

Dr Elizabeth Constable; Chairman; Mr Paul Papalia; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Frank Alban; Mr Andrew Waddell;
Ms Andrea Mitchell; Mr Peter Abetz; Mr David Templeman; Mr John Kobelke; Mr Peter Watson; Mr Tony
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Division 35: Education, \$3 740 237 000 —

Mr M.W. Sutherland, Chairman.

Dr E. Constable, Minister for Education.

Ms S. O'Neill, Director General.

Mr J.W. Leaf, Deputy Director General, Finance and Administration.

Mr D. Axworthy, Deputy Director General, Schools.

Mr C.W. Gillam, Executive Director, Workforce.

Mr B. Roach, Deputy Chief Finance Officer.

Mr J. Fischer, Executive Director, Infrastructure.

Mr L.R. Hale, Acting Executive Director, Statewide Planning and Delivery.

Ms J. Healy, Executive Director, Statewide Services.

Mr M. Trifunovic, Director, Facilities Program Delivery.

Mr P. Titmanis, Executive Director, Innovation, Performance and Research.

Mr G. Hewitt, Acting Executive Director, Office of Early Childhood Development and Learning.

Mr J. Lee, Chief of Staff, Office of the Minister for Education.

Ms J. Taggart, Principal Policy Adviser, Office of the Minister for Education.

The CHAIRMAN: This estimates committee will be reported by Hansard staff. The daily proof *Hansard* will be published at 9.00 am tomorrow.

It is the intention of the Chair to ensure that as many questions as possible are asked and answered and that both questions and answers are short and to the point. The estimates committee's consideration of the estimates will be restricted to discussion of those items for which a vote of money is proposed in the consolidated account. Questions must be clearly related to a page number, item program or amount in the current division. It will greatly assist Hansard if members can give these details in preface to their question.

The minister may agree to provide supplementary information to the committee, rather than asking that the question be put on notice for the next sitting week. I ask the minister to clearly indicate what supplementary information she agrees to provide and I will then allocate a reference number. If supplementary information is to be provided, I seek the minister's cooperation in ensuring that it is delivered to the committee clerk by Friday, 8 June 2012. I caution members that if a minister asks that a matter be put on notice, it is up to the member to lodge the question on notice with the Clerk's office.

I now ask the minister to introduce her advisers to the committee. We have a set of advisers here bigger than a Cecil B. DeMille production. What we can perhaps do is when advisers identify themselves, they can put their hand up so that the Hansard people can follow, and they should also speak loudly so that we can get their names. The minister has done the list for us.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: We are organised!

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much, minister. That is a very big help.

[Witnesses introduced.]

The CHAIRMAN: I give the call to the member for Warnbro.

Mr P. PAPALIA: On page 395 of budget paper No 2, I refer to the top dot point, "Independent Public Schools". Does the minister stand by the Premier's aggressive and personal attack on the principal of the independent public school John Curtin College of the Arts made in Parliament last Thursday?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: Mr Chairman, I do not think that is part of what is in that dot point at all.

The CHAIRMAN: It is up to you, minister. You do not have to answer the question if you do not want to.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I was not here on that Thursday because I was away ill, so I have no answer to the question.

Mr P. PAPALIA: The dot point states —

The Independent Public Schools initiative provides schools with the autonomy and flexibility to make decisions that meet the specific needs of their students ...

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The letter that the Premier took offence to and attacked the principal over alerted parents to health and safety issues at John Curtin College of the Arts. Is the minister aware of those health and safety issues? Has she done anything about it since the issue was raised and covered extensively in the media last Thursday?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I have certainly asked the director general and others questions about that, and I will get them to answer about that. But I understand there are no outstanding occupational health and safety issues. They are recorded in certain ways, and I will ask the director general and other members of the department to answer the question.

Ms S. O'Neill: There are no outstanding WorkSafe issues at the school. The school also, as does every other school, undertakes a risk management profile. In its risk management profile, the school principal and the school indicate the level of risk of any issues at the school, and they have also indicated that those risks are being managed at the school site. For 2012, their risk register has yet to be submitted. In terms of health and safety issues, there are no outstanding health and safety issues at the school that have been recorded with us and that are not being managed accordingly.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Does the minister think it was appropriate for the principal of an independent public school to write to the parents of his students about his concerns about health and safety issues at the school and also about inequitable access to suitable educational resources, relating specifically to what independent public school principals are able to do?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: It is always appropriate for a principal to communicate with their school community. I think in this case, as I understand it, there was a political interpretation placed on that letter and there were political aspects of the letter that the Premier took umbrage with.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Has the minister read the letter?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I have seen the letter.

Mr P. PAPALIA: When the minister says that she thinks there is a political tone to the letter, what is she saying? Which bit is political that she does not like?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I do not have the letter in front of me. A tone is not necessarily a few words in a letter. It was interpreted as having a political tone.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Does the department have a list of pre-1980s high schools with a revitalisation program that is prioritised?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: We have, at my request some months ago—quite some time ago—and work has been done in the department on future planning for modernisation of older high schools. I am sure that everyone in this chamber would agree that when we compare the wonderful new schools that have been built, such as Governor Stirling Senior High School being rebuilt and others, those schools are absolutely state of the art and outstanding, and when we go to older schools, we see quite a different picture, which is not surprising.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Is there a list —

Dr E. CONSTABLE: Can I finish my answer?

The CHAIRMAN: Just wait. Right, minister.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: Thank you. What I have put in place, and the department has been working on, is looking firstly at all pre-1980s high schools, and the department has since added to that list the pre-1990 high schools as well. That work is a work in progress. It is not completed, so there is no prioritisation. Once all the work has been done of auditing and master planning for those older schools, some priorities will be set. The first master plan that was actually completed was for Willetton Senior High School.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I have a further question.

The CHAIRMAN: Is this on the same thing, because the member for West Swan wants to ask a question?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: No; it is okay.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I just wanted to pursue this matter, based on what the minister just said.

The CHAIRMAN: Okay.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I have a newsletter from Willetton —

Dr E. CONSTABLE: Can I just ask the member: as well as an interest, being the shadow minister in this area, does the member have a child at John Curtin?

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Mr P. PAPALIA: Yes.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: Because I think that is an interest that should be declared.

Mr P. PAPALIA: In what way?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: As a parent, you have an extra interest as well.

The CHAIRMAN: All right. Now we have ascertained that the member has a child —

Mr P. PAPALIA: That is pretty interesting, noting the Premier's sensitivity with regard to families. But I have never made that a secret.

The CHAIRMAN: That is all right.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I have a further question.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: The member received the letter as a parent; that is all.

[9.10 am]

The CHAIRMAN: Let us just proceed now. Member for Warnbro, you have one more question and then I will give the call to the member for West Swan.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Why have I got one more question?

The CHAIRMAN: You can have one more question on this matter. You seemed to be going onto other things.

Mr P. PAPALIA: This is all related. I did not change the subject; the minister did.

The CHAIRMAN: All right. Now just ask the question and get back to it.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I have a newsletter from Willetton Senior High School that was released in January this year —

Dr E. CONSTABLE: Which dot point does the member's question refer to?

Mr P. PAPALIA: The one that the minister just referred to when she said that there was not a prioritised list of pre-1980 high schools. The newsletter states —

The Minister for Education confirmed that the master plan for the school will be part of the Department of Education's pre-1980 secondary schools revitalisation proposal ...

Is there a pre-1980 secondary schools revitalisation proposal and was John Curtin College of the Arts on that list above Willetton Senior High School?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I think from what the member read, that it was future tense—"will be part of".

Mr P. PAPALIA: Is that a yes or a no?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: The process for a modernisation program is ongoing for 35 secondary schools in Western Australia.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Was John Curtin number one on the list?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: There has never been a number one on the list.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Can we have the list?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: It is not finalised; it is a work in progress and has been for many months. I would think that it will take many more months to complete it. It is a huge amount of work to provide master plans for 35 schools.

Mr P. PAPALIA: So the minister was able to commit \$80 million to Willetton Senior High School without having a finalised list, but she cannot provide me with a list now?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: Let us get this straight: \$32.5 million has been committed for Willetton Senior High School, and with —

Mr P. PAPALIA: The minister's media release talked about \$80 million!

The CHAIRMAN: Just let the minister finish, please.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: And over a period of years, which I imagine will be nine or 10 years, to complete the master plan —

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Mr P. PAPALIA: I do not think that was in the media release—it was \$80 million.

The CHAIRMAN: Member! Can you let the minister finish, and then we will try to make some progress. Can the minister continue, please?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: All the master plans need to be finished before there can be a completed list that the member is asking for. There is no list that the member is asking for.

Mr P. PAPALIA: How long will the list take to complete, noting that year 7 students are moving to high school in 2015?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: This is not related to moving year 7 students to high school; that is another issue altogether. This is about the modernisation of existing schools.

Mr P. PAPALIA: If there is no list, how did the minister choose Willetton Senior High School?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: Willetton Senior High School is really very interesting. Willetton is, as the member knows, an old school. It is the biggest senior high school in the state. It has 24 transportable buildings and it has had them for a long time. It is a huge school with 1 700 to 1 800 students. Therefore, it was seen to have particular needs that no other older secondary school in the state actually has, and it has been looked at in those terms.

I will just go back a bit, because I do not think that we can look at Willetton Senior High School in isolation from a whole lot of other schools. The previous government did the same thing—although a lot has happened in the past three and a half years—with an emphasis on looking at older schools and working on them. Therefore, this is not new. I will list the needs of some other older schools. Work on Governor Stirling Senior High School is almost complete—it will be completed for the beginning of next year—and the cost of that is \$63 million. It has been bowled over and rebuilt on a very difficult small site in Midland. Applecross Senior High School is another old school; I think it opened in the same year as Governor Stirling Senior High School. It has been partly rebuilt and partly restored and refurbished, because we do not need to knock down every building in an old school to make it good. The cost of that is \$56 million. A lot of work has been done on Rossmoyne Senior High School. There is \$30 million for Dongara District High School. Exmouth District High School has had almost a complete rebuild. Some upgrading of Bullsbrook District High School happened under Labor and the second stage has happened under this government. There has been work on a K–12 school at Merredin because of the old stock that was there; two primary schools and the senior high school are combined on one site. Federal money as well as some state money is going into Kununurra. The first stage of redevelopment at Karratha Senior High School happened under the previous government and the second stage of \$46 million is happening now. Science labs have been redone at 18 schools. A large amount of money has been spent on design and technology upgrades. A long list of schools in country areas have received royalties for regions infrastructure funding. Work is being done on Hedland Senior High School at the moment. There has also been a rebuild of Harvey agricultural college, and so the list goes on.

The same process that the previous government used is now being used to determine the school that most needs work and that determination was Willetton Senior High School. I think that when the member looks at the fact that 24 transportable buildings have been on that site for a long time and it is a very large school, he will realise that this school needed work done on it before any other school. In this budget there is \$32.5 million committed to renew that school, with a view that overall it will probably cost an estimated \$80 million for new buildings and other work.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Has the minister seen the letter, which has the school letterhead, sent by the chair of the Willetton Senior High School board to all parents with the minister’s media release attached? The chair’s letter states —

We are excited to correspond with you about the recent announcement by our Premier concerning the rebuild of our school. A sum of \$80 million over a number of years will ensure that Willetton students can receive their education ...

Mr P. ABETZ: Over a number of years!

Mr F.A. ALBAN: That is over a number of years!

Dr E. CONSTABLE: That is over a number of years.

Mr P. PAPALIA: The minister’s media release is entitled, “State Budget 2012–13: Building the State—\$80million redevelopment for Willetton SHS”.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: The budget papers in front of the member —

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Mr P. PAPALIA: That is the minister's media release that was sent to every parent at the school.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: The budget papers in front of the member have \$32.5 million committed to the first stage. It is estimated that full restoration of the school will cost \$80 million. That \$80 million does not appear in the budget papers. Therefore, both are correct.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Does the minister think that it is hypocritical of the Premier to attack the principal of John Curtin College of the Arts for raising health and safety issues at his school and not say anything about the Willetton Senior High School board chair sending every parent not only a letter, using the school letterhead, but also the minister's media release?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: A misleading media release!

Mr P. PAPALIA: A misleading media release!

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I am not going to pass an opinion on this question.

The CHAIRMAN: That is your prerogative.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: But can I point out that the principal of a school is an employee of the department and therefore of the state, but the chair of a school board is not an employee.

