

Deputy Chairman; Hon Barbara Scott; Hon Graham Giffard; Hon Jon Ford; Hon Robyn McSweeney; Hon Ljiljana Ravlich; Hon Derrick Tomlinson; Hon Ed Dermer; Hon Norman Moore; Hon Sue Ellery; Hon Simon O'Brien; Hon Barry House; Hon Adele Farina; Hon Alan Cadby; Hon Dr Chrissy Sharp

Division 60: Education, \$2 014 622 000 -

Hon Kate Doust, Deputy Chairman.

Hon G.T. Giffard, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Education.

Mr R. Mance, Acting Director General.

Mr P. McCaffrey, Acting Executive Director, Corporate Services.

Mr. B. Doyle, Acting Director, Information and Communication Technologies.

Ms M. Banks, Acting Executive Director, Teaching and Learning.

Mr K. O'Keefe, Acting Executive Director, Teaching and Learning.

Ms V. Burns, Acting District Director, Fremantle, Peel and Canning Districts, Fremantle District Office.

Mr J. Ryan, Acting Director, People and Organisational Development.

Mr P. Hamilton, Acting Director, School and System Performance.

Mr S. Harvey, Acting Director, Facilities and Information Services.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: On behalf of the Legislative Council Estimates Committee, I welcome you to today's hearing. Government agencies and departments have an important role and duty in assisting Parliament to scrutinise the budget papers on behalf of the people of Western Australia. The Committee values that assistance.

Members are asked to sit towards the front of the Chamber where practicable so that witnesses will not have to turn their head when answering questions. It will greatly assist Hansard if when referring to the *Budget Statements* volumes or the consolidated fund estimates, members give the page number, item, program, amount, and so on in preface to their questions. If supplementary information is to be provided, I ask for your cooperation in ensuring that it is delivered to the Committee's clerk within five working days of receipt of the questions. An example of the required Hansard style for the documents has been provided to your advisers.

May I remind those members of the public in attendance that only accredited media representatives may take notes. However, full Hansard transcripts will be available to the public within a week of the close of these hearings.

The Committee reminds agency representatives to respond to questions in a succinct manner and to limit the extent of personal observations. At this time, I ask each of the witnesses whether they have read, understood and completed the Information for Witnesses form.

WITNESSES: Yes.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Do all the witnesses fully understand the meaning and effect of the provisions of that document?

WITNESSES: Yes.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I have received questions on notice from Hon Derrick Tomlinson and Hon Robin Chapple. I now table those questions and answers.

Hon B.M. SCOTT: My first question relates to the restructuring of the Education Department of Western Australia. What was the restructuring cost, or what is the predicted cost, in redundancies and salaried adjustments? Second, what savings have been made, if any, by dismantling the early childhood directorate?

[10.50 am]

Mr MANCE: The ministerial task force report proposes a new structure for the organisation, which is at a number of levels. We have provided some figures on the cost to date of people who have taken redundancy packages. Some savings will be achieved through the rationalisation of some positions and functions. I do not have those details with me but, with the parliamentary secretary's agreement, we will take it on notice and provide the full costs and projected savings. The early childhood directorate has not been abolished. The task force is considering recognising the phases of schooling and establishing teams responsible for each phase. I am sure that early childhood will continue to be a major phase, and recognised by the organisation.

Hon B.M. SCOTT: Will the parliamentary secretary specify the number and cost of the redundancies? Mr Mance said the early childhood directorate will not be abolished; I use the term "dismantled". I understand it will no longer have a role. However, I focus on the number of officers who have taken redundancies. What has that cost?

Extract from Hansard
[COUNCIL - Thursday, 18 October 2001]
p721b-733a

Deputy Chairman; Hon Barbara Scott; Hon Graham Giffard; Hon Jon Ford; Hon Robyn McSweeney; Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich; Hon Derrick Tomlinson; Hon Ed Dermer; Hon Norman Moore; Hon Sue Ellery; Hon Simon O'Brien; Hon Barry House; Hon Adele Farina; Hon Alan Cadby; Hon Dr Chrissy Sharp

Hon G.T. GIFFARD: Does that question relate to early childhood education or education generally?

Hon B.M. SCOTT: The question is about the restructure cost. I want a specific answer about the number of officers who took the redundancy packages and what that cost.

Mr McCAFFREY: The redundancies that were paid out under the machinery of government changes totalled \$363 000 in cash savings. I am aware that other figures have been provided by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. They are whole-of-government figures that incorporate superannuation benefits and other associated costs. Two or three other payments were made in 2001-02 but, unfortunately, I do not have those figures with me. I need a chance to put them together.

Hon B.M. SCOTT: Can I put that question on notice, and include the number of officers who took redundancies?

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Yes.

Hon JON FORD: I refer to the major initiatives for 2001-02 listed on page 1061, one of which is the rollout of telecommunications networking with increased bandwidth following the withdrawal of the Royal Flying Doctor Service high-frequency radio service. What provision is being made for the School of the Air following the withdrawal of that service, and how will isolated students continue to have access to education services?

Mr MANCE: The School of the Air uses the Royal Flying Doctor Service radio service, which is being wound down. We are in the process of negotiating a telecommunications contract that will provide significant enhanced bandwidth for both country and urban areas and replace the School of the Air service with a range of other mediums. We are working with the School of Isolated and Distance Education to develop online delivery and support through other mechanisms. The telecommunications contract is worth \$120 million over four years, and the rollout will take approximately 18 months. Bevan Doyle will expand on the services to isolated children.

Mr DOYLE: As part of that telecommunications tendering process, we are negotiating with two preferred suppliers, Optus Ltd and Telstra, and will soon trial some satellite solutions in a School of the Air situation. The solution will significantly enhance the telecommunications facilities available to those students. Once the tenderer has been chosen, we will move from an HF radio environment to a satellite solution, which will involve Internet access - initially two hours a day, and eventually scaled up - and services such as video streaming, so that teachers and students in remote locations can have visual contact. It will significantly improve the outcomes. As I said, we are about to trial some of the solutions, which we will provide subject to the results.

[11.00 am]

Hon ROBYN MCSWEENEY: I refer to the fourth dot point at the bottom of page 1060 under major initiatives for 2001-02, which refers to a social-emotional developmental continuum. I refer also to the numeracy and literacy statistics on pages 1064 and 1065. Females are scoring better than males across all measurements, which is obvious to me. Given the generally accepted fact that males are under-achieving, what strategies are being developed to address the problems in boys' education?

