate is what is in the best interests of students. That is my primary consideration. Members opposite know as well as I do that currently we are going through an unprecedented level of economic growth. We have all sorts of opportunities. Currently we have a skills shortage. I need to make sure that students are prepared for the opportunities that are in the community. They need to be prepared for some jobs that have not even been invented. Members know that the rate of technology is such that, basically, we have to keep up with it. We need people with the skills to do these jobs. Members opposite are telling me not to worry about it.

Hon Barry House: No, I am not.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: The member is telling me not to do this. Any public interest test would tell members that this has to happen. Quite frankly, it cannot be delayed because to delay would be to deny opportunity to young people. As Minister for Education and Training, why should I deny opportunity to young people? Should I deny an opportunity to the member's son and daughter? Should they be denied an opportunity? No.

The honourable member referred to another furphy that has been put around the community. He said it is terrible because, in Western Australia, we have a system that is so different from the systems in all the other states and, in fact, we have a pure system. When asked what he meant by this, the honourable member went to water, because he did not know what he meant. In fact, he would have one believe that we are out there on our own and that this is a disaster. The simple fact is that South Australia has an outcomes education system and so do Queensland, Victoria, Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory. Furthermore, the Western Australian government recently signed a quadrennial funding agreement with the commonwealth government. In part, it requires the Western Australian Department of Education and Training to implement the national statements of learning program as part of the next curriculum review, if that review ends before 1 January 2008, or before 1 January 2008 if such a review is not undertaken.

The national statements of learning are organised around - the member might be interested in this, because he might then refrain from peddling untruths - outcomes and include the development of English, mathematics, science, civics and citizenship education and information and communications technology. The English statement of learning is complete and has been endorsed by all ministers, including Minister Nelson. The national statements of learning describe the key knowledge, understanding, skills and capacity that each child should have the opportunity to acquire at school. The WA curriculum frameworks definition of outcomes is what all students should know, understand, value and be able to do as a result of the program that they undertake in schools in Western Australia from kindergarten to year 12. The national program is clearly taking the same outcomes approach that has been in place in Western Australia for many years. The project commissioned to develop the national standards of learning is called the national consistency in outcomes.

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The idea that in some way Western Australia is out on its own and the other states are not doing it is a lie; it is a furphy. Brendan Nelson called it a cancer of the system. I know he is a doctor and we can give him a little bit of latitude, but this is a federal minister who has signed a quadrennial funding agreement with each of the states; he knows they have an outcomes and standards system, and he proceeds to call it a cancer! He is a doctor, and if he thought it was a cancer, he has used the funding power of the commonwealth to get whatever he wants whenever he wants it. If I were a doctor and I thought there was cancer, the obvious thing to do would be to use the tools I have; in his case the funding power, to cut it out. Brendan Nelson has used that funding power to bludgeon the states in every other way. It does not add up to me. I am a really patient person, but this debate has been badly handled by the member opposite and federal Minister Nelson.

What I want and what I expect is an apology from federal Minister Nelson, because, quite frankly, he is a disgrace. He is continually attacking the education system. For a federal education minister to publicly state that this state does not teach the three Rs or phonics, is a lie. He is peddling untruths to support his own political agenda and his aspirations to move into the Lodge. He is prepared to sacrifice the students of this state. He is prepared to reflect very badly on the teachers of this state. This federal minister is prepared to do anything to make sure that he finds a way into the Lodge. The only thing he had to do to get a ministry was to take out the earring. That he did, and he got a ministry. He thinks that if he continues down this line he will be a front-runner. He owes the people of Western Australia an apology. He owes the teachers of Western Australia an apology. He definitely owes the students of Western Australia an apology because, quite frankly, the stuff he is peddling out in the community is wrong. I listened to the federal minister's performance on the Liam Bartlett radio program. Once again, he told untruths about the matters he raised. I am not the only one who is of that view. Yesterday, Hon Colin Barnett said in the other place that he had had a gutful of Minister Nelson running down this state's education system. I know that Hon Barry House does not really know what loyalty is. He seemed to stick to Hon Colin Barnett when he was education minister, but all of a sudden he is no longer education minister and so Hon Barry House has distanced himself from him. He is clearly a man who can be bought. Mr Barnett was quoted this morning on 720 ABC News as saying -

I'm extremely disappointed in the comments coming out of the Commonwealth Government over this.

Hon Colin Barnett was speaking about the outcomes and standards framework. He continued -

The Commonwealth Government does not run schools, does not employ teachers and is not responsible for the education of children.

What we should be doing, whatever our role is, state or federal, is encouraging education and building confidence in our schools, our teachers and our students.

He went on to say in a later news bulletin -

To use words like 'a form of cancer', to talk about harking back to an old fashioned phonics-based literacy, I mean, that is not a proper approach to be taken. And I particularly take exception to the approach that is being taken of threatening Commonwealth funding for schools. The one thing we shouldn't be threatening is schools and children and their education.

The honourable member might shake his head, but Hon Colin Barnett's criticism of Minister Nelson is not, I am sure, directed at Minister Nelson alone. I am sure that it would be justified for Hon Barry House to accept some of that criticism, because he is very similar to Minister Nelson, whose primary focus seems to be to run down our education system for political gain. At the end of the day, this motion will not advance Hon Barry House one bit. I have watched the member in the chamber. Quite frankly, this will not do it for him.

At the age of 15, students can choose between 33 tertiary entrance examination subjects, 122 vocational education and training subjects and 205 wholly school-assessed subjects. Of course, not one in 1 000 schools in this state offers anywhere near the full 360 subjects that have been mentioned in this debate. I am committed to outcomes and standards education.

Whenever I have asked Hon Barry House how many schools and classrooms he has visited he has never responded. He has been silent on that. I have gone to schools.

Hon Barry House: It has nothing to do with the argument and you know it.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: The member should look at what goes on in classrooms. If the member is telling me that he does not need to go into classrooms because he knows what goes on in them, I have news for him, and it is very bad; that is, the member might have a very misinformed position on this issue. I know that he has not been to schools. I know that he does not know what goes on in schools.

Hon Barry House: You don't know that at all, or to whom I have spoken.