Mr P. PAPALIA: It is an independent public school. There are a lot of independents there!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I will first say, what an extraordinary attack, minister, that was in relation to the member for Warnbro's son. I hope that she asks every member in this —

The CHAIRMAN: Just hold it a minute. This is not an opportunity to make statements, member for West Swan. If you want to ask a question, ask a question. Tell us what page and what line you refer to and ask the question.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I refer to the line item "Relocation of Year 7s to Secondary Schools" under "New Works" on page 402. What is the estimated total cost—not the amount in the budget—of all the upgrades and additions needed to schools around the state to accommodate year 7 students going to high schools?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: We have before us the budget for the coming year. What is in the budget—which is what we will deal with today, I imagine—is that 29 schools will require additional classroom accommodation to cater for year 7 students —

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Sorry, just on those 29 schools, some of them are new schools being built—is that correct?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: Yes, because when they were planned, the decision about year 7 students had not been made.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: But what I am asking—I know what is in the budget—is whether there is a total cost for the additions and improvements required at high schools around the state to accommodate the year 7 move.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: Is the member talking about capital works? Is that the member's question?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Yes.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: The total cost of the capital works is \$265 million.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I know, but has the minister been given information about the total cost of upgrading high schools around the state to accommodate the year 7 move?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I have just given the member the answer; it is \$265 million.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: But that is for 29 schools.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: Twenty-nine schools require works.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: So no other school requires works?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I will ask officers of the department to comment on this, but if the member looks at the report done in February 2007, under the previous government, she will see that it stated that 24 schools required work.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Yes, but the government is building more schools, so that is why 29 schools require works. Does the minister know what I mean? There are probably five new schools, which make that up to 29.

[9.20 am]

Dr E. CONSTABLE: And in those intervening years a lot of work has been done on schools, and there have been demographic shifts and other changes.

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Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Sure; but the estimate was \$800 million. That is why I want to know, at the time —

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I presume the member has read that report; it is a pretty soft report. That report, if the member looks at the capital works, came to \$156 million that could be accounted for, and then there was a soft prediction that capital works would be somewhere between \$200 million and \$250 million.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I am asking whether the minister has been provided current advice of any additional costs above those in this budget.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: No, I have not.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: No?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I will ask Mr Fischer to comment on that, given that his position is infrastructure.

Mr J. Fischer: The only advice we provided is for the additional work to accommodate the students, and that is included in the \$265 million.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Are there any other additional costs outside what —

Dr E. CONSTABLE: The member has to ask the question through me.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Through the minister: are there any other additional costs?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: Is the member asking about capital costs?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Other costs, including —

Dr E. CONSTABLE: The member was asking about capital before; we moved from capital.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I was asking about capital; I am now asking about other costs.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: Of course there are other costs; there are costs, for instance, of retraining teachers and project coordination. So, the additional costs to the department—in this budget only—are \$41.35 million, and that includes \$5.39 million over four years for project coordination, which is really important. There will be people dedicated to the capital works program and people dedicated to working with schools to ensure that they are ready and prepared with their transition programs for the year 7s and other aspects of transition. They will be working directly with schools. That is the management team, and that is extremely important. An allocation of \$22.42 million has been made for the retraining of primary teachers as secondary teachers. We know that is an issue; that has always been an issue. That is going to be every important. That \$22.42 million to allow 525 teachers to be retrained is a conservative number, and I would expect that more people who will be trained will be covered by that sum of money. Other funding has been allocated for transport. There will be more children to move, and we need more buses to do it.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: In relation to the other schools—not the 29 that have been listed—are any additional costs required at those schools?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: What costs is the member talking about? Is the member back to capital costs?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Back to capital.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: As Mr Fischer said and as I have said, 29 schools have been identified as needing capital works.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: So the other schools —

Dr E. CONSTABLE: The rest have sufficient accommodation, I am assured. The work and analysis that has been done has shown that those schools have sufficient accommodation to accommodate year 7s.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: So, there will be no changes to the composition of the classrooms or the fit-out—nothing like that?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: What does the member mean by that question?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I am just asking because there might be additional rooms there, but will any changes need to be made to accommodate year 7s for particular classes? That is what I am asking. Are there any other costs required at schools other than those 29 schools that need to be funded?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: No, but I will ask the director general to comment.

Ms S. O'Neill: The costs that have been outlined are the costs that have been provided so that year 7s can make that transition in every school site. Obviously, every single year—year by year, school by school—they will

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make decisions about programs and what classrooms they run and the composition of those classrooms. That is an ordinary, operational decision that a principal would make year by year, and we would expect them to make them also with the year 7s coming into schools. The costs the minister provided for the member is the outline of the cost of year 7s moving into secondary locations.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: There are a lot of schools in this state that are well below capacity; there are schools of 450, 500, 550 students that were built for hundreds more. Those schools can accommodate year 7s without any problem at all.

Mr P. PAPALIA: There are the 29 schools that will receive additional infrastructure to accommodate year 7s that the minister has released the names of, and there is a cohort of schools that have fewer enrolments than capacity, but then there is another lot of schools that are not in that position. What is the plan for schools other than the 29 the minister has announced that will receive funding for infrastructure?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: Which schools is the member talking about?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I do not know—the minister is the one with the plan. There are 29 that have been announced. How many high schools are there—92? What is going to happen with the rest of them?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I will ask the director general to answer.

The CHAIRMAN: Member for Warnbro, I thought that had been answered quite clearly.

Mr P. PAPALIA: No, it has not. I am talking about the plan —

The CHAIRMAN: The minister said there were 29, and she gave the figure that was going to be spent.

Mr P. PAPALIA: You are not the minister; I am asking the minister!

The CHAIRMAN: I am allocating the question. Member for Swan Hills —

Mr P. PAPALIA: I will ask again in a minute.

The CHAIRMAN: You can ask again, but now we are going to the member for Swan Hills.

Mr F.A. ALBAN: I refer to the last line of page 398 of budget paper No 2, regarding the rollout of playground equipment.

Mr P. PAPALIA: That is incredible! You are not the minister!

The CHAIRMAN: Yes, I know; I am the Chairman.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I will ask the minister.

The CHAIRMAN: Do not speak across the member for Swan Hills.

Mr F.A. ALBAN: I ask this question about one of my schools, Herne Hill Primary School, which still has 30-year-old copper logs in its playground. Will the minister update the house on the rollout of this program and advise of the benefits to schools of providing modern playground equipment?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I thank the member for this question. This has been, I think, a very important program. Although it is small in terms of the amount of money involved when we look at our whole budget, it is very important for the schools that have received the funding. It has been embraced by many schools, and, so far, 50 schools have benefited from the program. The state committed \$2 million in the 2011–12 budget, which was to be spread over four years. It was so popular that we, in fact, concertinaed that down, and rather than \$500 000 in the first year, \$1 million was allocated to the 50 schools. Funding of \$1 million remains, and a further \$4 million has been allocated over the next four years to assist primary schools to develop their playground equipment.

This is particularly important for older primary schools such as the one the member mentioned, which was Middle Swan, was it?

Mr F.A. ALBAN: Yes.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: Middle Swan Primary School.

It is important for schools in more disadvantaged areas. Although they have funds in their school grants that they can put aside for the replacement of playground equipment, and parents and citizens associations often contribute to those sorts of projects, this funding is really to assist those schools that struggle to find those extra funds. So far, 50 schools have benefited. The program, as I said, targets low socioeconomic-area schools that have not had the capacity to replace their old equipment. It is really important for children to have modern playground equipment to provide them opportunities for physical fitness, creative play, the development of their

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gross motor skills, and the development of strength and so on—in fact, to have fun. A lot of research has been done on the impact of well-designed playground equipment that provides children with fun and stimulating experiences. This funding really assists schools to develop their capacity to provide good playground equipment, and we are now extending this to schools being able to apply for sun shelter as well; in the first year that was not the case. A lot of schools are looking for shelter so that in the hot weather children can continue to play on that playground equipment.

Mr F.A. ALBAN: Would the minister consider that 30-year-old copper logs would have some priority under this scheme?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I would hope so; the member has made a really good pitch! When the applications come in, they are assessed by Mr Fischer's area, and I am sure that if an application comes in, he will remember the member's question.

Mr P. PAPALIA: With respect to that scheme, minister, of the primary schools that have contracted for the delivery of new playgrounds, how many have gone 12 months beyond the delivery and installation date?

[9.30 am]

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I do not know the answer to the member's question, even if it is a valid question. I understand that the schools get the grant of up to \$20 000 and then they go out and decide what playground equipment they require. That will depend on what is working well in the school, what else they have, and what they want to do; whether it is for older or younger children—it will vary. It is for the schools to decide the playground equipment that they want.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Does the Department of Education tell them which contractors they can use?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I have no idea; I do not have anything to do with contractors. I will ask Mr Fischer to answer the question.

Mr J. FISCHER: For work of that amount, they have to go through a normal tender process, and if there is a common use contract to provide equipment, they would use that source, but they are obliged to follow state procurement rules.

Mr P. ABETZ: Sorry; I cannot hear.

The CHAIRMAN: Could Mr Fischer repeat that?

Mr J. FISCHER: To manage that amount of \$20 000 they would have to follow state procurement rules, so if there is a common use contract, they would need to source that; otherwise they would go out for tenders.

Mr P. PAPALIA: For the minister's information, I ask that question because I am aware that there are a number of schools that have gone six to 12 months with their playgrounds ripped up, waiting for these contractors to complete their task.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: That has not been reported to me, and I do not know whether it has been reported to the department, but if it has, I am sure the department will follow up on it as it is able to. I understand that it is not this project or this particular item where the schools apply and get up to \$20 000; I understand that in some of the Building the Education Revolution projects there are or have been delays. I will ask Mr Fischer to comment on that.

Mr P. PAPALIA: No, the ones I was referring to came under this.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: That is news to me.

Mr A.J. WADDELL: I refer to the last dot point on page 394, which refers to year 7 students in secondary settings. As the minister is interested in declaring interests, I declare an interest: I went to Forrestfield Senior High School, which is now the Darling Range Sports College, in my electorate. I have a question in relation to the specialist programs that it currently offers. There was a story in *The West Australian* a few weeks ago that indicated that, as a result of the year 7 roll-in, schools will need to restrict their intake to their local geographic region. Has any modelling been done on what impact this will have on schools with specialist programs, such as the Darling Range Sports College, which currently draws students from more than 40 schools throughout the metropolitan area?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I thank the member for the question. A lot of imagination seems to have been involved in all of this. There has been no change to the enrolment policy, if that is the member's question—no change at all. It is the same enrolment policy as was in place under the previous government and when the act was passed in the 1990s. I will ask the director general to give the member some detail on enrolment policy in a moment. The enrolment policy stands as is and, of course, schools are obliged under the act and the regulations to first enrol

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students in the local intake area. That is the guarantee in the legislation. After that, schools are able to offer places to students from outside the area, and there is a cut-off date—I think it is 3 August—and places should not be offered before 3 August, every year, to students outside the area. Nothing has changed in terms of enrolment policy. I think people have taken a comment in *The West Australian* and magnified it into something that is actually not the case. I will ask the director general to elaborate.

Ms S. O'Neill: Specialist programs are an important part of the fabric of public schools, and the one that the member referred to is included in that. Under the School Education Act Regulations 2000 and the associated enrolment policy, specialist programs are allowed to take students from out of boundary. The policy and regulations have been in place for quite some time and nothing has changed. We sent a memo to schools on 4 April to say that they should follow the enrolment policy. The enrolment policy is that they must take students from their local intake area, which has always been the case, and when they have spare accommodation they can then consider, if they offer an approved specialist program, taking in students from outside the area. That has always been the case and remains the case. The memo reminded principals that they need to plan for the future intake of year 7s and to make sure they meet their responsibilities under the legislation and the policy, which have not changed at all. Principals were again reminded of that in discussions last week. There has been no change to specialist programs and there is no intention to change specialist programs. Schools can have specialist programs now and into the future if they meet the requirement to have spare capacity to be able to accommodate any out-of-boundary students. There is no change.

Mr A.J. WADDELL: That is really the crux of the problem, though. The minister has not allocated any funds for additional works at the majority of high schools throughout Western Australia to accommodate the year 7 intake; she has allocated funds only for the schools listed in the budget, and Darling Range Sports College is not one of those schools. The minister is assuming that there is capacity in that school today to take on the year 7s who will move into it in 2015; surely those year 7s who are currently eligible to enrol in Darling Range Sports College will consume a fair proportion of the additional capacity that that school currently uses to bring students into its specialist programs from out of boundary. Will that not have the effect of essentially destroying those specialist programs? It will be using all its capacity for local students, which means that it will not be able to attract students from out of boundary to its specialist programs.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: There is no evidence to support what the member is saying at all. The member said that programs will be destroyed; there is no evidence for that at all.

Mr A.J. WADDELL: They will have no capacity to take students from out of boundary if they have to use all their current capacity for local students.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: It is just the member's conjecture that it will have no capacity. I am going to ask the director general to talk about the enrolment audit that goes alongside this, and I think that will set the member's mind at rest.

Ms S. O'Neill: We are undertaking an enrolment audit in all secondary schools to do exactly as the member said—to check their capacity so that we can confirm schools' capacity. Our view is that there will be a small handful of schools that we will need to talk to directly, and I reassured principals just last week that there will be case-by-case discussions with those individual principals. I said to all secondary principals that, having completed the enrolment audit—we are currently finalising it—if the audit shows that there is going to be some enrolment pressure in terms of local intake and specialist programs, we will come and speak to the small handful of principals in the four or five schools where we think things will be tight, and we will work with them to find some solutions to any problems that arise. That will include the school that the member referred to, if any such problems arise there. It is not a blanket approach; it is a case-by-case approach, and we will work with individual schools to provide them with assistance.