Ms BANKS: No particular funding has been set aside to address boys' education. However, significant research is taking place at school and district level together with close monitoring of boys' performance and recognition of the need to address the gender differences. Significant professional development is provided to administrators and teachers through seminars. Officers such as Ian Lillico, through professional development and Churchill Fellowship research have developed expertise to support others in the system.

I should have written down the amount set aside for the social-emotional continuum.

Mr MANCE: Members may be interested to know that each State has been assigned a major task force. Western Australia has been successful in gaining a task force on student learning and student services. The gender equity issues are part of its terms of reference. The task force will address best practice and it will map the situation in other States to incorporate material into our strategies. It is a significant task force for which the study of gender equity, boys, bullying, participation and retention is a major part of its role.

Hon G.T. GIFFARD: Ms Banks was unable to find the figure on the social-emotional continuum, so we will provide the amount on notice.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: I refer to the *Economic And Fiscal Outlook* for 2001-02 on page 112 in relation to election commitments. I note that \$10 million has been allocated over the forward estimates period of which \$2.5 million has been allocated in this budget for behaviour management and discipline. Is that \$10 million specifically for years 8 and 9? I understand a total of \$28 million has been allocated in the budget to address behavioural problems in schools. How is this money being practically applied at the school level?

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Ms BANKS: The \$7 million is being split up as follows: \$3 million to be spent on the reduction of class sizes in years 8 and 9 in selected schools, \$2.5 million on specific high schools with behaviour and discipline issues, \$1 million on behaviour management training for teachers from all schools and, with some flexibility, \$500 000 on supporting students who are especially at risk.

When funding is spent on reduced class sizes it must be used to employ additional teachers for years 8 and 9. The use of the remaining funds allocated to schools is within the school's discretion. That will be done in the context of whole-school planning.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Is there a cooperative approach between schools within districts to get the best value from the money through sharing ideas and strategies and working cooperatively together?

Ms BANKS: A number of schools are collaborating such as Girrawheen, Mirrabooka and Balga Senior High Schools, on the new north project and sharing resources and facilities.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Have targets been set or are they in the process of being set at a district or school level so that the program outputs can be better measured?

Ms BANKS: We have compiled a reference group comprising principals from the schools and other key stakeholders to design careful evaluations of the program's effectiveness and to establish the criteria by which the effectiveness will be measured.

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: I refer to the latest monitoring standards in education data under "Supplementary information on Quality and Effectiveness" on page 1065. Although the data on literacy is impressive, it is statewide data and not consistently as high across all education districts, certainly not among the Aboriginal population. In fact in some parts of the State, Aboriginal literacy is appallingly low. Given the inconsistency of achievement of those very important targets for literacy, what strategies is the department pursuing, particularly in the allocation of resources for improving literacy in the low achieving districts?

Mr HAMILTON: There is a significant gap in performance between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students. A great deal of variation in performance also exists between districts. It has been a cause of concern and a number of strategies are in place. The gap in performance has closed a little from the previous year and we want it to continue to close. The performance information is on the table for us to address, but it requires further strategies.

[11.10 am]

Mr O'KEEFE: A number of strategies are in place. As Mr Hamilton identified, considerable success has been achieved in those areas. The department must acknowledge that a huge gap in learning achievement must be filled between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students in certain districts. The major focus has been developing the Getting it Right strategy in addition to the existing programs. That strategy focuses specifically on developing literacy and numeracy in those targeted areas. The budget is \$27.8 million over the next four years. District directors have identified 98 schools in which work needs to be done. The focus will be on developing specialist teachers to do this work. This strategy is in addition to a range of strategies that the department has been using over a number of years.

At the start of the 2002 school year, we will have an extra 50 full-time equivalents in the system, with further FTEs to be rolled out over time; that is, another 40 each year from 2003 to 2005, with an extra 30 at district offices from 2003.

We want to ensure that we use the accumulated wisdom we have gathered about literacy and numeracy strategies. The people occupying those positions will attend more than 20 days of professional development over seven workshops. This is a major initiative designed to deal with those issues in targeted schools and districts, and it is in addition to the strategies we have already been using.

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: I might be old-fashioned, but I thought every teacher was a literacy teacher. I accept the need for specialists in those 98 schools. Does that mean that the literacy specialists will be appointed over and above the schools formula entitlement?

Mr O'KEEFE: These will be additional positions in the system.

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: Will they be additional to the school formula entitlement?

Mr O'KEEFE: Yes.

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: I can look forward to the Middle Swan area getting two next year.

Mr O'KEEFE: I did not say that.

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p721b-733a

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Hon E.R.J. DERMER: I refer to page 1061 and the major initiatives for 2001-02. Mention is made of travelling advocates who will promote teaching as a career for secondary school students and graduates in rural and remote areas. What does that entail?

Mr RYAN: The department has appointed two travelling advocates. Their main role is to visit schools and communities to encourage people to consider teaching as a profession. A significant amount of research indicates that students do not see teaching as a worthwhile profession. A number of variables for that have been identified. These two people will not only visit sites but also skill our own teachers in advocating teaching as a worthwhile profession. The 2000-01 budget is \$38 302 and the 2001-02 budget is \$170 000.

Hon E.R.J. DERMER: Is it too early to garner feedback from the advocates about some of the factors that may be discouraging students from considering teaching as a profession?

Mr RYAN: We are completing a research report that has identified a number of variables. It will be released in the next two or three months. It is interesting to see some of the initial variables.

Hon E.R.J. DERMER: I look forward to that.

Hon N.F. MOORE: My question relates to the restructuring of the department. Did Mr Mance discuss the appointment of the acting deputy director general with the minister or any member of the minister's staff before the appointment was made?

Hon G.T. GIFFARD: How does that relate to the budget?

Hon N.F. MOORE: It relates to the restructuring of the Department of Education, which is a large part of this budget.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Can the member provide a page number?

Hon N.F. MOORE: There is no reference to it on a particular page. The question relates to the restructuring of the department. If they do not wish to answer the question, that is fine. If they do, I will be interested to hear what they have to say.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: It does not appear to link directly to the budget under discussion.

Hon N.F. MOORE: Are you ruling it out of order?

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Yes.

