

**ADDRESS-IN-REPLY**

*Motion*

Resumed from 27 April.

**HON DERRICK TOMLINSON (East Metropolitan)** [11.25 am]: Before the clock starts counting down my time on this debate, may I crave the President's indulgence for some information, please? I have been feeling somewhat bilious for the past seven hours and I find I am becoming increasingly so as the day progresses. Under the usual circumstances I would have sought to be paired today but regrettably they appear to have been called off. The explanation that I am seeking from you, Mr President, is that if I have to exit the chamber rapidly and without much warning, will I be able to return to the chamber to continue my remarks?

**The PRESIDENT:** I am sure that an appropriate motion could be moved in those circumstances -

**Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON:** I am sure a motion will be moved!

**The PRESIDENT:** That will facilitate the continuation of the member's remarks at a later stage. I can think only that Hon Derrick Tomlinson has been subjected to cruel and inhuman workplace conditions of the nature to which Hon Kate Doust referred. I can sympathise with him.

**Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON:** To be perfectly honest, I think I have been subjected to a cruel virus. However, even the Pope has no control over that.

It is with pleasure that I associate myself with the motion of Hon Louise Pratt and her expression of thanks to our most gracious sovereign, Queen Elizabeth I, Queen of Australia -

**Hon Kate Doust:** One more.

**Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON:** Queen Elizabeth II. I thank the member for that correction. I meant to say our most gracious sovereign Queen Elizabeth II, the Queen of Australia. I thank His Excellency for the speech that he was pleased to deliver. Several speakers have remarked on the quality of service that the Governor has given and is giving to Western Australia. I was particularly interested to listen to Hon Peter Foss yesterday evening. Regrettably, I have not had a close working relationship with His Excellency. However, having observed the Governor and his wife from an interested distance, I find him to be an admirable person. There is something about officer training in the military services that fits people for that quality of service. I am not surprised by the Governor's appreciation of politics because part of officer training is to have an intimate and detailed understanding of not only the politics of their home country but also the international relations of countries in which they might serve.

There was a time in Australian history - November 1975 - when a critical situation was such that it was rumoured that the Governor-General might have to declare a state of emergency and establish military rule. That is the sort of emergency that the military must be equipped to face.

It does not surprise me either that the Governor is erudite in matters of literature. It is my estimation that the School of Language, Literature and Communication at the Australian Defence Force Academy in Canberra is the pre-eminent school in Australia. The officers who come out of that academy, and the officers who progress to the rank that the Governor has achieved, are men of considerable distinction. His Excellency the Governor (Lieutenant General John Murray Sanderson, AC) has demonstrated those qualities. If I can use a platitude, he demonstrates the capacity to walk with princes and paupers. I can recount an experience about a week ago - not that I want to call the lady concerned a pauper or a prince - when the Governor was engaged in opening the University Club at the University of Western Australia. My wife attended that event and when she came home she recounted that to her discomfiture the Governor had focused on and approached the group with whom she was chatting. She felt somewhat alarmed by that and wondered how she would cope with the presence of such an eminent man - not that my wife is not equally as eminent; I think she is. She came away from that experience quite excited because she and the Governor had quickly established that they shared similar childhood educational experiences in country schools and were so involved in discussing their rural schooling experiences that it appeared that she had monopolised the Governor's time. Eventually his equerry suggested it was time he got on with officiating the event. The capacity to speak with such conviction, commitment and suasion is an admirable capacity and quality. The Governor has shown that and many other qualities at various times, as did his predecessor. Both men were military trained. I believe that the Governor's extended term will expire some time during the life of the present government. It will be very interesting to find a person who can match the qualities that the current and the previous Governor and the Governor-General of Australia bring to their offices. I am particularly pleased to thank His Excellency for the speech he made.