Mr A.J. WADDELL: Can schools with specialist programs anticipate being given additional capacity to accommodate out-of-boundary students? For example, if there is a student in Belmont who wishes to enrol in the specialist sporting program at Darling Range Sports College, but students in High Wycombe and Forrestfield are taking up the full capacity there, will the student from Belmont be disadvantaged by being denied a place in the specialist program of choice as a result of the year 7 intake?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I think the member is asking us to guess a solution before the work has been done. The audit has to be done and the work has to be done. The member said that Darling Range Sports College was not receiving any capital works; I query that. I have just been sent a note that says that Darling Range is receiving additional accommodation, so the example the member is giving —

Mr P. PAPALIA: It is not on the list of 29 schools.

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Dr E. CONSTABLE: I have the list here; let me read the list to members. Applecross Senior High School; Ashdale Secondary College; Australind Senior High School; Baldivis High School; Banksia Grove High School; Bunbury Senior High School —

Mr A.J. WADDELL: Yes, I take the correction, minister.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: — Broome Senior High School; Butler Secondary College; Byford Senior High School; Canning Vale College; Cape Naturaliste College; Carine Senior High School; Churchlands Senior High School; Comet Bay College; and, believe it or not, the next one is Darling Range Sports College.

Mr A.J. WADDELL: I thank the minister very much, and I take the correction. I used Darling Range Sports College as an example simply because it is a local school in my electorate; one could equally make the same point about Kent Street Senior High School or any other school with a specialist program.

[9.40 am]

Mr P. PAPALIA: I have a further question, minister, in relation to that. Other than the 29 schools that are on that list, half of which the minister just read out, how many of the other—the vast majority—of high schools in the state have the capacity right now to accommodate an entire cohort of year 7s in 2015?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I am assured, from the work that has been done, that all of the others have that capacity.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Every other school?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: That is what I have been assured by the department.

Mr P. PAPALIA: So every other high school in the state is 100 or so short in number?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I have been assured that they can accommodate them. This is no different from some of the early work that was done under the previous government to see whether year 7s would go in—it is a very similar result; and, in the meantime, a lot of work has been done.

Mr P. PAPALIA: The minister announced it in December, and now she is running around trying to make a plan.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I am sorry. What was that question?

Mr P. PAPALIA: On 8 December, the minister made the announcement, and now the minister is saying that she is doing an audit. What other formal consultation was done with principals' associations, with schools, with P&Cs, with WACSSO?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I first raised this issue in 2009.

Mr P. PAPALIA: The minister announced it on 8 December. What other formal consultation had been done prior to that date?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: From the time that I announced it, there was a good two and a half years of discussion in hundreds of schools that I visited; meetings —

Mr P. PAPALIA: What—at morning tea?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: Proper sit-down meetings with people, discussing the issue.

Mr P. PAPALIA: When, and where?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: In schools. I add to that that I met on a number of occasions with the professional organisations of principals as well.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I have a question about the enrolment audit that the minister said is about to be undertaken.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I understand from the director general that it is underway.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: In relation to that, how can the minister be so sure about the enrolment numbers and all the other issues about schools, other than the 29, if the department is just about to undertake the enrolment audit?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: An initial audit has been done. Schools are dynamic situations; numbers change all the time. So this is a further audit of schools to drill down and see whether there are changes. Demographic changes are happening quite quickly in Western Australia at the moment with the movement of population. So an initial audit was done in order to determine for this budget —

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: When was that undertaken?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: Over a period of time up until this budget—over the last 12 months.

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Ms R. SAFFIOTI: When will the data be ready from the next one?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I will have to ask the director general, because it is something that is in train at the moment. This will be a continuing process, and it is a process that we go through all the time anyway for schools, to monitor enrolments to see where more schools need to be built and so on. It is a dynamic situation; it is developing all the time with enrolments in our schools. Enrolments in the last year went up by 7 000, which was more than was anticipated, because the growth of Western Australia, as we all know, is happening at a great pace, with people moving into the state at a great pace. So this is a continuing thing, not just for year 7s, but for all schools, to monitor, for statewide planning, enrolments and demographic changes.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The question was: when will the enrolment audits be completed?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I am told that the department hopes to have them completed by early next term.

Ms A.R. MITCHELL: I refer to page 400 and the eighth line from the bottom regarding the allocation of \$2 million for electronic whiteboards. Many P&Cs have already installed these whiteboards, and they seem to be well received. What are the educational benefits of these learning tools for students?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: This is, again, a very important question, because it goes to the heart of the modern school and technology. But it also highlights another small, but very important, program that was introduced last year into the budget. In the 2011–12 budget, we announced \$4 million over four years for interactive whiteboards in primary schools in particular, and this has been extremely popular. What happens is that when we build a new primary school, it is standard now for each classroom to have an interactive whiteboard; it is part of modern teaching and learning. So, again to look at our older schools and make sure that they can offer equally the technology that is in our new schools, this program was put in place. Schools in their grants get funding for this sort of minor work. I think an interactive whiteboard costs \$4 000 or \$5 000. But we wanted to speed that up for those schools, particularly in disadvantaged areas, that might find it harder to find the funds to do this. The program was so popular that it is being delivered over two financial years rather than four so that schools can get the benefits. The first \$2 million has been expended already, and the final \$2 million will be spent in 2012–13. We are targeting schools particularly in lower socioeconomic areas. In the first year, 2011–12, at least 276 schools have benefited from the provision of this funding towards whiteboards.

The technology in this area is really important for the modern classroom. Any one of us who has been to a primary school classroom and has seen a group of children attending in a way that I think teachers would marvel at, working as a group and then individually, would find it quite extraordinary. The technology facilitates collaborative learning for the students, but it also facilitates group learning for a teacher working with a whole class. It enables an access to resources and activities in the classroom, through technology and computers, that we have not had before. It increases interaction in the classroom and it increases engagement in the classroom. It is also in touch with the world that children are growing up in, because they can touch the board or write on the board and work through a computer. We have had enormously positive feedback from schools for the program, and we are very appreciative that this program is in place.

In particular, I have been impressed, when I have been to education support centres, to see how the use of this assisted technology is helping children with learning disabilities, particularly children who are autistic. These children are very visual and need the visual cues, and for them it is working very well. I have sat and watched a group of three children working in this way, and it is quite illuminating to see the work that these children are able to do and the work that their teachers are able to present to them. The teachers and the students can physically interact with the board, and that seems to be a way to enhance the learning of children with disabilities, particularly, as I said, autistic children. A good example is South Ballajura Education Support Centre, where teachers are using the technology to help students develop spelling and numeracy skills using those visually-based programs.

From a teacher's point of view, the preparation of work by using their laptops and then being able to hook up their laptop to the interactive board I think is revolutionising the way teachers can prepare for their students, and also the amount of material that they can prepare for them—so much more than the old chalkboard that we had not so many years ago. This has been a rapid development in technology and a rapid use of that technology.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I refer to page 393, major spending changes, and the efficiency dividend. This shows that \$30.4 million will be saved from the Education budget in 2012–13.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: How much did the member say would be saved?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: It is \$30.4 million.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I thought the member said \$34 million. Sorry.

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Ms R. SAFFIOTI: What will that include?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: Could the member ask the question again?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: What will that \$30.4 million be made up of—what services; how many staff; which areas?
[9.50 am]

Dr E. CONSTABLE: The efficiency dividend has been only recently confirmed, as the member would be aware. One thing that is really important to note with the efficiency dividend is that for all other agencies across government it is a two per cent efficiency dividend in 2012–13, but in Education it is only a one per cent efficiency dividend. That is very important for us to note. The previous three per cent efficiency dividend was one that we worked very hard to achieve. It was very difficult in Education, as we were determined that front-line services would not be touched, and they were not touched. We did not quite reach the three per cent but got very close to it.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: How much was actually achieved?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I will have to ask Mr Leaf to answer that question.

Mr J.W. Leaf: We have actually answered this question on a number of occasions in this setting. I have mentioned several times that we actually stopped tracking savings against the efficiency dividend some years ago when it disappeared from our budget estimates. We have not completed an exhaustive list because time moved on, basically.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Okay. So we do not know where the savings were made last time?

Mr J.W. Leaf: We provided a schedule of savings that had been achieved up to a point in time. That was tabled last year. It has not been updated since, as we commented at the time of providing that schedule. If we are required to provide it again, I am more than happy to do that. It is on the record.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: A general comment on that is that the bulk of the savings came, as the member would expect, from central office efficiencies, because front-line services were not to be touched.

The CHAIRMAN: So this was a document that was tabled previously in the Parliament?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: At the last Council estimates.

The CHAIRMAN: I am informed by my assistant that it is a public document that can be obtained from the Legislative Council office.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Okay. In relation to the 2012–13 cut of \$30.4 million, can the department indicate how those savings will be achieved?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I did revert to the three per cent. The point of that was to show that Education is a special case, which has been recognised this time by Treasury and the government.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: That \$30.4 million still represents a one per cent efficiency dividend. We know that; that is fine.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: It is one per cent this time, in recognition of the special circumstances of Education and with a view that front-line services should be protected. We have only known for a very short period that the one per cent would be imposed. We are now looking at those options. There is no definitive list of where those savings will come from. It is always very important for us, and we do this all the time, to look for efficiencies to make sure that there is no waste. In a budget of \$4 billion, the government has to continually look to make sure that it is getting value out of every dollar it is spending. That is what this exercise is about.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Sure. The department could not achieve the three per cent saving last time without cutting front-line services. How will the department achieve further savings if it could not deliver the three per cent last time?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: That is the task we have. We have been asked to do that in recent weeks. We are looking at how that can be done.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Sorry, minister, but it has not been recent weeks. The three per cent was built into the budget estimates.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: The one per cent is very recent.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The budget was put to bed in the first or second week of April. It has not been two weeks; the minister has known about this for a few months now.

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Dr E. CONSTABLE: It is a few weeks between April and the end of May; we have not had months and months. We are looking at it. The financial year has not yet begun. The other interesting thing about Education that we always have to keep in mind when looking for efficiencies is that we are asked to work on a financial year through the budget, but we also work on a school year. We will take our time. We will do our very best to find that one per cent.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The beginning of the financial year starts in a month. There is a \$30.4 million cut listed in the education budget. It is not our budget; it is the government's budget. Surely the minister can give us an indication of how those savings will be made.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: We will be doing all the necessary reviews of all the projects, programs and departments and subdepartments within the central office and so on to look at how we can reach this one per cent. That is the task we have been given and that is what we will be doing. We do not have a definitive list for the member now.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The department could not deliver the three per cent on the basis that front-line services could not, in the minister's words, be cut. How is the department going to deliver another one per cent if it could not deliver the three per cent without cutting front-line services? The minister has said on numerous occasions that the department could not deliver the three per cent dividend.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I would be the first to say to the member that this is a challenge for me as minister and for the department. I know that I brought up the history of it. Historically, that is two years ago. Things move on.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Does the minister believe that \$30 million of fat has come into the budget within two years?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: We will do everything we can to achieve the target that has been set for us.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: These are the government's budget papers. The \$30 million cut was put into the government's budget papers. We did not do it; the minister's government did it. There is ownership on her side. Surely the minister can give us an indication of where those cuts are going to be made, given that the budget has been cut and that the budget year starts in four weeks.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: We are looking, and will continue to look, at all the programs. Some programs naturally come to an end. Various things finish and other things start.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: For example?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: Just in general terms; programs finish.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: For example?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: Just as national partnerships with the commonwealth finish. Things get completed and then we move on.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Sure, but can the minister give us one example of a program that is likely to finish?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I do not think that is worth doing at this stage, because it may be a program that is finishing but is then continued and rolled on. We will be coming up with efficiencies over the next short while and across the year. We will do everything we can to reach that \$30 million, or one per cent target. That is the task we have been set.

Mr P. PAPALIA: At the time of the last efficiency dividend cuts, was the participation directorate funding cut by 50 per cent? The number of participation officers was cut by 50 per cent. I am assuming that is what happened. It was in the budget papers.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I do not think that the participation cut came as a result of the three per cent dividend. I would need to check that.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Why was the number of participation officers cut by 50 per cent?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: The participation officers were quite properly put in place under the previous government when the school leaving age was raised, to assist those students who otherwise, under the older scheme, would have left school earlier.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I know what they do; I am just wondering whether the cut was part of the efficiency dividend.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: Once in place we did not require so many participation coordinators.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I beg your pardon?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: Once parents, students and schools adapted to the increased leaving age, the same number of participation coordinators was not required. That is why the number was cut.