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Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: I know that the member does not know what goes on in classrooms. I have been in classrooms. When I see what goes on in Western Australian classrooms, as Minister for Education and Training I feel proud. I take pride in walking into a classroom and seeing five and six-year-old children who are computer literate, because that is something to be proud of. I also took great pride in meeting a five-year-old boy, who is in grade 1 or pre-primary, who was holding a little soft toy called Retro Rabbit. This little boy is writing a novel. Every day he writes a few more lines in his novel. He made the point that writers do not write a book all in one hit; they write a little every day. That is what makes me proud about education. I am proud that this is going on in Western Australian schools. I take great pride in what happens in our schools, and I take the time to go and see what is happening. I have seen some remarkable things. For instance, under the School Apprenticeship Link program, which will be more formalised under the proposed changes, year 11 and sometimes year 10 students do a combination of school for a couple of days, technical and further education for a couple of days and then a day on a work site. I have seen the pride on the faces of those students. They take genuine pride in what they are doing. In some cases they are having the kind of success that they perhaps never dreamed of. I do not think a money value can be placed on some of those experiences. I know that Hon Barry House would like to place a political value on those experiences. I understand that there have been some concerns. I have worked to address those concerns, because I want the very best education system. I believe we have a great education system.

Hon Norman Moore: You never used to say that when you were sitting over here.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Hon Norman Moore should find evidence of that; he can do what he likes.

Hon Norman Moore: You should read your speech on the Curriculum Council Bill, when you said you did not support outcomes-based education. Just be consistent.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: The honourable member is entitled to have his say on this matter, as I am sure he will in due course. I call on Hon Barry House to apologise for peddling untruths with comments such as, "This is no good because it is a purist form." He does not know what he is talking about. I also call Minister Nelson to account. He should apologise, because it is not true that the three Rs are not taught in Western Australian schools or that phonics are not taught. I am very proud of Western Australian schools. As the federal minister, he should be proud of Western Australian schools rather than running them down for his own political ambitions. In fact, Hon Barry House and the federal minister have an enormous amount in common.

HON PETER COLLIER (North Metropolitan) [3.09 pm]: I endorse the motion and I believe that there is great merit in it. I feel qualified to speak on this motion, having taught for 23 years. As a bit of background, I was a product of the state system - North Kalgoorlie Primary School and Eastern Goldfields Senior High School, the same as our esteemed leader, Matt Birney - then, as I said, 23 years of teaching in both the state and the private system - John Curtin Senior High School, Lesmurdie Senior High School, Presbyterian Ladies' College and Scotch College. During that time I have held numerous positions, including head of department of social studies, history and politics. As I said, I feel qualified to speak on this motion. I feel the motion has great merit, and I commend Hon Barry House for putting it forward to the house.

I am passionate about teaching. I loved every minute of my 23 years in the classroom. I had 23 years in the classroom without a day off, and I doubt that there are too many teachers who can say that. I loved imparting and receiving knowledge. I loved the different energy levels of the students I taught and the hunger they had to achieve and to grow as individuals. The biggest regret I have had thus far is in leaving Scotch College, because I loved it so much. At the same time I never regret for one moment that I am here in this place. It is a dilemma that I have to live with but, as I said, I still have a great passion for teaching and I always will. Teaching is the most rewarding occupation that can be imagined. It is a tremendous occupation. Every single day a teacher can make a difference to the lives of dozens of our youth. Every day teachers in hundreds of schools across the state make a difference to lives in a vast array of capacities; not just from an educational perspective, but socially as well. We have committed, dedicated, passionate teachers who make a difference, assisting students in a positive manner in their journey through life. As a former educator I was saddened to hear the comments the Premier made in the other place on Tuesday about teaching. I will remind the house of those comments. In response to a request from the Leader of the Opposition that he provide the house with a concise explanation of outcomes-based education, the Premier stated -

I will tell the Leader of the Opposition what it means. It means changing from a situation in which the teacher goes into the classroom and expounds his or her point of view of what is happening and does not take any interest in the level of development of students or whether students are absorbing the ideas.

That is disgraceful. How sad it is that our Premier, who professes to be an academic, has such a low regard for the teaching profession. How sad it is that our Premier is so out of touch with the teaching profession that he fails to recognise the essential role that it plays in the intellectual and social development and enhancement of

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our youth. I am not sure when the Premier last entered a classroom but, whenever it was, it was almost certainly not in Western Australia. His comments show just how out of touch he is with the Western Australian education system that his government presides over. To suggest that Western Australian teachers currently enter their classrooms and merely lecture to pupils and show little regard for their thoughts and opinions is at the very least ignorant and, quite frankly, somewhat bizarre. It is an extremely narrow representation of our classrooms and completely ignores the tremendous amount of work that teachers put into their lessons, largely in their own time. It also ignores the genuine regard that teachers hold for the educational welfare of their students. As a former educator I am appalled and offended by the comments of the Premier, and I am confident that I speak for the entire teaching profession in requesting that he apologise unreservedly for his comments. I assume that the Minister for Education and Training does not endorse those comments, and that she would support the call for an apology.

Another aspect of education that saddens me at the moment is the level of disillusionment, cynicism, negativity and overall despair that permeates the profession. This is not a nebulous perception on my part; rather, it is based on real-life experiences. I was still in the classroom less than 12 months ago, and I still have close connections with dozens of teachers. In addition, my communication with schools in the North Metropolitan Region has reinforced my opinion. I had a great time in the six-week winter recess. I took the opportunity to go out into the community and meet with various community leaders and groups. I also took the opportunity to go out and meet as many educators, schools and students as I possibly could. I wrote to the 235 primary schools and 53 secondary schools in the North Metropolitan Region, to introduce myself and to offer my services in any capacity with which I could assist them. It was a very worthwhile exercise. I was overwhelmed by the response. The education system buzzes with energy; there is a tremendous amount of good going on out there, and it was an extremely positive experience. I met with the staff of a number of schools, both primary and secondary. As well as that, a number of teachers have contacted me through the PLATO web site. I had never accessed the PLATO web site until it came to my attention when a question I asked in this place on assessment procedures was placed on the site, so I took the time to have a look at it. If that is taken alongside my contact with my contemporaries, or former contemporaries, at Scotch College and surrounding schools, plus the interaction that I have had with teachers across the North Metropolitan Region, I daresay I have a fairly good understanding of the current mood that permeates through the education system. I am deeply concerned with the level of disenchantment. It should not exist in this occupation and in our schools. Something needs to be done about it, and that is why I endorse this motion.

