

SCHOOLS — BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

**290. Mr A.P. O'GORMAN to the Minister for Education and Training:**

Can the minister please outline to the house how the Carpenter government is dealing with behaviour management in our schools?

**Mr M. McGOWAN replied:**

I thank the member for the question. The government regards behaviour management and discipline in our state schools as a very important issue. The government has a lot of respect for its teaching workforce and wants to ensure that the school environment is pleasant —

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** — and productive for both staff and students throughout Western Australia. Therefore, we have established a number of initiatives to deal with this important issue. The government has put in place three secondary behaviour centres and has now introduced five primary behaviour centres, with additional funding, throughout Western Australia. We have introduced 1 300 additional teachers and 3 000 teachers' aides since we have been in office. We have streamlined the exclusion and suspension rules to make it easier for schools to deal with students who behave very badly. We have reduced class sizes for the early years of school, introduced compulsory community service for all year 10 students and invested in additional psychology support in public schools throughout Western Australia. Most importantly, the government has introduced the behaviour management and discipline policy, at a cost of \$16.5 million annually, in which it has invested more than \$100 million in a specific behaviour management and discipline strategy in public schools. I noticed on the weekend that the shadow minister for education said that these changes that I have just outlined were nothing more than cosmetic changes. The shadow Minister for Education and Training does nothing but attack public education.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** I call to order the member for Bunbury and the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** The shadow minister does nothing but run down and denigrate public education in Western Australia. I thought I would do some research. I went back to articles in *The West Australian* that detail the fact that there were discipline and behaviour management issues in schools in the 1990s, although I note that the shadow Minister for Education at the time, the member for Belmont, did not attack the public school system. However, there were very significant issues —

**Mr T. Buswell:** He had just left the union!

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** He was a very strong supporter of public education and as shadow Minister for Education did not denigrate but rather supported the state public education system. To conclude —

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Order, members!

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** We need a behaviour management centre for members opposite!

To conclude, all of these behaviour management and discipline issues were detailed in the 1990s. Could I find one policy initiative to deal with the problem back then? No; I found nothing! It is only this government that has done something about the matter.