

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, PUBLIC LIABILITY COVER

1182. Hon BARRY HOUSE to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Education:

- (1) What conditions, such as public liability cover, are placed by the Department of Education on facilities visited by schoolchildren?
- (2) Is the minister aware or concerned that many of these tough, stringent requirements are resulting in -
 - (a) increased costs to parents for their children involved in activities such as excursions, outdoor education etc;
 - (b) increased insurance premium costs for many business operators providing educational opportunities;
 - (c) withdrawal of many small excursion venues willing to take students because they do not have public liability cover?
- (3) What does the minister intend to do to address this situation?

Hon GRAHAM GIFFARD replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

- (1) The Department of Education and schools request facility providers to meet the requirements of the excursion and water-based excursion policy and guidelines. Within the policy and guidelines, there is a requirement for providers of services and facilities to have public liability cover.
- (2) In October 2001, the Department of Education reduced the public liability cover from \$20 million to a maximum of \$10 million for active activities and \$5 million for passive activities.
 - (a) These requirements have been put in place after significant consultation with providers and the Insurance Commission of Western Australia.
 - (b) Yes. However, the public liability requirements are neither tough nor stringent, but are within normal commercial requirements.
 - (c) The Department of Education has a significant risk profile for the number of students who visit and participate in excursions, and these measures are prudent action to help protect the students and the department.
- (3) The current situation is a result of full and complete consultation with providers, schools and the insurance industry.