

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES AND
FINANCIAL OPERATIONS**

2013–14 BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARINGS

**TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE
TAKEN AT PERTH
TUESDAY, 24 SEPTEMBER 2013**

**SESSION ONE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

Members

**Hon Ken Travers (Chair)
Hon Peter Katsambanis (Deputy Chair)
Hon Martin Aldridge
Hon Alanna Clohesy
Hon Rick Mazza**

Hearing commenced at 9.30 am

Hon PETER COLLIER
Minister for Education, examined:

Ms SHARYN O'NEILL
Director General, examined:

Mr EAMON RYAN
Executive Director, Professional Standards and Conduct, examined:

Mr JOHN LEAF
Deputy Director General, Finance and Administration, examined:

Mr DAVID AXWORTHY
Deputy Director General, Schools, examined:

Mr BRETT ROACH
Deputy Chief Finance Officer, examined:

Mr CLIFF GILLAM
Executive Director, Workforce, examined:

Mr JOHN FISCHER
Executive Director, Infrastructure, examined:

Mr LINDSAY HALE
Executive Director, Statewide Planning and Delivery, examined:

Mr PETER TITMANIS
Executive Director, Innovation, Performance and Research, examined:

The CHAIR: Good morning everyone. On behalf of the Legislative Council Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations, I would like to welcome you to all today's hearing. Witnesses before the committee are required to read and sign a document headed "Information for Witnesses." Can all of the witnesses confirm for the benefit of Hansard, if you have read and signed a copy of this document?

The Witnesses: Yes.

The CHAIR: I note all witnesses have indicated they have signed that document and read it. For the benefit of Hansard, can you confirm that you understand the document that you have signed?

The Witnesses: Yes.

The CHAIR: I again note that all witnesses are indicating in the affirmative. Witnesses need to be aware of the severe penalties that apply to persons providing false or misleading testimony to a parliamentary committee. It is essential that your testimony before the committee is complete and truthful to the best of your knowledge. This hearing is being held in public although there is discretion available to the committee to hear evidence in private either of its own motion or at the witness's request. If for some reason you wish to make a confidential statement during today's

proceedings, you should request that the evidence be taken in closed session before answering the question.

These proceedings are being recorded by Hansard. A transcript of your evidence will be provided to you. The committee reminds agency representatives to respond to questions in a succinct manner and to limit the extent of personal observations. To assist the committee and Hansard, please quote the full title of any document you refer to during the course of this hearing for the record; and please be aware of the microphones and try to talk into them. Ensure that you do not cover them with papers or make noise near them. Also, if you can make sure that you take in it in turns to speak. Members, it would greatly assist if, when referring to budget statements volumes or the consolidated account estimates, you give the page number, item, program, amount and so on in preface to your questions.

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 your assistance.

For the benefit of members and Hansard I ask the Minister for Education to introduce his advisers to the committee and for each adviser to please state their full name and the capacity in which they appear before the committee.

[Witnesses introduced.]

The CHAIR: Thank you, minister. Does the director general wish to make an opening statement?

Ms O'Neill: No.

The CHAIR: If not, we will go straight to questions. For the benefit of all other members, there are a number of questions on notice that were submitted. They were made public at yesterday's committee meeting. They are available to members if they wish to view those. I ask, are there any members with questions?

Hon SUE ELLERY: Thank you very much, Chair. If I can start by asking some questions to follow up on the questions on notice and the answers that I received. Thank you for providing those answers. Five of the questions that I asked were in respect to changes in FTE allocation in 2014. The response to those questions were in similar words for each one—that is, it is not possible to provide finalised information at this time. Projections for 2014 are currently being submitted by principals and schools will be staffed on the estimated teacher FTE once the department finalises the information across the system.

Each of those five questions were answered in similar words. My first question is, how did you reach the decision on the actual appropriation in the budget papers? You had a policy decision about reductions in expenditure that needed to happen at a school level in 2014. In the terms that you have been using, to transition to a new model, you must have done some estimations and projections to arrive at the appropriation for 2013–14 based on certain FTE reductions. I am asking now, what was your estimate of the reduction in FTE in the areas that I asked about in those questions on notice? If it assists you, I did just do an extra copy of the relevant questions; I am not sure if that is of assistance to you.

Hon PETER COLLIER: Sure.

Hon SUE ELLERY: My questions were—I refer to question 4 about the base teacher FTE allocation in 2014; question 5, about the reduction in 2014 of teacher FTE generated by the Perth student allocation year level multiplier, which would apply in secondary level only. In similar terms about the FTE reduction in the EALD, intensive English centres, and the 2014 multiplier for children with special needs. Question 8 was about a similar reduction in AIEOs, FTEs in 2014 and about the reduction of FTEs in mainstream EAs in 2014.

Hon PETER COLLIER: Yes. Can I just state at the outset in terms of overall numbers, there will be exactly the same FTEs next year as there are this year. I will ask the director general to give some specifics in a moment, but there are around 21 000 teachers in our schools at the moment spread throughout almost 800 schools. There will be around 21 000. Inevitably, that will have an impact because there has been an increase of 9 000 students. There will be an increase in terms of the ratio, and as I have said publicly very recently, that works out to about 0.4 of a student. That will of course be dispersed across the state. Those precise figures in terms of schools will not be known until the exact student numbers in those schools are known. As I said, I will get the director general to comment on that in a moment.

With regard to the EAs, yes, there are 350 less EAs spread across the system; that comes from a total of around 7 600 EAs across the system. Some 150 of those are from anaphylaxis students. The reason that we have done that—again, I have said in the Parliament to Hon Sue Ellery—we are the only state in the nation that actually provides anaphylaxis educational assistants. The government argues that the model it proposes is more effective and efficient—that is, it is providing online servicing for all schools as opposed to having one EA for anaphylaxis students.

With regard to the remainder of the EAs or the jobs that would effectively be lost, no permanent EA will lose their job. Of course EAs who are currently on contract, et cetera, more than likely will get consumed within the retention rate, which is around 500. But as for actual numbers and actual schools and precise numbers, as I have said, at the moment it is just not feasible to provide accuracy with regard to those numbers.

Hon SUE ELLERY: If I may, principals are required to provide you with their projections of enrolments by 30 August?

Hon PETER COLLIER: Yes.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Some estimation information is already available to you?

Hon PETER COLLIER: Yes.

Hon SUE ELLERY: If there is a deadline that is different to that 30 August date, then I would like to know what that is. I would also like to ask—for each of those questions—what is the department's estimated FTE for each school according to each of those five questions? I accept what you are saying about the final confirmation of FTE allocation per school; that the actual final-final number is not done until the census in the first term of 2014, but the estimation will be done well before that and that is the information I am after.

[9.40 am]

Hon PETER COLLIER: No problem, I will take that on board. As I said, the questions asked for the numbers and I made it quite clear that all we have at the moment are projections. It is very, very fluent, so it will simply not be known; very frequently the department will only know the exact numbers for schools a week or two weeks after the commencement of school next year. They simply do not know and that is why you have this transference and movement of teachers from one school to another, or they might come out of a pool, or be new graduates et cetera. They simply do not get employed until everything is known. They get employed all the way through the school year, but the actual precise numbers, the accuracy of those numbers cannot be verified until early next year. I will ask the director general to comment on that.

Ms O'Neill: The process and the reason why the questions are answered in that way is, as you have pointed out, that schools have until 30 August to provide their projections as they see them at that point. We do not have all of those in; we are chasing some final ones down. It has been quite complex in some schools because, as you have heard, we have considerable enrolment growth in some areas, particularly in growth areas. So we are finalising those. The process is that they come in, we do some analysis to align it with our own internal projections, and then—you are quite right—we will have a school-by-school understanding of the preliminary projections. We staff

those schools and we have always done it this way—we staff the schools on those preliminary projections of student enrolments and then on the first day of school and for two weeks after there is quite a bit of movement. Sometimes families choose not to go where they were indicating they were going to go. It is called, and it has always been called “unders and overs”, where schools are under and over the enrolment and then we shift students around and that is when we then finalise the staffing, which is why the question was answered in the way that it was answered. We should have, in the next two or three weeks, the finalised—as much as they can be final—preliminary projections upon which we staff schools. They are not available yet, but subject to the minister’s agreement, they will be available in the next two or three weeks.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Mr Chair, what is the process by which I seek for information to be provided?

Hon PETER COLLIER: I can undertake to provide that information, if that is right, with your indulgence Mr Chair. It is no problem at all, but once we have all the final projections—again on the understanding that they are projections at this stage. The final numbers will simply not be known until early next year. I can give an undertaking to the committee that once those final projections from all schools are available, I will provide that information.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Can we be clear about our language because the final —

Hon PETER COLLIER: Projections.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Okay yes.

Hon PETER COLLIER: They are projections and as I said, I want to emphasise projections.

Hon SUE ELLERY: All right, I understand that.

Hon PETER COLLIER: We will not know the final numbers until next year.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Mr Chair, can I just make sure, for the rest of the session, what is the language? Do I need to say questions on notice or do I need to say supplementary information? What do I say?

The CHAIR: I think what we will do—it is supplementary information—is that I will give that the title of A1, which is the projections that are expected as a result of the 30 August census, for want of a better term.

[Supplementary Information No A1.]

Hon PETER COLLIER: That is right.

The CHAIR: And that that will be provided as soon as possible, hopefully within the 10 days that normally apply to supplementary information. If it is not available in that time, then subsequent to that.

Hon PETER COLLIER: If I could again seek your indulgence Mr Chair; first of all that is for these questions that Hon Sue Ellery has asked?

Hon SUE ELLERY: Yes.

Hon PETER COLLIER: For each of those questions, but there is a likelihood that the answers are not going to be available within the 10 days. So, as the director general has said, it is probably within two or three weeks. As I said, I will give an undertaking that as soon as they are available—I can assure you we will not be delaying it—we will provide that information.

Hon SUE ELLERY: I will ask you in PQ anyway if you do not give it to me.

The CHAIR: I think we have that, so we will note that as A1, but we will also note that it may be beyond the 10 day cut-off. Can I just ask a question on that point? Just so I can understand it; what were the budget figures based upon? Did those figures not have an estimate at the time of the budget cut-off date?

Ms O'Neill: The budget is based on the best estimation that we have at the time. We just had the August census concluded, but that was after the finalisation of the budget. So, our budget is based on the most recent census numbers, which would be August 2013. Subsequent to that, schools then have inquiries from parents for early enrolments and so their projections are based on the August census, and then their knowledge at a local level—school by school—about people coming into their school.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: Mr Chair, can I just clarify something? I think the director general said that the budget information is based on the August 2013 census; can I just clarify that it was August 2012 that the budget figures were based on.

Hon SUE ELLERY: It must have been. It could not have been August 2013 because that census was after the budget.

The CHAIR: There is also an increase in enrolments in the budget, so there must have been subsequent censuses after August 2012. So that is why I am trying to understand.

Hon SUE ELLERY: You would have done a census in February 2013.

Hon PETER COLLIER: We did have an additional ERC meeting post the budget and that was to cope with the new census readings for the additional increase in student numbers. We had that after the budget was handed down.

The CHAIR: I understand that, but for the benefit of the committee, I am assuming that there would have been estimations of all the questions asked by Hon Sue Ellery on which the budget papers are based. Is there any reason why the committee cannot receive those?

Hon PETER COLLIER: We are just trying to work out how to best do it; we are not trying to delay the process. It is done on a global basis, not on a school by school basis. So, we can certainly provide the global figures but not the school-by-school breakdown.

The CHAIR: Do you have that now or will we have to take that as supplementary information?

Hon PETER COLLIER: No, we cannot provide it now, but I will provide it.

[*Supplementary Information No A2.*]

Hon PETER COLLIER: You are asking for the figures upon which the budget was based.

The CHAIR: Yes.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Student enrolment.

The CHAIR: The relevant questions asked by Hon Sue Ellery.

Hon PETER COLLIER: No, because they are specific to schools.

The CHAIR: Right; it is the global figures relative to those areas.

Ms O'Neill: Are you asking for global student enrolments?

Hon PETER COLLIER: Yes; we can provide that but it will be at a later time—on a global level.

The CHAIR: Before I again give the call to Hon Sue Ellery, can members who have questions give an indication so that I know the numbers? Thank you members.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Thank you very much Mr Chair. I refer to “Works in Progress” on page 279 of budget paper No 2. I want to ask some questions about the relocation of year 7s to secondary schools. The total allocation across 2012–13 to 2014–15 is \$186.9 million. In last year’s budget you announced \$265 million for upgrades to 29 secondary schools and that figure included some \$42.6 million from royalties for regions which does appear in this year’s budget. But the promise from last year’s budget of \$265 million is now reduced by some \$35.5 million. In the interim, the director general has provided advice to the estimates hearing in the other place that there are an additional 30 schools that were on a watch list because their projected enrolments were such that

there was a need to make sure that there was a capacity to make whatever adjustments had to be made to the buildings—with respect to those additional 30 schools. There is now a lesser allocation, down by some \$35.5 million, and a greater pool of schools that potentially need additional assistance to relocate those year 7s. Have any of those 30 schools been added to the list of schools that need work to be done? How are you going to manage that; given that you have a greater pool of schools and a lesser amount of money?

