

CURRICULUM COUNCIL ACT - REVIEW

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

I refer the minister to section 36 of the Curriculum Council Act 1997, which is headed "review of act". It reads in part -

- (1) The Minister is to carry out a review of the operation and effectiveness of this Act as soon as is practicable after the expiry of 5 years from its commencement.
- (2) In the course of that review the Minister is to consider and have regard to -
 - (a) the effectiveness of the operations of the Council . . .

It continues -

- (3) The Minister is to prepare a report based on the review -

And the minister is to table it in Parliament. I also quote from the Legislative Assembly Estimates Committee from 21 May 2003, in which the then CEO of the Curriculum Council, Mrs Norma Jeffery, said -

The time line has been held up slightly because we have to review the Curriculum Council Act. The council has done an internal review and we are now looking at getting an external reviewer to examine that. This change will be part of the total change. We then have to make recommendations to the minister. We hope that the review will be completed within six months.

I ask -

- (1) What has happened to this review of the Curriculum Council?
- (2) When will the minister meet her obligations with regard to this review in line with the legislative requirements?

The PRESIDENT: Before I give the call to the Minister for Education and Training, I note that what might loosely be referred to as preambles seem to be taking longer than the questions asked. I would ask members to give that some consideration before they ask questions in future.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH replied:

Thank you, Mr President; you will be happy to know that the question is not longer than the answer in this case.

- (1)-(2) The member is quite right with regard to section 36 of the Curriculum Council Act and the requirement for a review within five years of the expiry date. The Curriculum Council did, in fact, commence to undertake that review in 2002. However, a number of events made it difficult to progress that review. There was certainly a machinery of government report and a review of the efficient delivery of government priorities report. There was a recommendation from the machinery of government report that the Curriculum Council continue as an independent statutory authority. However, the review of the efficient delivery of government priorities report in December 2002 made a different recommendation; namely, that all agencies in the education portfolio, including the Curriculum Council, be amalgamated into one department. The Department of Education and the Department of Training were, as the member will be aware, amalgamated in 2003. The Curriculum Council is made up of a number of representatives from various education sectors - independent schools, Catholics, the government sector, the State School Teachers' Union of WA, universities, employers, parent representatives etc. A decision was made by the Curriculum Council to continue as an independent statutory authority to ensure that it remained representative of all the education stakeholders. Following the resolution of this issue, the review of the Curriculum Council Act commenced in 2005. I would have had reservations about bringing the Curriculum Council to be part of the Department of Education and Training, for example, because the council has a very clear statutory function; that is what it was set up for, and that is the job that it has to do.

To ensure independence, I shifted the conduct of the review from the Curriculum Council, because in my view there is no point in the council reviewing its own operations. I thought we would have a better review outcome if the review was undertaken by the Department of Education Services. Feedback has been collected from the stakeholders and has been considered in the course of the review, and it is anticipated that I will get a draft report concerning this matter by the end of June 2006.