

PROPOSED YEARS 11 AND 12 CURRICULUM CHANGES, MORATORIUM

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

My question follows on from a question asked a while ago by Hon Graham Giffard. Given the state government's acceptance in recent days of the national schooling agreement with the commonwealth government, which imposes requirements for report cards which are at variance with outcomes-based reporting methods, does this not present yet another compelling reason for a moratorium on the proposed curriculum changes for years 11 and 12, which are being met with widespread concern and confusion in schools and the community?

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH replied:**

No notice was given of this question, but I thank the member for it anyway.

The quadrennial agreement with the commonwealth proposes that we report according to an A, B, C, D reporting arrangement. This is not at variance with outcomes-based education. The intent of outcomes-based reporting is that it is simple and can be understood by the community, so that the community can get a good grasp of it. This seems to be the weakest excuse around for deferring or doing away with the changes that are proposed to post-compulsory education. Primary schoolteachers have been using an outcomes-based approach for many years. There is a greater focus on subjects in secondary schooling. However, many secondary schools have moved towards an outcomes-based system over the past 12 years. Outcomes-based education is not new. The curriculum framework was introduced into schools for consultation in 1997 and outcomes-based education was rolled out in 1998; it has been around in a formal sense for the past seven or eight years. Phase 1 of the changes proposed next year for years 11 and 12 is ready for implementation in 2006. It deals with four subjects. Of those four subjects, the government has already rolled out aviation; it has already been introduced in eight schools this year. That leaves three courses of study; that is, English, engineering, media production and analysis. We are way down the track in the implementation of those subjects.

It would be a major disruption to delay the implementation of those subjects, because most schools have published information handbooks for year 10 students and their parents on subject offerings for year 11. This information has been presented to parents at parent nights and provided to students. Schools have begun formulating their timetables for next year. The member would know from his experience as a senior master, as I do having been a deputy principal, that the timetabling of high school subjects is a nightmare. Therefore, this process has already started and the Leader of the Opposition is telling me that it should be disrupted. Furthermore, teacher professional development for the courses has begun and has been planned for the rest of the year; therefore, there would be a major disruption. I also make the point that although these subjects are being rolled out next year, phase 2 - which is the next lot of 20 subjects - will not be rolled out until 2007. That means that there is a lead-up time of 18 months, that teachers will get five days of professional development and that a lot of work will happen in the next 18 months. However, I am sorry to tell the Leader of the Opposition, if he thinks that it is easy to line up every aspect of a major reform and roll it out in one go, that is not the way things work. Therefore, these subjects will be rolled out next year. There are not too many subjects. I have confidence that schools can cope; I have confidence that teachers can cope; and I have confidence that students will benefit. I am very confident that the roll out of these subjects will occur next year. There will then be another 18 months' lead-up time for the next lot of 20 subjects. Then in 2008, which is quite a way down the track, the last lot of 20 will be rolled out. I do not have to be Einstein to work out that there will be some challenges. However, I have confidence that the education system can embrace those challenges. I believe we will look back after 2008, 2009 and 2010 and say, "By golly, that was the way to go, because upper school education could not have stayed where it was."