[9.50 am]

Hon PETER COLLIER: I will ask the director general to talk about specific schools. Suffice to say there has been a reduction in the anticipated cost of the year 7s transition. It is all on track at this stage.

Hon SUE ELLERY: How has the lesser cost been arrived at?

Hon PETER COLLIER: As I said, I will ask the director general to talk about specific costs and the reduction in specific schools, but it is on track. The transition from year 7s into secondary school in which you have a six-by-six educational formula—year 1 through to year 6 and then year 7 through to year 12—is on track. That includes the Switch program that will see the transition of some primary school teachers, who will, dare I say, upskill to teaching at a secondary level. I will ask the director general about the specifics of the actual schools.

Ms O'Neill: As I mentioned previously, there are a number of schools we are monitoring to see if their enrolments will require us to do something different with their capital. At this stage that is not the case, but that is part of the process that we talked about before—projected enrolments are coming in, we are talking to those schools and so at the moment there is no change with respect to the list of schools that will require capital. Perhaps, minister, John might be able to talk specifically about the capital costs.

Mr Fischer: The initial budget of \$265 million, when it was announced to those 29 schools, included a contingency amount to provide for those schools that would have required some adjustment. That was all —

Hon SUE ELLERY: Sorry, I did not catch that last bit—contingency for?

Mr Fischer: For schools that might have required some adjustment to accommodation. It was always envisaged that it was to be the 29 schools that were announced plus a contingency amount for other works that was required to accommodate year 7s in particular schools. Of the 30 schools we are monitoring it was always envisaged that there would be some work involved in providing accommodation or specialist facilities at those schools. In terms of the reduced budget, the tender results that we have had for the 29 schools—or the schools that have gone to tender today—have been well underneath the initial estimates for those schools. There are savings in the program for those 29 schools, and that means we will be able to accommodate the full scope of works that was announced for those 29 schools plus the adjustments for those other schools that require new facilities.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Was there any change in what you were asking those tenderers to bid for?

Mr Fischer: We maintained the scope for those schools on the basis that the tender results were coming in under our pre-tender estimates. We maintained the scope.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Just so that I can be absolutely clear, with the \$186.9 million that you have now you can do the 29 schools to the same capacity as they were announced last year and, potentially, some of that list of 30?

Mr Fischer: The \$186 million refers to those schools in the metropolitan area and we still have the \$42.7 million, so it is a \$229 million program. It is correct that the scope of works that was envisaged under the \$265 million program will be delivered.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Thank you. I am not sure if this goes to you or back through the minister. Further to the year 7s implementation, the time line for getting everything ready for term 1 in 2015; how is that progressing? What stage are you at now?

Hon PETER COLLIER: It is progressing very well indeed. There is a great deal of anticipation and a little bit of angst in some small communities. I have been to about four schools in the midwest and the great southern that had some anxiety about the impact on the community —

Hon SUE ELLERY: Sorry, minister, I was talking about the capital works.

Hon PETER COLLIER: I thought you were talking about the actual year 7s transition.

Hon SUE ELLERY: No. Just the capital works.

Hon PETER COLLIER: I thought you said the actual year 7s transition. As far as the capital works, it is completely on track. If you do not mind, I will digress for one minute and give an example. It is the example of John Willcock College in Geraldton, which is part of that component. There was some anxiety in the community that there will be some transportables, which in themselves are very, very good vehicles for educational delivery. The reason we have done this at John Willcock is because at this stage there is uncertainty about what is going to happen with regard to that school and Geraldton Senior College. We will maintain the transportables until the decision is made whether to amalgamate those schools or not. There have been comments about the use of transportables, but I do not have an issue with that at all, it is a key component of the capital cost and is included in the \$229 million. Yes, they are on track.

Hon SUE ELLERY: I do not want to get into a debate about John Willcock College but the parents —

Hon PETER COLLIER: I would love to.

Hon SUE ELLERY: This is not the place, but the parents I have met with have an issue with the use of transportables.

Hon PETER COLLIER: Bring it on; I would love to have a debate on it.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Thank you. For the purposes of finding a page in the budget, I will go for page 275, which lists significant issues impacting the agency. Do not rush to turn to that page, because that is just a generic catchall. I refer to the recent announcement about reductions in 2014 and the 30 per cent cut to the school support program resource allocation: can you total me what the total allocation for SSPRA was in 2013?

Hon PETER COLLIER: What it is for this year?

Hon SUE ELLERY: Yes.

Hon PETER COLLIER: Yes, we can. The total is \$53 509 810.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Great. SSPRA is used in part—and school communities that have contacted me in the past month have been quite distressed about this—to top up programs in literacy and numeracy; to put in place specialists; and in many schools fantastic innovative programs for children with learning difficulties. There is a range of other programs as well, including behaviour management. Can the minister give us a guarantee that no child who receives services through SSPRA funding will be worse off as a result of the cut to SSPRA funding?

Hon PETER COLLIER: As I said, there are 800 schools throughout Western Australia and SSPRA funding constitutes about one per cent of a school's total budget, and schools will continue to get a significant majority of that funding. They will still get 70 per cent of the SSPRA funding. They are still very well resourced schools. They are the best resourced schools in the nation, and we need to remember that. Our principals are best placed to determine where their funding should go. As I have said on a number of occasions over the past couple of weeks, we do need to tighten our

belts and this is one area where schools can make the appropriate decision based upon their cohort of students.

Getting back to literacy and numeracy, they are a core role of schools, we will continue to provide excellent literacy and numeracy facilities for our students throughout all of our schools. As far as the SSPRA funding is concerned, we need to keep it in perspective. SSPRA constitutes a minute proportion of the overall budget of a school and schools will still get a significant majority of those funds next year.

Hon SUE ELLERY: So when I visit schools and school communities contact me say that they will need to cut innovative literacy, numeracy and behaviour management programs and a range of other things because of the cut to SSPRA—that is what they are telling me—they are wrong?

Hon PETER COLLIER: No. It is up to schools to make the determination of where they direct those funds.

Hon SUE ELLERY: They are saying that if you take the funds off them they cannot deliver those innovative programs.

[10.00 am]

Hon PETER COLLIER: Let us take, for example, behaviour management. We made a commitment at the last election to increase school psychologists by 50—we have increased them by 60. Also schools have much broader access to chaplaincy than they have ever had. These things need to be taken in the context of what we are talking about here. Our schools are very, very well resourced. As I said, it is up to a particular school to manage its money. Principals, deputy principals and administrators of schools are very good managers of their money. They are very good managers of determining where they need to tighten their belts in particular areas and where to direct the funds in other areas. I have great confidence in our public school principals and administrators ensuring that the quality of service of education is maintained throughout our schools. The director general would like to comment as well.

Ms O'Neill: To add to that, we need to have an understanding of what SSPRA is. The school support programs resource allocation is supplementation; it is not key funding. We could not guarantee in any year, let alone 2014, that programs will not change, as the money is provided flexibly and schools make those decisions. It is not the same amount in any given year in any case because of the way in which SSPRA is calculated. It is not a flat amount; there are dependencies in that funding. Depending in any school year the amount schools will receive from SSPRA and also dependent on their enrolment, they will make adjustments to the programs they have in place. We are not in a position at any time to guarantee that programs will be maintained. It is entirely dependent on student enrolment and on the different ways and forms that SSPRA formulas work with each other. So, those decisions ultimately become decisions for schools, depending on how much money they receive in any given year. In saying that, though, schools are well resourced to provide the programs that they provide, and we expect in 2014, as we do in any year when enrolments shift, that schools will plan appropriate programs for their students—and that will require some change in 2014.

Hon PETER COLLIER: I will also pick up on that answer to the honourable member. With regard to behaviour management, et cetera, one of the biggest issues in our entire education system—the public system and the non-government system—is behaviour management, in that there are a lot more social issues in our schools than ever before. The government is very cognisant of that, so we need to put in place what we are doing in the education system. Also we will have 16 child and parent centres next year, which will directly impact upon those in the lowest socioeconomic areas. They will deal with developing parenting skills, developing resilience in children from a very early age and specifically early intervention in literacy and numeracy issues. As I said, we have to take a whole-of-government approach towards ensuring that we provide

intervention skills and pastoral care support for those who are most marginalised. Increased funding from this government for child and parent centres and for care schools will ensure that those who are most marginalised will be provided with support and the chaplaincy program. As I said, putting all these resources altogether shows that our commitment to pastoral care and behaviour management is second to none.

Hon SUE ELLERY: School communities are telling me that when all those things are put together, they still have to come up with an innovative program and use their supplementary funding to address behaviour management. Frankly, the child and parent centres are not going to address the behaviour management issues of an 11-year-old or indeed anyone higher up the age scale. In addition to having psychologists, chaplains and all those things, they still need to use the supplementary funding for innovative programs to address behaviour management and literacy and numeracy, yet the minister is saying they will do without. The question I asked at the beginning of this session was: can the minister guarantee that the services provided to those children currently through the supplementary funding received in SSPRA will not be reduced?

Hon PETER COLLIER: I will pick up on something that the director general said. We have never been able to guarantee those sorts of outcomes.

Hon SUE ELLERY: I am asking for 2014: can the minister guarantee with the services those children receive, which the schools have determined they need in addition to the services they can provide through school psychs, chaplains et cetera, that no child will miss out on those programs as a result of the cuts to SSPRA?

Hon PETER COLLIER: I will repeat my response: we have never been able to give that guarantee on any occasion. Having said that, it is up to schools to make a determination. It is supplementary funding. I need to emphasise this: our schools are extraordinarily well resourced. Our public education system —

Hon SUE ELLERY: They are not feeling like that right now.

Hon PETER COLLIER: They are extraordinarily well resourced. I acknowledge—I have said this before and I do not mean to be flippant about this—that we have to tighten our belts. But if we keep it in perspective, the SSPRA funding is one per cent on average of an entire school's budget, and schools will get 70 per cent. Almost three-quarters of that SSPRA funding will still be available. We are therefore not decimating the funding of schools. Yes, we are asking schools to be a little constrained in terms of what they can provide, but we are not decimating the education system. Schools are still very, very well resourced in Western Australia. It is the best resourced education system in the nation. In addition to that, and I want to emphasise this, there is no reduction in disability spending at all.

Hon SUE ELLERY: I have not asked about that.

Hon PETER COLLIER: Disability spending is an imperative component and will continue to be a priority for the government.

The CHAIR: Has the member finished on this area?

Hon SUE ELLERY: On that line of questioning, yes.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: I refer to page 272 of budget paper No 2 on additional funding for independent public schools. There is a fourth intake there as well as a fifth intake. I note that through the forward estimates the funding for the fifth intake takes a significant spike. It is a good initiative and an initiative that I support. Can the minister outline what additional numbers that reflects for schools becoming independent public schools?

Hon PETER COLLIER: The independent public school system has been very successful. We have about 255 independent public schools at the moment and they appreciate the autonomy and the flexibility that they have never had before to make appropriate decisions for their particular cohort

of students. The aspect I was very cognisant of when I took over as education minister was the potential to develop a two-tier system of education with IPS and non-IPS schools; I wanted to avoid that. One of the biggest issues in the selection process that came about was that a lot of schools had been through three selection processes. Some schools had missed out on each occasion and felt that they could not be bothered any more, quite frankly. I therefore spoke to the director general and we made the change last year—this is where the increased funding comes from—to ensure that a school that wants to become IPS can develop into an IPS school. That is not like—for want of a better term—an exam or a line in the sand that they have to reach before they get there. The school will be assisted in the process to become an IPS school. We have asked for expressions of interest for that, which the department has closed at this stage. The response has been phenomenal; 245 schools have applied to move into IPS. They will then move through a development process into an IPS structure. If they meet all the criteria for IPS, they will then become an independent public school in 2015.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: The funding for the 245 schools that have applied obviously takes into account the development process. Can the minister outline what that process will entail and how it will be different from the previous intakes for independent public schools?

Hon PETER COLLIER: Yes. I will ask the director general to go into the specifics. In simple terms, this came from messages to me, particularly when I took over as education minister and when I visited schools. They felt that the selection process was too rigorous. I do not want it to be any less rigorous. Of course if a school is IPS, it is using public funds and it has a responsibility to the government and to the public of Western Australia to ensure that the delivery of service in the school is first rate. I therefore do not want to get to a point where we diminish the standard required of an independent public school, but I want to make sure that the schools that want to become IPS are not dissuaded because of the selection process. That is why we have changed the selection process, and with regard to the actual process itself, I will ask the director general to make a comment.

Ms O'Neill: The new program will have three elements. There will be a briefing day, which will be held in October. On the briefing day, the principal and the chair of the school council can learn about IPS, its intention and what is required of it. This was perhaps missing from the previous selection process. It will therefore ensure that schools and their broader communities will be informed of the expectations and the requirements for them in undertaking IPS as a program.

[10.10 am]

From there, they will make a decision about whether they want to participate further in the development program that will be hosted next year. The development program will have a series of workshops, which rather than in the past involved a selection process which was simply—not simply, it was detailed—an application, this will require their attendance at a series of workshops where they will be given developmental tasks they will need to go back to their schools to undertake.