The biggest problem associated with the education system at the moment is outcomes-based education. I will get onto this topic in a moment because, fundamentally, I think there are great merits in outcomes-based education, and I put myself on the record as saying that. I do, however, feel that there are sufficient problems with outcomes-based education, particularly at the post-compulsory level, and with the courses of study to warrant a delay in their implementation. Outcomes-based education is a term that confuses so many people. So many people ask what it is, and so few people can articulate an answer. In simple terms, the aim of outcomes-based education is to provide a learning environment for students in which students are encouraged to discover, research and develop as individuals with their own strengths, with a teacher acting as a facilitator to that learning. That sounds good and, as I said, it has merit. Ideally, what we as educators want is to ensure that our students reach their potential; that we provide an environment for them in which they can reach their full potential. That sounds simple enough, so why the disillusionment? Why has there been so much community concern, and calls from organisation such as the State School Teachers' Union of WA and the Independent Schools Association for a delay in the implementation of the courses of study? Why is there such reticence about the implementation of the courses of study?

I will identify a few problem areas that have arisen during my interaction with the various groups I mentioned a few minutes ago. The complexity of this new educational direction and the lack of adequate support from the Curriculum Council is the most common complaint that I have been able to establish through my interaction with educators. There is genuine concern that the Curriculum Council constantly moves the goalposts, deadlines are regularly changed and adequate support material is not provided. The lack of adequate time to prepare for the proposed changes is also a major concern. The level of disenchantment directed towards the Curriculum Council has been quite profound, in particular referring to its inflexibility and arrogance in relation to the limitations of the courses of study. Perhaps if the Curriculum Council had been a little more accommodating and consultative, this level of disenchantment would not exist. I was informed during the past week that the History Teachers Association held a forum to review the courses of study. The teachers at the forum were informed by a representative of the Curriculum Council that the Curriculum Council would be pursuing legal action against any teachers who publicly criticised the courses of study. I got that from three teachers. They were welcome to question the individual aspects of a particular course of study, but they were not to attack the concept of the course of study. The whole point of raising this matter is to emphasise the point I am making. If the Curriculum

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Council had been more consultative and less dogmatic in its approach, the vast proportion of the teaching fraternity would not be offside. They are offside and there are concerns. The system cannot operate in an environment in which people are not permitted to express an opinion and in which legal action will be taken against those who do express an opinion. That is neither a constructive nor an effective way to work.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: I find that hard to believe.

Hon PETER COLLIER: I thank the minister for that interjection, because I found it hard to believe also. I checked my source and confirmed it with two other members of the teaching fraternity who attended that forum. I can take their word for it. I was very disappointed.

Secondly, sufficient professional development is not provided. There is a lack of qualified teacher relief, and the additional costs of providing professional development are excessive. This is a vital issue concerning professional development. Adequate funding for professional development is needed. It is inappropriate and inadequate for teachers to spend between just two and five days here or there attending professional development courses. Unfortunately, it is in the hands of the Curriculum Council to ensure that adequate professional development training is provided. The Curriculum Council must take that into consideration.

Outcomes-based education produces a vague and verbose reporting system. The documents are difficult and extremely time consuming for teachers to produce, and parents and students find them even more difficult to understand. That is true, and the situation will probably get worse in the next year or two.

Another problem that has been articulated to me by a number of sources is the one-size-fits-all arrangement regarding the study courses. Basically, it is flawed to adopt a one-size-fits-all course, particularly for science and maths, because it is difficult to make both of those fields of study compatible with outcomes or other courses of study. In addition, the establishment of all foreign languages under one course of study has caused considerable angst, particularly among teachers who teach languages other than English. It is extremely difficult to define appropriate levels when some languages are Latin based and others, such as Japanese and Chinese, are scripted. There is particular anxiety among the LOTE teachers about the implementation of the courses of study.

Another considerable frustration about the structure and assessment procedures of the impending courses of study at the post-compulsory level is the uncertainty created in the compatibility of outcomes-based assessment with tertiary requirements. In particular, there is concern about developing consistency across schools. Several moderation sessions that have been held have revealed glaring inconsistencies in the range of levels awarded by different schools. I appreciate that that is why moderation sessions are held. However, the levels that have been produced by different schools are so profoundly diverse that obviously something is not right.

On that point, I draw the attention of the house to the proposed courses of study for politics and law. I refer to sample materials and the formal consultation draft. I looked at one of the assessment items a couple of weeks ago. This is to be used to assess outcome 1, political and legal investigation, communication and participation; outcome 2, society and change; and outcome 3, our political and legal systems.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: According to Hon Barry House we do not have assessments.

Hon Barry House: Don't be stupid. That is a stupid comment. I said there were problems with the assessments.

Hon PETER COLLIER: If I could just continue.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon Graham Giffard): Order, members! Interjections are not welcome.

Hon PETER COLLIER: Thank you, Mr Deputy President. As I have said previously, I taught politics for almost 20 years. Three of my boys got the top score in the state and two came second. Vanity aside, I am letting members know that I have had some experience in teaching this subject. For the life of me I would have had difficulty assessing this. The assessment says that it is the teacher's task to distinguish between informative and opinionative sources and to explain differing opinions by examining the perspectives reflected and the different points of view about the curfew on young people in Northbridge.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: You're not talking about your boys; you mean the boys in your class.

Hon PETER COLLIER: Yes.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: I understand. I thought you were talking about all your children. I thought the number of the member's children totalled about eight by now. It is a fair enough question. It is a clarification.

Hon Norman Moore: You have gone beneath dignity. You have none whatsoever.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order, members!