Part of my discomfort today stems from the very fact that I am in the chamber. I am here because the government was returned. It was my expectation before the election that the government would not be returned

and that the house would not be recalled until after 22 May. Regrettably, my expectations in both instances have not been met. However, I congratulate the government on its election success. I have listened to all sorts of explanations about why the government won and why we lost. I have some opinions, but my opinions are worth the same as everybody else's - a pinch of salt. The fact is that the electors of Western Australia made their decision. There is no question of whether we like or dislike that decision; it is a decision that we accept. The electors of Western Australia made the decision to return the government, and I congratulate the government on that decision.

I also congratulate the government on its campaign. One might criticise this or that aspect of it, but the admirable aspect of it from where I sat, and in the light of the consequences, was that the government's campaign remained focused and on message. It did not depart from the focus and the message. At the end of the campaign the Leader of the Opposition fell into an error that confirmed the very message and image that was the focus of the government's campaign. For that reason, I commend the Labor Party for staying focused and on message. For us, there is a lesson to be learnt.

I also congratulate those members who have been elevated to the ministry. I am sure both Hon Jon Ford and Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich will make a significant contribution to the government over the next four years. I must confess that I was somewhat disappointed that Hon Sue Ellery did not get a guernsey in the ministry. Another of my expectations before the election was that she would be on the front bench on this side of the house occupying the Leader of the Opposition's seat or, if not, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition's seat. Regrettably, she is neither in opposition nor in one of those positions. Parties appoint ministers in strange and mysterious ways. Government members might be able to explain how their ministerial appointees achieve eminence. I have never been able to understand how it is done in our party. However, that is another story.

I was absent on parliamentary business for many of the early Address-in-Reply speeches. However, I read all of them in *Hansard* with some interest. I was particularly interested in the Address-in-Reply speech of Hon Alan Cadby. Hon Alan Cadby used a couple of words that resonate in my memory. He made reference to corruption and rotting of the system. The reason that those words resonate with me is that they were the very words that I used some time ago, I think around 1992, in the circumstances at the time. By coincidence when clearing out my electorate office I came across a box of files that related to that incident when I was called upon to give reasons I should not be expelled from the Liberal Party.

**Hon Alan Cadby:** I was not given that opportunity.

**Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON:** I would like to talk to Hon Alan Cadby about that one day. It was quite an entertaining walk down memory lane to go through that box of files. I had kept them quite deliberately. I was going to write about that incident and have my writings published posthumously, not that I feared libel; it is just that it would have been inconvenient to have to face a libel case. I had no fear of it because the documentary evidence that I had was irrefutable proof. However, I read with some interest the *Hansard* report of Hon Alan Cadby's speech. What I did in fact was shred those files and put it all behind me. I have not visited it publicly and will not visit the incident again.

In an episode like that we find out who our friends are. We also find out who our enemies are. I found that I had two friends in Parliament. I will not name them. Neither of them is currently a member of Parliament. They together defeated the motion in the state executive to expel me from the Liberal Party. They rallied the people who supported me to attend the special meeting of the state executive to hear my defence or the charges against me. One of the people whom they rallied interrupted a family holiday on the Gold Coast to fly home to attend the executive meeting and then return. Another of the two friends flew to Bunbury with an airline ticket, met one of the members of the state executive on the tarmac and gave him a ticket to fly to Perth to attend the state executive meeting. I was not expelled; I was censured, but I learnt who were my friends, and most of them were outside Parliament. I learnt who were my enemies, and I make no comment on where they were. However, I would say to Hon Alan Cadby that as painful as these experiences are, eventually we put them behind us, but we do learn who are our friends.

I note that Hon Peter Foss is beside me. I want to correct one aspect of his address yesterday. He intimated that, as a result of my indiscretion, he was placed number one on the ticket. That ultimately was the result, but the historical fact is that the selection committee placed me number one on the ticket and Hon Peter Foss number two on the ticket. Regrettably, one of the people who was involved in the state executive matter was also on the selection committee. After the result was announced, he said publicly that they did not get me there but they would get me in state council. There followed a couple of very torrid state council meetings to discuss that. I do not know what happened because I was not allowed to attend; I was tried in my absence. The attempt was made to shift me from number one to number three on the ticket, which was deemed to be an unwinnable position. Again, my friends outside Parliament rallied. They could not avoid the reverse of the position, but, as a result of that, Hon Peter Foss was placed number one by state council and I was placed number two.