Importantly, the selection criteria that previous IPS principals and communities undertook will be reflected in the development process—there are three of those and they are the same. The rigor remains the same. They will go through a development process—a program of not only information sessions, but also tasks to take back to schools. It is more like an action learning process, and then they will come back and at each point they will be assessed. We are using IPS principals themselves as part of the selection process, and there will be some moderation of those selections. At the conclusion, there will be a presentation and they will put their case to a panel so that that can be scrutinised. At the conclusion of that, judgments will have been made on those that go forward. They will then undertake the transition training in the second half of next year, which is the operational detail with regard to on-line budgets and staffing.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: When that process eventually leads to a selection of schools to move forward into the IPS system, what additional resources will be provided to those schools?

Ms O'Neill: When schools become IPS, there is an initial transitional grant of between \$20 000 to \$40 000 to assist those schools for the costs of consultation, attending development programs and information sessions, and, in addition, all IPSs receive a fund that is around \$50 000 recurrent for administrative costs to assist with the work they undertake in relation to their delivering performance agreements and their business planning with their councils.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: In the forward estimates, is it foreshadowed there will be another selection process beyond the one that has just been undertaken where we have had the 245 schools apply or is it foreshadowed at the moment that that will be the last of the intake processes?

Hon PETER COLLIER: I will ask the director general to comment, but I want to comment as well.

Ms O'Neill: The budget forward estimates allow for this first development program. Then we would be in discussion, obviously, with the minister and, therefore, through the EERC or cabinet for anything further. That has been the case for IPS. We undertake each process and we reflect on the total numbers available to the system, and then we go back and discuss that with the minister.

Hon PETER COLLIER: If I have my way, it will certainly not be the last occasion. We must remember that there were about 750 schools when the original intake took place almost four years ago, and 34 schools were successful. There are now 255 schools. After this, I imagine around half the schools will be IPS. We do need to have a breather then in possibly 2015, but I have to make sure that we do not compromise the standard of IPS and rush it out. That would be detrimental to the model. The model has been widely acclaimed and recognised, and the reason it has been recognised is there has been so much rigor around the governance within those school environments. I am not going to compromise that.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: From the 245 schools that have applied, how many do you envisage would transition through into becoming IPS?

Hon PETER COLLIER: Originally, all schools had an opportunity to become IPS, and 34 got through the process. I reckon it would be pushing it if half of them became IPS, because as I said we will not compromise the rigor.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: My last question on IPS before I move on to other questions is, in the recent election campaign the incoming government mentioned it would look at Western Australia's IPS model as a model for it to roll out in other states. Is there any opportunity for us as a state to recover some funding from the intellectual property?

Hon PETER COLLIER: I wish! I remember having this conversation with John Paul Langoulant, when he was going to come over, but then he could not come over because of the financial issues at the time. I told him that we had patented it and it would cost him. We are not going down that path, but I have heard the current federal minister say some very complimentary things about our model.

The CHAIR: I hope the minister also has his public liability signed up!

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: You mentioned earlier child and parent centres—I think the number was 16, from memory.

Hon PETER COLLIER: That is right.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: I note on page 272 of the budget papers there is provision for additional child and parent centres on public schools sites. Can the minister outline how many additional centres are envisaged in that funding and whether the sites have been selected at this stage?

Hon PETER COLLIER: It is much the same as IPS at the time. I think 16 is enough. I think we need to come up for air after the implementation of those 16. That will certainly be a topic for future budget consideration, but as we are moving through—the opening is in 2015—a number of those child and parent centres, I would like to see how they operate and learn from their successes about ways in which we can improve before we transition further. But I do think they are a very valuable tool and provide a tremendous vehicle for communities, particularly in lower socioeconomic areas where there are social challenges, to provide early intervention strategies for students and their parents to assist parents in parenting skills and the education of their children. I would like to see how successful they are before we transition further or see an extension of the program.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: On that, I understand that the management and the running of the child and parent centres themselves will be effectively outsourced to some non-government organisations.

Hon PETER COLLIER: That is correct; it is happening now.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: Can the minister put on the record the organisations that have been successful in tendering for those contracts?

Hon PETER COLLIER: We can provide that. We do not have it with us, unfortunately.

The CHAIR: That is to be provided as supplementary information.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: Could the minister outline the centres and which NGO is running each centre?

The CHAIR: In an earlier question, Hon Peter Katsambanis asked for the location.

Hon PETER COLLIER: We can do that. We will provide the location and the NGOs.

[*Supplementary Information No. A3*]

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: I now move to page 276 of the *Budget Statements* and the significant issues impacting the agency. In relation to managing the supply of teachers, there is an initiative called the Switch training program that is said to be operating in 2013–14 in relation to transitioning primary school teachers to teach in secondary schools, and also secondary teachers to teach additional in-demand subjects. Can I get some information around that program, in particular the funding that has been invested and the numbers of people who have taken up the program?

Hon PETER COLLIER: I will get the director general to talk on the specifics. The Switch program is needed because if a year group is to be transitioned into the secondary level, inevitably those teachers will have to have the capacity to teach in specialist areas and also, ideally, in other year groups other than year 7, which is exactly what we need. You will need fewer teachers at the primary school level and more teachers at the secondary school level. That is why we introduced the Switch program so that a well-qualified primary teacher has the capacity to teach in a specialist area of expertise of his or her desire and will up-skill next year to reach those qualifications. There has been an enormous amount of interest in it. It is around 450 at this stage. We anticipated that we need around—I will get the director general to confirm this—1 000 secondary teachers to meet that demand. I will get the director general to make some comments.

[10.20 am]

Ms O'Neill: I will go to the specifics of your question. It is \$6 million in 2013–14, with \$22.4 million allocated over three years. With respect to the numbers, as the minister said, 450 teachers have already expressed an interest in the program. About two-thirds of that number are primary teachers looking to move to secondary education, and about one-third would be secondary teachers who are interested in teaching in an area of demand, which is terrific because we do have some secondary teachers in areas of rapidly declining need. That is good for us. Perhaps if I can explain, the Switch training program has two options. The first is a university-based graduate

certificate. Those qualifications, for example, are for primary teachers who have not done a degree in a particular area to get the content base. Primary degrees are much broader in scope. Secondary degrees have, first of all, a degree in a specialist area. That will provide a graduate certificate in an area of depth. That is one component. Those graduate certificate courses commenced in semester 2 of this year, so they are already underway. We have 34 teachers who are already doing a graduate certificate in maths at Murdoch University, eight teachers who are at Edith Cowan University doing a grad cert in special education, and 23 teachers doing a grad cert in science. They will finish those courses at the end of semester 1 in 2014. In October, we have 28 teachers commencing a grad cert in design and technology, which is an area of demand. Overall, the minister talked about us needing, on current projections and depending on enrolments, around 1 000 secondary teachers. Over that period, the Switch program funds for, I think, 525 teachers to teach in secondary schools. What we know about the gap between the 525 and 1 000 teachers is that we have quite a few graduate teachers coming through who are well placed, either to move from primary into secondary teaching or are secondary graduates themselves. At the moment that projection is well covered and Switch has been very well received. The second part relates to short courses, because we also have teachers, both primary and secondary, who already have a degree. This might be a primary teacher with a degree in science who chooses to teach in primary. They need more of a refresher than the full graduate certificate. Those courses are out to tender at the moment.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: To clarify, the program funds for the teacher to obtain those additional qualifications are at no cost to the teacher or at very low cost to the teacher.

Ms O'Neill: That is right. The Switch program is fully funded and the teachers' release from school is also fully funded.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: Does public funding cover relief teaching and any higher education contribution scheme fee or additional liability they might incur?

Hon PETER COLLIER: Yes. The intent is to make it cost neutral, because they are the ones making the commitment to switch.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: I have a number of questions, but I know many other members do also, so perhaps let us rotate and come back to me if we get the opportunity.

Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE: I have some questions in relation to page 4 of budget paper No 3 on the school fees that are proposed to be charged on children of 457 visa holders. Could the minister tell me how many subclass 457 students the department has predicted in this financial year and in the forward estimates?

Hon PETER COLLIER: There are around 4 500. There are more, but some have become naturalised in the process.

Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE: Of those 4 500, how many come from non-English speaking backgrounds?

Hon PETER COLLIER: We will have to provide that, Mr Chair.

[Supplementary Information No A4.]

Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE: Further to that question, budget paper No 2, volume 1, page 287, "Details of administered transactions", shows the amount of money expected to be raised by the fees for dependants of 457 visa holders; and obviously there is a transfer going back into the consolidated account of the exact amount of the fee. Is it fair to assume that any fees raised from charging children of 457 visa holders would return to Treasury and will not directly support the education of the children?

Hon PETER COLLIER: It is going to Treasury; it is not going to the Department of Education.

Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE: Obviously, since the budget was handed down to Parliament, there have been some amendments to policy. What impacts will those amendments have on the projected budget revenue measures?

Hon PETER COLLIER: Is the member talking about the overall budget? This will not affect the Department of Education's budget at all.

Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE: This comes under the Department of Education on page 287, "Details of administered transactions". It is revenue the Department of Education will, I assume, receive and transfer to the consolidated account. What impact will that have on the projected revenue that the Department of Education is expected to receive?

Hon PETER COLLIER: It will not impact next year because it is for 2015. It has been delayed; it has been pushed back for 12 months.

Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE: Yes, and that will result in less revenue.

Hon PETER COLLIER: That is correct.

Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE: What is the revised revenue that is now expected? The budget papers refer to \$120 million over four years. What is it now?

Hon PETER COLLIER: I will ask Mr Leaf to respond.

Mr Leaf: Page 287 shows 2013–14, which is a financial year with a budgeted estimated revenue of \$17 million, and that is for a half-year. My understanding is that that will not be forthcoming because of the delay in the implementation.

Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE: Assuming the department will not get the revenue for the last six months of 2014 either, I assume it is double that.

Mr Leaf: There will be a further half-year impact in the 2014–15 year, but I would like to stress, as the minister has observed already, this is not an impact on the Department of Education's budget. We would act largely as a post box to collect money and return it to Treasury.

Hon SUE ELLERY: I hope you are charging for it then!

Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE: Just to confirm, are you saying that the revision to the policy will essentially mean that the revenue received will be \$34.396 million less than what is shown in the budget papers?

Mr Leaf: I prefer not to answer too specifically, because the changes that have been made have been made post-budget, and it has only just been announced by the government that the changes to fee collection will be staged depending on the number of children in a 457 visa family—so I have not come today particularly well prepared to answer specifics about the actual change across all the forward estimates because, as I have observed before and the minister has said, this change is at the whole-of-government level not in the Department of Education's budget. I can undertake to provide more information should the member desire that as a supplementary question, but we will be flagging that through working alongside the Department of Treasury.

[Supplementary Information No A5.]

Hon PETER COLLIER: Is the member asking about the effect on the Department of Education, because it will not have any impact?

Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE: I am not asking about the effect, because the amount comes in and goes straight back out to Treasury. I am asking: what is the whole-of-budget writedown, if you like, of the projected revenue that the Department of Education was going to receive?

[10.30 am]

Hon PETER COLLIER: That is actually a Treasury question.

The CHAIR: Can I just ask a question to clarify it? What role did the department have in developing the figures? Earlier you said that there are 4 500, but the budget papers say 8 600. What role has your agency had in developing these figures in the budget papers?

Hon PETER COLLIER: None.

The CHAIR: So you were not asked to provide advice on how many 457 visa holders there are? Have you subsequently been asked how many 457 visa holders have more than one child in their family?

Hon PETER COLLIER: Not to my knowledge. I will ask the director general to respond.

Ms O'Neill: Prior to the budgeting, I have not had any formal request for information, but I understand at officer level there was an informal discussion about how many students this might have impacted on. The question I think was: how many 457 students do you have? It is around 8 000, which is the number that you quoted. But with respect to the impact of the particular policy, it is not the total group; it is more like 4 500, which is the number we have given.

The CHAIR: Can you explain that?

Hon PETER COLLIER: Mr Hale can give some more information.

Mr Hale: There has been some lack of clarity around those numbers, because I think the original figure that was provided was based on the department's understanding of how many students who were dependants of 457 visa holders had enrolled in our schools. That is not necessarily the same as how many of those folks are still on 457 visas—for instance, if they become permanent residents. That is not something that we have had any cause to track in the past, so that has caused some doubt about the precise numbers, which we are now working through. Equally, we had not ever looked at the question of how many children might be in each family. Again, that is something that we will have to go back and work through.

The CHAIR: Just to be clear, at the moment you as an agency do not have those figures for the number of 457 visa students who are enrolled and the number of families that have multiple children?

Mr Hale: We are going through a process whereby we will need to confirm that exact figure.

Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE: Will there be any hardship or exceptional circumstance provisions applied under the policy for students and their parents who perhaps do not have the capacity to pay the fee that will be charged?

Hon PETER COLLIER: That was part of the change.

Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE: It was not announced in the media statement.

Hon PETER COLLIER: The criteria for those exceptional circumstances are being developed at the moment. But, yes, as a result of the changes that the Premier announced two weeks ago, that was one of the new elements in addition to delaying it until 2015 and every subsequent child after the first child will pay \$2 000 per annum; that is, hardship criteria would be developed, and they are being developed at the moment.

Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE: Did that criteria exist under the original policy presented when the budget was handed down or was that a result of the policy change this month?