Hon N.F. MOORE: That is interesting.

Hon SUE ELLERY: I refer to page 1061 and initiatives relating to Aboriginal students. An announcement was made yesterday about an agreement reached with the Ngaanyatjarra Land Council. How does that link in with the initiatives mentioned in the budget papers?

Mr MANCE: The department has been aware for some time that its performance in that area has not been very successful, particularly with regard to involvement, retention, literacy and numeracy. We have tried to make it an area of special focus and to take a more holistic approach to addressing the needs of Aborigines. Additional resources will be allocated to the lands. That strategy will involve the appointment of directors; that is, level 8 officers, who are a level below the district directors. The two officers appointed will work closely with the community to improve the way services are delivered and to address the concerns expressed to us about the failings in the system. The next phase will be working with other government agencies to ensure a joint and seamless provision of government services to the lands. We will have further discussions with the Department for Community Development and the Department of Training to ensure the implementation of appropriate programs and resources and that we work together.

Mr O'KEEFE: The Ngaanyatjarra people are very pleased with this as an opportunity to work in partnership. One of the major strategies is to have the department work with local communities to develop programs of specific interest; for example, more culturally appropriate curricula. This is an opportunity to encourage professional development for teachers so that the expertise they bring to the area remains there. In the past, we have had difficulties with teachers gaining experience in the lands and then moving on. The appointment of the two people Mr Mance referred to will allow us to develop a repository of information that will remain permanently in the lands.

In addition, the communities want their children instructed in their mother tongue. A major part of the development of programs will be to give people that opportunity other than in early childhood. The dilemma for many of the teachers in these areas is that they speak English, but it is not spoken outside the school. We want to

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ensure a decent intermingling between the knowledge of teaching in English and teaching it as a second language.

We are keen to improve retention rates of Aboriginal students in those lands. The long-term vision of the community and the Department of Education is that the communities will produce students who will become teachers and remain in their communities as teachers. In addition to the interagency opportunities referred to by Mr Mance, the agreement encapsulates many of the strategies that we are trying to develop in greater detail for a range of Aboriginal communities. We see this as potentially the first of many agreements. There will be further opportunities for local communities that want to take on this initiative to work with the Department of Education.

[11.20 am]

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: I have a question that relates to output 2 - secondary education. For many years a chaplaincy program has existed in a number of schools. It is supported by the Churches Commission on Education and other bodies such as the State Government. The Department of Education has provided funding in support of the chaplaincy program. What was the level of support to the chaplaincy program in last year's budget and what is this year's level of funding?

Mr MANCE: It is a very worthwhile program that works very well in schools. The Department of Education is committed to providing resources for the program. The current agreement between the Minister for Education and the Churches Commission on Education commits the department to provide \$200 000 for 2001-02. Over the past three years, the department has contributed \$450 000 to the program. In addition, the Office of Youth Affairs committed \$50 000 for each of the past three years.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: In recent years there has been a very worthwhile change to allow students with disabilities to attend mainstream schools. Previously, many young people with disabilities were often institutionalised for much of their schooling. Many of them are now students in the mainstream education system. This is starting to show a greater need in the school environment for therapy and other services. What plans does the Government have for this year and future years to expand the availability of therapy services, therapists and other tangible facilities?

Mr MANCE: It is a growing need and our policy is to include students in mainstream education, bearing in mind their best interests and capabilities. The department is reviewing student services to try to improve the delivery of programs and support mechanisms and to identify what the costs will be over the next four to 10 years. Therapy services is an area of increasing need. I have an appointment with the Disability Services Commission next week to discuss ways of improving service delivery across government. We are identifying future needs to ensure the Government of the day understands what are the implications for resources and what some of the delivery models should look like.

Ms BANKS: The provision of therapy services is not the responsibility of the Department of Education except in the provision of language development centres. Additional funding of \$200 000 is available for this year's budget. As Mr Mance indicated, the department acknowledges the continuing requests of parents to include disabled children in mainstream programs. Through the current review of services for students with disabilities we are forming policy directions for ongoing support and facility resource arrangements.

Hon JON FORD: I refer to the eighth dot point at page 1060 of the *Budget Statements*. One of the challenges any Government faces on Aboriginal education, particularly in my electorate, is the way students move with their families through the electorate. The initiative listed attempts to deal with that through tracking itinerant students. May I have more detail of how that will be achieved?

Mr O'KEEFE: It is a significant issue for the Department of Education in dealing with the education of Aboriginal students. Aboriginal families often have natural processes of transiency that create difficulties for the department. There has been considerable discussion for some time about a student tracking system. It was initiated through the Department of Education and the Aboriginal Education and Training Council. People from across several sectors have been working to develop a tracking system. It has been trialled in two districts and the intention is to expand it. Management groups across each sector of schooling will expand the program. The trials were conducted in the goldfields and mid west. It will be expanded to other districts that have high levels of Aboriginal students. It has given the department a decent opportunity to find out where people are and to share information between schools. The government, non-government and Catholic sectors of education are optimistic that the system will allow us to know who is in the school system. It will reduce significantly the

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number of students whose whereabouts are unknown. It will allow us to make sure that students who have been identified by the department are subject to a coordinated program as they move from school to school.

Hon BARRY HOUSE: I refer to the capital works program at page 1069. I am inquiring about the new South Busselton primary school. In the light of the recent review of the joint provision of sporting, recreation and education facilities - which was contributed to by the Departments of Local Government, Sport and Recreation, and Planning and Infrastructure - why has construction of the new South Busselton primary school commenced when the best outcome for the whole community will not be achieved due to the Shire of Busselton reneging on a commitment to jointly develop the oval, hard courts and other facilities?

Mr HARVEY: We needed to proceed with the construction of the school in order to meet the demographic demand. The department regrets that the shire could not see its way clear to provide a joint share facility; nevertheless, the demand still exists and the need to provide the facility remains. The school should be ready in 2002.

Hon BARRY HOUSE: Speaking of capital works, there is a new school only 50 kilometres up the road - the Eaton high school. The Labor Party's pre-election pledge on the Eaton high school was to build it to cater for years 8 to 12. Why is the school being constructed as a middle school with facilities to cater for only years 8 to 10?