**Hon Peter Foss:** Neither of us got endorsed for six months!

**Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON:** I say that simply to ensure that the historical record is correct for posterity.

**Hon Graham Giffard:** Also that you have moved on.

**Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON:** Yes, and that I have moved on. I really am grateful because I have chosen my own time to leave this place. It is not an indulgence available to all. The average life of a parliamentarian is 1.5 Parliaments. Very few people choose to serve merely 1.5 Parliaments, particularly if, as was required in the good old days, they required seven years service or two terms plus contesting a third election before they qualified for superannuation, but that is a rather grubby view of politics. I have chosen to leave of my own volition. The very simple reason is this: it is very difficult in positions like this, which are so encouraging to our vanity, self-esteem and natural egocentricity, not to want to stay in the job beyond our usefulness. It is very difficult for a member of Parliament to choose the time of leaving. I think that I have left my time of leaving four years too long. As much as I deeply regret the silly decision of the selection committee not to re-endorse Hon Peter Foss, I think right now he agrees with me that it was a decision beneficial to him and probably his only regret is, like me, he had not previously chosen to go of his own volition. However, those are matters of history. I will simply store them in my memory and enjoy them in my dotage.

I wish to focus on one aspect of the Governor's speech. Under the headings of "Better Services" and "Education and Training" the speech reads -

The legislative program in education will include the introduction of a Bill to raise the school leaving age. From 2006 all 16 year olds, and from 2008 all 17 year olds, will be in school or in training unless they hold a job with genuine long-term career prospects.

Quite clearly, this is one issue where the government can claim it had a mandate. The previous Minister for Education, Hon Alan Carpenter, had flagged this in the last Parliament. There had been a lengthy and thorough process of public consultation and the government had announced its decision before the election. The very fact that it is endorsed means the government can quite honestly claim that, in this case, it has a mandate to proceed. I do not dispute that mandate, and neither do I dispute the raising of the school leaving age, progressively, from 16 to 17.

I have said previously in this place that I support the proposition that every Australian has entitlement to 12 years of schooling. The proposition advanced by Professor Karmel and his committee in 1973 was that every Australian has entitlement to 12 years of schooling. The Karmel report extended that to say that that 12 years of schooling may be cashed, to use the term, at any time in the person's life. Therefore, if a child were to leave school at the end of the compulsory schooling period, in most instances at the end of year 10, that person would still have credit for two years of schooling at cost to the state. That is a matter I hope future governments will look at closely.

I praise the value of places like Canning College, North Lake College and Cyril Jackson Senior Campus where second chance education is available, and the second chance education available in our TAFE colleges.

Even though we will be moving progressively to 12 years of schooling when the 17-year compulsory attendance age comes into effect, regrettably a very large portion of the population will have entitlement to two years credit of school. I argue they should be able to cash in their entitlement at any time at expense to the state. I sound like a socialist, but that is a statement about my commitment to the value of education. Therefore, I commend that part of the government's education policy, and I think the words were: education is the centrepiece of a second-term agenda of this government.

From my own indulgent perspective I commend the government. I think it is something like fourth, fifth or sixth on the matters of urgency confronting this state. For the long-term benefit of this state we must not only extend the education of our population, but also enhance the education of our population and aspire to excellence, otherwise we shall be nothing more than a quarry to service the educated millions elsewhere. I will return to the quarry later because I can recall in the 1970s, in the period of the John Tonkin government, the concern of the Labor Party was that the quarry mentality would leave Western Australia with nothing more than holes in the ground. We should revisit that proposition because with increasing rapidity we are exploiting our natural resources without a real view to replacing them with another resource, and our greatest resource is our human resource.