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Mr P. PAPALIA: So the number of students coming through the system who might benefit from having a participation officer support them has reduced somehow. Has it dropped?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I think we have gone on to another matter.

Mr P. PAPALIA: The minister just said that the requirement was reduced.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I will ask the director general to elaborate on my comment.

Ms S. O'Neill: When the legislation was first brought in, there was an enormous amount of work that the participation unit needed to do, including following up with the students with whom we needed to be engaging. Other work, though, was to get quite a number of students onto notices of arrangement who had never been on notices of arrangement before. The member asked about the participation unit. The staffing in the participation unit in the early days of the legislation was always anticipated to be more because we had to get thousands of students—those in employment, those on apprenticeships and those on other engagement programs—onto notices of arrangement. There was a whole new process that was needed in the early days of the legislation that is not needed now because the process is in place. Therefore, the staffing of the participation unit as a total in the early days needed to be higher than it is now.

[10.00 am]

Mr P. PAPALIA: Were the savings made by the reduction in the participation directorate budget? Was the number of participation officers attributed to the efficiency dividend benefits that were recorded in the budget? Were they part of whatever was achieved in the budget cuts?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I think they were counted as part of that.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Were they recognised as part of the efficiency dividend?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: They were recognised as that.

Mr P. PAPALIA: The last time the minister made an efficiency cut, the number of participation officers was cut by 50 per cent.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: The member needs to understand that that is what the director general was just saying. There were far more students. For instance, in 2008, 5 221 17-year-old students were on notices of arrangement. This year there are 3 314. I was looking at these figures over the past few days. It would appear that there are more students staying on at school rather than going on notices of arrangement.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Does the minister consider participation officers to be front-line services?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: The role of those participation officers has changed, as the director general has just described, as has the number of students requiring the services of participation officers, just as we would have fewer teachers if the numbers in a school dropped.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Is the service front line?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: It is a very important service.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Is it front line?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: The service is proportional to the number of students. Of course it is front line.

Mr P. PAPALIA: The minister said that front-line services would not be cut this time; she cut them last time.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: The member is being very cute.

Mr P. PAPALIA: The minister is being cute; I am being accurate.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: The member is suggesting that once a school starts with 1 000 children and it goes down to 500, the same number of staff should be kept. It is exactly the same here.

Mr P. PAPALIA: The minister cut the participation officers' budget as part of her efficiency dividend and now she is retrospectively trying to justify it.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: Because there were less required.

The CHAIRMAN: Member for Warnbro, you have the next question.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I refer to "New Primary Schools" under "Works in Progress" on page 400, in particular, Aveley. Is it true that the builder who is contracted to build Aveley primary school has gone into voluntary insolvency and a large number of contractors are out of pocket to the tune of hundreds of thousands of dollars?

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Dr E. CONSTABLE: I will ask Mr Trifunovic to answer this question.

Mr M. Trifunovic: Building Management and Works is currently managing that process. I understand there have been some discussions. I am not aware of any subcontractors who have not been paid.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: This is not really a question for the Department of Education or me as minister; I would have thought it was a question for BMW.

Mr P. PAPALIA: It is in the Education budget.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: The money is in our budget for our school and the management and letting of those contracts is done by Building Management and Works. It chooses the builder. We then transfer that money to it for payment. We pay as work is completed. Those decisions are made by BMW. Questions about contracts are not really questions for the Department of Education.

Mr P. PAPALIA: It does impact on the school's completion potentially and the quality of the schools.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: Of course it does but the member's question was contractual, which is not about the school and the running of the school; it is a BMW matter.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Is the minister satisfied that she is getting good service from BMW with regard to management of these contracts?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: Education has had the biggest capital works program ever in the last year. That is just the money that has come from the state budget. If we add the Building the Education Revolution program to that over the past two or three years, it has been a massive capital works budget. Yes, we are satisfied with the work that is being done and we are working extremely well and extremely closely with BMW. If there is any individual issue that we are not happy with, we raise it with BMW. We have a very good working relationship with BMW.

Mr P. PAPALIA: The reason I asked is that if it is not managing projects effectively, Education may be paying more from its budget for works than it should be.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: The member has chosen one of probably hundreds of contracts. I do not see that that takes away from the general comment that we are happy with the work being done with BMW. I point out to the member the incredible success that this state had with the BER projects. Where other states fell in deep holes over it, WA came up trumps with an excellent record in the unprecedented amount of work that was done. It was outstanding. Anyone who visits any primary school in Western Australia can see the enormous benefits of that program, plus the enormous benefits of a huge injection of capital funding from this government.

Mr P. ABETZ: I refer to "New Works" on page 402 and new primary schools. There is an allocation of \$78.2 million for new primary schools, namely Hammond Park, North Butler, North Yanchep, Treendale and Wandina. Would the minister be able to advise on the scope of the works and the time line for each of these projects? Are there any other issues with new primary schools that the minister could draw to our attention, particularly in my electorate of Southern River?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I thank the member for this question. It follows on very nicely from the previous discussion about the capital works program in Education. Since 2008, 14 public schools have been built and another 16 are under construction to cater for the increased enrolments and the incredible growth in the Perth metropolitan area in particular. I notice that four of the five schools that the member listed are being built as Perth expands; Wandina is in Geraldton. The five new primary schools being opened in 2014 meet that demographically driven demand that we are constantly working on. Hammond Park, North Butler, North Yanchep and Treendale will be built for 430 students. In addition, North Butler will be a fully inclusive school and will provide accommodation for up to 40 high-needs education support students, so there will be an integrated situation there. Wandina primary school will provide accommodation and will be built in two stages. The first stage will be for around 234 students from kindergarten to year 3 and a second stage will follow on after that. The first stage will consist of an administration building, an early childhood block with the associated activity and play spaces for children, toilets, teacher preparation areas, a playground, a general teaching block of four classrooms with all the other activity spaces required, an education support classroom, a covered assembly area with a canteen and music classrooms. That will be a very good set-up for K to 3. Hammond Park, North Butler and Treendale will consist of an administration block, a staff room, a library, an early childhood learning block with all the other associated spaces that I just mentioned, three general learning blocks—those are generally built with four classrooms in each block with an activity space that they can all access—all the toilets and teacher preparation areas, an education support classroom, a covered assembly area, with a canteen, music and art classrooms, hard courts and all the other bells and whistles such as interactive whiteboards that I

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mentioned earlier. Each school will have access to that state-of-the-art technology. Architects have been appointed at the schools and all the planning is well underway. Construction for the five schools will start in 2013 and I am assured that the delivery and commencement date will be 2014.

[10.10 am]

Mr A.J. WADDELL: I refer to the line item for the total cost of service for delivering primary education on page 397 of the budget papers. Within that line item, what is the cost of delivering the primary extension and challenge program?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I do not have at my fingertips a breakdown of the cost of the PEAC program, but I will give the member a bit of background while we see whether we have that information. As the member will be well aware, primary school students are tested in year 4, and they can participate in the gifted and talented primary extension and challenge program. PEAC is a part-time withdrawal program that is delivered through education regions. I am told that in 2012, approximately 2 100 identified students in years 5, 6 and 7 are eligible to participate in courses delivered from the local PEAC centres or online. The number of students identified for PEAC participation is based on the most academically able 2.5 per cent of each cohort. It gives academically able children an opportunity for withdrawal and extension. We have been talking about what will happen when year 7 students move into high school. This will provide us with an excellent opportunity—I am sure that the member will agree—to review the offerings to bright children in primary schools. As far as it goes, I think PEAC has provided a reasonable opportunity to these children, but we can now look to see whether we want to do more than that. I have been interested in looking at, and officers from the department have looked at, other jurisdictions and what they do—for instance, the opportunity classes in New South Wales. There is a renewed discussion about what is appropriate for primary-aged gifted children. That is a very good conversation that we all should be having, and I know it is one that the member would be very interested in. I will see whether we have the answer to the member's question. I will ask the director general to make a comment about the costs.

Ms S. O'Neill: I am unable to give the member an isolated cost for PEAC. We know there are staffing costs for the PEAC centres themselves and costs for testing. The reason I am unable to give the member a disaggregated cost is that there is testing for not only PEAC, but also the gifted and talented programs, and there is some movement across those two arrangements. It is part of a total cost, and we do not have with us today the disaggregated cost only for PEAC. In essence, the cost will include the staffing costs of the centres themselves and the costs of testing.

Mr A.J. WADDELL: Can I ask that that information be provided by way of supplementary information?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: Yes, as best we can. We will provide a breakdown of the cost of the PEAC classes.

Mr A.J. WADDELL: Yes, and if it could be broken down into staffing costs at one end and a guesstimate of the testing costs at the other end.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: The answer will indicate where it is precise and where it is an estimate.

[*Supplementary Information No B41.*]

Mr A.J. WADDELL: The minister pre-empted a bunch of my questions in her earlier statement. She has identified 2 100 students who are eligible. Does she know the participation rate of those 2 100 students?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I take that as 2 100 children accepted into the program. That is correct; 2 100 have been identified and accepted into the program.

Mr A.J. WADDELL: So the 2.5 per cent of students the minister talked about would be eligible; is that correct? The programs are aimed at the top 2.5 per cent, I presume.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: That is correct.

Mr A.J. WADDELL: What would that 2.5 per cent equate to in numbers?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: It would be higher than the 2 100, because it is harder to provide such a program in some rural and remote areas. That is why the online work has been provided. With modern technology, I think some very interesting things can happen, such as videoconferencing. One example I have commented on a number of times is Beaumaris Primary School in the northern suburbs, which is an independent public school. It works very closely with the cluster of Perenjori, Coorow and Three Springs in the midwest. If Beaumaris Primary School can videoconference or beam out to the midwest, it does that. I think we should be harnessing technology in that way more often. I would expect that to happen pretty rapidly in future, if we have the capacity to do it. The 2.5 per cent number would be much higher. I do not have that figure.

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Mr A.J. WADDELL: Again, can I ask for that information by way of supplementary information?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: We can calculate the 2.5 per cent of year 5, 6 and 7 students across the state.

[Supplementary Information No B42.]

Mr A.J. WADDELL: We are not sure about the 2.5 per cent. One of the difficulties is the withdrawal from class and the ability of people in low socioeconomic areas to access the program. Is the same opportunity being provided across all the regions? The minister has indicated that obviously there are difficulties in regional areas. Does every child in the various divisions within Education—north, south and east—have the same opportunity to attend a PEAC class, or do only the top one per cent in one cluster and the top three per cent in another cluster have that chance?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I would be only guessing the answer, but every region has a PEAC program. My guess is that it fits in with what I was saying before. In the metropolitan region, and probably in Bunbury, it is easier for children to access, but in the more remote parts of the state and smaller rural communities, it is harder.

Mr A.J. WADDELL: I was more focused on the metropolitan area and whether the same opportunities exist in the eastern suburbs versus the western suburbs.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I am not sure that we would have that information. The regions would provide that opportunity, and so the opportunity is there. The member is talking about access and whether children can actually get to a centre.

Mr A.J. WADDELL: It is also competition. There is a certain amount of funding for each division. Does that mean that to get access to the program, students would have to be in the top one per cent in one area, but in the top three per cent in another area?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I think that is the case. We also ought to be mindful that in the metropolitan area particularly, but also in other parts of the state, schools run their own extension programs. Students do not have to be in a PEAC program to be part of extension. One of the things that is interesting about the on-entry testing for preprimary children is that very early on teachers can work out which children are ready, even at that age, to be extended beyond what would generally happen in the classroom, while others would also get extra help if they lag a little in their early literacy and numeracy skills. I have seen children and small groups being extended even at that very young age. There is a much greater awareness in schools than there was, say, 10 or 15 years ago that extension is a very important part of programming. Again, I think technology is allowing us to do a lot of that.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I refer to the line item for the relocation of year 7 students in the table of major spending changes on page 393. I know the minister has referred to an amount of about \$260 million. In the card that was distributed with the budget papers, the headline amount of funding for the relocation of year 7 to high school was \$341 million. Can the minister tell me what the rest of that money will be utilised for?

[10.20 am]

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I will just get that. The total is \$341 million. It has been allocated in this budget to bring us up to 2015. There will be further costs beyond that that are not included in this. The total of \$341 million has been allocated to the year 7 initiative; \$307 million to the Department of Education; and \$22.4 million to provide for the retraining of primary teachers, which I mentioned earlier, so that they can teach in secondary schools. An amount of \$33 million has been allocated to the Public Transport Authority to purchase and operate additional buses, and \$1.2 million to the Department of Education Services for very small additional grants to non-government schools. The \$307 million to the Department of Education is made up of the \$265 million and the \$22.4 million, funding of \$5.39 million for the implementation group, and there is an amount for depreciation, I think, in there as well. Every amount seems to have depreciation in it.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Further to that, what is the implementation group? What is the plan? How is that going to work?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I will ask the director general to elaborate in a moment. The implementation group will basically consist of people with skills in the capital works area, so they will be dedicated to looking after the capital works program to make sure that it goes smoothly and happens well, as our other programs do. The other people within that group will be dedicated to the educational side of it, to the transition programs, working directly with schools in preparing for year 7s to move to high schools. But I ask the director general to elaborate.

