

SCHOOLS, DRUG EDUCATION PROGRAM

142. Hon RAY HALLIGAN to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Education:

Can the minister inform the House of any recent measures to help educate Western Australian school students about the danger of drugs?

Hon BARRY HOUSE replied:

I thank the member for some notice of his question. A comprehensive and widely supported drug education program has been operating in Western Australian government and non-government schools since 1997. The school drug education project was formed as a joint initiative of the Education Department, the Association of Independent Schools and the Catholic Education Office to implement the strategic plan for drug education in WA. Its aim is to ensure that effective drug education is provided in all schools. The project is part of the State Government's Together Against Drugs strategy.

Since 1997, the government has allocated over \$1m to the project each year. Key achievements to date have been the development of comprehensive teacher and curriculum support material, which has received Australia-wide acclaim; professional development for teachers in government and non-government schools; guidelines for the development of school-based policies on drug education; parent and community participation; and the development of resources to assist schools to monitor their programs.

A recent evaluation of the project by Curtin University of Technology has shown that the involvement of schools leads to positive outcomes, such as the development of formal drug education policies in schools; increased involvement of parents in project-related activities; and a high level of use by teachers of the support material provided.