I would like to impress on the government the need to hasten slowly in the extension of the school leaving age. I say that because the problem is not for the upper quartile of students, nor the second quartile of students, nor the third quartile of students - the problem is for the fourth quartile of students. As it is the government's intention to increase the school leaving age for 16-year-olds from 2006 and 17-year-olds from 2008, I requested from the Department of Education and Training the most recent data on Western Australian school retention rates by

sector - government and non-government schools - gender and Aboriginality. I looked at the retention rate for year 11, which will be the school leaving year for the bulk of 16-year-olds in 2006, and found that in 2004 the retention rates for year 11 non-Aboriginal females was 87.7 per cent. The retention rate for non-Aboriginal males to year 11 was 85.3 per cent. Therefore, something like 86 per cent, as a rough inadequate average, appear to stay at school until the end of year 11. I say appear because I refer to the retention rates. It is more appropriate to refer to the apparent retention rates.

**Hon Graham Giffard:** Enrolment rates.

**Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON:** The apparent retention rate is the term I will use. I hope members will indulge my skiting. It was a term I first used in 1975 when I was with the Australian Council for Educational Research and was commissioned by the then commonwealth Department of Education through the ACER to analyse the retention rates. It is painfully obvious that the retention rates are a mathematical fabrication, because they do not take account of intra-sector or intrastate migration, mortality or international migration. The 100 per cent at the enrolment is not the same 100 per cent at the exit. It is a different population. The retention rate of a school is really the apparent retention rate, because in some schools the turnover is such that the number of children who graduate from that school, having started at that school in year 8, is considerably smaller than the retention rate would suggest. I prefer to talk about the apparent retention rate.

**Hon Graham Giffard:** A retention rate is trending up or down and it has some meaning.

**Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON:** It does and it has particular meaning in this context. Firstly, it means that that 86 per cent retention rate to the end of year 11 is trending upwards, only marginally. Secondly, it indicates that 15 per cent only of the student cohort will be affected by the extension of the compulsion to attend school until the end of year 11. However, that 15 per cent is possibly the most difficult 15 per cent in terms of educational provision. It is the 15 per cent for whom school has been inappropriate or -

**Hon Graham Giffard:** Unfulfilling.

**Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON:** I thank the member. It has been unfulfilling in all senses of the word. The retention rate for year 12 is a slightly different matter, because the apparent retention rates for non-Aboriginal males in government schools is 61.2 per cent. In other words, in the previous year it was 85.3 per cent in year 11 and 61.2 per cent in year 12. There had been a decrease of 24 per cent in the students statewide, which is quite significant. Similarly, the apparent retention rate for a non-Aboriginal female in year 12 in 2004 was 70.2 per cent and in the previous year - 2003 - it was 88.6 per cent. There was quite a marked dropout between years 11 and 12; certainly a more significant dropout between years 10 and 11, because retention rates to the end of year 10 are in the order of 99.8 per cent with some marginal differences between gender. Again, we do not have to worry about the top quartile; they succeed despite the teachers. Nothing that a bad teacher can do - I will qualify that. Little that a bad teacher can do will harm the educational achievement of the top quartile. They are the people who will probably progress to university; they will probably progress if not to management certainly to middle management. They become a very valuable asset. School for them is a matter of coping with the system and, because of their capacities and abilities, they tend to cope with the system admirably. They understand it and use it to their advantage. For the top quartile there are no worries. The second quartile, the 50 to 75 per cent, again can be significantly affected by schooling in terms of their achievement or their desire to continue with schooling, but, likewise, they will probably finish year 12. The third quartile drops off after year 11. The bottom quartile is the most problematic in educational terms, and providing for that bottom quartile has never been resolved in Western Australia during my involvement with schooling. I was with the board of secondary education in 1975 when we moved from the matriculation examination to the school certificate and a concerted effort was made to provide a meaningful educational program for those people who would progress to a school certificate but not necessarily matriculation. That aspiration was never achieved. I have seen curriculum change, organisational change and system change, but 25 per cent of the population is still bailing out at the end of year 11. We are now moving to a so-called compulsory post-compulsory period. We are going to make years 11 and 12 compulsory, but none of the year 11 and 12 courses seems to be fulfilling for that lower quartile. They are the statewide apparent retention rates.