Ms S. O'Neill: We are just going through a process right now to put that team together. As the minister says, we will need specialist staff in there to assist with the infrastructure. As was raised earlier, each individual school will have its own implications, and they will use the enrolment audit information to work with those schools.

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The question was raised earlier about the specialist programs. To work with each secondary school around the implications of the change, we will have staff who will work with the schools around the transition program, because it is two cohorts of students going at once—the normal group plus the year 7s. It would be anticipated that that group would have strong people in it, with strong experience in secondary schooling, but also in primary schooling, because we have the window of opportunity in rural areas for primary school parents to talk to their principal on a case-by-case basis about the transition over a three-year period for those year 7 students. We plan for the team to have secondary schooling experience and primary schooling experience in the areas of transition, in the areas of infrastructure and also in the areas of staffing, because we have the retraining program and the logistical arrangement of ensuring that the secondary schools are staffed appropriately. It will be a complementary team. It will report to me, as director general, and obviously I will report to the minister on progress. We anticipate having them in place shortly.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am glad the director general referred to the regions, because obviously she is aware that it is a pretty controversial subject in a lot of country areas. The director general talked about parents. Is it intended to conduct some sort of consultative process? The minister has already made the announcement, so it is happening. Will the department consult with communities, beyond individual parents who might want to take advantage of the three-year period?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: Consult on what—on the transition?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Talk to them about probably the most significant change that will happen to education in Western Australia, which is coming into place in 2015 and will impact on their kids.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: There will be a communication strategy, which I will again ask the director general to elaborate on. It will be incumbent, as it always is, on each individual school—both the primary schools and the secondary schools—to work with their school communities and the parents of students, to guide those children from primary school to secondary school. At the end of the day, the role of those individual schools and how they manage the transition, how they guide the parents and how they provide information to parents will be really important. I ask the director general to elaborate.

Ms S. O'Neill: Of course, in country areas concerns have been raised in places, so it is going to be really important that we work with not only parents, but also the broader community on a school-by-school basis and, therefore, on a community-by-community basis. That will be the role of the principal. They are the senior educator and lead person in each community. I mentioned earlier having someone in the team who has primary expertise. That person will be asked to go to primary schools and work with the principal, so the principal has all the information at hand. Information packs will be given to principals so that they can do exactly what the member is referring to—that is, talk to people in the community about their particular position. The decision is made. The consultation is around individual students and their families who might want to take the opportunity of the three-year window to make the transition, but it is also broader than that to ensure that the school communities and the broader community understand the change. As part of the communication strategy, brochures have already been provided, and that will continue. We have websites. I think we had a hotline in the early days, and we certainly would continue that. We had very few calls to the hotline. We found that people, by and large, understand the decision, and the individual questions that are asked, particularly in regions, tend to be asked of the principal. So the principal is a key person. They will need to work with the families. They will need to work with the school communities, first, to understand the change and, second, to understand the fact that there is a transition window and to make arrangements school by school. So the answer is yes, there will be consultation with the school community around the transition of individuals, not around the decision itself.

The other part of the consultation with schools and the school community, obviously, to go back to what we were talking about before, will be around the enrolment audit and ensuring that each and every one of those schools has the capacity to take the students—we understand they have the capacity, but we will go back and confirm the capacity to take all the students. Our advice is that they will be well placed to accommodate all the year 7 students. We cannot forget that district high schools already have year 7s, as do a handful of other schools that we know about—seven or eight schools that already have year 7s. We will also use our new network system to provide support and advice across schools to ensure that school communities and the broader community are well advised and well informed about the change. We want to make sure that parents are comfortable with the arrangements for their child. We already have longstanding transitional arrangements. This is not new. The move to high school happens every year for a group of students. Primary schools and high schools manage that transition very well. We are going to work with them again to ensure that those transition arrangements are sophisticated and that they give comfort and assurance to parents and to the students who are making the change.

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In some ways the change is a change that we already manage now with a cohort every single year. We want to make sure that parents have the same assurance that they do every year.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I seem to recall the Premier, in one of his bouts of yelling at me late at night, referring to a briefing team that would go around the state to brief parents. Is that part of the plan?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: That is the implementation team.

Mr P. PAPALIA: What—one person with the expertise going to talk to the principal?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: No, the director general did not say one person. It is a team of people working through the structures of the department with regions and networks and so on, as the director general outlined to the member.

Mr P. PAPALIA: The reason I asked—this is what provoked the Premier's interjections at the time—is that in Queensland they conducted a series of forums and did a structured process, which seemed to be pretty well planned, with the same objective of achieving year 7 to high school in 2015. They did their forums and they did their consultation. Then they delivered a draft plan—they delivered a draft plan prior to that, sorry. Then they received the consultation, adapted their plan, and produced a white paper, so everyone knew what was going to happen, as opposed to the minister making an announcement on 8 December —

Dr E. CONSTABLE: No. I —

Mr P. PAPALIA: — and everyone working it out now and running around to try to pick up afterwards.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: No, that is not what has happened. I think it is a bit like comparing apples and oranges to compare Queensland with Western Australia. In Western Australia during the Labor years, when Hon Ljiljana Ravlich was the minister, she gave permission —

Mr P. PAPALIA: Is the minister going to give me a history lesson?

[10.30 am]

Dr E. CONSTABLE: Another history lesson. But this is a really important part of why we are in the situation we are in today and the difference between the two jurisdictions.

The decision was made, I think quite properly, to allow Catholic schools to move their year 7 students into secondary schools. The following year when Hon Mark McGowan was the minister, the same decision was made for other independent schools. During that time, or just before, there was a period when in fact our own high schools were being built to have year 7 students. Therefore, we have eight of those schools—fine schools that they are. The situation we found ourselves in was the result of that earlier decision. If I was minister then, I would have made the same decision but I would have looked more carefully at its impact on government schools. Everyone in this room is aware of the impact that decision to allow non-government schools to move their year 7 students to secondary school has had on government schools. The horse bolted long ago in Western Australia. We had a two-tiered situation in which one-third of students in this state were in year 7 at secondary schools and the rest were in primary schools, which, with the change in school entry age, meant that half those children turned 13 in primary school. I have to say that there was a lot of agitation about that and whether it was appropriate to have adolescents in primary school, given the extension of all the activities in the early childhood space with kindergarten and preprimary that this state has done so well with over the past 15 or 20 years. Those excellent developments also happened under the two governments before this government. Therefore, we were in a very different situation. One year, a school in my electorate had one year 7 student. I am sure that everyone can tell stories about primary schools in their electorates that were affected by that decision. Parents were voting with their feet and moving their children out of government primary schools earlier than they once were so that they could take advantage of year 7 education in secondary school. That is the reason we had to relook at it first and foremost, and then other issues came into the situation as well, including the Australian curriculum. Therefore, a whole lot of things added up to us making the decision that the best place for our year 7 students was in high schools. It is a very different situation from Queensland.

It is half past 10. Is it time for a break? Did I read that in the schedule?

The CHAIRMAN: It is up to you to decide when you want to take a break, minister.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: That is really why I am raising it. When do we want to take a break?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The member for Balcatta has one question.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: We will let him ask it and then maybe we will take a break.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Maybe we can have a break after his question and then go straight to the member for Swan Hills.

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Dr E. CONSTABLE: The Whip is working well today!

The CHAIRMAN: Everybody is happy with that.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: I refer to the line item “Playground Equipment and Shade Structures” on page 403, which the minister spoke to me about outside the chamber because I asked a question on notice. I refer to the \$9.3 million contract for Smith Constructions for the construction of playground equipment and shade structures. The first part of my question is: how much of that is from the Building the Education Revolution allocation on page 402 and how much is from the playground equipment and shade structures allocation on page 403?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I ask Mr Fischer or Mr Trifunovic to elaborate on that.

Mr J. Fischer: All the money allocated through the state-funded playground equipment line item has been given directly to schools. If there is a specific contract for playground equipment, that would be work that has been undertaken through the Building the Education Revolution program.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: Is the minister satisfied with the work being done by Smith Constructions, and how many complaints has her office or the department received about the extended time line for the construction of that equipment, which is causing major disruption in two schools in my electorate?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I think this question was raised earlier, and of course we will deal with it again now. I cannot remember; as minister I may well have—we are up to about 33 000 files—received correspondence on that. I think this is really a question for Mr Fischer.

Mr J. Fischer: A number of projects have been undertaken by Smith Constructions to install playgrounds and they have all exceeded their initial time lines. I guess it should be remembered that the playground equipment was an additional program that was added into the BER program when savings were made, so it followed perhaps a bit of a different process from the earlier work. It is a separate contract. Yes, we have had difficulties with this contract and it has caused quite a number of problems in schools. We have been assured by Building Management and Works that it is putting pressure on to have the works completed as soon as practicable, but I understand that it is still causing some concern in a number of locations.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: I thank the minister for that. What can the minister do to try to speed up and finalise the work at West Balcatta Primary School? Its playground equipment was removed in March or April last year and it was promised that it would take just a few weeks. The children in preprimary have not had play equipment or a playground for well over 12 months. I am getting quite a number of angry phone calls from parents. The work was promised to be finished today, but when I rang yesterday it was still not finished. The children at West Balcatta Primary School, particularly the preprimary children, have not had the opportunity to use the playground or equipment and the work is still well short of being completed.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: Member, I agree that that is not satisfactory at all. I will make sure that I personally follow that one up for the member. We have discussed it, and I ask Mr Trifunovic and Mr Fischer to ensure that they get that done. The member is absolutely right.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: I thank the minister for that. I asked the minister question on notice 7589 about this issue, but the response for some reason came back through the Department of Finance and the dates I was given there —

Dr E. CONSTABLE: That is because Building Management and Works let the contract on this.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: The dates that I was given for the commencement and completion of the work at West Balcatta Primary School were factually wrong. I was given the wrong dates in that answer, so I am not sure who is actually managing this project.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: Any contract for Building the Education Revolution buildings, I understand—I am sure that I will be corrected if I do not get this right—are managed entirely by BMW, which I think the member understands. That is why the information came from BMW for that answer. We will follow that up for the member —

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: I would appreciate that if the minister would.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I will get my office to communicate with the member on that.

Meeting suspended from 10.37 to 10.47 am

The CHAIRMAN: I give the call to the member for Swan Hills.

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Mr F.A. ALBAN: I refer to page 402 of budget paper No 2 and the line item “Ellenbrook North” under “New Works”. An allocation of \$160 million has been made for three high schools, including Ellenbrook North. Can the minister advise on the scope of works and the time line for these projects? Also, as the minister is aware, Ellenbrook is responsible for most of the growth of the City of Swan, so will there be the flexibility to allow for an earlier start on the project should the need be established?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: Yes, the new schools mentioned in budget paper No 2 are Banksia Grove, Forrestdale and Ellenbrook North; provision has also been made for the senior years of schooling at Halls Head Community College. There are four major projects in the area of secondary education.

The first stage of the new high school for Banksia Grove will cater for up to 600 students, and is due to open in 2015 with enrolments for years 7 and 8. Stage 1 will have the facilities that the member would expect: an administration block; student services; library resource centre; classroom blocks with eight classrooms—education support classrooms as well—and all the associated facilities for students and staff. There will be technology and enterprise rooms with materials technology workshops and studios, science learning areas—including two science laboratories and five multipurpose laboratories—food and textile studios, a performing arts centre, music and media teaching spaces, a sports hall and a cafeteria. The first stage will provide many of the things required for students across all six years of secondary schooling, so that the initial students will start with all the required facilities. I understand that an architect will soon be appointed and that planning will begin in June 2012. The first stage of Forrestdale, which will open in 2018, has been allocated \$61 million. Detailed planning will not commence for a year or so, and construction will commence in 2016. That school will provide relief to Canning Vale College, and the first stage will accommodate 850 students. That school will have the same facilities as those at Banksia Grove.

An amount of \$54 million has been allocated in the out years for Ellenbrook North. There is certainly the capacity to bring any of these schools forward if the demand is there—as has happened in the past—because statewide planning is a continuous process, as I mentioned earlier. Ellenbrook North will have exactly the same facilities as I outlined before. All the specialist facilities in terms of science, design and technology and food technology will be included in the first stage. I imagine that second stage for those high schools will be mainly classrooms and the required utilitarian sort of things.

Halls Head Community College will benefit from \$30 million of funding for stage 2, which will increase the school’s capacity to accommodate students in the senior years of schooling. The detailed planning for that is expected to begin in the next couple of months, once the architect has been appointed, with a view to construction starting in 2013 and being completed in 2015. Stage 2 will accommodate up to 550 students, and will include materials technology workshops and studios, some science laboratories, a senior learning block, dance and music studios, a Perth education classroom, a fitness centre, and associated storerooms, which are always needed in schools. In addition, there will be some refurbishment of some existing areas, particularly media, visual arts, information technology, and food and textiles. That will then become a 7–12 school in 2015.