[11.30 am]

Mr HARVEY: The school is being planned to ultimately become a senior high school. In our overall site plan we have made an allowance for years 11 and 12. However, at this point there is no need to build those facilities because year 11 and 12 students will be adequately housed within the Australind Senior High School. When it is needed, we will provide a senior high school at the site.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Once again, I refer specifically to page 112 of the "*Economic Fiscal Outlook*", which is budget paper No 3. On that page is a line item about funding for information technology in schools. I note that two of the more recent of the Auditor General's reports deal specifically with the Department of Education's learning technologies project, which was released in May, and the follow up report, "Do Numbers Count?" Both of those reports highlighted the apparent failure of the department to properly conduct evaluation and monitoring of new initiatives. Given that the \$80 million spent by the former Government on the learning technologies project did not result in the expected learning outcomes for children, what steps are being taken so that the Education to the Community vision avoids a repeat of that costly mistake?

Mr MANCE: The department was criticised for what was termed a "box drop"; that is, it provided schools with computers but did not provide the appropriate professional development, information technology support or networking to go with it. There is no doubt that the boxes are needed. Across the State, schools have made significant advances to meet the ratios required to give access to computers for students. A pilot program is being undertaken in Fremantle, which is a holistic view about how the different technologies work together. That program will get information from teachers about professional development needs and it will take their advice on how best to integrate technology into teaching and learning.

As I mentioned before, the roadway must be put in place for the "e2c", which will provide the required bandwidth and access. We will link that with the Fremantle pilot program and the announcement about the provision of laptops for teachers in the future. The telecommunications rollout will give teachers remote access to the school information system, databases and student information etc, through their laptops. The "e2c" is a holistic approach to all the elements, including content. We have contributed to a \$68 million national program for the development of an on-line curriculum. Some of that will be done internally but it will also be part of the national approach. Other States may focus on science or the Chinese language and we will not duplicate that; however, we will be a part owner in that approach. Over the years, a major element of the "e2c" program involves IT support and professional development. Members might have heard some discussion about "thin client" technology. In the future, we will look to use thin client technology that is backed up by a file server or a larger computer. That will allow us to tackle other issues we have with boxes; that is, theft, vandalism and damage. These thin clients have an extra life. Both PCs and thin clients will be used.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Has a study been conducted on the opportunity cost that might have occurred as a result of the previous Government having not provided the appropriate support network to the learning technologies project?

Mr MANCE: No, not specifically for that program. However, we have gathered data to identify how many teachers we believe are in the system who provide technology support. From memory, some 200 full-time

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p721b-733a

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equivalents who are not in the classroom support technology. The opportunity cost or the real cost of delivering IT must include the cost of those 200 teachers.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Does the department know the amount of that cost?

Mr MANCE: We will have that information, but I do not have it with me. That could be provided.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Is it possible to provide the amount of how much those 240 FTEs are worth?

Mr MANCE: Yes.

Hon B.M. SCOTT: On 13 September 2001, I asked the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Education a question about the Government's pledged support to reduce maximum class sizes to 24 children in years 1 to 3 by 2003. I was told that funds had been allocated for that purpose in the forward estimates. Will the parliamentary secretary specify those funds that are to be directed at reducing maximum class sizes in years 1 to 3? What will be the maximum class sizes for preprimary classes? Will the Government maintain the current maximum class size of 20 students for the kindergarten year?

Hon G.T. GIFFARD: As I understand it, the second part of the member's question sought some sort of government commitment or undertaking.

Hon B.M. SCOTT: I want the first part of the question answered first because the member promised to provide it.

Hon G.T. GIFFARD: Mr McCaffrey will be able to provide that information. However, as I understood it, the second part of the question did not specifically relate to a question about the budget. It sought a government commitment on something.

Hon B.M. SCOTT: No, it did not. I said that the Government made a commitment to have a maximum class size of 24 students in years 1 to 3 and 20 students in kindergarten. Currently, there are 25 to 27 students in preprimary classes. What is the Government's commitment to the classroom sizes for kindergarten and the years 1 to 3?

Mr McCAFFREY: Funding has been provided in the forward estimates to reduce the class sizes to 24 students in years 1 to 3. That will be staged over the year 2003.

Hon B.M. SCOTT: Will the minister specify those funds?

Mr McCAFFREY: No, I cannot find that information at the moment.

Mr RYAN: It is estimated that \$2.3 million will be spent in 2002-03, and \$3.2 million will be spent in 2003-04.

Hon B.M. SCOTT: The Government announced a policy to make school fees in years 8 and 9 non-compulsory. The minister said that as a result of that measure there would be a shortfall in school funding. The predicted shortfall varies from \$10 million to \$15 million. How much money is in the current budget to compensate schools for loss of income from the non-payment of school fees?

[11.40 am]

Mr McCAFFREY: A commitment was given to provide a financial assistance package for schools as part of the new School Education Act. This year, we have tackled that issue from two directions, one of which included the financial hardship clause. We have reviewed the level of allowances being paid under the student assistance scheme. That has two components - a charges allowance and a clothing allowance. We will increase the charges allowance up to \$215 across all years. From memory, it was \$180 for years 8 to 10, \$215 for year 11 and \$160 for year 12. We will increase those levels of resources to assist schools to meet some of the fall off in charges. As members know, a guideline to apply for that allowance is that a parent must have a health care card.

As another strategy the minister has requested that we develop an education assistance fund, and that modelling is being done at the moment. The exact level of funds to be provided for that model has yet to be determined, because we are waiting for some more accurate information on how the fees are being collected and what the impact is on a school-by-school basis. We are receiving support for that from the Secondary Principals' Association and the Primary Principals' Association. They expect that by March or April 2002 a better indication will be available of the difficulties being experienced by some schools. At that time it is proposed to work with the minister to have resources allocated to assist those schools.

Hon B.M. SCOTT: I think the question has been slightly misunderstood. It related to a specific change to years 8 and 9. Nothing in the School Education Act 1999 covered that, so that assistance package does not relate to the statement by the minister that there would be a shortfall, and that funding would be made available in this

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budget to cover that shortfall, for schools that did not get the school fees. That does not relate to the School Education Act 1999.

Mr McCAFFREY: I stand corrected. There had already been discussions about providing some support under the financial hardship provision of the new Act. Then, when the amendment was made by the current minister on the nature of the fees, we expanded that approach to try to assist those schools at a higher level. I am suggesting that the extent to which we need to assist schools is unknown at the moment, and certainly a range of assistance could be provided. We need that information before we can determine just how much support we need to give schools.