Hon PETER COLLIER: No. The detail that was announced initially did not have that hardship allowance. There was significant public disquiet with regard to the initial policy, and the government listened and we have made those subsequent changes to delay it for 12 months until 2015, to make it \$2 000 for every child after the first child, and also to develop hardship criteria, which are being developed at the moment. I cannot be any more specific about the hardship criteria at this stage.

Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE: Some of my questions go to the formation of the policy, but I have been told today that the policy was essentially initiated from Treasury, not from the Department of Education; is that correct?

Hon PETER COLLIER: It was developed as an across-government policy. Suffice to say, the Department of Education had very minimal input into the original determination of that policy, other than, as we have just mentioned, the number of children of 457 visa holders.

Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE: Minister, there is a report that you will be aware of by the Education and Health Standing Committee in relation to the education of 457 visa students. One of its recommendations was that the Department of Education consider implementing a means-tested cost-recovery program to obtain the payment of fees from 457 visa holders for English as a second language support in schools. I think the basis of its investigations were that only about half the students were receiving appropriate levels of ESL courses. Is it your view, or perhaps the view of the department, that raising this fee could have been better used by bolstering some of the services that are provided to 457 students, particularly those with non-English speaking backgrounds?

Hon PETER COLLIER: I guess it is a value judgement when it comes down to it. Yes; the simple fact of the matter is that we did agree to make the changes. We are facing very, very tight financial conditions at the moment in this state, as you would be well aware. The cost of educating a child in a public school is in excess of \$15 000 per annum. Now the government is asking for the children of 457 visa holders to contribute around one-quarter of that—around \$4 000, and even less for every subsequent child. We are mindful of the impost that it places on 457 visa holders, as I have said, and that is why we have made the changes. As I have said in answer to a couple of previous questions, we have a phenomenally resourced public education system, particularly for literacy, numeracy and assistance with English as a second language. We as a government felt that 457 visa holders and their children needed to contribute to that education but that the original decision with regard to the \$4 000 for each child was perhaps too severe, and that is why we have made the changes. I will ask the director general to comment on the programs and support that we have, particularly for students with English as a second language.

Ms O'Neill: The 457 visa students are able to access any of the ESL programs available to any other student who has language needs, so on that basis they have full access to the programs that are available. In fact, identified 457 students in primary schools receive support for up to three years and secondary kids receive support for up to four years, because a number of them—not all—have particular language needs. Also, if they are humanitarian entrants with limited schooling background, we are funded to give an additional year of support. In fact, we got additional state funding for two years to cater for the English as an additional language and dialect needs of students on 457 visas. In the 2009–10 financial year, we got an additional \$6.86 million and in 2010–11 we got an additional \$7.032 million. The expenditure of these funds was designed to cater for or to attend to many of the recommendations of the Education and Health Standing Committee report. Further to that, we gave one-off \$2 000 grants to each 457 student within their first six months of arrival, and in 2012–13 we spent over \$1 million that was allocated to 520 eligible 457 students. There is a fair degree of targeting of support to those students. Whether or not we could do with more funding for those students is always a good discussion to have; we can always spend more! At this point, I think it is reasonable to say that when those students come into our school, they are well catered for. There are lots of programs. They are able to access our IECs, which are high-level support systems. I think we have already had an additional injection of funds to cater for some of the issues and recommendations of the report that you referred to.

[10.40 am]

Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE: I appreciate that overview of the support services available, but are they predominantly metropolitan based? Are they flowing to small country towns outside of our large regional centres and our cities to where we have clusters of 457 visa families, particularly our

low-income ones, who are probably going to be more adversely affected by the introduction of this fee?

Ms O'Neill: You are quite right that some of those support services are metropolitan based, but whether a student is 457 visa student or not, if they have language or further development needs, as I said, some of that support funding is per student, and we have people who go out to regional areas and can support students in those schools. I do not think we have an IEC, for example, in a specific school for that purpose in a country area; nonetheless, we know where the students are. Like for any student in our system in a regional area who requires access to that sort of support, we provide it, but we might provide a different way than we would in a metropolitan school—and that includes a visiting arrangement. Also, I think it is important that we note that our teachers are provided with considerable resources for English as a second language or dialect learning and teaching. It is not that it always has to be provided externally. Our teachers are well trained and well supported, particularly if they have children who come from a background that would require intensive English language assistance. We have put in quite an investment in recent years into support programs and resources for those students and those teachers. It is always a challenge in our regional areas, and so we have tried to more recently co-locate our support to students out at Padbury such that we can provide that support more efficiently in country areas.

Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE: Given that we have identified today that the policy substantially has been initiated from Treasury, and there has not been a lot of consultation with the department, I think it is fair to say, when are we likely to know the true cost to the budget of the revenue measures associated with charging 457 visa families? I assume Treasury is having a conversation with Department of Education officials to obtain the information about enrolments. The policy is more complex than the one announced in the budget in terms of subsequent students within a family, and I assume a lot of communication is occurring to try to establish how many enrolments and how many students per family. When can we expect to have some further information on that?

Hon PETER COLLIER: The final determination will be identified in the midyear review, but I seek some clarification, Mr Chair: did we not agree to provide some information with regard to the impact?

The CHAIR: Yes, you have—and on the whole of budget.

Hon PETER COLLIER: Are you talking about the global budget?

Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE: Yes—and my question is one of timing. We are obviously being asked to pass a budget now, but given that the policy is now delayed until the start of 2015, is it going to be something we find out at the start of next year or in the next budget?

Hon PETER COLLIER: As I said, this will not impact on these budget papers, because it will not impact on the Department of Education budget, which is what we are considering today.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Minister, can you confirm how many 457 visa holders are enrolled today in WA schools? You are previously on the record in this chamber as saying there are approximately 8 600, yet the Premier in a statement recently said there were 4 000. Perhaps the minister could let us know how many children we are talking about.

Hon PETER COLLIER: We provided that information earlier. Mr Hale talked about the global number of 8 600, which extended beyond just the actual number. I will ask the director general to comment again, but essentially it is around 4 000 or 4 500.

Ms O'Neill: At semester 1 2013, there were approximately 8 600 dependants of 457 visa holders recorded as being enrolled in our schools. The reason we are now talking about a different number is that to date, and historically, once they are in our schools, many of the 457 visa holders do not inform their child's school when they gain permanent resident status, but they tell us when they come in. As at semester 1 2013, taken probably in the February census this year, there were 8 600—but during the year we know that many of them gain permanent resident status. Once they are in our

schools, they are treated as any other student and considered for funding, support and program purposes as any other student. There has not been this great need in the past for them to declare to us or to their individual school that they have now gained permanent resident status. That is the discrepancy in the numbers that you are perhaps hearing. We are now working on a school-by-school basis to verify data on the visa status of students that we have now. That is the work we have said we are doing right now.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Four thousand one hundred students is a lot of students to move on in the last few months; I will not say anything more on that.

Ms O'Neill: Since February.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Since February, half the student number has changed. I refer to “Details of Administered Transactions” on page 487 of the *Budget Statements*. I note the question of Hon Martin Aldridge, but budget papers talk about an income of \$17 198 000 as the budget estimate for 2013–14—and it goes on. Regarding the conversation we were having with Hon Martin Aldridge, are we now in a position to state how much the anticipated income will be from these 4 500.

The CHAIR: They have agreed to take that as a question on notice.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Great; I will leave that one.

Given the government will have to amend the School Education Regulations 2000 to charge a fee to 457 visa families, will this mean that 457 visa children will have to be reclassified, obviously, as students? If these children are reclassified and therefore no longer have local enrolment entitlements, does this mean siblings may be split up and some children will have to move from the current schools if they are maximum capacity?

Hon PETER COLLIER: Yes, we will change the regulations and there will need to be a change to the act to ensure that they are provided with local area intake, and those changes will be implemented.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: So no student or, indeed, family members will lose their current enrolment?

Hon PETER COLLIER: No.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Are schools expected to collect the fees from the 457 visa families?

Hon PETER COLLIER: No.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: How will this happen?

Hon PETER COLLIER: Education and Training International will be responsible for the collection of those fees.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: How will that happen—by invoice? I am concerned. Will schools be expected to bar entry to 457 visa children if the parents have been unable to pay?

Hon PETER COLLIER: That goes through the Department of Training and Workforce Development, which will be responsible for that. I am not sure how it tends to do it. That said, it is not the responsibility of the Department of Education.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: As Minister for Education, would it concern you that children would be barred from attending school if they had not paid this fee?

Hon PETER COLLIER: Yes, it does, but, as I said, we are speculating on something. It is not the responsibility of the education department to collect those fees.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Sure, but it is certainly detailed in your budget papers that it is income from your department and you are the Minister for Education. Will you give the guarantee that students will not be barred from school?

Hon PETER COLLIER: As a result of non-payment of the fees? As I said, there is a hardship component of the policy and we are working through that at the moment to ensure we do not get into that situation. It may be payment in instalments or it may be delayed payments if there is a situation of genuine hardship, as we do all the time with all our students. We are working through that process on hardship and payment at the moment and those things will be taken into consideration.

The CHAIR: If you are saying that it is not your agency that will collect the money, why is it listed under “Details of Administrative Transactions” for your agency and not for the Department of Training and Workforce Development?

[10.50 am]

Hon PETER COLLIER: That is a very good question.

The CHAIR: Yes. That is why I asked it.

Hon PETER COLLIER: Of course, they are attending Department of Education schools. That is why the revenue is in there, within the Education budget. The collection of the fees is not with education. Can I just say that ETI collect the fees for overseas students. That is their role, and it is the same for all international students; ETI collect those fees. So it is actually correct that they do collect those fees.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: This whole thing seems farcical. It is a case where the left hand is not talking to the right hand. It is really policy on the run. Has the department considered what impact these fees may have on voluntary contributions paid by parents to schools? I think if some of these parents are going to have to pay \$2 000, then they are not going to be paying whatever the voluntary contribution is to a school. So have you taken that into consideration?

Hon PETER COLLIER: Well, no. They are voluntary, so it is up to them to pay if they want to anyway.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Sure; but certainly schools start to rely on these things. But we may well see a drop in further contributions to the school.

Hon PETER COLLIER: It is up to the individual, to the parent, as to whether or not they are going to pay a voluntary fee.

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: I appreciate that my colleagues have covered many of the issues. Minister, what is the reason for this fee?

Hon PETER COLLIER: Sorry?

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: What is the reason for this fee?

Hon PETER COLLIER: I am sorry; I am —

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: What is the reason to charge 457 visa holders fees for their public education?

Hon PETER COLLIER: As I said earlier, we are facing very serious financial constraints at the moment in a whole-of-government area and we have to look at all areas, and all departments right across sectoral government must contribute to ensuring that we do, dare I say it, play our part. Now, with regard to the fees, as I have said earlier, the cost of educating a child in a public school is close to \$16 000—it is around \$15 500—and we are asking 457 visa holders, or students of 457 visa holders, to contribute around a quarter of that cost, or less for every second or subsequent child.

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: Are there any plans to ask any other students to contribute towards the cost of their education?

Hon PETER COLLIER: No, other than the fees.

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: Does the department actually support the charging of this fee?

Hon PETER COLLIER: I beg your pardon?

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: Does the department actually support the charging of this fee?

Hon PETER COLLIER: It is a government decision to make that the charge.

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: As it is in the education budget, like other members, I am a bit baffled by it being under the administered transactions section, and then clearly going directly into consolidated funds. As you have not indicated that the education department is actually going to be receiving these fees, therefore I assume that there are no costs associated with the education department for the collection of these fees. But where is the costing for the transactions? Are you paying Education and Training International to collect these fees, and where is that detailed—in which budget?

Hon PETER COLLIER: It is not costing the Department of Education anything at all to recoup the charge. So I want to clarify that again.

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: You can see why it is confusing for us, because it is listed as income.

Hon PETER COLLIER: Yes; it goes in and out.

The CHAIR: So is there an administration charge? I think the question was: is there an administration charge, and where in the budget papers does that appear if it is not education's charge?

Hon PETER COLLIER: No, there is no administration charge for the Department of Education.

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: Just to clarify, because I think you responded to Hon Stephen Dawson in addressing the query that I had around the local entitlement. That, of course, would mean that you would have to reassess the school populations. If there is a cluster of 457 kids in a school area and they do lose their local entitlement, you would have to look at the enrolments of that school.

Hon PETER COLLIER: Yes.

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: Just to clarify, you are going to ensure that they maintain their local entitlement.

Hon PETER COLLIER: I have responded to that. Yes, we will, in making those changes. We will be making changes to the regulations, and also to make them overseas fee-paying students, and to the act to retain their local area status. But I will ask the director general to comment.

Ms O'Neill: Any student that is enrolled in a school now will not be impacted in terms of their enrolment; they are in schools now. The intention of the legislative change is to ensure that they can enrol in local schools. Generally, international students or overseas full-fee-paying students can come in, but they go to schools where we have space. They are not entitled to enrol in their local school. So what has been contemplated under the legislative change is for those students to be able to seek enrolment in a school that is in their local area so that they are not travelling those distances. That is the intention of the legislative change that we will be pursuing under the education act for those 457 students.

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: Thank you. That is very important, because I have been visited by families who are concerned about that. So thank you for clarifying that.

Hon PETER COLLIER: Can I just add to that, Hon Lynn MacLaren, with regard to the charges and fees et cetera. As I mentioned in an earlier response, the precise details with regard to the charging et cetera are being worked out as we speak, as with those hardship considerations, but the actual costings et cetera will all be fully available in the midyear review.