[10.50 am]

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The minister said that that expansion is to accommodate year 7s as well as —

Dr E. CONSTABLE: No, there is additional funding, I believe, for year 7s. That funding is additional to the \$30 million.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: So the \$30 million build will provide capacity for years 7 to 12?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: The \$30 million build will give capacity to add in years 11 and 12. There will be an additional sum of money for year 7s identified for Halls Head.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: In respect of Halls Head and secondary education in Mandurah in general, has the Department of Education continued to do work on the viability of the three campuses—John Tonkin College, Halls Head Community College and Coodanup Community College—with regard to years 11 and 12 provision? As the minister is aware, there are numbers issues there, resulting in impacts on John Tonkin, and particularly the Peel Education Campus. I would be interested to hear feedback from either the director general or the minister on the issue of viability of the numbers.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: That is an issue that the member and I have spoken about before; when I visited with him some time ago that was one of the things we talked about. In general terms, the statewide planning is a continuous process of monitoring any demographic changes and developments for the future. The other issue is distance; is distance from some of the other facilities an issue for Halls Head as well?

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Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: It can be.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: It can be for some people living further south of Halls Head.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The biggest problem we face in Halls Head relates to the aspirations of parents. I think a very strong marketing effort needs to be made in respect of Halls Head as an entity, because that school will cater for the southern corridor's intake. I am sure the Deputy Premier has told the minister that there are still families living further south, in Dawesville, who are consistently asking why there is no high school further south, and I think the answer is: there are not sufficient numbers. That is the reality.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I think we might find that the refurbishment of some of the existing facilities at Halls Head and the additions to make it a years 7 to 12 school might change people's perceptions of the school. Middle schooling has not been as successful as people originally anticipated—not just there, but also in other places.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Hence my comment about the marketing aspect.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: Yes, the member is absolutely right.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I have a further question relating to Halls Head and to the Career Enterprise Centre. The Career Enterprise Centre is situated at the John Tonkin site, although it is not part of John Tonkin.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: Is it part of TAFE?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: No, it is an entity in its own right. The Career Enterprise Centre caters for young people with disabilities in years 11 and 12, and Halls Head currently caters for years 8 to 12 students with special needs. I understand that there is currently an issue about the two entities and a viability concern about the Career Enterprise Centre. That is currently being reviewed and I am keen to know what the outcome of that is, or when we are going to have a determination by the regional director on that, because we are going into the second half of the year with transition, and both entities are looking at who they are pitching their —

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I am not aware of that review, so I will ask the director general to comment. I assume it is a review within the region, rather than —

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I think it is a review specifically between those two entities.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I will ask the director general to comment.

Ms S. O'Neill: As the member knows, viability across the whole area has been of interest to us. The member spoke originally about the various schools and their viability. Of course, year 7s entering secondary schools will attend to some of that, but we will continue to monitor the viability of all the schools down there. The review of the Career Enterprise Centre and others is a review being done by the regional executive director. I do not have a time line for when that is due. All regions are continuing to review, as the member would expect, because the enrolment shifts can be great, particularly around students with disabilities and the mobility of families seeking different services. I cannot give the member a date for when that review is due, but certainly, when we have that information, we will be in a position to share it.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: My main concern is that, because of this transition process, we are getting towards the second half of the year and there are a lot of things that need to happen for next year. There is some urgency, I think.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: Rather than supplementary information, can I undertake to get the director general to provide me with an update on where that is at? The member and I can have a discussion and I will keep him informed about it.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Yes; I thank the minister. I refer to the fifth dot point on page 395, "Behaviour and Attendance". Can the minister provide, by region, how many assaults against teachers by students were reported in the last two years in state government schools? Perhaps the minister can give some brief comment, if she has those figures. Secondly, can the minister provide, by region, how many assaults or allegations of inappropriate behaviour or criminal charges were made against teachers by students?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I am just seeing whether we have that information as we speak. Can I ask the member how he would define "assault"? As I understand it—the director general can correct me if I am wrong—assault is defined very broadly in the figures that we have; it could be a kid making a paper plane and throwing it at a teacher.

[11.00 am]

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I would be interested in the total number of assaults—so anything that has been reported—and then anything that the department would determine as serious.

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Dr E. CONSTABLE: I am not sure, but keep going. I want to make sure the member gets the information that he is asking for.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: A teacher being struck by a student physically would to me be a serious assault; throwing a paper plane would probably not necessarily be seen as a serious assault.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: We will see how we can break that down. The member asked in the second part of his question about criminal charges.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: That is regarding any charges against teachers.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: We do not have that information. The member would need to ask, if it is available at all, the police; and parents do not necessarily tell schools if they are laying charges, either, so it is something that comes outside the school gate.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Would the department have, then, figures on teachers who have been suspended due to charges being laid? The department would need to have those figures, because it would need to know when a teacher is suspended from service for a period.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I will ask the director general to go through the member's request and we will see where we get with it, and we will then see what else we need to do.

Ms S. O'Neill: On the first part of the question around assaults against staff, we have two broad categories that we are able to provide to the member today. This is 2011 data, because obviously we do not have a lot of 2012 data. In 2011, for physical violence against staff, of all and any sort, there were 533 incidents. That is down from last year's figure of 584; so a reduction in 2011 over 2010. As the minister said, physical violence can range from striking, to nudging as they walk past. That is as reported to us. We do not make a judgement about whether it is serious or not. If it is serious enough to be reported, it is serious enough for us to know about. For verbal violence, there were 225 incidents in 2011, down from 277 in 2010. Again, that is as reported to us. As the minister said, we would not have available to us whether parents have had teachers charged.

In relation to complaints against staff, it is reported in our annual report, and it comes under child protection, which covers any issues to do with child protection. That is a very large category. It can include a teacher touching a child inappropriately, or it can be violence of a physical nature. In 2011, there were 100 complaints made of that kind, out of a workforce of 35 000. What I do not have available to me is whether those teachers have been charged. In terms of the number of suspensions, though, as at 16 April this year, we have directed away from school—which is suspension—14 employees, and that could be for any reason, not just for the ones the member has mentioned.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: If I can add to that, it is interesting to note that there has been a decrease in the two categories that the director general mentioned, at a time when we have more students than ever in our schools—well, more students than there were before. I think that can be attributed to a number of things, but certainly to the amount of work that has been done in the area of behaviour management in schools. That has been really important. When members opposite were in government, they set up the first behaviour centres, and we have added to those, I think with five or six more, particularly in regional areas. They are making a big difference to schools, because they are an avenue that schools can call for help. There has been an increase of 30 per cent in the number of school psychologists as well, with school psychologists now working from schools rather than from the old district offices. They are just two of the things that I think have made a difference, but there are many more in terms of providing information to teachers, professional development, and training in behaviour management. Those figures are beginning to show us the good effect of the work being done in the area of behaviour management, and the improvement that has been made in that area is a gold star for the department.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Further to that minister's comment, would the minister be able to provide, by way of supplementary, I guess, for each of the regions, how many full-time equivalent truancy officers, participation officers, school psychologists and other staff are located in the regional office; and, if they are not located in the regional office, for each of the regions, where they are located, and the numbers?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: If I can just check, the member mentioned truancy officers and school psychologists. Did the member mention any other category?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Participation officers, and any other staff in the regional office.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: So the member wants regional office staff?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Yes, but also, I understand that many of those staff are now not located in a central office but are in schools; so, for each region, their numbers, and where they are located.

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Dr E. CONSTABLE: Can I just make it clear that we do not have people employed as truancy officers, which was the term the member used.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Okay. So what term would the department use?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: It is true that school psychologists were, as I mentioned a moment ago, in the old district offices, and they are now in schools, which is, I think, where they belong.

Mr P. PAPALIA: What does the department call truancy officers now?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I will get the director general to comment so that we are clear on what the member is asking for. Participation officers are also now in schools, again closer to the teachers and working with the school staff. I will ask the director general to comment, and then we can work out what else we need to get for the member.

Ms S. O'Neill: The overall answer to the member's question, before we break it down, is that we have—the 2011 and 2012 figures would reflect this—79 staff in regional offices, as opposed to originally in 2010 when we had 401 staff in regional offices. So the staff—the difference between the 401 and the 79—are in schools, or as close to schools as they can be, because sometimes they are in networks or groups of schools. In the regional offices themselves, we obviously have the regional executive director, the operational manager, the service manager who looks after the services, and ancillary staff. Apart from that, the school psychologists, for the most part, and the participation coordinators, for the most part, are all in schools or in networks of schools. There is a case-by-case situation in some places where it just has not been as feasible, because of distances, to travel. But apart from that, everyone else is in schools. In the Pilbara and the Kimberley, for example, a couple of those staff are in the office, but what has happened in those regions is that we have combined with Catholics and independents and we are providing a broader service with additional resources.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Rather than go through them all now, is the minister able to provide, by way of supplementary information, for each region, where the staff are located—so, the regional office staff, and the breakdown of those staff, and where the other additional assets that previously had resided in the district office are now located?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: So is the member asking, if we take that number of 400, or whatever it was, in 2010, where those people would now be?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Well, the equivalent people.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: That is what I mean. I do not mean those particular people. I mean the tasks that they do.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Yes, the type of staff. But, also, can the minister answer the question about what truancy officers are called now, or what they do and who they are?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I want to be clear on what the supplementary information is. It means that we will have to look at every single school in every region to tell the member where those people are.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Well, does it really, because should not the department know —

Dr E. CONSTABLE: That is why I want to clarify what the member is asking.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Should not the department know, for each region, what resources in the field of behaviour management and student services are provided?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: Let me give the member an example, just to be clear on what the member is asking for. In the North Metropolitan Region, there are a number of psychologists. The member wants to know how many of those X number of people are in schools. We may not be able to tell the member which schools they are all in within the time available, given the public holiday on Monday. I want to make sure that the member gets what he is asking for.

[11.10 am]

Mr P. PAPALIA: I would not think that would be too challenging. I understand what the minister is saying. I understand that there are psychologists that schools employ themselves through their own budgetary flexibility. What I am talking about are the ones employed by the state.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: They are all employed by the state.

Mr P. PAPALIA: The minister knows what I mean.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: That is why we need to be clear about what the member is asking for.

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Mr P. PAPALIA: Surely they must be on a database or something.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I will ask the director general to answer.

Ms S. O'Neill: We recently answered a parliamentary question on specific school locations of school psychologists. We have provided that information. As the minister just said, we can provide the specific location of those services. We do not hold that information centrally; the regions hold it. We will need to go to the regions. It is a matter of timing. From what I understand, the member is asking for the specific locations of every school psychologist, participation coordinator and various subgroups that used to be in district offices; the member wants to know which schools they are all in. What we are saying is that we will do the best we can, but it is just a matter of timing and whether we can do it in the 10 days. We have to go to every region. Some of the psychs have moved schools, so it is about making sure that we can get accurate information in the time required.

Mr P. PAPALIA: As Ms O'Neill said, I have had a recent answer about the psychs.

Ms S. O'Neill: The PQ was 7134.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am not that stressed about the psychs, but I am interested in the other staff—the type of people I mentioned.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I think it is probably fair if we say —

Mr P. PAPALIA: How about we remove the psychs?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: Along the lines of what the member has asked about psychologists, we will do the best we can to provide the information the member is asking for in the time available. If the member wants further information after that, I will ask him to put a question on notice and we can continue to refine the information.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Just drop the psych requirement. That should make it a significantly easier task.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: That has already been done. If all the information cannot be collated in time, given that we have to get information from the Kimberley region and the Pilbara and so on —

Mr P. PAPALIA: The minister does not have to walk there, though.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: Pardon?

Mr P. PAPALIA: It is all right; I was being facetious.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: We will do the very best we can to provide the information the member has asked for and we can then follow up afterwards if he wants that refined.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Is the minister going to say what the supplementary information will be?

The CHAIRMAN: Can the minister tell me exactly what she is going to provide?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I am going to try very hard, Mr Chairman! We are going to provide information about the positions that were once in the district offices and are now in schools, and which schools those positions are in. It includes participation officers, not psychologists—who else?

Mr P. PAPALIA: The minister said there are no truancy officers.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: We will come back to attendance in a moment.

[Supplementary Information No B43.]

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I will ask the director general to comment on the member's question about truancy officers, which we do not have. However, there are people involved in monitoring attendance and following up lack of attendance.