Hon B.M. SCOTT: I was under the impression from the minister that that could have been addressed in this budget.

Hon ADELE FARINA: I refer to the eleventh dot point under the capital works program on page 1069 of the *Budget Statements*. This point makes reference to \$7.4 million being made available to continue the implementation of early childhood education for four-year-old children. How is this money to be expended?

Mr HARVEY: Early childhood facilities are being provided at all primary schools to allow places for all four and five-year-olds. Programs have been run over a number of years, and they are now reaching completion. This \$7.4 million is the last part of the funding for the provision of early childhood program facilities.

Hon ALAN CADBY: I refer to page 1062, and the line item on laptops for teachers. In the laptop program there is no allocation in the 2001-02 budget period. Can I assume that no laptops will therefore be issued at the beginning of the 2002 academic year? Can I also assume that no specialist training will be given to teachers during that budget period? If I understand the policy of teachers incurring a low cost between \$5 and \$10, and that the tender price is under \$2 500, is it likely that the laptops will be cheap, old technology computers that computer companies will gladly dump in Western Australia? Would the money not be better spent on improving the career structure of teachers, and making teaching a more rewarding career?

Mr MANCE: There will be expenditure on this item in 2001-02, which was factored into the department's internal funding. About \$1.6 million will be spent in 2001-02 for the first roll-out of laptops, which will be aligned with a telecommunications roll-out. Mr Doyle will provide details on the standard of the equipment, but one question raised is whether the equipment is at the bottom end, being rubbishy equipment, or is the Rolls-Royce of information technology. The equipment being provided by the department is middle of the range, but it is a very good package, with the basic box and the bells and whistles that come with it. The costing also contains a component for product development and IT support. Mr Doyle can be more specific on what the computers will be able to do.

Mr DOYLE: The specification of the equipment is not Rolls-Royce level, but a very sound and solid medium-range computer is being sought from the responses to the tender. It needs to be capable of running a complex suite of office software and other software packages that teachers will wish to use. Given our intention to link the computers with a telecommunications roll-out, it will need to operate remote access facilities, so it will need to be quite robust and of good standard. We have asked the companies responding to the tender to list a range of machines that fit these general descriptors. We will bench-test the machines offered by each of the respondents, and ensure that an optimal solution is arrived at, rather than a very high range, which would be unnecessary in most circumstances for a teacher. If a teacher needs a very high-powered notebook computer, and it is a personal decision, we are seeking tender responses to ensure that teachers can purchase a very high specification machine outright at the reduced price.

Hon ALAN CADBY: Two questions I have asked have not been answered yet and I will reiterate them. Can I assume that no laptops will be issued at the beginning of the year 2002? Could the money not be better spent on career structuring?

Mr MANCE: Laptops will be delivered at the start of the year, and in fact some will be delivered at the end of this year. The department is in the market now, doing evaluations. Career structures are a very important aspect of our profession, of course, but so also is technology. Teachers have identified the desire to have access to laptops. A lot of surveying has been done, and the department has followed very closely what has happened in Victoria. I spoke to many teacher in schools there, about how they were using the laptops. It is interesting that nowadays many students, particularly senior students, also bring their laptops to schools, so it is important that the education system be up to date with the skill set and the access to information. It is part of the whole suite of elements of education through computers. School information systems are being put into schools. These systems have different modules of curriculum management and student administration. It is important that teachers, whether they sit in the staffroom or at home, can access this sort of information, as well as do such

Deputy Chairman; Hon Barbara Scott; Hon Graham Giffard; Hon Jon Ford; Hon Robyn McSweeney; Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich; Hon Derrick Tomlinson; Hon Ed Dermer; Hon Norman Moore; Hon Sue Ellery; Hon Simon O'Brien; Hon Barry House; Hon Adele Farina; Hon Alan Cadby; Hon Dr Chrissy Sharp

things as lesson plans and preparation. It is our view these days that the computer is an essential tool for the profession.

[11.50 am]

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Footnote (a) on page 1074 of the *Budget Statements* details the number of full-time equivalent employees in 2000-01 and 2001-02. I note that there has been an increase in FTEs from 24 886 in 2000-01 to 25 045 in 2001-02. First, can you explain that increase? Secondly, can Mr Mance explain the process by which Acting Director General Mr Ed Harken was appointed to his position?

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: I would rule that question out of order.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: The question relates to the budget, as the member is well aware.

Mr McCAFFREY: The FTE changes cover a range of areas. It might be easier if I break those down into chunks. The Government's election initiatives, which were announced and funded in the budget, account for 177 of those FTEs. They cover a range of areas such as behaviour management, which relates to year 8 and 9 class sizes, and the literacy and numeracy program. They were the first tranche of teachers appointed during that year. Additional staffing resources have been provided to help students with disabilities, and teachers will be given additional professional development opportunities. On the other side, some adjustments must be taken into account. Changes are continuing through the cleaning reforms. The move from day labour to contract is reflected and its full-year impact is listed in the budget. Other internal adjustments pick up some additional long service leave requirements that are expected next year. That is in the order of 28 FTEs. The money provided to us as part of the enterprise bargaining agreement included additional resources for years 8 and 9 programs and would involve some 59 FTEs. They are the major areas that have contributed to the growth in FTE positions.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: I ask Mr Mance to answer the second part of my question.

Mr MANCE: It is important to put the appointment of Mr Harken within the context of the department at that time. Prior to 30 June, the department had six corporate executive members. Four of the six decided to take packages and another accepted an invitation to work across government in other roles. One person was left, which was me. I was the acting director general. At the same time, a report was released that said the organisation would be restructured. The restructure was to include the next tier of the organisation - the level 9 positions. The number of those positions has been reduced and many of those people took packages. Under the public sector standards, I am permitted in my role as acting director general to appoint people in acting positions for up to six months. That is what I did. I am also required, before the end of the six-month period, to clearly signal that a merit process is being and will be followed for temporary and substantive appointments. I do not intend to make any substantive appointments. That will be the prerogative of the incoming director general. I will pursue that process. If we had been told earlier that there was to be a significant turnover in staff, particularly among executive staff, it would have allowed us to put a process in place. I had to have people in place from 1 July. Mr Harken and Mr O'Keefe are closely associated with the task force review. Mr Harken received submissions through the task force and had many interviews. He was well placed at that time to advise me on where the task force intended and wanted to go, and the issues involved.

