

TEACHERS — INDUSTRIAL ACTION — IMPACT

**248. Mr P.J. RUNDLE to the Minister for Education:**

I refer to the ongoing failure of this Cook Labor government to reach a deal with the hardworking teachers of Western Australia. Yesterday, the Premier babbled through an answer saying, “the Department of Education is preparing to minimise the impact on students and parents.” It can now be revealed that Western Australian public schools should not expect to rely on education assistants or other support staff to supervise students while teachers are out on strike next week.

Who can the parents of WA expect to supervise their children while teachers are on strike?

**Dr A.D. BUTI replied:**

We still remain hopeful that strike action can be avoided. We are negotiating in good faith. We have put a good offer to the State School Teachers’ Union of WA and we hope that teachers will remain on the job on Tuesday. If not, the department is looking at various arrangements to be put in place to minimise as much as possible the disruption to the school day. It is a half-day strike that also creates transport difficulties. We have made a special plea to the union to allow education support centres to remain open for our most vulnerable students. Unfortunately, the teachers’ union has rejected that at this stage. We hope that it will reconsider because the kids going to ed support centres use special buses, and it is very hard for the buses to come back halfway through the day.

We have negotiated in good faith and we continue to negotiate in good faith. We ask the union, with its members, to consider the very attractive offer that we have made with regard to not only salary, but also the other components that will improve the education system of Western Australia.

While I am on my feet, I will let the member know, because I know he is very interested in the WA student assistance payment, that nearly 100 000 people have made a claim. We only opened that process up on Monday and it is now Thursday. Of those claims, 11 703 have been made using alternative methods to the ServiceWA app. People know about alternative methods because 11 000 of them have applied in that way. We are very happy with that. With regard to the impending industrial action, we hope that can still be avoided.