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Hon PETER COLLIER: As a teacher in that school I would have levelled such a student on the following criteria based on the three outcomes that are used to assess their scales of achievement. It is assumed that the student is at level 4, 5 or 6. A student at level 5 - taking into account there are three different scales of outcomes - must analyse and clarify the purpose of a political and legal investigation to formulate questions, select from a range of appropriate data sources and methods of recording, and use supporting evidence to explain patterns and draw conclusions that generalise beyond the immediate context and present a particular viewpoint. Then I would have to distinguish between level 5 and level 6. At level 6 the student must formulate his or her own proposition for an investigation, identify the main aspects to be considered, and decide on the most appropriate data sources and recording techniques. The student must justify those conclusions by logically examining the viewpoints and the evidence presented by others for accuracy, bias and omission. I would then have to move on to outcome 2 and look at level 5. Assuming that the student was working at level 5, the student must understand a variety of factors that influence the degree to which the political and legal values, structures and processes of a society are characterised by continuity and change. Alternatively, I would have to distinguish level 5 from level 6, which is that the student understands that traditions, values, events and issues have differing impacts on the continuity and change of political structures and processes compared with legal structures and processes. Then I would have to take that into consideration with outcome 3. At level 5 the student must understand that political and legal structures and processes have direct and indirect impacts on people's lives and allow for varying levels and forms of participation in decision making, and that the enforcement of standards and behaviour and dispute resolution processes will vary in scope, formality and complexity. At level 6 I would have to distinguish between a level 5 and a level 6 student in outcome 3. The student must understand that political and legal systems are shaped by underlying constitutional principles and processes of government, which together shape avenues of representation and participation, levels and forms of power, accountability of decision makers and processes for the enforcement of standards of behaviour and for dispute resolution. I would have great difficulty implementing that assessment procedure in a course of study for politics and law.

I acknowledge that I have been out of the system for six months, but I do not believe I have forgotten all that much. I fully understand and sympathise with the concerns teachers have in trying to get their heads around assessment procedures that are as verbose as those I have just read out.

As I said, the combination of all these concerns reveals a number of problems. They are real concerns. I promise members that they are neither the product of a media beat-up nor the views of a few disgruntled voices from the wilderness or opinions of entrenched opponents of outcomes-based education. They are the views of the teaching fraternity at large. They are the views of teachers in public and private primary and secondary schools. These are the views of dedicated teaching professionals who are faced with implementing, assessing and reporting on a system they neither fully comprehend nor, dare I say it, necessarily support. This issue is larger than any single person. It is larger than the minister and any single government. This issue concerns the education of our current generation of school students. For that reason we must remove the emotion from the argument. We must also, dare I say it, remove the politics from the argument. We must remember that the most vital component in the outcomes-based education debate is the students. There is more than sufficient disquiet within the community at large to warrant a delay in the implementation of the courses of study. There are more than enough question marks over outcomes-based education to warrant a delay, and that is why I support the motion. In life there are no dress rehearsals. We must get it right the first time around. We cannot look back in five, 10 or 15 years and say, "Oops, we got it wrong; we apologise for your inability to deal with basic arithmetic and algebra problems and your inability to write coherently. The one positive we can say to come out of it is that there is a common problem!" We simply cannot take that chance. We owe our students, our children, much more than that. As I said, there are no dress rehearsals in life; we have to get it right the first time. Although we get away with missing a line or two, I doubt very much that the production would survive if an entire scene were removed. I firmly believe that is what is under threat with outcomes-based education and the courses of study.

I have read most of the letters to the editor about this issue. I read with amusement one that drew an analogy between playing tennis and courses of study in outcomes-based education. The author was a strong supporter of outcomes-based education. He said that, in a game of tennis, a player is not tested every time he learns a new skill before he goes on to the next skill. He made the analogy with outcomes-based education. I have had a bit of experience in coaching tennis and I think the writer of that letter needs to get a new coach! People who play tennis learn skills for the fundamental reason that they want to play; they want to compete. They want to be better and they want to play a game. It does not matter whether they want to have a bit of a hit and giggle on a Saturday afternoon or if they want to play pennants at the local club or play at the state or national level or on the international circuit, which will give them a PhD in tennis, so to speak. That is totally irrelevant. My point is that it does not matter at what level a person is because he is competing; otherwise, he would not keep score. A person will develop as an individual in tennis through perseverance. If a person does not reach the highest level, that is, if he does not reach the PhD level and play on the tour, there is no reason to not play the game. Similarly,

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if a person does not aspire to attending a university - which applies to approximately two-thirds of students at secondary level - there is no reason to not complete years 11 and 12. It is no reason to not choose subjects currently referred to as TEE subjects. Of course, to think otherwise is to assume that a person does not take those subjects unless he intends to go to university. That is a nonsense. A lot of my former students studied politics and history. I taught English as well at TEE level for a few years. They had no intention of going on to tertiary study. That does not mean that they should not have studied those subjects. It is like saying that a person does not play tennis unless he is going to play on the international circuit. That is nonsense. The analogy is quite profound; it is quite valid. The only problem is that the chap who wrote the letter to the editor got it wrong, in my opinion. Learning to play tennis is like developing any skill, including academic development. However, if one hopes to refine one's skills, one has to get the basics right. That might mean changing coaches. Just as with our education system, change is not necessarily a bad thing.

As previously mentioned, outcomes-based education certainly has merit. I make no apology for saying that. However, unless we get the basics right - that is, we perfect the implementation - we might live to regret it. It is for that reason that I fully support the motion. We need a moratorium on the implementation of the courses of study. We need some cool heads to ensure that we get it right now.

HON NORMAN MOORE (Mining and Pastoral - Leader of the Opposition) [3.34 pm]: I will make just a few comments about this as I know other members wish to speak on the matter.