I extracted from the data provided to me information about particular schools. I called for this data because I was somewhat alarmed when I looked at some of the data published by *The West Australian* on Friday, 14 February. For example, I looked at Armadale Senior High School, because it is a school of some interest to me, and I found that 49 full-time students were eligible to graduate.

**Hon Graham Giffard:** In what year?

**Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON:** Year 12. Of those 49 students, two did not graduate from high school.

**Hon Graham Giffard:** When you say eligible to graduate -

**Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON:** They had completed year 12.

**Hon Graham Giffard:** They had enrolled?

**Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON:** Yes: 49 only from Armadale Senior High School. I wanted to compare Armadale Senior High School with a neighbouring high school, such as Cecil Andrews Senior High School. I found that that school was very comparable and had 50 students eligible to graduate or 50 students enrolled at the end of year 12. The performance across both tertiary entrance examination subjects and the weighted school assessment subjects was not encouraging. I then looked closely at those schools. I do not want to criticise the school, but I want to focus on a very serious issue that confronts us. What I found at Armadale Senior High School was that in year 8 in 2000, 72 non-Aboriginal male students enrolled at the time of the census. In year 12 in 2004, 23 enrolled, with an apparent retention rate of 31.9 per cent - nearly 32 per cent. In other words, for two-thirds of the students, the school experience was unfulfilling. The rate for the non-Aboriginal females was a little more encouraging: at Armadale Senior High School, there were 69 non-Aboriginal female students in 2000, but in 2004 there were 39, or a 56.5 per cent drop-out rate. The retention rate of non-Aboriginal students at that school was 43.9 per cent - more than half of the students who commenced year 8 at that school in 2000 had dropped out. It did not affect merely the bottom quartile in that school, but in fact half of the students. When I use the term "bottom quartile", I refer to comparative achievement. It does not necessarily reflect innate ability. Most often it is innate ability that is the predictor of school success or educational achievement, but it is not innate ability alone. I had the experience many years ago of working with one of the brightest young people I have ever enjoyed working with in a classroom. His IQ broke the scale. He went home to the farm midway through year 11. I do not know what that person was capable of, but he is probably a damn good farmer.

Of the students represented in these figures, some are capable students who have gained a meaningful job and will make a valuable economic contribution to society. However, the important factor is that 50 per cent of them have abandoned or dropped out of school by year 12. Cecil Andrews Senior High School had an equally depressing number of 54 non-Aboriginal male students in year 8 in 2000. This is an example of the apparency of retention rates, because in 2001 there were 62 students, an increase of 14 per cent. From 100 per cent in 2000, it rose to 114 per cent in year 9 in 2001. It dropped to 41 students, or 75.9 per cent, in year 11, and down to 31.5 per cent in year 12. The number of non-Aboriginal females was again much more encouraging, with 62 students, but it dropped to 31 students, a drop-out rate of 50 per cent. Overall, the apparent retention rate of students at that school was about 42 per cent. I could go through the figures for many schools and paint that picture. For whatever reason, years 11 and 12, and in particular year 11, are not fulfilling to too many students.

I will not make a comparison with the non-government sector because that would be a meaningless comparison. It would be like comparing chalk with cheese. There are so many different variables to consider in the government and non-government sectors that those comparisons do not stand up to close scrutiny. The retention rates are considerably higher in the non-government sector, in the order of 88 to 90 per cent in year 12. I will not engage in that argument because many learned papers have been written on why students drop out.

The matter on which I want to focus is that we will now progress to compelling those recalcitrant students to attend school. I say "recalcitrant" in terms of those students not wanting to be at school because it has nothing for them. Those recalcitrant students will now be compelled to attend until the end of year 11, and by 2008 will be compelled to stay until the end of year 12. The two schools that I earlier used to illustrate drop-out rates were used simply because they are schools in my electorate with which I am familiar. I did not use them to single them out for condemnation or criticism. My purpose was to illustrate the point that if we are to make attendance compulsory, two options will be available to us; that is, to radically alter the provision of secondary schooling to make it fulfilling for 100 per cent of students - at present it is fulfilling for perhaps 10 to 20 per cent of students in some places - or to continue with more of the same, in which case we will read about students in Western Australian schools behaving in the same way as students in some London schools, as described in an article published in yesterday's *The West Australian*. They are blackboard jungles.