Ms S. O'Neill: We have not had truancy officers under this structure or even in district offices. That is not something that was there previously, and it is not there now. Likewise with attendance officers, previous to the current regional structure there would have been one or two attendance officers left in district offices, which is a historical position. We have not had attendance officers per se for quite some time. Under the legislation it is the role of every school and every school teacher to pursue attendance. That is exactly what each and every school does. Obviously they have got to keep the roll and follow up any attendance issues as they arise. Once there is an attendance issue that begins to be problematic and is outside the school's capacity to deal with, for example, if prosecution is necessary, then the school is supported centrally by the team we have that works through major attendance issues. Attendance is sometimes complicated in years 11 and 12 with the participation coordinators. Their role is not about attendance but to engage students in programs, but sometimes, of course, they are more

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aware of who is attending and who is not attending. We have not had attendance officers under this or the previous structure and we have not had them at all for some time.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I refer to the item on independent public schools on page 395 of the *Budget Statements*. At the risk of the minister outing where my 12-year-old son goes to school, I would like to ask: what guidance is there for principals as to what they can write to parents and other people on school letterhead? I am referring particularly to independent public school principals.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I will ask the director general to elaborate in a moment, but first and foremost the principal of a school that is or is not an independent public school is a government employee and must abide by the rules and regulations that apply to government employees. The principals of independent public schools have to abide by all the industrial agreements and legislation that covers schools. That is a broad-brush answer to the member's question. They are supposed to do just that.

Ms S. O'Neill: Independent public schools and the principals who lead those schools are, like any other school, subject to the legislation and the policies of the department unless they negotiate—that is the freedom they have; to negotiate a different policy. If we are referring back to the situation at John Curtin, that school has not negotiated a different policy around communication with the public. The code of conduct governs all principals, as does the Public Sector Management Act. As part of those two instruments, government employees must confine themselves to commentary about operational matters of the school. Of course, we support all principals, whether of independent public schools or otherwise, communicating with and informing their school community. What they are not supposed to do is to get into the area of making commentary or implied commentary about government decisions or otherwise. It is the role of public sector employees to implement the government policy of the day and to not make commentary on it. With respect to independent public schools, as I said they are governed by the same code of conduct as any other employee. In fact, their delivery and performance agreement and business plans are directly signed by me and the school council. As part of the performance management of any principal, including independent public school principals, we expect them to comply with policy and the legislation that has been outlined. We do not have a policy on what principals can write to their communities and the letterhead that they can use. Obviously, if we did that, we would have policies about everything that occurred in a school. We expect principals to use good sound judgement on the basis of their professional expertise and the professional expectations we have for them. We outline those professional expectations pretty clearly. From time to time principals do not perhaps exercise the best judgement on a matter, but the professional expectation is clear and their performance is managed. There is no policy about who they can write to, when they can write to them or what letterhead they can use.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Is it appropriate, then, for the principal of Willetton to allow the use of his school letterhead to promote a government announcement, which was absolutely political in nature?

[11.20 am]

Dr E. CONSTABLE: It is within the grasp of a school council to write to its school community.

Mr P. PAPALIA: On school letterhead?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I have been the chair of an independent school council in past years, and, yes, chairs do write on school letterhead to identify who they are because they are in that official capacity.

Mr P. PAPALIA: To promote the local member as having won an \$80 million upgrade as announced by the government in an election campaign?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: From memory, he was thanking people for the work that they had done to assist the school. As far as I know, all local members help their schools.

Mr P. PAPALIA: He attached the minister's media release.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: Attaching my media release is, again, the judgement of that person. The chair of a school board is the chair of a school board, not a government employee, and that is the difference that is being made here. I will ask the director general if she has any further comments to make.

Ms S. O'Neill: That is exactly right. When independent public schools become newly independent public schools, we run training for the school boards and the school chairs and give guidelines setting out appropriate behaviour of councils. That is enshrined in legislation as well. Of course we want to encourage them to communicate with their school community. I cannot recall seeing the Willetton letter, but, that aside, the school council chair wrote it. The difference, as the minister points out, is that it is not a public sector employee whose performance and conduct is governed by legislation and various other policies and instruments of law.

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Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I refer to “Independent Public Schools” on page 395. Can the minister provide information on how many schools have applied for independent public school status and been rejected? Of those schools that have applied, how many have been rejected more than once—I am happy to take it as supplementary information—and could she list those schools?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I do not have the specific information at hand. I will get the member some information and we may have to give some by way of supplementary as well.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I am very happy to get it by way of supplementary information. Could the minister provide me with how many schools have applied and been rejected, the names of those schools and those schools that applied more than once and were unsuccessful, and the names of those schools?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I will give the member some information now and what we do not have, we can give as supplementary. In the first round, 34 schools were selected out of 104. I am sure that all those that applied were aware that it would be a fairly small number in the first year. I do not think we can read anything negative into not being accepted in the first, second, third or fourth year because we have always accepted only a limited number in order to progress this in an orderly fashion and give each school the opportunity for professional development and to be ready the following year.

Mr P. PAPALIA: We just want the names. Supplementary information would be good and then we can get on with other things.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: Sixty-four schools were accepted in the second round in 2011 out of 134 applications. In the third round, there were 196 applications and 109 schools were accepted. There have been 141 applications this year, given that the pool that can apply is getting smaller each time, and they are being looked at at the moment. We can give the member the information he is looking for about the number of applications. I think the member has to be careful implying that if someone misses out, there is —

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I am not doing that but I am interested in —

Dr E. CONSTABLE: The member is interested in knowing how it has progressed.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I am interested in the names of the schools.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: Of the ones that have missed out?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Absolutely.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: People in the department and members of the independent review group committee that make the selections recommend those to the director general. It is all done at arm’s length from the central office and the director general and recommendations are made. Those people are also available to talk to schools if they miss out on their first or even second application. There is a lot of support for schools in developing their applications for IPS. We will get the member numbers and names of independent public schools that have missed out when they have applied each time.

Can I just be sure about that? I am reminded that schools are very sensitive when they miss out, and naming them publicly, while I can understand the member’s question, may cause some angst to those schools and those school communities. While I can do that for the member, I am concerned that schools may feel badly dealt with because of the negative connotations that might unnecessarily and unfairly be placed on them. Can the member be sure that that is what he wants to ask?

Mr P. PAPALIA: The schools that have approached us want us to have this information.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I am sorry?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Schools have approached us and told us about this.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: Told the member about what?

Mr P. PAPALIA: That they have been rejected.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: And that they have not had feedback?

Mr P. PAPALIA: No, we did not say that. All we want is the names of the schools that have been rejected once and those that have been rejected twice.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Or more than once, because some schools have been rejected three times.

The CHAIRMAN: Minister, can I ask you to reiterate exactly what information will be provided?

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Dr E. CONSTABLE: I will provide that information; I am not arguing about that but the member must realise that schools will feel very distressed that they are being named publicly in that way.

The CHAIRMAN: Minister, for the purposes of the committee and *Hansard*, can I ask you again to clarify what you are providing?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: We are providing a list of schools that have applied and have not been successful in their first and subsequent applications to become independent public schools.

[*Supplementary Information No B44.*]

Mr A.J. WADDELL: I turn to “Year 7 Students in Secondary Settings” on page 394. With the year 7 cohort entering high school, will there be changes to the gifted and talented education testing mechanism? Will that be brought forward from year 6 students to year 5 students? Also, what provisions have been made in the academically selective programs to accommodate the additional students who will obviously come through as part of the year 7 cohort?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: That is a good question. I will answer that as far as I can and then get the director general and others to comment. I understand that the testing will continue to take place in year 6, which, given my professional understanding of this, will mean that as well as it being administered better than year 5, it will be fairer than doing it in year 6. That is a good response to that new situation that the department has had to think through. The member asked about accommodation as well.

Mr A.J. WADDELL: Yes, whether the academic selective programs will have their capacity expanded due to the fact that they will have year 7 students in them as well.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I will ask the deputy director general, schools, David Axworthy, to answer that. Those programs remain intact. They have been highly successful. In talking to the minister in New South Wales fairly recently about that—where there were a large number of wholly selective high schools—and our comprehensive schools that have a selective stream, he said that he thinks that is better than having a large number of schools that are just selective. I think that situation has worked really well for us. I will ask Mr Axworthy to elaborate.

[11.30 am]

Mr D. Axworthy: Exactly. As the minister said, we intend to continue to assess in year 6 and then commence the secondary program in year 7. Effectively, there will be an extension of the gifted and talented program in secondary schools, which currently starts in year 8; it will now start in year 7. That has been built into all the projected planning around space in schools and is part of the audit that we spoke about earlier.

Mr P. ABETZ: I refer to the first dot point on page 394 regarding early childhood education. The government recently announced 10 new child and parent centres as a major advancement in the provision of integrated support services to families. Can the minister outline the government’s commitment, the philosophy behind it and the capital works program that will support this important commitment to assist children in more vulnerable areas in particular?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I thank the member for Southern River for his question. This is a new initiative that appears in the budget papers for 10 new child and parent centres. It is a very important initiative that integrates services across a number of government agencies—Education, Health, Communities, Child Protection and others. It is based on the notion that we are working towards the health and learning outcomes and lifetime opportunities for all our young people, especially young people in vulnerable communities. The 10 communities that have been identified to have these new centres are low socioeconomic status communities. Data from the Australian early development index and other information indicate that these are the areas in which the centres should be established. There is \$28 million in funding for the centres, \$10.9 million of which is for the capital works program. Five centres will receive buildings at a cost of around \$1.5 million each; the others will be purpose built, or existing buildings on the school sites will be refurbished. It is intended that once these centres are up and running and well established, other communities will benefit in due course. I use the word “communities” rather than “schools” because each of these centres will be for a larger community than the actual school. We expect five of those centres to be finished by the end of 2013 and the other five by the end of 2014. The important thing in all this is that the other funding is to provide coordinators and services for those centres. The coordinators of the programs will be appointed in the next few months. I might ask the director general to comment on the appointment of the coordinators and how that will be worked through.

The services will essentially be in the areas of early childhood development and learning, including learning programs with parental involvement. I was at Neerabup Primary School in the northern suburbs yesterday and spoke with three different groups of people who are involved in providing playgroups and support to parents in

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the area. One group is Ngala, which has been working in the space of mothers and young children for 120 years. Another playgroup is offered by the school itself and the third playgroup is offered by some people involved with Aboriginal communities in the area. I see those groups of people who currently work with families and young children, such as Ngala and the Smith Family, being very involved in these centres. Services such as child health checks and referrals, parenting information programs, psychological counselling if required and speech therapy will be brought onsite to make it easy for people to access them. Therefore, infrastructure is needed to have those things happen. I ask the director general to elaborate on the coordinator matter.

Ms S. O'Neill: Each of the 10 sites will have a coordinator, and a not-for-profit organisation will be procured by the department to employ the child and parent centre coordinator for each school. That person will obviously report to the principal on a day-by-day basis, because the principal is the site manager. The use of the not-for-profit sector to get the coordinators for these centres is reflective of the expertise that not-for-profits generally have in bringing together other not-for-profit service providers and government service providers and of their connection to and understanding of what is needed in each school community, because each of the 10 centres will be different. We are developing that process now and we hope to have those coordinators in place during third term.

Mr F.A. ALBAN: I refer to the twelfth and thirteenth dot points on page 398 under the heading “Asset Investment Program”. There are significant commitments to additions and improvements to district high schools across the state. I particularly refer to the twelfth dot point, which indicates that Bullsbrook District High School will get \$23.5 million for construction. Can the minister outline the scope of works, particularly as highlighted in the thirteenth dot point, which refers to the additional \$40 million for technology and science upgrades to these district high schools?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I thank the member for the question. Many of the state’s district high schools were built well before 1980, and I am sure that Bullsbrook District High School is one of those schools, if my knowledge from my visits to the school with the member is correct. Many of them are in need of improvement. That is exactly what is happening with our program of improvement of district high schools. An amount of \$40 million over the next four years has been dedicated to district high schools across Western Australia, particularly to bring those schools up to a more modern standard to provide students with the very best facilities that we can. With the \$40 million injection of funding, there will be upgrades to the science, food technology and arts facilities. Some schools will be provided with facilities that they have not had before or facilities to a higher standard. As well as that, Exmouth District High School will have almost a complete rebuild. Similarly, most of the older buildings at Dongara District High School will be redeveloped at a cost of about \$30 million. Bullsbrook District High School in the member’s electorate has had a staged redevelopment to bring it up to a state-of-the-art facility. Similarly, Kununurra District High School will basically get a rebuild, with a couple of the old buildings to be retained, at a cost of \$49 million. It is quite a large district high school, with 400 or 500 students and increasing with the Ord development. Those facilities were also very much in need of a rebuild. That will be completed in 2012. Roleystone Community College was an amalgamation of two schools, one of which was a district high school. I think it is one of the most beautiful schools in the state and is in a lovely setting. Some fantastic work is being done to refurbish and expand the library and to accommodate the former primary school on the site. It is now a K–10 school.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I went to Roleystone Primary School.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: The member was very lucky to go there.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Yes, and now the government is knocking it down. That is great!

