

EDUCATION - CURRICULUM STANDARDS

290. Mr A.P. O'GORMAN to the Minister for Education and Training:

What is the state government doing to ensure a high standard curriculum is taught to Western Australian students?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

I thank the member for the question. One of the worst mistakes that has been made in our education system was in 1998 when the then government and then Minister for Education abandoned the formal syllabus for years K-10. That meant that all those younger and junior teachers in particular, especially those in smaller country schools where they may not have had as many experienced teachers to guide them, did not have the formal guidance of a syllabus to assist them in their day-to-day classroom activities. The abandonment of the syllabus was a grievous error, I think with the best of intentions, for our education system. I am very pleased to inform the house that we are re-establishing the syllabus for years K-10. It is currently being prepared and will be introduced in time for commencement of the next school year. We are having it nationally reviewed by a group of eminent educators.

I am pleased to announce today that the national advisory panel who will be reviewing the syllabus that is being prepared consist of the following: the Chair of the New South Wales Board of Studies, Professor Gordon Stanley; Dr Susan Hill, Associate Professor of Early Childhood Education at the University of South Australia; Professor Kaye Stacey, the foundation Chair of Mathematics Education at Melbourne University; Professor Julie Campbell, director of the Wesley Research Institute; and Dr Bruce Scates, Associate Professor of History at the University of New South Wales. These people are all eminently respected educators from around Australia. They will review the syllabus, starting in July, they will validate the review in November and we will have an outstanding, world best practice syllabus in our schools for the start of the next school year.