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: Thank you. Could we then finally also get information regarding where the affected families are, because, as Hon Martin Aldridge pointed out, there are some communities that may be more impacted by this, and parents may well choose not to make their voluntary

contribution to a school because they are having to perhaps take out a loan to pay for these 457 fees? So, could we get from you the enrolment map for where the 457 families are that are being affected?

Hon PETER COLLIER: Sure. You are asking to identify the location of the 457 students.

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: Yes.

Hon PETER COLLIER: Again, I am seeking a little bit of latitude here, Mr Chair, just with regard to the timing. With over 8 000 students, and we are talking about individual schools, it may take longer than the 10 days.

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: Okay.

Hon PETER COLLIER: So it will be as soon as we possibly can, but if we can just have a bit of latitude with that.

The CHAIR: All right.

[Supplementary Information No A6.]

The CHAIR: I think one of the things is that you can provide all the other information, but in those areas where you are not able to provide it because you are still collating it, you can provide that as soon as you have collated it.

Ms O'Neill: It does require us to speak to the families about their current visa status, so there are a lot of individual discussions to be had.

Hon PETER COLLIER: Yes, that is the problem. We are still trying to, again, ascertain the exact number of 457s. That was one of the issues that we had.

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: I understand that. Thank you. Mr Chair, I have other questions, but not in this area.

The CHAIR: Yes. I am just going to finish off on the 457s.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: Again, on this issue of 457 visa holders and determining the number that would be affected by the fees, I understand from your explanation that a child may well be registered on the system as being the child of a 457 visa holder, even if they initially came to Australia three or four years ago, because for your purposes, once you know they hold the 457 visa, you do not need to worry about it anymore because they have just come into the system and they were not to be charged fees. Is that how I understand that explanation to be?

Hon PETER COLLIER: Yes; spot on. Exactly as the director general said, you do not know when they may gain permanent status. Very frequently we do not know that they are actually permanent citizens, and they will still go under the mantle of a 457 visa student.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: Since this budget announcement, the fees may be collected by another agency, but it really requires extremely accurate figures from your department in order for that to happen.

Hon PETER COLLIER: It does.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: Since that budget decision was taken, what, for want of a better word, "census" of current 457 visa holders has been conducted by your department to determine the actual numbers today, and what process has been put into place to make sure that that is regularly updated?

[11.00 am]

Hon PETER COLLIER: Sure. Thanks for that question. Mr Hale made a comment on this. I do not know whether he wanted to add anything to his previous comment.

Mr Hale: We are in a situation at the moment where, frankly, we are planning with the process to gain that information because there have been other layers of complication, and of course consideration now of the number of family members also requires some checking. I do not think we can be absolutely frank about the timing on that yet. In fact, in our planning, I think we are expecting that the ultimate confirmation will be at the census at the beginning of 2014.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: That goes, really, to the question that was taken on notice from my colleague Hon Lynn MacLaren. I understand that pushing out the commencement period for the fee collection from 2014 to 2015 takes away from the imperative, but do I take it from your answer that the real clarity will start to emerge post-February 2014?

Ms O'Neill: There are two parts. There is the clarity around the policy and process that I think the minister has said is being finalised, and, for our portion of it, it is the clarity around exactly who we are talking about so that we, or not us, ETI, can charge the right people. As Mr Hale says, we are developing that process. There are only so many ways actually available to us to go down to the individual school level. It is very time consuming and it needs to be enacted very carefully. So that process is being developed as we speak.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: Sure.

Ms O'Neill: But it needs to be precise because we are talking about charging arrangements.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: Of course. Either the minister or the director general, through you, Chair, mentioned earlier that there are other temporary visa holders whose children are charged fees in an education setting. My question will relate to those visa holders who are not the full-fee paying overseas students who come to Australia specifically to study. I do not know whether you have the information available today or you could take it on notice, but I would like to know the various categories of temporary visas that currently attract a fee, what that fee is in a government school setting, and the number of people who are currently subject to that fee. I could imagine there might be a series of visa classes where a fee might be chargeable, but there may not be any children of current visa holders who are subject to that fee. If you could provide that information, I would really appreciate it.

Hon PETER COLLIER: We can. We cannot provide it today. We will take it on notice, Mr Chair.

The CHAIR: All right.

Hon PETER COLLIER: It is the type of visa and the amount charged?

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: The type of visa, the amount charged and the number of students who are currently paying that fee.

The CHAIR: I note that as supplementary information A7.

[Supplementary information No A7.]

The CHAIR: Is that it?

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: That is it for me for 457 visas.

Hon PAUL BROWN: When the Treasury came up with the model for this funding, what part did education play in identifying the cost or was that from Treasury?

Hon PETER COLLIER: As I said in response to an earlier question, the Department of Education had preliminary discussions with Treasury with regard to the numbers of students—not the actual cost itself. The cost of a student was considered, I am sure, in educating a child and also that other states charge 457 visa holders. Those sorts of things, I am sure, were taken in consideration. In terms of forensic analysis with education, no, it was more discussions of the actual number of students.

Hon PAUL BROWN: When Treasury is charging this fee and it is saying it is costing the education department or it is costing the government X amount of dollars, why is that money not being put back into the education department to deliver either English as a second language or other learning that is supposedly being at a cost to the government?

The CHAIR: I think a lot of this has been covered by the earlier questions that were asked, by Hon Martin Aldridge.

Hon PAUL BROWN: I do not think it has been properly.

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: Mr Chair, I have one further question on that.

Hon PETER COLLIER: I need to respond here, first.

The CHAIR: Yes.

Hon PETER COLLIER: Sorry, the question was: why does the money not come back to education?

Hon PAUL BROWN: Yes, ostensibly. It is a fee for the service of providing an education, whether it be English as a second language or as an extra teacher allocation. Why then does it go into consolidated rather than coming back into education to actually fund the provision of the service?

Hon PETER COLLIER: As I said, I think in response to an earlier question, we have to look at it globally in this instance in terms of an all-of-government approach, and there are a number of very, very significant imposts as result of the budget with regard to addressing the serious financial constraints that we face at the moment. This was just a part of that process.

Hon SUE ELLERY: This is just a debacle!

Hon PAUL BROWN: If I may, Chair.

Hon SUE ELLERY: From beginning to end!

The CHAIR: I will take that as a comment, as Tony Jones would say.

Hon PAUL BROWN: Therefore, it is not a \$4 000 fee for education; it is a \$4 000 fee for being here in WA.

Hon PETER COLLIER: Yes, because when they come to Western Australia, they are getting a quality education. They are actually paying for education. It is a public education; it is for a public education delivery. As I have said before, our schools are the best resourced in the nation, and that costs Western Australian taxpayers \$4.4 billion this year just in recurrent expenditure on education. So, yes, we proudly provide more for our students in Western Australia than is the case in any other state. An enormous amount goes into education from the public purse.

Hon PAUL BROWN: Therefore, if we did not have the 457 visa holders in our schools, would your budget be cut?

Hon PETER COLLIER: The budget has not been cut.

Hon PAUL BROWN: If you were not having to provide education to another 8 000 students or 4 500 students, depending on where your figures are, would your budget be reduced, because you are not providing education for those 8 500 or 4 500 students?

Hon PETER COLLIER: In that instance, if you are going to take those 8 000 students out, yes, the budget would be cut because the budget is based on a per capita basis—on a student basis. So it would be.

The CHAIR: Just one last question from Hon Lynn MacLaren on this point.

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: Thank you.

The question related to something that the director general said about 520 grants that were given to the children of 457 visa holders to assist in their settlement, I am guessing, for their first six months. I wondered about those 520 grants. Where do I find that in your budget so that I can track that?

The CHAIR: The director general.

Hon PETER COLLIER: Yes.

Ms O'Neill: Those grants would not be detailed down to that level in our budget papers.

The CHAIR: Are you able to provide it as supplementary information?

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: Yes. Maybe what bucket of money it comes out of or the name of the grant.

Ms O'Neill: It will be out of total cost of services.

Hon PETER COLLIER: As I said, there is no way you can identify those sorts of grants in the budget papers, but certainly we can provide that level of detail as supplementary information.

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: Thank you.

The CHAIR: Supplementary information A8 will be the details of the grants, the amount, the number and where it comes out of the budget.

[Supplementary information No A8.]

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: I want to go to page 276 of budget paper No 2, “Services and Key Efficiency Indicators” for primary education employees—FTEs. Will there be any FTE reductions or changes to the School of Instrumental Music offered at primary schools? Specifically, I am concerned about the one in my electorate in Maylands, of course—but across the board, will there be any —

Hon PETER COLLIER: Is that the School of Instrumental Music?

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: SIMs.

Hon PETER COLLIER: Yes. I will ask the director general to comment.

Ms O'Neill: To just clarify, did you ask whether there was a staffing reduction?

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: That is right—FTEs.

[11.10 am]

Ms O'Neill: The School of Instrumental Music is not funded or staffed on the same basis as other schools, but they have been advised that their total budget allocation will be reduced by 10 per cent.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: Ten per cent. So, that is across the board and each SIM school will get a —

Ms O'Neill: The School of Instrumental Music is one school and it has some satellite areas, but it is organised as one school, so it is a 10 per cent reduction on the total.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: Okay. So how do we find out how those satellite areas are affected? What impact is that going to have on the program?

Ms O'Neill: I would anticipate that for the School of Instrumental Music, once again if I can just clarify that it operates as one school, you would need to look at the impact across the school. But like any other school, where from year to year you would have fluctuations of enrolments, they will manage the delivery of their program in accordance with the funding that they have available to them.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: Across those schools, will there be some sort of an impact in relation to kids being able to take up music programs? How will that have an impact? Will it be around what level of instruments they will be able to buy and that sort of thing?

Ms O'Neill: A 10 per cent reduction could be managed in a range of ways. They could, for example, be more efficient in terms of travel or their procurement processes; there are so many ways that a school will manage its program and its goods and services in relation to its budget. I am not in a position to tell you; the principal will decide how best to manage their budget with that kind of a reduction. But, for example, it could be that rather than having three teachers travel to Bunbury at different times—because it is peripatetic and has visiting teachers—they might all go together. It might be that they are able to manage their delivery in a more efficient way. Our very clear expectation is that they will do everything they can to minimise the impost on individual students and we believe that there are ways in which any school can undertake budget adjustments, like they would in any year. If for example, they had 20 fewer students enrolled they would have a reduction in the budget and they would manage that. So there are a number of ways that SIM will be able to undertake its delivery and I would expect that that would be done in the most commonsense way possible with the least impact on students.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: So there will be a 10 per cent reduction in that. Will there be any FTE reductions in the gifted and talented students program in high schools?

Ms O'Neill: I do not believe there has been a reduction to the specialist programs—the gifted and talented programs—in secondary education.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: So there are no schools indicating that those programs will need to be reduced.

Ms O'Neill: The gifted and talented specialist secondary programs are programs that schools run on behalf of the system and at this stage I am not aware that there will be any impact on those programs.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: So you are not expecting any or you are just not aware of any?

Ms O'Neill: No, I am not expecting that there is. There is not.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: There is not.

Ms O'Neill: No.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: And there will not be?

Ms O'Neill: No.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: Okay. Can I move backwards in terms of page numbers to page 272 and look at corrective measures in the “Spending Changes” table, specifically the line item, public sector workforce reform. I just want to check, what corrective measures does the government expect to put in place in relation to the administration of north metropolitan and south metropolitan education regional offices.

Hon PETER COLLIER: Is that the specific offices themselves?

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: Yes.

Hon PETER COLLIER: In terms of FTEs?

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: Yes.

Hon PETER COLLIER: I will ask the director general to comment on those specific operational offices.

Ms O'Neill: Like central office, regional offices, with respect to how we ask them to manage their budget, have had a vacancy rate applied to their staffing. That is one corrective measure and that means that they need to take account of the vacancies that are there and not always backfill. In addition to that, more recently we announced 150 fewer positions would be available in central and regional offices—about 14 FTEs were reduced from across all the regions, not just the two that you mentioned.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: Can you tell me how that will affect north metro and south metro regional offices if there are 14 across the board?

Ms O'Neill: Well from 14 FTEs across eight sites, I think that would probably mean that is about four each from north metro and south metro given that they are the biggest regions that we have. Similarly, as I said with SIM, we would expect them to manage the services that they have; remembering that we went from many hundreds of staff in regional offices only a few years ago to now, I think in total, there are less than 100 across all regional offices. So the positions that are in regional offices—all the services and support left the offices and went out to schools and are placed in schools giving direct support to schools—are administrative roles and we do not anticipate there being a direct impact on schools in terms of those administrative roles. They are not positions that provide services to students and to schools like the school psychologists that used to be there, and like other positions that used to be in the regional offices that used to provide services to schools—they are now in the schools servicing the schools directly.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: Thank you. I do have a number of other questions, particularly also relating to student enrolment figures, but I know there are a lot of people waiting. If there is anyone else that wants to follow up that theme—I am just saying that that is what I want to follow up next, but I will pass it on.