In my opinion there is a lot of merit in the notion of outcomes-based education. The concern expressed to me is the concern that surrounds the implementation of the new curriculum framework in our schools and the onward progression through the school system of outcomes-based curriculum in the various years and the intended introduction in year 11 next year. The concern is about the sorts of issues we had just heard from Hon Peter Collier about the complexities of the tasks and so on that need to be assessed. It is also about concern among teachers that the profession is not yet ready to deal with English and two other subjects next year. The Curriculum Council has not provided the material to teachers of English to make them feel comfortable about the introduction of the subject next year.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: The English teachers' association -

Hon NORMAN MOORE: I do not care what the minister says. She has convinced me today with her attitude towards this that she is a short-term education minister and that her government will go at the next election. As I said yesterday, she is starting to sound like her predecessors. She should get one thing straight: she can fix this tomorrow if she wants to by saying that she acknowledges there is a problem, putting this off for a year and sorting out the problems. The problem will then go away, I can promise her that. However, she is so dogmatic and set in her ways that she will not take advice. I am giving her advice to save her political hide. I do not know why. The minister will never take advice from me anyway. That suits me fine. If she does not take my advice, she will be a short-term minister. She is getting herself into a position where she simply cannot back off. The ability to back off is a trait that gives ministers some longevity. I did not last for a very long time as education minister; it was only three years. One of the reasons I did not last was that I was a bit like the minister; I would not back off on a number of issues because I was right! Of course, I was right, but nobody else agreed with me. That is the problem the minister has now. She may well be right about what is going on concerning the curriculum in the schools, fundamentally, but she is wrong and the department and the Curriculum Council are wrong by insisting that it be implemented in the post-compulsory section of school now. The schools are not ready for it.

Let us get one thing straight: when the minister speaks about this issue publicly, she says that I started it. Let us get that straight. I ordered an inquiry into education headed by Dr Vickery. The Vickery report recommended a whole restructure of the education administrative system. Part of that was a new Curriculum Council arrangement, which I supported very strongly. I then engaged Therese Temby, who was the head of the Catholic system, to look at how we might introduce the new curriculum process in Western Australia. She was assisted by Jerry Skivinis, who was then the Deputy Director General of Education. They brought out a report that recommended the formation of the Curriculum Council and they also recommended that we head down the path of outcomes-based education. That is when I finished my role in this. I was replaced by Hon Colin Barnett, who introduced into Parliament the Curriculum Council legislation in 1997. I might add that yesterday I drew the minister's attention to the fact that she did not support outcomes-based education in 1997; she expressed some reservations about it. It did not matter what the reservations were, but she had some. I will get the *Hansard* if she wants me to. She had reservations about outcomes-based education. That is a fact of life; it is in *Hansard*. If she wants to change her mind, she is entitled to. Everybody is entitled to change his or her mind; she should just get up and say it. That is all the minister needs to do.

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The Curriculum Council Bill 1997 came to Parliament. Therein lies the problem that we have today, because what is in the bill is not what I intended should be in the bill when I was the minister. The Curriculum Council is made up of people who come from various organisations that operate within the education system. The chairman is appointed by the minister. There is also the chief executive officer of the department. Eleven other people are appointed by the minister but they come from various organisations that have a vested interest in education. My ambition for the Curriculum Council was that it comprise 12 tried and true citizens of Western Australia who were not involved in the education system and who were citizens who could be relied upon to make a proper assessment of the views of the community on the content and the values of the curriculum. I did not want the Curriculum Council to comprise a body of people who have been involved in education all their life and have a vested interest. I wanted the Curriculum Council to comprise a body of people who are not directly involved in education and can represent the interests and values of the community and can give us an assessment of what is taking place in curriculum development in Western Australia and what our kids are learning. The most important thing in education is what are our kids are learning.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: Did Colin Barnett get it wrong?

Hon NORMAN MOORE: I believe he did. He knows my views on that. However, he did not have a choice, because we did not have control of this house at the time. The minister knows that this government changed the Curriculum Council Bill to make sure that the State School Teachers' Union of Western Australia and the Western Australian Council of State School Organisations would have a position on it and the minister of the day would have no say in who the members of the Curriculum Council should be. The problem as I see it is that the Curriculum Council is not an organisation that represents the interests of the community. It is an organisation that represents the interests of the people who work in education. I was desperate to get away from the situation in which educators were determining what educators would teach in our schools. In my view, having been an educator, educators do not necessarily have a broad enough understanding of the issues and values that represent a particular community's attitude to what should be taught in our schools. Therefore, the Curriculum Council never became what I thought it should be and what I still think it should be changed into. That does not mean the council actually writes the curriculum, but it assesses what is written by the people who are engaged to write the curriculum.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: Your government gutted the curriculum unit within the Department of Education.

Hon NORMAN MOORE: That is where the problem used to lie. The minister does not understand.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: It took 350 curriculum writers out of the system - gone!

Hon NORMAN MOORE: When we give the writing and the final determination of curriculum to professional educators, we invariably miss what the rest of the community thinks is important. The Curriculum Council should have been a sounding board to represent the interests of the total community in respect of the things that these professional educators were churning out through the curriculum organisations that existed in the system. That is what I tried to achieve. If the minister cannot understand that, she will never understand anything. There is an old saying: those who can, do; those who can't, teach. I would say those who cannot teach are the ones who write curriculum and sit in head office and make the decisions for those who are trying their best to teach. The problem is that the people who sit in head office - "Silver City" - and make the decisions for the education system are in many cases failed teachers, or in many other cases are people who do not want to teach because it is too hard! If a person does not want to be an educator, he or she is better off sitting in head office writing curriculum! It is a lovely way to spend one's time!

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: You are very cynical!

Hon NORMAN MOORE: I am, because I have been a teacher. I have been involved in education for many years. I am married to a school principal. I know what is going on. When I started my speech, I said I support the notion of outcomes-based education. I am told it is delivering some absolutely brilliant outcomes in our schools. That is commendable. However, do not give us the stuff that Hon Peter Collier read out, which illustrates what teachers have to try to deal with when they are teaching a politics subject. It is bizarre. Get real! The people who write that sort of stuff are not the ones who have to teach it and assess the students on it. They are the ones who are sitting in their ivory tower and are churning it out day after day; and, not only that, their colleagues are on the Curriculum Council, and they are saying if Joe Blow is saying that is good, I will tick it off! Change the Curriculum Council, minister. Get people onto the Curriculum Council who can represent the community and tell the minister what the community wants children to learn. Sure, put trade union people on it; I would have put them on there. However, also put on it leaders of industry, and church, sporting and other people who can give us a broad understanding of what the community believes is appropriate for children to learn in our schools. That would be far better than leaving it to the so-called professional educators who claim, in the jargon they use, that they are the only ones who know what kids ought to learn. They are not. I used to be

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one of those. The problem is the Curriculum Council. We need to re-assess the make-up of the Curriculum Council. We need to re-assess what its job should be.

