

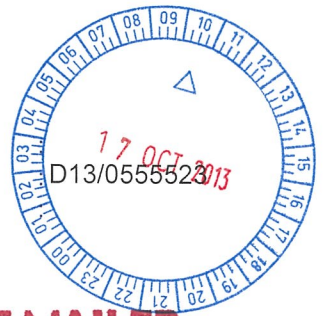


Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Education**

PUBLIC

21/10/13

Your ref
Our ref
Enquiries



E-MAILED

16-10-13

Hon Ken Travers MLC
Chair
Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations
Parliament House
PERTH WA 6000

Dear Mr Travers

I wish to clarify some factual information that formed part of the evidence provided during the Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations on 24 September 2013.

I refer to page 18 of the draft transcript of evidence regarding the number of dependents of 457 Visa holders enrolled in West Australian public schools. In my statement, in reference to dependents of 457 visa holders, I noted that, "during the year we know that many of them gain permanent resident status". By way of clarification, the visa status of these students could have changed in the course of this year, or any other year since the child was enrolled.

In response to the Hon Stephen Dawson's comment, "Four thousand one hundred students is a lot of students to move on in the last few months; I will not say anything more about that," I commented, "Since February." I am concerned that this could be misinterpreted as suggesting that the enrolment reduced by 4 100 in 2013 which is not the case.

The 2013 Budget revenue assumptions were based on the February, Semester 1, 2013 Census that showed there were 8 599 students registered as dependents of 457 Visa holders. Closer examination of the data indicated that a large number of these students were beyond the four year time limit of their parent's 457 temporary residency visa. A number are likely to have changed their visa status or obtained permanent residency.

The possible overstatement of approximately 4 100 students is due to there being no administrative need for schools to update the students' visa/residency status. During Term 4, 2013 the status of the all enrolled students registered as dependents of 457 Visa holders will be verified to ascertain actual numbers which will be confirmed from the February 2014 census.

A second point of clarification relates to the School of Instrumental Music (SIM). The Hon Alanna Clohesy asked whether there would be a FTE reduction to the School Of Instrumental Music (pages 24, 25).

The member was advised that the School of Instrumental Music would have its total budget allocation reduced by 10 per cent. For clarity, the total budget reduction was approximately 6 per cent and this reflects a reduction of 8.0 FTE. As referred to in the hearing, SIM is not funded or staffed in the same way as other schools, causing the confusion in the response.

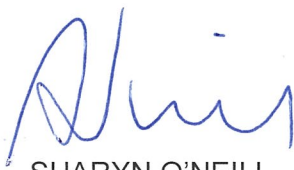
This question was also asked without notice in Parliament by Hon Sue Ellery on Wednesday, 16 October 2013.

The third point of clarification is in relation to the discussion in the Estimates hearing relating to dependants of Visa 457 holders. On page 16, I gave a response that "457 Visa students are able to access any of the ESL programs available to any other student who has language needs..."

While many dependants of Visa 457 holders in schools have access to the ESL programs available to other students with language needs because the schools are able to provide it, from a technical perspective, they are *entitled* to either access an Intensive English Centre for support for 12 months or the one-off \$2000 grant to each mainstream 457 student referred to in the hearing.

I trust this clarifies these responses for you.

Yours sincerely



SHARYN O'NEILL
DIRECTOR GENERAL

16 OCT 2013