**Hon Graham Giffard:** I haven't read that article. Did that say in the later years?

**Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON:** It did not specify later years; it simply showed that the disaffected population of those schools was tyrannical in its behaviour.

**Hon Graham Giffard:** They might have a disaffected population in year 8.

**Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON:** Regrettably we have a seriously disaffected population in year 8 as well. There are two things that I want to draw from this. First, we have a very large disaffected population. The size of the disaffected population varies among schools according to all sorts of determinant variables, but it is still a very large disaffected group that will now be compelled to attend school. That is an educational challenge. Secondly, we could analyse the data and look at the disaffection that is occurring even in year 8. Actually, I would take that down to year 3, because if a child has not mastered literacy and numeracy by year 3 and has not developed enthusiasm for the school experience by year 3, that student will be lost.

**Hon Ed Dermer:** You are generalising again.

**Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON:** Yes, I am generalising. Hon Ed Dermer's experience is proof that generalisation is a fallacy. Likewise, it could be demonstrated that there is a fallacy about socioeconomic status being a determinant. I do not know what it is, but I will not go down that line.

The other factor is gender. The drop-out rate for boys is greater than the drop-out rate for girls. A school principal once said to me, "Derrick, what 14-year-old boy would not rather be out kicking a footy around, or throwing a ball around, or hitting a ball with a bat, or simply being in a rough and tumble with his mates than sitting in a classroom writing a meaningless letter to some meaningless penfriend?" There is a difference in the learning styles of males and females. However, we have a particular problem with the education of males that must be addressed.

I have spoken only about the retention rates of non-Aboriginal students. I will look at the figures for Aboriginal students at Armadale Senior High School. Overall, there were 615 male Aboriginal students in the state at the beginning of year 8, and 111 by the end of year 12 in 2004. Overall for Aboriginal students there was an apparent retention rate of 22 per cent. Even that is deceptive. Armadale Senior High School had five male Aboriginal students in year 8 in 2000. By the end of year 12 there were none. That was a 100 per cent drop-out rate. There were nine female Aboriginal students at the beginning of year 8 and two at the end of year 12. Fourteen Aboriginal students enrolled at that school in 2000, but only two stayed there. That is consistent with a statewide pattern. However, the deceptiveness of the figure is the transfer between year 7 and year 8. Were I to go to the catchment schools of Armadale Senior High School, Cecil Andrews Senior High School and many others in the state, I would find that the total Aboriginal population at the end of year 7 in the catchment schools is considerably greater than the population that transfers to year 8 in a high school the following year. There is a drop-out rate at the end of primary schooling. They will not be distinguished when it comes to compulsory schooling, but they are not distinguished now either. Where are they? In rural and remote areas it is a particular problem.

I want to emphasise that if we progress with more of the same, the results will be destructive to our educational system. I know that the intention of the post-compulsory education review and the post-compulsory education system, which will become the compulsory education system for years 11 and 12 after 2008, is to have greater flexibility in, and variety of, schooling. I look at the 55 subjects. For the top five per cent of students who will become the veterinarians and brain surgeons, the two maths, two sciences, English and one other subject stream is still available to them. They will do that, because that is their best guarantee of entry to a faculty of their choice in the university of their choice. There will also be the opportunity for the second and third quartile to mix their schooling, so that there will be a period of schooling, a time in work experience or even a time in TAFE, and they can have combinations and permutations of those; or there will be the opportunity for a maximum time in TAFE and work experience, and a minimum time in school. All manner of possibilities are envisaged in the new system, and I commend that. It will be an administrative challenge. I avoid saying nightmare; it will be an administrative challenge. It will also be a significant resource challenge.