My simple political advice to the minister is that she should put this off for a year. She will then survive another year. If the minister does not do that and continues to go down the path that she is going down now, she is destined to have a very short term in office. I said when the minister first got the job that she would be either very, very good or very, very bad.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: I am glad you spend so much time thinking about me!

Hon NORMAN MOORE: I do not spend a lot of time thinking about the minister at all, which means that I can sleep peacefully at night. If I had to think about the minister, I would be in turmoil because of the things she is doing. The minister will be a very good Minister for Education if she is willing to take on board the genuine concerns that are being expressed to her by the community, rather than bury her head in the sand and say everything she is told by the department and by the Curriculum Council is right, because it is not. They have their own vested interests to protect -

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: Unlike you!

Hon NORMAN MOORE: I am a former Minister for Education. I did not leave because I wanted to. I was hung out to dry for the very same reason the minister will be hung out to dry. The minister should take my advice, as someone who has been there and done that. The minister will not survive if she gets dogmatic about these sorts of issues and tells everyone, as she has done today, that they are wrong and she is right, because on this issue -

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: That is not what I said. I said my primary interest is in what will be in the best interests of students.

Hon NORMAN MOORE: With all due respect, what the minister told us today was that we are bringing this in because it is a political issue and we are seeking to achieve some political end. The minister is the one who is providing us with a political end, because she will not change her mind. The more dogmatic and head-in-the-sand approach the minister takes, the better it is for us politically. We are giving the minister an opportunity to get herself off the hook. The only problem I have in saying that is that I know the minister will not do that. That is fine. The politics will continue to roll on, and the minister will get rolled. The minister should take my advice, as someone who has been there and done that, and put this off for a year so that, when it is implemented, all the curriculum development and assessment processes will be in place, and people will have confidence and will know what they will need to do when they confront it the following year. The important thing is to make it work for English, because if we can make it work for English really well, the rest will flow on like cream. That is my advice to the minister, and she should take it.

HON MATTHEW BENSON-LIDHOLM (South West) [3.47 pm]: I thank Hon Norman Moore for those comments. For the benefit of those members who do not know where I stand, I was actually a curriculum consultant until the beginning of this year -

Hon Simon O'Brien: We thought there was something wrong with you - you scoundrel!

Hon MATTHEW BENSON-LIDHOLM: Had it not been for the electors of the south west, I would have been back at Mt Barker Senior High School this year, putting into practice the very things that I put into last year's year 11 and 12 economics course, which, I must say right from the start, is quite extraordinary. I am very pleased to be given the opportunity to speak on the motion moved by Hon Barry House, particularly the second part, because I believe that, until this time, and certainly since I have been in this Chamber, there has been much misinformation and ignorance about what outcomes-based education is all about.

Hon Simon O'Brien: So he is attacking his own minister now!

Hon MATTHEW BENSON-LIDHOLM: No. The ignorance is coming from the other side of the chamber. I assure Hon Barry House that, having been there and having done all that work, I am certainly in a much better position than someone who has been in this chamber for the past 18 years. I assure the member that having been in the schools until, as I said, the beginning of this year, I believe I am in a reasonably authoritative and informed position to make judgments about outcomes-based education. That is fine. Members opposite are entitled to their opinion. I want to give members mine, and I would appreciate it if they would listen for a while. My starting point will be the history of this whole movement. It has been noted already that had the coalition won the 2001 election, by 2004 we would have had the introduction of this new system of education. I am proud to say that under the Gallop Labor Government, with both Hon Alan Carpenter and Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich, there has been far more consultation in their endeavours to get it right than occurred under the previous government. As a consequence of that, the agreed year, particularly for English courses, is 2006.

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Hon Barbara Scott: Why, then, are the masses screaming?

Hon MATTHEW BENSON-LIDHOLM: I suggest to the honourable member that she ask the relevant questions in her electorate. I have certainly done that. I am in constant contact with my colleagues on the south coast. I can assure the member that the school at which I was a teacher and administrator until the beginning of the year is well poised to implement the system, particularly the English curriculum, next year. Let us drop the mismanagement issue right now. Society is in a constant state of change. Education should not and cannot be shielded from that change. The education system has had ample opportunity to prepare itself. We live in a dynamic and changing world and education helps us to cope with that change. It is a bit like the microeconomic reform of the 1980s. We must supply the very best and, having been in a position to ensure that that is the case - I refer to my work in year 11 and 12 economics - I know we are poised to deliver that. Members should be better versed in outcomes-based education. I suggest that they check the Department of Education and Training's web site to get a better idea of precisely what they are arguing. There is too much ignorance about this issue, which has resulted in members making accusations, labelling the system as ill-prepared and moving motions such as the one moved by Hon Barry House. If members were better informed, perhaps they would not make such accusations.

I want to explain to members what outcomes-based education is all about.

Hon Barbara Scott: The minister hasn't been able to.

Hon MATTHEW BENSON-LIDHOLM: That may be the case. However, I am here to inform the honourable member that the focus is on standards and learning. It is about what students are expected to achieve. It is not necessarily about what teachers teach. Outcomes-based education is student-centred. In this day and age, any teacher worth his or her salt would be practising OBE. I dare say that 18 years ago, Hon Barry House would likewise have practised the principles of outcomes-based learning, which is student-centred and collaborative. The system is also about problem solving, and it relies on governments investing in technology so that we can present that type of information. If anyone came to me and said that they do not understand outcomes-based education, I would say what I have just said. Members should visit the schools in their electorates and they will soon find what I have just said to be very true.