The CHAIR: So that members are aware, this is just to remind members that committee members or the lead speakers get priority and now that we have gone through all of those, I am now about to go through some of the other members that are here and not on the committee.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Thank you, Mr Chair. Minister, it strikes me that in recent times there has been an intellectual stand-off with regard to this ongoing debate about either cuts to or increases in the education budget. This morning I am asking your assistance to resolve that stand-off. The first question is with regard to the extent to which the budget has increased. Now, this figure of \$300 000 is being bandied about —

Hon PETER COLLIER: \$300 million.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Three hundred million, sorry. I will just ask you to identify for me in the budget papers what that \$300 million figure is based upon.

Hon PETER COLLIER: Yes, it is total cost of services in the “Appropriations, Expenses and Cash Assets” table on page 271 of budget paper No 2. If you have a look at total cost of services under expenses—that does not include the additional \$40 million that was included.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Just so I have this clear, the 2013–14 budget estimate is \$4.377 billion.

Hon PETER COLLIER: That is correct.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: And what is the figure that we are then basing it off to get to the \$300 million increase?

Hon PETER COLLIER: The—where are we up to—see the 2012–13 budget?

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Yes, so the \$4.059 billion?

Hon PETER COLLIER: Yes.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: So it is actually more than \$300 million.

The CHAIR: I think this is going to be one of those statistics statistic.

Hon PETER COLLIER: You are quite correct; it is just over \$300 million from budget to budget.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: So for the purposes of this morning’s discussion, if I said \$318 million, you would be comfortable with that figure minister?

Hon PETER COLLIER: I will ask Mr Leaf to comment, but that is pretty accurate.

Mr Leaf: There are any number of ways that we can look at an increase in an amount that the budget has increased by; we can compare it to the estimated actual and then the additional supplementation that came through. I think you would all be aware that there was an additional \$80 million, \$40 million in 2013–14 and 2014–15 and that \$300 million is a headline number which certainly stacks up in a number of different ways of looking at it. I think for the purposes of being here today, the numbers in the budget estimates themselves, if you compare budget to budget, I am comfortable with that \$320 million increase.

[11.20 am]

Hon NICK GOIRAN: A \$320 million increase. Minister, where will I find teachers' salaries in the budget? Is it on the item on page 271 that you just referred to—"Item 26 Net amount appropriated to deliver services"?

Hon PETER COLLIER: It is under "Employee benefits" on page 284.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Minister, can you please clarify how much the "Employee benefits" is going up in this budget?

Hon PETER COLLIER: If you use the same measure as the one that we have just used, it will go up from \$3 040 287 000 to \$3 323 084 000. There is another 4.25 per cent increase in December.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Using that measure, it is going up by \$283 million.

Hon PETER COLLIER: Yes.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Of the \$320 million increase this financial year, \$283 million is for employee benefits. What percentage of that is for classroom teachers?

Hon PETER COLLIER: If the member means the teacher population as opposed to global employees, teachers account for 21 000 of the total number of 35 000 employees.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: That is the number of teachers and "administrators", if you like, although I use the word loosely. Of course, not everyone gets paid the same amount.

Hon PETER COLLIER: No.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: How much of that \$3.3 billion that is to be spent in the upcoming year will be spent on classroom teachers' salaries.

Hon PETER COLLIER: Salaries in total are about 75 per cent. We will have to take on notice the specifics of the 21 000. As I understand it, you want to know how much of the total salary pool goes to teachers alone?

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Yes.

The CHAIR: I will clarify the question. How much of the increase is for teachers' salaries? Do you want that broken down into how much is for salary increases and how much is for additional staff?

Hon ADELE FARINA: Chair, how can the minister not know that?

Hon NICK GOIRAN: I thought I had the call.

Hon PETER COLLIER: I just said that there are 21 000 teachers out of a total of 35 000 employees. I have to say, that is a pretty accurate response. We are looking at the exact amount of the employee benefits of \$3.323 billion that go to the 21 000 teachers.

Hon SUE ELLERY: I have a question similar to that asked by Hon Nick Goiran. I wonder whether in addition to what has just been agreed to be provided in supplementary information No A9, the minister can set out the component of the \$300 million increase for the salaries of teachers for the categories used in the annual report, which are: administrative and school support. I think there is a fourth one, but I cannot remember that off the top of my head?

Hon PETER COLLIER: Do you mean the additional increase?

Hon SUE ELLERY: Yes.

Hon PETER COLLIER: I think it is around \$93 million for salaries. No worries. We will get that.

The CHAIR: I think we will classify that as part of one answer to supplementary information No A9. If the minister can provide as much reconciling information, because I assume there are full-time equivalents going up and down, and salary increases in there as well. I assume also that there is a component for student numbers increases as well. It might be useful to get all that.

[Supplementary Information No A9.]

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Minister, are you in a position today to indicate to what extent teachers' salaries will increase in the upcoming financial year?

Hon PETER COLLIER: For next year?

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Sorry, in 2013–14.

Hon PETER COLLIER: A 4.25 per cent increase kicks in at December this year as a part of the current enterprise bargaining agreement.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Is that part of the \$283 million increase under "Employee benefits", which forms part of the \$320 million overall budget increase that we have talked about?

Hon PETER COLLIER: Yes, it is part of that total.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Is it fair for me to say that a significant majority of the \$320 million increase in the budget for this year is for teachers' salaries.

Hon PETER COLLIER: Yes, it is a combination of enrolment growth and teachers' salaries. I have said in the past that in 2008 we had the worst-paid teachers in the nation and there were massive teacher shortages. We could not attract people to the profession, which was a shame. Teachers felt undervalued and overworked. Since that time, we have put a teacher in front of every class for the past four years. The reason for this is, I think, significantly due to the fact that we pay our teachers more than any other state in the nation. They are now the highest-paid teachers in the nation. Teachers start as a graduate on \$60 000 and a level 3 teacher is on \$107 000. That is a real incentive to stay in the classroom. Previously, a lot of people treated teaching as if it were a stopgap before moving on to another profession. They are now seeing teaching for what it should be, which is as a career. There is a raft of different promotions a teacher can aspire to. In addition, a teacher is getting paid what he or she is worth. That is why, as I said, we now have no problems filling our classrooms and we pay our teachers better than any other state. I am proud of being part of a government that has done that.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: A final question for me on this point, Mr Chairman —

The CHAIR: Sorry, Hon Peter Katsambanis.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: Minister, you mentioned the range of salaries from \$60 000-odd to \$107 000. Is it possible to get a breakdown of the bands and how much teachers within each of those bands will be getting in 2013, 2014 and as far as your current industrial agreements extends?

Hon PETER COLLIER: Yes, I think that would be good. That would be from graduates through to the highest band plus level 3. Do you want principals and deputies?

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: Yes, principals and deputies as well. Right across the salary band of anyone that would be classified within the teacher FTE.

Hon PETER COLLIER: That will include the 4.25 per cent increase.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: Yes.

Hon PETER COLLIER: It is publicly available in the EBA but we will provide that.

The CHAIR: That will be supplementary information A10, but when you answer the questions you may combine A9 and A10 into a comprehensive package.

[*Supplementary Information No A10.*]

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: I know that it is hard to classify but is there a median salary for an average full-time teacher across the system?

Hon PETER COLLIER: We could provide that, but I do not know whether that would be worthwhile. A teacher on the highest pay scale will have been in the classroom for about eight or nine years, as opposed to a graduate teacher who has been in the classroom less than one year.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Schools use an average figure.

Ms O'Neill: It is \$100 000.

Hon PETER COLLIER: For members' information, \$100 000 is generally used as the figure of what a teacher is worth.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: Does an average teacher in Western Australia cost the system about \$100 000 a year?

Hon PETER COLLIER: Yes.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: I have heard the minister say many times that that is higher than any other state in Australia.

I also wanted to clarify a point on salaries on page 273 of the budget papers where there is a significant discrepancy in the budget allocation for primary and secondary education. I understand this is because there are eight years in primary school education at the moment and five years in secondary education. Is there any difference in salary bands or pay scales for teachers in primary and secondary education?

[11.30 am]

Hon PETER COLLIER: No, there is not. The entitlements are different at the secondary level, of course, because they have more DOTT time and the specialist attention that teachers are provided with. Also the ratios in class sizes at the primary level are higher in comparison with their secondary counterparts.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: I will conclude on this point. I started my questions wanting to get the minister's assistance to resolve this intellectual stand-off with regard to cuts versus increase. Based on the evidence the minister has given to the committee this morning, I understand that we can confidently go out to the community as Legislative Councillors and indicate that in this financial year the budget has increased, and that a significant reason for that is that teachers' salaries have increased so that they are now the highest paid in the nation.

Hon PETER COLLIER: The member can confidently say that. The fact of the matter is that over three-quarters of the entire education budget is taken up with salaries; we make no bones about that. It is very important to me as a former chalkie and also to the government that we give teachers what they are worth, and that is why they are the highest paid in the nation. In addition to that, of course, there has been significant student growth over recent years.

Hon ADELE FARINA: I refer to page 282 of the budget papers and the amount of drawdowns from royalties for regions. I note that close to \$68 million has been drawn down from royalties for regions, which indicates a significant cost-shifting from the education department budget to royalties for regions. Can the minister provide an itemised list of how each dollar of that amount will be spent and which school it will go to?

Hon PETER COLLIER: I will ask Mr Fischer to answer.

Mr Fischer: The \$67 million shown in the 2013–14 budget is identified in the previous pages. Under “New Works” at the bottom of page 281 is “Royalties for Regions; Kalgoorlie–Boulder Community High School; Redevelopment (Stage 1)” for \$1 million. The rest of it is shown under “Works in Progress” on page 279. Under “Royalties for Regions” is the breakdown of individual schools listed there including \$24.7 million for the relocation of year 7s. Is that the detail the member is seeking or is there additional detail?

Hon ADELE FARINA: No; that will do, thank you.

The CHAIR: Can I just clarify that? The money referred to on page 272 under “Spending Changes” also lists royalties for regions. Is that only for capital works or is there also some recurrent funding? It is under “Government Initiatives and Budget Priorities”.

Mr Leaf: The information on page 282 actually describes the funding arrangements for the total cost of the asset investment program. That \$67.9 million for the royalties for regions is entirely capital. As you can see, the total of the capital investment program is \$581 million, which is the total of the funding program. So it is all capital works.

Hon ADELE FARINA: For my next question I refer to “Spending Changes” on page 272 and to the 15 staff within the schools’ library support service that will be cut from head office. Can the minister explain how the national library database for schools will be managed, as currently the library support service provides up to 40 per cent of all records Australia-wide? Also, how will the schools implement the learning resources, digital and non-digital, as part of the national curriculum without the schools’ library support service?

Hon PETER COLLIER: I will ask Mr Hale to comment on that.

Mr Hale: There are two points to this, if I understand the member’s question correctly. Part of the work has been undertaken. I should begin by saying that the past work of the people we are talking about is valued, but the reality is that things have moved on and the exact functions in the past are no longer as relevant as they once were. Therefore, two functions in that area will be closing down. One of those roles was to review and evaluate fiction and non-fiction print materials for teachers, and to assist in those materials being catalogued. That service is really no longer required because people in schools are able to access the SCIS database, which is run by Education Services Australia. One of the other functions that people in that area were involved in was evaluating the educational value of websites. Frankly, we have moved on a long way from that. Educators are now very familiar with both the internet and the resources that are available on it, and there are also much more friendly user interfaces to help people to access them.

Hon ADELE FARINA: I refer to page 275 of the budget papers and the dot point on attendance. Does every school currently have a dedicated staff officer to manage school attendance? If not, which schools have a dedicated staff officer to manage school attendance; is it a full-time position; and, will any of these positions be cut in 2013–14?

Hon PETER COLLIER: Yes, they do have attendance officers. Regarding specific schools, I might see if the director general can comment on that.

Ms O’Neill: Department of Education personnel with a significant role in enrolment and attendance can be authorised as attendance officers under sections 12 and 33 of the School Education Act. We have badged attendance officers. That does not mean that that is the only role they do. People can have another role but as part of that they have the authority and they are legally authorised to stop, detain and question absent students during school hours. At 30 August this year there were 330 badged attendance officers in schools, school networks and regional offices. This compares with the same time in 2012 when we had 160 badged attendance officers. We have therefore across the state 330 people who have the authority under the act to stop, detain and question students who are absent from school. It has been the case for quite a few years now that there were only a handful of the old attendance officers whose only job it was to chase up students not at school. Every person in

the school has a responsibility for attendance. As I said, we have 330 across the state that have as part of their job a specific authority to detain students.

Hon ADELE FARINA: Can we have a breakdown of where those people are located and how much of their time is spent on dealing with attendance issues?

Hon PETER COLLIER: Yes.

[Supplementary Information No A11.]

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: I refer to page 275 and pick up on the question asked by Hon Adele Farina about the dot point on attendance. It refers to “ongoing development of partnerships with families, communities” and goes on. Could the minister or the director general outline some of those initiatives that are underway, particularly those relating to partnerships?

Ms O’Neill: One good example is the Operation Redirect—Daytime Safe Place program, which is a partnership we have with Western Australia Police. It commenced in the second semester in 2012. Since that time, WA police reported at December 2012 that they had intercepted 276 kids and they were returned to schools. This year as at 30 August 2013 only 22 young people have been intercepted and the bulk of those students were returned to schools.