Let us look at those two schools that I used as an example. By themselves, with 50 students each or thereabouts in year 12, they are not viable. There is not sufficient critical mass to provide the 55 subjects. Therefore, in those schools, curriculum choice for students will be diminished, thereby lessening the possibility that there will be an educational program that is meaningful for the aspirations of a particular child. The notion of an educational program tailored to the aspirations and stages of intellectual, social and physical development and chronological age of a child is gone. If those two schools are not viable by themselves, what are the alternatives? We might look at some sort of amalgamation. However, supposing we were to amalgamate two non-viable schools on the fringe of the metropolitan area, students would not have easy access to the alternatives. There are two alternatives. One is work experience and the second is TAFE. I will use Armadale as the example. The easiest TAFE for them to access from Armadale is the Carlisle campus of the Swan TAFE. Carlisle is an automotive industries TAFE.

**Hon Sue Ellery:** And refrigeration.

**Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON:** Okay.

**Hon Sue Ellery:** And airconditioning.

**Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON:** The next most accessible TAFE distance-wise is the Thornlie campus of the Swan TAFE, where a much larger range of programs are available. However, Thornlie is less accessible for 16 and 17-year-olds from the Armadale catchment area. If those two schools are to be rationalised, the next thing we must think about is the opportunity to co-locate the TAFE.

The next opportunity available to the students in the low-achieving quartiles is the work experience combination: some school, some work experience and some TAFE. Work experience requires the voluntary provision of work experience spaces by employers. In many places the capacity for students to undertake work experience is

already exhausted; it is already saturated. It is a serious problem. From those two schools, another 100 students will be looking for work experience within the Armadale Senior High School and Cecil Andrews Senior High School catchment area, with all the attendant problems of workplace insurance and occupational health and safety that will particularly be the responsibility of the Department of Education and Training and the employer.

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

**Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON:** I pose those examples to illustrate the challenges ahead of us. I commend the 12-year schooling concept. I urge the government to hasten slowly. I would make this speech when the legislation comes before the house were I in this place at that time. However, I will not be available, so I want to make the speech now. Please hasten slowly. If the government simply provides more of the same, it will not satisfy the expectations of the post-compulsory program. Choice will be constrained in many schools, and the opportunity for an individually tailored educational program will just not be available, particularly for that disaffected group of students who will be captive in the system, and the task will be childminding rather than education.

Another matter on which I advise the government to hasten slowly concerns the year 11 and 12 curriculum. For some years now the Curriculum Council has been working on an outcomes-based curriculum framework for a seamless year 8 to 12 educational system. Despite the explanation given by the Minister for Education and Training recently, it is not standards-based; it is outcomes-based. Standards relate to criterion-referenced or norm-referenced benchmarks.

**Hon Peter Foss:** She thinks they are the same.

**Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON:** Clearly, they are not. Outcomes, as is understood and proposed by the Department of Education and the Curriculum Council, are the demonstration of desirable behaviours at certain levels of educational progress. They are two quite distinct concepts. For some time we have developed an outcomes-based curriculum for seamless progression through five years of secondary schooling. Compulsory attendance of year 11 is to commence in 2006 and 55 school-based subjects are to be provided to achieve diversity. One would anticipate that those 55 school-based subjects required for skills-based learning necessary for graduation - a combination or permutation of those that are necessary for secondary school graduation - would be available. I refer, of course, to the 55 post-curriculum areas; we do not have subjects any more. It is anticipated that those curriculum areas will be available from the beginning of 2006 for the first cohort of compulsory attendance. I do not know whether the Curriculum Council web site is up to date. I sought some information about the progress of the curriculum development for the so-called compulsory education system and was instructed that all the information I needed was available on the web site. I visited the web site and of the 55 curriculum areas, just five are available online for 2006.