The second part of the motion calls for a review. Why should there be a review? Teachers are quite confident about the system and how to implement OBE in their classrooms. They go home at night and rest comfortably in that knowledge. I cannot see a problem with that. If other members can see a problem, I am free to debate the issue with them. Outcomes-based education is nationwide. That is the interesting thing. Like Hon Peter Collier, I have not bothered to check the web site of People Lobbying Against Teaching Outcomes; however, I am reliably informed that people are saying that the different approaches do not exist. However, they do exist. Since 2001 - under Labor's two Ministers for Education and Training - Western Australia has made an enormous effort to ensure that this state's system reflects what is required. We want students in Western Australia to know, understand, value and be able to do things. We do not want a system that relies on students regurgitating facts that teachers have given them. Those days are gone. I dare say that when I was at school in the 1950s and 1960s, if I could not regurgitate what a teacher told me I was considered a failure. We want our students to go beyond that. I suggest to honourable members that no matter what people say about certain issues, kids of today are more articulate, confident, competent and informed. Members should visit the schools in their electorates and talk to the kids to learn what they do. I am sure that they will be somewhat staggered by their level of talent. Kids in year 10 have gone through the whole system. Where will they be if, next year, particularly in English, we suddenly suggest that they forget the way they have learnt in the first 10 years and return to a system that requires them to regurgitate facts? That would be a retrograde step, and one to which I do not subscribe. I point out - this has been mentioned already - that under the recently signed \$1 billion federal funding deal, Western Australia was required to agree to a consistent national curriculum. That curriculum, of course, is outcomes based. Why do members opposite want a review? Given the historical acceptance of members opposite that the national curriculum is outcomes based, why should we go back to the past? Certainly that is what this motion, particularly the second part, would have us do.

Hon Barry House: I think you've misinterpreted it. I have stressed several times that the problems are with the implementation and assessment procedures.

Hon MATTHEW BENSON-LIDHOLM: Paragraph (b) of the motion calls for -

a full, independent review of the Curriculum Council and the merits and implementation of outcomes-based education.

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That is my interpretation. The member may put a different spin on it, but it is fairly clear that rather than showing leadership on this issue, which is what the Minister for Education and Training is doing, he is reacting to pressure.

Hon Simon O'Brien interjected.

Hon MATTHEW BENSON-LIDHOLM: Hon Simon O'Brien may mock me.

The other thing that amuses me - I have read this in newspapers and it has come from both sides of politics - is the argument that we are dumbing down the system. That accusation has been levelled at educators for quite some time. Let me assure members that the majority view is that the system is smartening up. Students are encouraged to question and expand on facts and theories. I put it to Hon Barry House that when he was at school - certainly when I was at school - if he could work out an arithmetical or physics problem and come up with a bottom-line answer, everyone would say, "Well done, young House. That is 10 out of 10", and everybody would be happy. Our education system and kids have moved on from that. Outcomes-based education is the vehicle by which we will move into the future. I assure members that adopting a system that we have used previously - no doubt Hon Barry House has been through the various curriculum changes over the years - is no solution. Students will still sit exams and tests. That aspect of the issue is something that a lot of people, particularly parents, do not understand. While I am on the subject of parents and guardians, I take on board the issue that parents are in a no-win situation. They are in a no-win situation because 99 per cent of them learnt through a different system of education. I take on board that what governments need to do through their schools is to put in place better strategies whereby parents are informed about what their kids are doing.

Since 2001, both Labor education ministers have been charged with implementing an enormous change to our system. I suggest to members that the leadership they have shown is matched by a commitment to financial and human resources previously unheard of in this state. Of particular note is the professional development available to staff. I dare say that certainly in the Albany education district money has been made available to schools to promote knowledge to parents. I put that to all members.

The implementation timetable for some of the subjects has been set for 2006. In my estimation, that must continue. We will confuse the heck out of students if, all of a sudden, we say, "Sorry, you are going to year 11 and you propose to do X, Y, Z course, but you will go back to the past; to a system whereby you get grades." The kids are smart, but what a way to destroy their comprehension of the education system. It is good to hear Hon Norman Moore say he is an ardent advocate of outcomes-based education.

Hon Norman Moore: Hang on, I did not use the word "ardent".

Hon MATTHEW BENSON-LIDHOLM: All right, the member is a supporter of the principle.

Hon Norman Moore: Yes.

Hon MATTHEW BENSON-LIDHOLM: These kids would have completed year 10 and we will tell them, all of a sudden, in 2006 that we are sorry, but they will have to do what their parents did.

Hon Norman Moore: Not every subject will go to outcomes-based education next year.

Hon MATTHEW BENSON-LIDHOLM: I never said every subject would.

Hon Ray Halligan: Not everyone will go through this process you are expounding.

Hon MATTHEW BENSON-LIDHOLM: Certainly with the school leaving age being extended, we will see these kids moving through the system

Hon Ray Halligan: That is another argument.

Hon MATTHEW BENSON-LIDHOLM: Maybe it is. How long will we have to wait with the moratorium that Hon Barry House has put before the house? Will we wait a semester or a year? Imagine the message that would be sent to primary schoolteachers and the reaction from the rest of the system. What will we do with students in middle school?

Hon Barbara Scott: Why will it affect them?

Hon MATTHEW BENSON-LIDHOLM: Why? Because we are saying we do not know what will be done in year 11 and we will have to wait for the government to come up with a new idea. What a disaster!

Hon Ray Halligan: Are you suggesting you are a disaster because you didn't go through that system?

Hon MATTHEW BENSON-LIDHOLM: No, I am saying that with change, we move on. Now is the time to move on. We should not go back in the past.

I suggest that members visit the schools in their electorate and talk to the kids. They are handling the changes; why jeopardise their future?

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In summary, far from being critical of the current minister, I laud her for her commitment and endeavour. It is a difficult portfolio, as some members would attest, and it is made even more difficult by the ill-timed and ill-informed intervention by people like Brendan Nelson. The bully tactics and the pointless demands - fancy saying to people in an outcomes system that all that is important is one's place in the class. Outcomes-based education is about statewide and national standards.

Hon Norman Moore: That is not what he said. I do not disagree that he should not be bullying people. You are quoting him incorrectly.

Hon MATTHEW BENSON-LIDHOLM: I suggest that Hon Barry House is certainly off the mark with his condemnation. Our new outcomes approach is here to stay. The year 2006 will see the start of the implementation of our new and dynamic education system. I oppose the motion.

HON DONNA TAYLOR (East Metropolitan) [4.05 pm]: I rise in support of Hon Barry House's motion and will make a few brief comments on this important issue.