Hon N.F. MOORE: Now that the issue has been raised, may I ask a question that relates to the same issue? Page 1062 of the *Budget Statements* refers to management initiated redundancy savings. Mr Mance, was the minister or his office involved in any appointments made as a result of those redundancy packages?

Mr MANCE: No, he was not.

Hon N.F. MOORE: Neither the minister nor his office was involved?

Mr MANCE: That is correct.

Hon CHRISTINE SHARP: I refer to the students at educational risk program. I have not found any mention of that program in the budget papers. Will that program continue? Has the funding been maintained or improved, and, if so, by how much? Will you provide an update on that program?

Hon G.T. GIFFARD: Margaret Banks will provide an answer to that question in a moment.

Mr McCAFFREY: I will comment while Margaret is finding that figure. The students at educational risk program remains a key initiative of the department. The additional money mentioned earlier for behaviour management, literacy and numeracy programs, and Aboriginal education are aimed at better supporting the students at risk strategy. They are components of that strategy. Margaret will provide some more detail.

Ms BANKS: The students at educational risk strategy specifically aims to support students who are at risk of not achieving the outcomes specified by the curriculum framework. An amount of \$495 000 has been allocated to

Deputy Chairman; Hon Barbara Scott; Hon Graham Giffard; Hon Jon Ford; Hon Robyn McSweeney; Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich; Hon Derrick Tomlinson; Hon Ed Dermer; Hon Norman Moore; Hon Sue Ellery; Hon Simon O'Brien; Hon Barry House; Hon Adele Farina; Hon Alan Cadby; Hon Dr Chrissy Sharp

districts and that funding will continue. The expectation is that a range of strategies will be included under the umbrella of that funding, such as providing support for behaviour management and for implementing programs to satisfactorily identify, monitor and support students at risk.

Hon CHRISTINE SHARP: I have a supplementary question: is that amount of \$495 000 broken down into districts or is that funding provided across the board?

Ms BANKS: It is allocated to district funding.

Hon CHRISTINE SHARP: For each district?

Ms BANKS: That amount is allocated to cover all districts.

Mr McCAFFREY: Each district will receive an allocation of funds for the students at educational risk program, which will enable them to make decisions at the local level to deal with issues relevant to local schools.

Hon CHRISTINE SHARP: I want a point clarified. Will the figure you have provided be shared across all districts, or are allocations made for each district?

Mr McCAFFREY: That funding goes across all districts.

Hon CHRISTINE SHARP: The whole State?

Mr McCAFFREY: Yes, but it is in addition to a range of other strategies that are already provided to districts, such as through behaviour management, students at risk and intellectual disability programs. That helps provide a coordinated approach to difficulties faced in those schools, which are often interrelated.

Hon B.M. SCOTT: This question may act as a supplementary to the previous question, so I might fit another question in as well.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Hon Barbara Scott might be able to do that, but we are running out of time and a number of members have questions to ask.

Hon B.M. SCOTT: On 8 August 2001, I asked the parliamentary secretary a question about the funding of school meals, and of breakfasts in particular. The parliamentary secretary replied that these programs are run by school communities, with the assistance of the State, the Commonwealth, parents and citizens associations, and charitable organisations. What state funding is allocated in this budget for school meals, and in particular for breakfast programs?

[12 noon]

Mr McCAFFREY: That question referred to the State's contribution, which forms part of the grants that are made to schools. All schools receive a base grant and a per capita grant, and it is the schools' discretion to determine how to apply those funds. The intention is that the schools have complete flexibility to apply those funds to the areas that they see fit.

Hon B.M. SCOTT: I refer to dot point one on page 1058 of the *Budget Statements*, and I note that kindergarten programs will increase from two to four half sessions a week in 2001. First, what is the predicted cost in 2002 for the full cohort of four-year-olds when they commence? Secondly, how many four-year-olds are educated at community kindergartens, and why were they excluded from the budget figures? Thirdly, will the common funding model be retained for these four-year-old children in community kindergartens, along with their teachers' salaries, and has that common funding model been budgeted for?

Mr McCAFFREY: I only have the figure for the 2002-03 financial year, but that is close to what the four year cost would be. We have estimated an additional cost of \$21 571 000 to provide the extra time for the four-year-olds.

Hon B.M. SCOTT: Does that include all costs, such as maintenance, capital works, communication and so on?

Mr McCAFFREY: That is the salary cost.

Hon B.M. SCOTT: I want to know the full cost of the kindergarten program.

Mr McCAFFREY: I do not have those figures, but I will try to get them for the member. We do not always dissect the cost of a school site by years of education, and I would not want to mislead the member into thinking that I can provide that figure easily. It will be an extensive research project.

Hon B.M. SCOTT: I appreciate that, and I am happy to put that question on notice.

Ms BURNS: We will have to take the member's second question on notice, but in response to the third question, the answer is yes. Last year a formula for the ongoing continuation of community kindergartens - it is no longer

Deputy Chairman; Hon Barbara Scott; Hon Graham Giffard; Hon Jon Ford; Hon Robyn McSweeney; Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich; Hon Derrick Tomlinson; Hon Ed Dermer; Hon Norman Moore; Hon Sue Ellery; Hon Simon O'Brien; Hon Barry House; Hon Adele Farina; Hon Alan Cadby; Hon Dr Chrissy Sharp

called the commonwealth funding model - was decided upon, and it is now a permanent item within the budget provision and it covers both teachers' salaries and operating costs.

Hon E.R.J. DERMER: The second dot point on page 1069 of the *Budget Statements* states that there will be an allocation of \$8.4 million in the 2001-02 financial year for the construction of the Kinross middle school, which will open in February 2002 with a year 6 and 7 intake of approximately 250 students. I would like a progress report on the building of that school.

Mr HARVEY: The Kinross middle school is progressing well. It has been one of our most difficult projects because of the tight timeframe in which it is being built. However, it will open in time. A supplementary block will be completed later next year for 2003. It will open in 2002 for years 6, 7 and 8. The school is being built within a tight time schedule and we will continue to watch its progress carefully.

Hon E.R.J. DERMER: That is very encouraging.