[11.40 am]

That is on the intervention end when students are actually not at school and police have the authority to do what they are doing. On the positive partnership end, many individual schools are in partnerships in, say, Newman with BHP, or in Hedland with the same, or with Woodside. There are those sorts of partnerships where there are positive reinforcements for students to achieve attendance targets, for example. We have had the Community Development Foundation, with Barry Cable and Jenny Day involved in the program, around incentives for students and families winning prizes. You can look at the Clontarf Foundation where boys are participating in football academies and their attendance has improved. There are many such programs, some are bigger, some are individual schools with local community groups or the local newsagents. For a period of time, down in Fremantle shop owners joined together and refused to serve people who were of school age in the shops during the day. There are many such programs that contribute, as well as the ones the schools run themselves on which schools spend an enormous amount of time, energy and effort.

I also point to in regional locations, particularly in remote schools, the wonderful work teachers and the broader staff do in picking up students for school, feeding them breakfast as part of breakfast clubs, providing lunch, washing their clothes, providing uniforms and running after-school programs. It is all about engagement. There are many on the positive end. Of course, there are some on the intervention end, and quite apart from that—they are not community partnerships—we have the legislative requirement for students to be in schools.

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: Still on page 275, under “Literacy and Numeracy”, the dot point states —

Directions for the explicit teaching of literacy and numeracy, including strengthening the teaching of phonics, grammar and reading comprehension, are in place.

I have two questions, and one may need to be taken on notice. Could you provide some more detail with respect to those, when you refer to directions? Secondly, I understand that Ballajura Primary School is an example of a school that uses explicit teaching. Is there a list of schools currently providing this form of teaching; and, if so, can we have that?

Hon PETER COLLIER: A list of schools that provide what?

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: Explicit teaching, use that model of teaching.

Hon PETER COLLIER: In that specific instance I will get the director general to comment on that; suffice to say, yes.

In terms of literacy and numeracy, I emphasise something I said earlier in the hearing—that is, literacy and numeracy is a priority of all schools. I am stating the bleeding obvious there, but some schools adopt specific programs for their specific cohort of students or the individual needs of students. With regard to explicit teaching, I will pass to the director general.

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: I refer to Ballajura Primary School because it is a good example of where this particular form of teaching has had some success.

Ms O'Neill: I provide some clarifying comments because there have been a lot of discussion about explicit teaching as if it were a program schools use; of course, it is not. Explicit teaching is a descriptor given to the practice of being absolutely clear what the students need to achieve—the students themselves, as well as the teachers—and essentially teaching it until it is taught. That is different to the methodology that might have been considered by many years ago, which was more immersion and waiting for students to learn.

In the case of Ballajura, which I recall has been well celebrated in the newspaper and which has done a fantastic job with wonderful results, they have their own form of explicit teaching. What is commended at Ballajura Primary School is that every single teacher is absolutely clear about what needs to be taught. They have shared agreement about the pedagogy, or the teaching styles, they will use and the programs and the resources that will back it up. The other strength of their program is that the students are very clear about their current performance, and they set targets for future performance and learning. That is the kind of practice we would want to see widespread. In fact, over the past two years we have put out a focus document which talks to schools about what we want to see particularly. It talks about explicit teaching, phonics and grammar and ensuring that those are featured highly in the school's curriculum. We have been clear in our directions and expectations of schools. It is fair to say that Ballajura is top of the bunch in terms of how it has taken that and worked it through at a school level. There are many other schools that are doing similar things, just slightly different to suit their students, which are doing very well as well. There are some schools we provide support to who we think we want to see that style of direct teaching.

The CHAIR: I have to keep moving on, Hon Donna Faragher.

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: On that, could I just ask if we could get a copy of the document the director general referred to—that is, the education focus document—which provides detail on that?

Ms O'Neill: Sure; it is publicly available. We can provide it.

[Supplementary Information No A12]

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: Following on from the questions of Hon Donna Faragher on literacy and numeracy, I notice on page 276, under “Outcomes and Key Effectiveness Indicators” there are a series of measures of literacy and numeracy that I assume relate to NAPLAN. Over the period from 2011–12 through to the budget period there is really no significant statistical increase in any of those figures. There are a couple of declines. There is a particular decline in numeracy in both year 3 and year 5 between the 2011–12 actual and the 2012–13 estimated actual. Are there any reasons for that estimated decline?

Hon PETER COLLIER: I will ask the director general to comment, suffice to say there have been over the last few years significant increases or improvements in Western Australia's NAPLAN results more than any other jurisdiction. We have flatlined in the last 12 months, but I will ask the director general to comment on the anticipated targets.

Ms O'Neill: The minister is right. Along with Queensland, we remain the most improved state—in fact, it was only us until the last year, but Queensland did particularly well this year. We remain the most improved state since 2008 in NAPLAN, which is a fantastic result for us. We were historically probably second last, the Northern Territory is ordinarily last, if you consider them in a rank order. We are now in about the middle of the pack—obviously we would like to be at the top of the pack. In the 20 assessments, in mean scores, we improved in three of the tests; we are about the same in

16 of the tests and declined in one test—that is, the recent test. A lot of those, particularly the declining and staying around the same, are not really statistically significant given the numbers of students involved; but, obviously, our target is for much greater improvement. One thing we can particularly mention is that we have one of the lowest withdrawal rates. All of these NAPLAN results need to be considered in accordance with all of the information. We have, like Queensland and the Northern Territory, more Aboriginal students, for whom the gap is historically enormous, so all of the data needs to be considered. But there has not been great statistical significant difference in the last year.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: The other issue that particularly concerns me is over time year 9 writing has remained below 80 per cent, so one in four or one in five students at year 9 are not meeting the minimum national standard. That has not really changed over time. Why is it that the Western Australian system does not seem to meet the needs of that standard? Is it something to do with the testing? Is it a difference in the teaching? Is it a difference in the teaching at earlier levels that has flowed on and that might wash out of the system in the future with a return to explicit learning? I want to know why, statistically, between one in four and one in five students at year 9 level is not meeting that minimum writing benchmark?

[11.50 am]

Hon PETER COLLIER: I will comment and then ask the director general to comment. This is an issue of concern to me as minister. When I made those changes to the Western Australian Certificate of Education at the beginning of this year, one of the very prominent and, dare I say, essential components of those changes is that at the start of 2014–15 all year 10 students do a literacy–numeracy test. People say we do not need more tests, but we do, because, quite frankly, too many of our students are entering a senior secondary level of education with substandard literacy–numeracy skills and as they move into subject choices very frequently they are choosing inappropriately. A lot of that has to do with the fact that their literacy and numeracy skill simply is not at a level that allows those students to cope with those subject choices. So the literacy–numeracy test will be implemented in March next year, when the year 10 students will sit that test. It will work on the back of the existing literacy–numeracy tests through the National Assessment Program — Literacy and Numeracy, but will identify students who have difficulty in that area. There will then be foundation courses for literacy and numeracy throughout year 11 to assist those students, so that when they get to the end of year 12, in order to graduate with a WACE they must meet a literacy–numeracy standard. That has been widely applauded right across the board, in the industry and education sectors, to ensure that when our students leave school at the end of year 12 they are best prepared for the outside world. That is a positive step forward with all the structures in place to identify deficiencies in student learning in years 3, 5, 7 and 9, through NAPLAN, and now it is extended to year 10 so that when they move to senior secondary education, ideally, if they are still falling through the cracks, we can identify the deficiencies and assist those students in years 11 and 12. That was as a bit of background. I ask the director general to talk specifically about the member’s question on year 9 writing.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: What has been introduced is highly commendable. It is terrific that we will ensure that at the end of the process as many students as possible come out with a basis in literacy and numeracy, and the minister ought to be commended for that. I am seeking some clarity around why we get to that pointy end, because we have continued to apply more and more resources over time.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: Member, you have already asked your question. We can ask the director general to respond.

Ms O’Neill: The member is right that it is a very difficult area to make movement in and, historically, particularly year 9 boys have been much less engaged in writing, but that would be the same across the nation. I am not saying our year 9 boys are special in this regard. One of the things

we know in our analysis of the NAPLAN results is that, historically, by the time our students reach year 3, on the NAPLAN, they are already behind. We were one of the few states in which preprimary was not compulsory until this year, even though we had high levels of involvement and engagement. It is true to say other states have more formalised learning at a younger age. I am not suggesting that we move, in preprimary, to make it look like the rest of the schooling system. One of the strengths in our system is the way in which we conduct preprimary. There was a question earlier around explicit teaching. Unlike other states, Western Australia has not had a strong history in preprimary, and kindergarten for that matter, of explicit teaching. We now know that many of the young people coming into our schools at that age can already read or are ready to read, so we have commenced a much stronger emphasis of that explicit teaching of literacy and numeracy in the early years, because by the time we get to year 3 we are already behind. We hope to see some particular movement there. The other thing I point to, and the member is rightly concerned about the students who do not have the minimum standard by the time they get to year 9, is if we look at all of the data, we do quite well in all of the other bands; that is, comparative to other systems, we do well in year 9 for year levels. It is a particular concern to us. I have referred to the focus document, and we have asked specifically to give concern to writing. The test did change, but it changed for everyone to persuasive writing—historically it had always been more of a written account. Similarly to the concern the member raised, we are concerned about the writing outcomes. It is something we are working directly with schools on to make sure that it is front and centre of their attention, because it relates to basic literacy skills in some of those schools.

Hon SAMANTHA ROWE: I refer to page 285 of budget paper No 2, the line item for grants and subsidies to non-government schools and other organisations. What are these grants and subsidies?

Hon PETER COLLIER: We will get the member some greater clarity, and I will ask the director general to comment.

Ms O'Neill: The grants do not go directly to non-government schools; they simply come through our budget and then are disbursed to non-government schools. For example, for education and training plans when the leaving age was raised; and national partnership funding from the commonwealth government would come to our department and we disburse it to non-government schools. We spoke previously about that sense of being a post box. It works in that way similarly. The funding comes to us from Treasury and then is disbursed to non-government schools, which have a different mechanism. Another group is coming before the committee from the Department of Education Services, which is the funding body, and the other question is more appropriately directed to them. For our part, we receive funding for a particular purpose such as leaving age programs. We receive it and non-government schools receive it. We are working on it collaboratively, so it comes to us and then it is shared out.

Hon SAMANTHA ROWE: Am I able to get a list?

[*Supplementary Information No A13.*]

Hon SAMANTHA ROWE: I refer to “New Works” on page 281 of budget paper No 2. Is the minister able to give assurances that no district high school will be downgraded to a primary school in this term of government?

Hon PETER COLLIER: I cannot give any guarantees. There is certainly nothing in the pipeline. Those instances always depend on enrolment figures for schools. That is constantly monitored, but it has not happened for some time. As I said, unless there is a mass exodus from a particular school at some stage, it is highly unlikely.

Hon COL HOLT: I refer the minister to “Works in progress” on page 279 of budget paper No 2. The line item “Relocation of Year 7s to secondary schools” is quite a large budgetary allocation. I notice that Collie Senior High School has royalties for regions money spent there. Is there any

funding in that allocation for transition of year 7s into Collie Senior High School, which in my view is a bit of a priority?

Hon PETER COLLIER: No, to the first one.

Hon COL HOLT: So, none at all in any of that funding?

Hon PETER COLLIER: No, as I understand it.

Hon COL HOLT: How are we developing Collie Senior High School?

Mr Fischer: In terms of the major capital works or permanent capital works, there is no work planned at Collie Senior High. We are considering that now. That is one we are monitoring in terms of whether there needs to be some transportable accommodation or some amendment to refurbishments to the existing facilities to accommodate that. That decision has not been finalised yet; we are still monitoring the actual enrolments.

[12 noon]

Hon COL HOLT: So there will be no actual expenditure into Collie at this point in time for the transition of year 7s. They are expecting a 30 per cent increase in their school.

Mr Fischer: If there was any work to be undertaken, it would be undertaken within that \$186 million allocation.

Hon COL HOLT: The second question is around Bunbury Senior High School, which has some heritage buildings, so it has some special needs in terms of heritage spends. From my knowledge, some pretty serious and immediate works need to happen to some of the buildings.

Hon PETER COLLIER: The canteen?

Hon COL HOLT: I think also to some toilets. Is that budgeted for in this upcoming thing?

Hon PETER COLLIER: For Bunbury, I am not sure whether there is any earmarked. I went and visited Bunbury a few months ago. I am conscious of the issues at Bunbury, but in this budget I do not think there is anything earmarked. I will ask Mr Fischer.

Mr Fischer: The only specific works at Bunbury are for the year 7 relocation. There are no other works planned.

Hon PETER COLLIER: Having said that, it is on the radar, if that gives you a bit of comfort. I am very conscious of the issues at Bunbury.

Hon COL HOLT: Page 308 deals with the Country High School Hostels Authority. I note that the third dot point under the heading “Significant Issues Impacting the Agency” refers to upgrading residential colleges to ensure that there is additional capacity for year 7s. Is there a list of the current capacity of those hostels and the expected capacity when year 7s transition to high school? Can I get a list of that?

Hon PETER COLLIER: Officers from the Country High School Hostels Authority are here, so we will probably do it in the next round. We can provide that information.

Hon COL HOLT: I am happy to do that.

The CHAIR: Will you be able to provide it in the next round?

Hon PETER COLLIER: Yes; it is probably best to wait until the next round.

