

ABORIGINAL STUDENTS, ABSENTEE RATE, NEWTON MOORE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

1168. Hon BARRY HOUSE to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Education and Training:

- (1) Is the minister aware of the current high absentee rate - 30 per cent for upper school students and 32 per cent for lower school students - for Aboriginal students attending Newton Moore Senior High School?
- (2) How does this compare with the figures from recent years when the Nyoongah program operated at the school?
- (3) In light of this clear deterioration, does the minister -
 - (a) acknowledge the mistake of abandoning this program at the end of the last school year;
 - (b) intend to reinstate funding for a tutor and full-time coordinator for the Aboriginal program at Newton Moore Senior High School?

Hon GRAHAM GIFFARD replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

- (1) In the time allowed to respond to the member's question only year 11 and 12 figures are available. The absentee rate for Aboriginal students for year 11 at Newton Moore Senior High School is 18.7 per cent, slightly less than the state average. For year 12 it is 10.6 per cent, much less than the state average.
- (2) The objective of the program was retention to year 12. In the time the program operated at Newton Moore Senior High School the retention rates from year 10 to 12 decreased from 28 per cent to five per cent.
- (3)
 - (a) The program was reviewed to allow renegotiation with the school community with regard to the structure of the program and to seek increased funding.
 - (b) The program will be reintroduced with an increase in funding as part of the secondary aspirations program "Follow the Dream". The position of coordinator at the school is currently being advertised. It is envisaged that the successful applicant will take up the position in term 4.