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: I refer to the first table on page 1062 of the *Budget Statements* and the line which states that the redirection to service delivery has been estimated at \$6.9 million for the 2001-02 financial year and \$7 million for the forward estimates over the next three years. First, are the sums in the forward estimates merely a one-off for 2001-02 that will be carried forward for each of those years, or will there be redirections of those amounts for each of those financial years? Secondly, what is meant by redirection? Thirdly, what has been directed, from where has it been directed and to where is it being directed? Finally, how will the redirection in each of those initiatives enhance the learning outcomes of children in government schools?

Mr MANCE: In answer to the member's first question, that figure is not an aggregating figure but a figure in its own right for each year. The redirection goes towards the items listed above that line, so it is a contribution to all of those other decisions. It has been redirected within the organisation as a contribution to those initiatives. Mr McCaffrey will be able to provide examples to indicate from where that money has been taken. Each year we review all our budgets and cost centres, and redirect funding.

Mr McCAFFREY: As Mr Mance pointed out, each year we are required to go through and reassess all our programs. As an agency it is expected that we will meet whatever changes we can. There is no question that the Department of Education was treated favourably in this budget round. We received a reduction or redirection of half a per cent on our operating costs. We have also been in an environment in which we have suffered badly from the enrolment benchmark adjustment that the federal Government imposed on all education systems across Australia. Fortunately for us, the federal Government shifted its ground during the year and doubled the buffer, which gave us extra resources. We used the benefit of not having to return approximately \$2 million to the federal Government.

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: Is that part of that \$6.9 million?

Mr McCAFFREY: Yes it is. Digital copyright expenses is an item on the horizon, and we have been waiting for decisions from the federal sphere to determine how that will affect our schools. In anticipation of that, funds were set aside, but because \$1 million of that will not be needed, it has been used as a redirection.

I was a little overzealous in my provision for the indexation of the school grant. The estimate I used was higher than the actual figure, releasing about \$1.5 million, which I was also able to reapply. We were worried how the removal of the wholesale sales tax would impact upon our purchasing program. I was particularly concerned about the maintenance budget, so I set aside some funds as a safety net in case those savings did not flow through. There has been a reduction in costs of \$1 million, so I have used that money as well. As part of our normal process, we decided, as an executive, that we would remove \$1.5 million from existing programs and redirect that money to the initiatives, which are listed on page 1062 of the *Budget Statements* as decisions made since the election. It is a contribution towards that total cost, and it came to about \$17 million in additional funding that was needed for those programs.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: That is very impressive.

[12.10 pm]

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: I agree with Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich.

Hon SUE ELLERY: I refer to the capital works program on page 1069. I cannot find reference to South Coogee Primary School, which has been closed. What is the progress on and time line for its replacement?

Mr HARVEY: The South Coogee Primary School replacement is referred to in the capital works program as Stanford Gardens. That is the name of the residential area, but it may not be the name of the school we will provide. It will be ready for 2003, possibly earlier. It is the replacement for South Coogee Primary School, and we know the history of that.

Deputy Chairman; Hon Barbara Scott; Hon Graham Giffard; Hon Jon Ford; Hon Robyn McSweeney; Hon Ljiljana Ravlich; Hon Derrick Tomlinson; Hon Ed Dermer; Hon Norman Moore; Hon Sue Ellery; Hon Simon O'Brien; Hon Barry House; Hon Adele Farina; Hon Alan Cadby; Hon Dr Chrissy Sharp

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Does the department intend to continue the hearing and sight health check-up of four-year-olds? If so, will that take place in the kindergarten or preprimary year?

Mr McCAFFREY: Perhaps that work is done by another agency. I am not sure.

Hon B.M. SCOTT: It is partly funded by the Department of Education.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: I will put that on notice. In November last year the Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations lodged report No 33 relating to the dental health of Aboriginal children in the Kimberley. The committee recommended that, as a public health measure, a dental hygiene program including toothbrushes, toothpaste and a regular session every day at school be implemented in schools in the area. Has the Minister for Health or the Department of Health followed that up with the Department of Education?

Hon G.T. GIFFARD: We will take that on notice.

Hon JON FORD: The second-last dot point of the capital works program on page 1069 refers to the \$4.5 million asbestos cement roof replacement program. How many schools still need this work?

Mr HARVEY: I do not have with me a list of all the schools that have had this work. The last lot of work will be done this year, and I have a list of those schools. The number of schools is in the hundreds. This year's program will mean the completion of the program to replace all the asbestos roofs as well as tile roofs requiring replacement. We can provide the list of all the schools for which work has been completed, and I have with me a list of the schools for which work will be undertaken this year.

Hon G.T. GIFFARD: We will provide that as supplementary information. We have a list for this year, and we will submit that at the conclusion of the hearing.

Hon ALAN CADBY: My question refers to the sixth dot point under major initiatives for 2001-02 at page 1060. What funding has been allocated to schools for the implementation of the curriculum framework and outcomes and standard framework? What funding or extra staff has been allocated to Silver City and/or the regional offices for the delivery of relevant, quality support and promotion of this program through in-service courses for teachers?

Mr O'KEEFE: The curriculum improvement program is an ongoing program that is in the third year of a five-year operation. Funding for the program includes \$2.5 million for 2000-01. The assumption is that expenditure will remain at that level in 2001-02. A recent stocktake has given us a clear idea about the progress we are making, and identified the areas we need to target more specifically. Particular issues exist in the secondary schools, and we must do some work in that area. We are also focusing on the crucial role education leaders will play in the further implementation of the program in schools. We have designed a professional development program to inform principals of their increasing role as education leaders. That will be administered by the district directors. This program is designed for students of the new era, and will produce high-level problem solvers, decision makers and so on. It is a crucial part of our core business. The high level of funding that has been provided for the program's implementation will continue, and better targeted strategies will be introduced. These will be aimed at the groups of teachers and schools that need particular support to progress the matter.

Hon ALAN CADBY: Will that \$2.5 million go to the schools, or is the funding for both the schools and regional offices?

Mr McCAFFREY: It is a mixture. The large part of it - about \$2.1 million - will go directly to schools for their programs. That will be supplemented by the balance, which will be allocated to each district according to the number of schools, students and teachers. Those funds will be given to the district offices to help facilitate professional development for teachers. It is a two-pronged approach, with the district office working with the schools to provide that curriculum support.

Hon CHRISTINE SHARP: Can the department provide, either now or on notice, some data on the spending in this budget on government schools compared with that in other States?