The CHAIR: Officers from the Country High School Hostels Authority are coming in with those from the Department of Education Services.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I refer to page 292 of the budget papers, which deals with asset investment. Will the government look at including IT technical support for schools so that they can better use the technology and hardware that the department provides them? At the moment, there is

a haphazard, uncoordinated approach to providing IT support to schools. Will you look at being more coordinated?

Hon PETER COLLIER: Sorry; what was the question?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Will you essentially look at including IT technical support for schools so that they are not doing it themselves, the department is responsible for it, and it is not happening in a haphazard way?

Hon PETER COLLIER: I am conscious of it. It comes to my attention quite regularly from various schools. I can once again give you an undertaking that we will continue to work towards an appropriate outcome. At this stage, I cannot offer anything more positive. There is nothing in the forward estimates, but it is an emerging issue.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: On that same point in the budget papers, in regard to the change in depreciation policy, the government has now made it the policy that the useful life of the school will reach its end after 50 years, rather than 40 years. Does this not mean that you have abandoned your promise to rebuild schools built before the 1980s?

Hon PETER COLLIER: There was never a promise that we would rebuild schools. We will always identify schools on a case-by-case basis and the material worth of either renovating or upgrading those schools as opposed to rebuilding them. That has not changed; that will continue.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Some parents may have sent their children to a school that is 40 years old and were expecting some major work, but you were essentially telling them to come back in 10 years' time or that we were not going to fix it for 10 years.

Hon PETER COLLIER: No. Some schools that are 100 years old are in very good condition. I recently went back to my primary school, North Kalgoorlie, which is over 100 years old and is in magnificent condition. Quite frankly, we are rebuilding some that were built in the 1970s—for example, my old high school. I do not think you can put a one-size-fits-all on rebuilds; it depends on the individual school.

Hon LIZ BEHJAT: I have some questions on the asset investment program, but before I do that, I want to pick up on the questions asked by Hon Col Holt in relation to transitioning students from year 7. The final dot point on page 274 under the year 7 thing refers to a case-by-case basis. There is some scope for principals to be given flexibility about students transitioning to year 8. Are you able to give us an idea of how many families have been requesting that special consideration? Do you have those?

Hon PETER COLLIER: Yes, we have, actually. When I went to Beacon and a few others just recently, we had those figures. I am not sure whether we have the most up to date here. At that stage, there were only about half a dozen, but as I understand it, it has developed since that time. Mr Hale has the most precise number.

Mr Hale: In our check in the last full term, there were only about eight, and that number has grown during the current term. We are not burdening schools by asking repeatedly, but we are checking in once a term. On 16 August this year, a total of 42 applications for special consideration had been received. Those were across 16 small country primary schools. Of those, 36 have been approved and six at that time were pending, although we can reasonably expect that they will all be approved. Because this is for the three-year transition period, that is for 16 students in 2015, nine in 2016, and 11 in 2017. The vast majority of those have been across the wheatbelt region.

Hon LIZ BEHJAT: It just seemed that the indications were that there was going to be a massive number of people wanting to do that, but obviously that is not the case.

On the asset investment program on page 278, under the heading “Miscellaneous Programs”, it states —

An allocation of \$10 million will be made to purchase and develop land for the construction of new schools in 2013–14.

I think that is a very badly worded sentence. I do not think you are going to be building anything in 2013–14 and definitely not for \$10 million. So obviously it relates to identifying land and purchasing that land. Have you identified that land? Are you talking about land in newly developing housing estate areas or is some consideration being given to the residential infill happening in some of the more established areas? It has actually been suggested that we probably need Scarborough high school back.

The CHAIR: Some of us suggested not selling it at the time, Hon Liz Behjat!

Hon LIZ BEHJAT: I will leave that for others to decide, but I know the pressures that are on schools in my electorate, such as Churchlands and others. Can you talk me through where that \$10 million will be spent?

Hon PETER COLLIER: I will ask Mr Fischer to respond to that.

Mr Fischer: The \$10 million has been identified. It relates mainly to the purchase of land for the high school that has been announced for opening in 2017 down in Harrisdale. The majority of that money will be spent on that school. In terms of new developing areas, land for primary schools is generally provided free of charge as part of the planning process. Around the metropolitan area, I think about 165 sites have been identified for future school sites and a number of those would already have been released or provided to the department free of charge, or they would be protected in a land planning scheme.

Hon LIZ BEHJAT: Still on the asset investment program, given that we are heading towards summer time—although you would not know from the weather in the last week—has the \$52 million state air-cooling program suffered any loss, given that there are budget constraints at the moment, or is the rollout still happening? Where have we got to with that? Are we going to have schools without air cooling this summer?

Hon PETER COLLIER: It has not suffered. Our students will continue to be educated in comfort, but I am not sure about the update. Mr Fischer.

Mr Fischer: The program is on schedule to be completed. It is a four-year program. We have finished two years. I believe 165 schools are planned as part of stage 2, and work is underway at the majority of those at the moment. The intention is that the work that has been identified this year will be finished for the start of 2014.

[12.10 pm]

Hon BRIAN ELLIS: All my questions have been asked, so I am at the end. I would like to follow up on the question asked by Hon Liz Behjat regarding page 274 of the *Budget Statements*. Regarding the special considerations by small country school principals, I want to know how this is going to work. Are any extra resources going to be provided to those schools? The reason I ask the question is that I am a little concerned that we may be getting a two-tiered year 7. How far behind could those year 7s be when actually do go to high school?

Hon PETER COLLIER: They will still be funded as primary school students if they make a conscious decision to stay at their primary school. It is done on a case-by-case basis. A school cannot be classified as a non-participant. The parents will make a determination as to whether they want the child to go to secondary school or not. If he stays at the primary school, he will still get that level of education at that primary school, but he will not be funded as a secondary student.

Hon BRIAN ELLIS: So it is case-by-case for students, not schools.

Hon PETER COLLIER: A whole school cannot be exempt; it is case by case, because in most instances virtually all students will go into year 7. There are some specific instances in some of

those regions—I think you came with me, actually—where some of those families feel very passionately about it and they want the children stay at those schools, and they will be given the opportunity to do so.

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: I have a question about the asset investment program, and particularly I want to know whether the Department of Education has prepared any briefings, reports or reviews for the minister regarding the current and future structure and/or performance of secondary education in the wider Fremantle area. As you know, it has been flagged that South Fremantle Senior High School —

Hon PETER COLLIER: I would love to talk about that; it is very important to me. We are going to do some good things in Freo, I will tell you right now. I have had some briefing notes, yes. At the moment, I tell you this now: there is a real issue in Fremantle with education with Hamilton Hill, South Fremantle and the state-of-the-art John Curtin. They all want something done. I am going there with the Premier in a month or so to have a discussion with the community, as it were—the education committee and the community at large. There are a couple of groups there that quite legitimately emerged and a couple of them have been to see me. We still have a long way to go, but I want to make sure that we still maintain and expand John Curtin as a state-of-the-art school, which it is and will continue to be. South Fremantle is a magnificent structure, but unfortunately it is bleeding in terms of student numbers et cetera, and it is the same with Hamilton Hill. We will have a look at what we could do that would provide the best educational outcomes for people in the Fremantle area. I will not pre-empt anything, but suffice it to say, we will need to rationalise to a degree. Whether that means closing one of the schools is something that we will look at. We will talk with the community at large. I would like to think that certainly within this term of government, we will have made two big decisions in terms of metropolitan education. One will be in Fremantle, in terms of making sure we do what is right for that area, which is desperately in need, and the other will be in Armadale.

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: Would you provide me with those reports and briefings that have been prepared so far?

Hon PETER COLLIER: There is no report. I can provide you with whatever I have got.

[Supplementary Information No A14.]

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: I have a related question. In Ferndale, there is a primary school oval that I believe is being redeveloped for housing. Was that oval in Ferndale sold?

Hon PETER COLLIER: In Ferndale?

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: The primary school in Ferndale, yes.

Hon PETER COLLIER: What was the issue, sorry?

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: It is a primary school oval and I believe it is being redeveloped by the Department of Housing. I wonder whether any school properties are either flagged for sale or have been identified for sale or have been sold in this last financial year or even in the previous financial years to 2009.

The CHAIR: Are you talking about Ferndale or more generally?

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: It is clear that the minister is not aware of the Ferndale oval, so I just wonder whether he could provide me with further information about Ferndale in particular, and any other school ovals. In your budget you only have new schools; you do not have anything for any sale of land or any revenue that might be gained from the sale of land on school grounds. I know this is a big issue in my region and probably throughout the state.

Hon PETER COLLIER: I am not aware of any of it, and by looking at the shaking of heads around me, I do not think my advisers are. We will take that question on notice and see whether there is anything we can provide for you.

The CHAIR: That will be sale of the school land in the last 12 months.

[*Supplementary Information No A15.*]

Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE: I just follow on from a question asked by Hon Adele Farina on budget paper No 2, page 282, “Drawdowns from Royalties for Regions Fund”, with estimated expenditure of \$67.97 million. In budget paper No 3, on page 228, the regional schools initiative has a total expenditure of \$75.4 million. Is there a reason that there perhaps would be a discrepancy between those two figures or is some aspect of the regional schools initiative not being delivered by the department?

Mr Fischer: I do not have all the details in front of me. The \$67.97 million relates to capital works. There are other moneys given to education for specific programs funded by royalties for regions, and I believe Foodbank is one of those. There are one or two others; I do not have the details, but they would be available. I think Mr Hale might have those.

Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE: Obviously there are three components to the regional schools initiative: the regional schools plan, the relocation of year 7 students and the regional residential college upgrades. I assume the residential college upgrades are capital works.

Mr Fischer: That would be in the country hostels budget, not in the education budget.

The CHAIR: That is the next session.

Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE: We already have a supplementary question on what the \$67.97 million in drawdown from royalty regions funds is, do we not?

The CHAIR: Just to be on the safe side, if you want that, shall we ask for it again?

Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE: Yes, please.

[*Supplementary Information No A16.*]

Hon SUE ELLERY: I have two areas I want to canvas. One, how many teaching FTEs are currently on fixed-term contracts? While you are looking, how many other school staff by category are on fixed-term contracts currently as well?

Hon PETER COLLIER: It is 21 per cent who are on fixed-term contracts.

Hon SUE ELLERY: How many is that? Seriously, you do not have a number? I can do the maths as well, but you would think you would have a number.

Hon PETER COLLIER: I will get that for you right now.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Thank you. Everyone is sitting there with their calculators! How many school staff, by category, are on fixed-term contracts?

Hon PETER COLLIER: Are you talking about non-teachers?

Hon SUE ELLERY: Yes.

Hon PETER COLLIER: We will have to take that on notice. I will just explain that that changes on a day-to-day basis.

[*Supplementary Information No A17.*]

Hon SUE ELLERY: My other question is in relation to the new funding model. What is the time line to finalise the new funding model, given that it is due to commence in five terms—at the beginning of 2015?

[12.20 pm]

Hon PETER COLLIER: It is around 4 400 teachers on contract, to answer your question. The new funding model comes into place in 2015, not 2014. So that is the time line. That is when it will be introduced.

Hon SUE ELLERY: I understand that is when it will come into operation, but in order for schools to prepare, and given the announcement you made when you did your media release—you said that your department is working immediately on the new model—schools will have to know what that new model is well in advance of February 2015. So when do you anticipate that that work will be done?

Hon PETER COLLIER: As I said, in terms of budgeting and in terms of information to schools, it will be, I would imagine, provided early next year.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Early in 2014?

Hon PETER COLLIER: Yes.

Hon SUE ELLERY: So they will not have to wait until the budget, presuming the budget is in May.

Hon PETER COLLIER: No.

Hon SUE ELLERY: My other question is: following up the question about closures of schools or changes to schools, are there any plans to close any schools in the Kimberley?

Hon PETER COLLIER: No, I have not been given any advice to that effect at this stage, but, as I said, again that is a fluid thing, so we will do it on a case-by-case basis, and it depends on student numbers. But I have just been informed, as far as the Kimberley is concerned, no.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Okay. My last one is: the Premier announced recently that the student-to-teacher ratio will increase from 13.15 students per teacher in 2013 to 13.53 in 2014. How was that ratio calculated? Did it include students in remote schools and special ed schools, and students enrolled in a School of the Air?

Hon PETER COLLIER: The figures the Premier was referring to are based upon the total number of teachers comparative to the total number of students—the ratios.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Across the whole spectrum?

Hon PETER COLLIER: Yes.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Including remotes, special ed —

Hon PETER COLLIER: Including everyone, yes.

The CHAIR: Thank you, members. Apologies that not everyone got to ask as many questions as they liked. We will certainly have to try to look at that in future years as a committee.

The committee will forward any additional questions it has to the department via the minister in writing in the next couple of days, together with a transcript of evidence, which includes the questions you have taken on notice. Responses to these questions will be requested within 10 working days of receipt of the questions, noting that those other matters where you cannot, you will provide later; but where you can, you will hopefully provide them within the 10 days. Should you be unable to meet this due date, please advise the committee in writing as soon as possible before the due date. The advice is to include specific reasons as to why the due date cannot be met. If members have any unasked questions, I ask you to submit these to the committee clerk at the close of the hearing. On behalf of the committee, I thank everyone for their attendance today.

Hearing concluded at 12.23 pm
