

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING - ALLEGATIONS OF MISCONDUCT

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

I refer to the series of questions I asked in September, October and November 2005 about cases of alleged misconduct of Department of Education and Training employees in state schools. The minister at that time indicated that processes were in place, that matters were being investigated, and that certain issues would be dealt with.

- (1) Will the minister indicate exactly what inquiries she made to the Department of Education and Training at the time?
- (2) Did the minister discuss these matters with Mr Paul Albert or any other departmental representative at the time?
- (3) Did the minister issue any instructions or directives at the time or subsequently regarding these issues?

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH replied:**

- (1)-(3) The member asked me the following questions on 15 November 2005 -

I refer to the minister's acknowledgment that 99 examples of alleged misconduct by Department of Education and Training staff are under investigation, and that 83 of these staff are still in schools.

- (1) Are any of the 83 alleged to have committed misconduct of a sexual nature, whether it be paedophilia, sourcing paedophilia information from the Internet, or other sexual misconduct?
- (2) If so, what steps is the minister taking to ensure the education department does not put children at risk by allowing people facing serious allegations to remain at schools and within close range of Western Australian school children?
- (3) Are any of the other 16 - who on the minister's admission are employed at district and the central education offices - alleged to have committed offences involving sexual abuse of children or sourcing of child pornography?
- (4) If so, what steps is the minister taking to ensure that the education department does not continue to employ these people. . .

I responded as follows -

- (1) No.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) Yes.
- (4) The matters are being investigated according to the disciplinary provisions of the Public Sector Management Act 1994, or equivalent for wages staff. Pending the outcome of these investigations, individual employees will remain in locations without contact with students.

On 16 November 2005, Hon Barry House asked in question without notice 894 -

I refer to the answer the minister gave yesterday to question without notice 877, in which she confirmed that some teachers moved out of schools are facing serious allegations involving sexual abuse of children or procurement of child pornography.

- (1) Have all the allegations against the 16 staff removed from schools been referred to the police?
- (2) If not, why not?
- (3) If the matters have not been referred to the police, will the minister assure the house that her department will be directed to call in the police immediately and refer all 16 serious allegations to the police?
- (4) If not, why not?

I responded -

- (1)-(4) I cannot advise whether one or all of the matters have been put to the police, but I can advise that the matters have been, and will be, dealt with in accordance with the normal procedures in dealing with such matters. If that means a referral to the police,

obviously the department will do whatever is required in terms of the legal obligations of the department to deal with matters such as the ones the member has outlined.

Hon Barry House then asked me whether I would personally be referring matters to the police. It is not usual for a minister to directly refer matters to the police. From memory, I responded accordingly. As members know, these systems are in place. The Corruption and Crime Commission report has clearly demonstrated that sometimes the systems do not work as effectively as they should work. I am certainly not proud of the fact that the complaints management unit has been seen to have shortcomings. I am not proud of what has been found. The point is -

Several members interjected.

**The PRESIDENT:** Order, members! Can we not have cross-interjections?

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** I think that I have answered the question.