**Hon Graham Giffard:** Which school was that?

**Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON:** I am not referring to a school, but to the Curriculum Council. On the web site I could access information on aeronautics - or aviation - English, engineering and two others. Before the system is changed, the curriculum development must be completed, tested, trialed and demonstrated to be workable. It must meet all the educational values to which schools aspire. Experience of such curriculum development indicates that the minimum lead-time of five years is required to prepare, develop and test a new curriculum. It is now 2005. Compulsory year 11 education will commence in 2006. Some 50 of the 55 learning areas across the outcomes-based curriculum are at the concept stage; they are out for comment. In other words, development has not begun on the very complex set of outcomes at progressive levels for 50 subjects. That is a serious problem. I implore the government to persist with its appreciation of providing diversity and choice in the development of our secondary educational system. I implore the government also to persist with creating flexibility in the learning arrangements that offer students several choices of schooling through to TAFE. The student who wants to study two maths and science subjects, English and one other stream to maximise his choice of entry into a university of his choice should be able to do so. Likewise, students who do not have those aspirations should be offered an equally meaningful, valuable and portable set of curriculum materials. I have done very well; I have not thrown up yet.

**Hon Graham Giffard:** I am feeling a bit bilious.

**Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON:** I hope the member does. As a former parliamentary secretary for education, I hope he has a deep and abiding interest in these matters. Indeed, I know about his educational attainment.

I will touch briefly on a matter that I wanted to spend more than six minutes discussing. The Governor's speech drew the issue of water to the attention of members. He said that, because of the declining rainfall and run-off from our dams, the government is giving high priority to the procurement of a water supply. For 12 years I sat in this place and was unfairly intolerant of Hon Jim Scott when he exhorted us to take note of climate change. I want to demonstrate my damascene conversion. I spent last weekend - the Anzac Day weekend - at my wife's

family farm where they have kept daily rainfall records from the 1930s. Those records demonstrate that in Mt Barker the rainfall declined by 50 per cent between 1930 and 1990. The area receives half the average annual rainfall today than it did during the 1930s. If the alarming trend since 1990 continues - let us hope it is simply a drought phenomenon - it is predictable that in half that time Mt Barker will receive only half the current annual rainfall. We have been hell-bent on the growth of Perth to the point at which the demand on the water supplies will be stressed under that type of scenario. I apologise to Hon Jim Scott. Climate change is real and we are unprepared for it.

I again ask members to think laterally and divergently. The argument is about whether we will bring water from the Yarragadee aquifer to Perth or whether we will bring water from the north of the state to Perth. The demand for water caused by population growth and industry continues in the already saturated metropolitan centre. We dream about bringing water to Perth. We hear people of the south west say that the water from the Yarragadee aquifer cannot be used for Perth because it belongs to the south west and they want to use it for their own purposes. That is selfish, is it not?

During the election campaign I heard eminent people such as Sir Charles Court offer the very helpful advice that the water from the north should stay in the north for the development of the north. That is probably very sound. However, to achieve that, instead of bringing the water to where the people are, we must do what mankind has done since time immemorial. Mankind has relocated from where the water is not to where the water is. That is about the decentralisation of Western Australia's population. We have an adequate but not an indeterminate water supply for the south west of the state in the Yarragadee aquifer. Why are we not putting our resources into the development of population centres and industry? Indeed, we need industry to attract people because people will go where the work is. People will live where they work. Why are we not putting our energy into the development of regional and industrial centres in the triangle - it is not quite a triangle; maybe it is octagon or a rhombus - of Esperance, Albany, Bunbury and Katanning? Why are we exploiting the resources of the north with a fly in, fly out population? One of the things that was never adequately explained in the unfortunate canal proposition was the direction of the canal. The canal would not have watered Perth - it would have watered the west coast. It would have watered all those industrial centres, or had the potential the water all those industrial centres, that are now stressed for water. Growth in industry is possible because we have the resources, but the most precious resource is the one that is not available - water. The second most precious resource is the one that flies in and flies out - people. I make the following plea to future decision makers: do not think in terms of more of the same, which is to bring water to Perth. Rather, think laterally about decentralising the population. I would like to be able to say that Perth's sustainable population has reached saturation point. I would like to be able to say that we should put a cap on Perth's population and direct that there be decentralisation. However, that is fairytale stuff. As much as Colin Barnett's canal was lampooned it was, in fact, visionary in its aim of providing to the driest state of the driest continent a water supply from natural and recurring sources. More of the same in human endeavour is not necessarily progressive; it can be regressive.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Hon Bruce Donaldson**.