I say at the outset that I am not necessarily opposed to some of the elements of outcomes-based education. However, given the widespread concern and confusion surrounding the current proposed changes, Hon Barry House's call for a moratorium on the proposed 2006 changes seem very sensible. The minister said in this place that some people do not like change. That is true, but when there is an ever-increasing body of concerned people, and I include teachers, parents and the State School Teachers Union, who have either withdrawn their support or are clearly anxious and concerned about the effect of the proposed changes, it is appropriate that the issue be revisited. I mentioned the union and in its most recent report, dated 16 August, the following concerns about the proposed changes were made -

- lack of specific resources and models for programming and assessment

- lack of effective trialling and piloting

- lateness and unsatisfactory PD including:

- lack of respect for and devaluing of practicing teacher input and critical analysis

- massive workload increases in a short time period in a high stakes area of schooling

- lack of teacher confidence in successful implementation resulting from the above.

Furthermore, one need only read the various letters to the editor in *The West Australian* over the last couple of months to understand the intensity of the concern of the teachers who are inevitably charged with delivering this new system. For example, on 19 July a high school teacher wrote -

I am a hard-working teacher with 15 years' experience in teaching. As was (and still is) the case with the implementation of the curriculum framework in Years 8 to 10, I am supportive of the need to change to outcomes-based teaching pedagogy.

However, when it comes to effective assessment and levelling of students, my feeling and experience tell me that this system is sadly deficient.

The teacher goes on to say -

Distinctions between levels are almost impossible to decipher, let alone deliver to students and their parents in a manner that can be easily understood.

An example of this from one of the forthcoming upper school courses of study states: "The student understands cause and effect relationships leading to alternative outcomes when discussing the impact that changes in natural and social systems have on each other and the resulting patterns of features and activities in landscapes."

The letter continues -

I have a degree in education and several higher degrees yet I have great difficulty understanding exactly how to assess the students under my care. How are our students and their parents expected to cope?

It is quite clear that there is confusion and, indeed, real and significant concern about these proposed changes. There are concerns about teacher workloads, increased assessment and reporting and the vagueness of the reporting outcomes.

Perhaps these concerns can be overcome. In recognising them now it seems only appropriate that a moratorium be investigated. It will give the Curriculum Council and Department of Education and Training adequate time to perhaps trial the proposed changes, rather than implement them in full, and for the Legislative Assembly's Education and Health Committee to complete its inquiry into changes to the post-compulsory curriculum. Principally, its terms of reference are to investigate, amongst other things, the merit and basis of proposed

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changes, the readiness of the education system for the proposed changes, the effect of extending to upper secondary education the outcomes-based curriculum, assessment and reporting and the effect of the amalgamation of TEE and non-TEE subjects and assessment.

I appreciate that reform is never easy, but it is quite clear that there is anxiety among very hardworking and experienced teachers and parents and the minister needs to respond to their concerns.

HON BARBARA SCOTT (South Metropolitan) [4.09 pm]: I rise to not only support the motion moved by Hon Barry House but also commend him for bringing this urgent matter to the Parliament. This issue is tearing the Western Australian community apart and is one of the biggest insults to Western Australian teachers that I have seen for many years. I will keep my comments very brief because of the limited time available. I remind the minister that it is not so much the outcomes-based learning that is opposed as much as the nature and rate of change for parents and teachers. Hon Matthew Benson-Lidholm outlined his knowledge of outcomes-based education. Those who have been involved with early childhood education for many years know that teachers have assessed children on their progress and what they know and not on a curriculum-based test. That is a difficult thing to do. However, early childhood teachers have always done that. It is student-centred assessment.

The minister is being totally arrogant by not listening to the teachers of Western Australia. She should take two important issues on board; that is, the nature and rate of change. I received a letter from a person who is very important in this debate. He is a retired principal. His letter states -

Dear Barbara,

Thank you for seeing me . . .

. . .

The former -

That is, the nature of change -

concerns the vague objectives of the course and the nature in which student achievement is reported, particularly to parents. This approach has been in primary school and middle school for about four years and as I pointed out the progress of many students is reported in vague terms such as “developing,” . . .

I have talked about that in the chamber before. A parent of a child in year 7 cannot be told that his child is “developing” in his reading. This is the difficulty that teachers have with the rate and nature of the change in reporting to parents. Those two points are important.

The other point I make concerns the arrogance of the government in forcing this change upon teachers. Teachers have almost rebelled. They will not give in. Hon Norman Moore was humble enough to talk about an experience during his time as Minister for Education, Employment and Training. I remember it well, because it was about the school entry age. The coalition government stopped and listened, because parents and teachers said that a lead time of at least two or three years was needed for major changes in education. Major change cannot be imposed upon a system without that lead time.

Hon Barry House is correct. I support him for bringing this matter to the Parliament’s notice. I urge the minister to listen and to not be so arrogant. We have an arrogant and inconsistent government. The Minister for Education and Training has said that she will not wait for a parliamentary committee to report on this matter. However, it was reported in *The West Australian* of 25 June on the issue of food labelling that -

. . . the Premier has insisted on waiting for the recommendations of a parliamentary committee not scheduled to report until March 31 next year.

The inconsistency of the government is absolutely transparent on this issue. Parents are confused because they do not know how they will receive reports on their children’s progress. Teachers are struggling with how they will explain the subjects to parents and tell them how their children are going and how well they have achieved without the simple tests that we were brought up with. This major change should not be forced upon parents, teachers or students without a lead time of at least two or three years, as we learnt in government. This government is arrogant, arrogant, arrogant and inconsistent, inconsistent, inconsistent. Who will lose? Our teachers will lose. We already have difficulty getting good people into the teaching profession. How outrageous it is to put this strain upon them and to expect them to retrain and study in the limited time that has been offered. I have been told that many teachers would need at least five days of in-service training, but it would not be possible to provide that across the state in the time frame that has been offered. The Minister for Education and Training is not willing to listen to teachers or to the concerns of the community. She will suffer, but so will our

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children in Western Australia. I support the motion. I commend Hon Barry House. I hope he continues to run the gauntlet, because the government needs to be brought to book over its arrogance and inconsistencies.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to sessional orders.

Sitting suspended from 4.15 to 4.30 pm