Hon G.T. GIFFARD: We can provide that on notice. We do not have that information here.

Hon B.M. SCOTT: Supplementary to Hon Alan Cadby's question, the sixth dot point at page 1060 states that all schools will produce better information. We have had some explanation about the funding for that. It is predicted that it will take a number of years to train and familiarise teachers with the curriculum framework and student outcome statements. What form of reporting will take place in the non-compulsory years of kindergarten and preprimary? The department has stated that written reports will be required and that additional training will be provided to enable early childhood teachers to cope with that new requirement. This must be done cautiously,

Deputy Chairman; Hon Barbara Scott; Hon Graham Giffard; Hon Jon Ford; Hon Robyn McSweeney; Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich; Hon Derrick Tomlinson; Hon Ed Dermer; Hon Norman Moore; Hon Sue Ellery; Hon Simon O'Brien; Hon Barry House; Hon Adele Farina; Hon Alan Cadby; Hon Dr Chrissy Sharp

because I would be concerned if written reports about three and four-year-olds resulted in a Japanese-style of pressure on parents. Early childhood teachers will need a large part of the \$2.5 million to assist them in moving from verbal reporting to written reporting in the non-compulsory years of schooling.

[12.20 pm]

Ms BURNS: The non-compulsory or precompulsory years of schooling are integral to the education system. The funding for and provision of professional development for the precompulsory years is proportionately similar to the funding for the rest of the schooling. There is a great deal of emphasis on training teachers to have a play-based problem-solving approach by which children learn through experience. There is no intention within the system to change the traditional approach, which we know is effective for young children's learning.

In assisting teachers to move from verbal reporting to written reporting, the early childhood world has led schools in the development of portfolios. This is a much more explicit and helpful way for parents to understand how young children learn. If anything, the early childhood world has been leading our schools in new forms of much more comprehensive reporting.

Hon B.M. SCOTT: I appreciate that very sound answer. I hope it is taken note of, because it is far more effective in non-compulsory years to use worldwide portfolio reporting and registering of children's activities than to write reports to parents.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: I refer to page 112 of the *Economic and Fiscal Output*, budget paper No 3, in which the Government has indicated a commitment of \$5 million over the forward estimate period and an allocation in this budget of \$1.25 million to increase professional development opportunities for teachers and to increase the number of senior teachers. I am not trying to give Mr Ryan any leads here! It has also indicated a commitment to provide scholarships for teachers amounting to \$2.108 million over the forward estimates period and an allocation of \$173 000 for 2001-02. Why was such a significant increase allocated for the forward estimates period? Was there a deficiency under the previous Government? How will it be implemented at school level?

Hon B.M. SCOTT: It is a specific purpose grant from the federal Government.

Mr RYAN: The budget has allowed the department to enhance the career structure of teachers by creating level 3 teachers, but they are described as senior teachers in the budget papers. Western Australia leads Australia in developing career structures. It commenced in 1996 under a certified agreement, which was signed. Since 1998 the department has been developing competencies on which to base the assessment of level 3 teachers. This budget allows for that to continue. We will appoint another 100 teachers over the next couple of years at least, to allow the level 3 teacher structure to continue.

The level 3 teacher structure has had to meet a quota. Last year we appointed 98 teachers to level 3. We are now considering the ramifications of removing that quota. A significant amount has been set aside for professional development in a number of programs, such as the curriculum improvement program, the technology program, and literacy and numeracy programs to assist teachers with improvements in their competency and capabilities and to help improve outcomes for students.

There has been a significant increase in the number of scholarships. The previous scholarships will continue. The department will continue to promote teaching as a profession. A number of different scholarships have been implemented, such as the Western Australian government teaching scholarship, which has been offered to high school leavers, and country practice scholarships. The department pays a living wage to fill places in country areas so that students get a taste of country living. A scholarship exists for people to take on a technology and enterprise training wage, more commonly known as design and technology or home economics scholarships. Internships are available for people in their final year of teaching. A couple of years ago the universities succeeded in making that a four-year course. After students have completed three and a half years and their final practical session, they can join the work force. A total of \$360 000 has been diverted from the Department of Education Services to the Department of Education to fund the government teaching scholarships and the Aboriginal scholarships. The amount of \$100 000 is for the teacher training country practicum scholarships in conjunction with a number of other agencies, such as the Chamber of Minerals and Energy of Western Australia. The technology enterprise training wage allocation is \$207 000, and the final year higher education contribution scholarships to address areas of demand, such as design technology and mathematics, amount to \$173 000.

Hon B.M. SCOTT: I refer to the sixth dot point on page 1058 of the *Budget Statements*, which indicates that while teachers continue to be well respected at school there is a worldwide trend for teachers to leave the service after three or four years. Does the minister know how many teachers leave the profession each year for reasons

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Deputy Chairman; Hon Barbara Scott; Hon Graham Giffard; Hon Jon Ford; Hon Robyn McSweeney; Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich; Hon Derrick Tomlinson; Hon Ed Dermer; Hon Norman Moore; Hon Sue Ellery; Hon Simon O'Brien; Hon Barry House; Hon Adele Farina; Hon Alan Cadby; Hon Dr Chrissy Sharp

other than retirement? What incentives are there to stay beyond the first three to four years and beyond eight years, when salary increases end for the majority who do not wish to go into administration? What long-term plans does the Government have to increase salary levels and the desirability of teaching as a career? Is the three per cent promised salary increase for teachers budgeted?

Mr RYAN: The exit rate of teachers from the Department of Education is quite low. In previous years it was about 2.9 per cent. This year the rate is lower. If teachers are going to leave the profession they will more than likely leave in the first two or three years.

[12.30 pm]

Hon B.M. SCOTT: That is consistent with the worldwide trend. I am referring to the point at which there are no salary increases but they want to stay in the classroom.

Mr RYAN: The member is correct in stating that, if they are going to leave, they usually do so during the first three years. The career structure I referred to is a leader in Australia and allows our teachers to stay in the classroom and be paid at the same rate as level 3 administrators. We are looking to expand and continue that program. We are also considering competencies. The three per cent is budgeted for the salary increases, and we are locked into those agreements over the next three years with the union.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I thank the parliamentary secretary and his advisers for attending today and for their contributions. If members have any outstanding questions, they should submit them in writing to the clerks within the next 30 minutes.