Dr E. CONSTABLE: It is a great place to grow up.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: It is a historic school in Western Australia and the government is knocking it down.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: The K–10 Roleystone Community College is first-class. A great deal of effort has been put into making sure that children in district high schools have the same opportunities as students in senior high schools in the metropolitan area.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I refer to the line item that mentions Ashdale and Landsdale under the heading “New Primary Schools” on page 402. Can I confirm that in the budget papers last year \$1.5 million was dedicated to the new south Landsdale school, and now that has been changed, and, instead, a new kindergarten to preprimary annexe has been created to service both Ashdale and Landsdale?

[11.40 am]

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Dr E. CONSTABLE: I will get Mr Fischer to comment on the detail. This has been an exercise in statewide planning to monitor changes and developments in populations there. There was \$1.5 million initially for an early childhood annexe. It was then found that that was not required because the Building the Education Revolution buildings that were built on the sites of the two schools, Ashdale and Landsdale, were sufficient; therefore, we did not need to create the annexe on a different site. That was the \$1.5 million. Now there is further funding in the budget to accommodate the population, which is, as the member would know, expanding at a great rate in that area. But, for the detail, I will ask Mr Fischer to comment.

Mr J. Fischer: The driving force, obviously, is the growth in the Landsdale area. The department has two locations in which it has set aside land at both east Landsdale and south Landsdale. The two primary schools under accommodation pressure are Landsdale Primary School and Ashdale Primary School. As mentioned, we have been monitoring the growth in those schools. In the 2011–12 budget, \$1.5 million was shown, and those moneys are still shown. It was anticipated that that money would have been spent. In the new budget, there is a further \$2 million, so effectively \$3.5 million is allocated. The \$1.5 million is shown under the completed works on page 402, if the member is trying to find that, and then there is the money that the member referred to on page 403.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I think it is pages 401 and 402.

Mr J. Fischer: Sorry; page 401, yes. So the total amount of money will provide facilities for primary children where the growth is.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I am quite staggered by this approach. South Landsdale and east Landsdale are growing population hubs. As has been stated, land is set aside as part of —

Dr E. CONSTABLE: Can the member ask the question through the minister.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Sorry, through the minister. South Landsdale and east Landsdale are significantly growing suburban hubs. Land has been earmarked and dedicated for new schools. People bought their home sites on the premise that there would be a new school in the area designated and approved by the Western Australian Planning Commission. We will now not go ahead with south Landsdale and, instead, create a new kindergarten to preprimary annexe in another area not attached to those schools. This will mean that families have to run around to two different schools. When will construction of the south Landsdale school start?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I do not think there is a date attached to south Landsdale at this point—is there?

Mr J. Fischer: Perhaps I should just clarify that. The kindergarten to preprimary annexe will be at the south Landsdale site.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Okay. But is there any date for the construction of the school at south Landsdale?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: No, there is no date. But this has happened before, I think, when there has been an annexe or a stage, which might be K–1 or K–2, as a first step in monitoring where we go. I would see this as a first step. The member commented on people buying land and establishing their houses because a school site is there. Schools are not built until the people are there. We do not build schools and hope people will come, because sometimes there is —

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I know, minister, but —

Mr P. PAPALIA: She is saying the people are there.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: Our statewide planning says that the next step to provide schooling in that area is this annexe for kindergarten to preprimary.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I know, but I can give the minister the example of Bennett Springs, where land was designated; it is there. It is now an empty block that requires a lot of maintenance by both the council and the education department. The population has hit the minimum required to have a school built. I am saying that people buy home sites with that expectation. The structure plan is approved by government; it is not approved by anybody else. Yes, I know that an area needs to have a certain population number to trigger a school's construction. All I am saying is that in some cases that does not occur, and huge expectations are built up by the local community.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: The thing about the population growth in that area, as I understand it, is that there was a bulge, if you like, in the birth rate, which we are now seeing in the year before schooling starts—the year before kindergarten. We need to cater for that population. We do not have the number of children in the older age groups at this point. That will come.

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Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I have a follow-up question on Bennett Springs. As I said, the population—we got this information two years ago—has hit the target. How many existing sites throughout the metropolitan area have been designated as sites for schools but have not yet had schools built on them?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I happen to have that in my hand. A very important part of what we do in planning in education is to make sure that we are ahead of the game and that we have school sites. I will give the member some idea of the enormity of this task and the planning that is undertaken by the department. I will deal with planned public school sites as of May this year. The total in the metropolitan area is 157 sites; that is, they are designated as sites. Some sites we own and some sites we have partially acquired; doing that is a continuing process. In the regions, the total is 75, and the total across the state is 232. That is the planning exercise that is undertaken. The member will find that in many parts of the state and in the outer metropolitan area there are designated school sites, but it might be five, eight or 10 years before the school needs to be built. However, that is the sort of medium to long-term thinking that we have to engage in. We monitor it all the time.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Sure. Could the minister table or —

Dr E. CONSTABLE: No, I am not required to table information. This is just a working —

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Sorry—by way of supplementary —

Mr P. PAPALIA: No. We are asking for the list to be provided by way of supplementary information.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The list of school sites by way of supplementary information.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: Yes. I am being asked for the list of future school sites, Mr Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN: Yes.

[Supplementary Information No B45.]

Mr P.B. WATSON: Page 394 deals with year 7 in secondary schools. Have plans been put in place for when the year 7s go into high school in Albany? With Albany Senior High School nearly full now—I know there is a gap at North Albany Senior High School—does this mean that all the year 7s will go into North Albany Senior High School? Has any consideration been given to the grade 7 students who will come in from regional areas at such a young age? Will there be an increase in the number of places in the hostels, because the hostels are nearly all full? Was any thought given to the fact that small community schools such as Wellstead, South Stirling and Manypeaks, without their year 7s, will be battling to stay open? Also, it will affect junior regional sporting facilities in those smaller communities. People in my electorate and I think that this change might be all right in the city, but it will have a huge impact in regional areas.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: The question about the hostels is not in this division, but —

Mr P.B. WATSON: No, but it is to do with education. It has to be planned.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I am midsentence. The question that the member asked about the hostels is not in this division, but I can assure the member that consideration of accommodation in all the hostels, including in Albany, has been taken into account. There will be hostel accommodation for those who come in at year 7, and I imagine there will still be some students—at least in the first three years, because that is what we have talked about earlier today and something that we have in mind—who come in at year 8 as well. It will not be just a one-off and students can come in only at year 7. Year 7 and year 8 entry will be available, at least initially. That is part of another division, but the member asked the question.

I can understand the issues that people in country areas are dealing with, but at the end of the day we need to decide whether we want all children in this state to have the best quality opportunities and the best quality education.

[11.50 am]

Mr P.B. WATSON: We are taking them away from home a year earlier.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: The best education will be provided for those students at high school level, just as it is in New South Wales and Victoria and has been —

Mr P.B. WATSON: I am not worried about them; I am worried about people in my area.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I am talking about the quality of education that we can provide for young people.

Mr P.B. WATSON: So the minister is saying that primary schools are not good education.

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Dr E. CONSTABLE: I am talking about changes that have come about, particularly with the Australian curriculum, and the age of the children. Year 7 students are six months older than their predecessors were at the turn of the century. They are adolescents in primary school. I ask the director general to talk about the effect on small primary schools and the work that has been done in that area.

Ms S. O'Neill: It really depends from what angle the question is being asked. As part of the implementation team that we talked about earlier, we will work with the primary schools, primary school communities and families on the change in the transition. In some instances, some of those very small schools—I think the member mentioned Wellstead Primary School—will become smaller by sometimes one or two students, sometimes four or five, depending on the size of the cohort —

Mr P.B. WATSON: To the minister, those one or two kids are the school leaders in a not very big school, so there will be younger leaders in the school, and this is a huge concern for the young kids coming through.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: Again, we are talking about a six-month age difference from that of 10 or 12 years ago.

Mr P.B. WATSON: But the point is that those year 7 students are in the school and they are part of the school. When they have school sports, they play against other little schools. Those kids who are the leaders in the schools will not be there anymore. There will be younger kids there. The minister just does not understand.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I do understand! The year 6 students will become the leaders in the school, and the member does not think that they can be that. Of course they can. I ask the director general to continue her comments.

Ms S. O'Neill: It is true, with the age change that was made some years ago, that on average the students are six months older and some will be older still. In terms of age-appropriate activity, physical maturity, mental capacity and the capacity for leadership, we promote school leadership at all levels of the school and someone at the top of the pile ends up being the school leader. In this case, there will be school leaders. I am very familiar with small schools because I have worked in them, so I know how one or two students make a difference to the overall population of the school. But schools will continue to be resourced as they are now; that is, on the basis of the number of students in the school. In fact, the minister has already assured primary school principals that classifications of principals will not change as a result of only the year 7 decision and the classification of schools also will not change on the basis of the reduction of a few students, which can, very often, lead to a reduction overall in the school leadership in terms of the principal's position. For small schools, yes, there will be an impact on student numbers. Schools are resourced now on the basis of student numbers, so the resourcing formulae do not change; they will reflect the student numbers that are there. There will be school leaders and school captains in the schools and they will be almost the same age as the ones who are there now.

The member also asked a question about community sporting arrangements. This department is not responsible for community sporting arrangements but, of course, schools in very small regional communities are very much involved in the community-based sport that goes into the schools. Those community groups will still use the resources of the school—the ovals and the teachers who are involved—and that sort of interaction between schools, such as sports days, will continue. Schools work this out for themselves; it is not unusual in the small communities that the member knows for a family to move and the school to therefore lose one-third of its population. The school makes —

Mr P.B. WATSON: But that is not because of a government decision; it is a private decision.

Ms S. O'Neill: Nonetheless, the point I make is that schools are very good at making the adjustments to their programs, timetables and the way they deliver education, regardless of why people move. People who live in small rural communities move and the adjustments are made at schools, regardless of the reason for the decision. Therefore, the point I make is that, yes, there will be fewer students in some of those small schools, but schools, as they have done forever, will make adjustments and ensure that quality programs are delivered as necessary. In fact, some of those small schools pride themselves on the individualised programs that they can provide because they have so few students. However, schools will be resourced appropriately to deliver on the requirements of the curriculum.

Mr P.B. WATSON: The director general said that these schools will not close due to the year 7 students leaving. Can we get a guarantee that the Wellstead, South Stirling and Mount Manypeaks Primary Schools will not close because of a lack of year 7 students?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: Schools will not be closed with the movement of the year 7 students.

Mr A.J. SIMPSON: I refer to the third dot point on page 395 about National Assessment Program — Literacy and Numeracy results. In the past couple of months, a lot of NAPLAN testing has been done throughout the

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state. Like a lot of members, I have had a lot of constituents come to see me about it, including parents who are concerned about their children taking those tests. Can the minister provide us with an overview of how NAPLAN helps our students be well-equipped for the real world?

[Mr M.W. Sutherland took the chair.]

Dr E. CONSTABLE: We in Western Australia can be pleased about the improvement that we have seen and the sustained effort that has been put in by teachers in their classrooms to make sure that children do well in their National Assessment Program — Literacy and Numeracy tests. Of course, NAPLAN tests those fundamental skills in literacy and numeracy—phonics, grammar, reading comprehension, number skills and so on—that are the basis, really, of all learning. We have seen a sustained effort and significant improvements in those results over the past three years since NAPLAN took the place of the Western Australian Literacy and Numeracy Assessment tests.

One of the things that I think is important is the flexibility and autonomy that has been provided to schools, rather than us stipulating that one size fits all and how schools must teach the areas of literacy and numeracy. We give schools assistance to look at their results from year to year, to look at whole-school approaches and to look across from K–7 at what they need to do to improve and to help each and every child in the classroom. To do that, we have a focus on teaching literacy and numeracy skills.

The director general initiated a review of early learning practice in kindergarten, preprimary and year 1 by Collette Tayler from the University of Melbourne. That work has been incorporated into the work of our schools in this area through whole-school planning and teachers' strategies. Rather than have each teacher work more on their own, this whole-school approach ensures that not only what is being taught is sequential but also the approaches taken to teaching follow on from one year to the next. This has been a really important development. I think that all of us as members of Parliament have seen this in practice. When we visit schools in our electorates, we often see a chart of whole-school planning on the wall or the principal tells us about the work being done within either the school or the school network to ensure that planning is done. There is a huge amount of sharing of information. There are also 62 teacher development schools whereby expertise is centred in those schools, and other schools within a network or an area work together with those teachers. Again, we have moved very, very quickly in this state from a lot of top-down imposition on schools to schools themselves being where the expertise is for teachers to work together and share information.

As a result of the work done on the development of school networks, we are receiving enormously enthusiastic and professional feedback from principals and teachers. After the most recent teacher development day on 24 April, the director general received a couple of letters in which principals wrote that it was the best professional development work they have witnessed. We are also getting national recognition around the rate of improvement in our National Assessment Program — Literacy and Numeracy results. We have seen a huge change over the past few years in how schools approach the development of their programs, and we have seen a huge amount of support for that coming from the central office. We have seen, through the harnessing of skills and expert teachers and others working together, an improvement in NAPLAN results.

[12 noon]

Mr A.J. SIMPSON: NAPLAN testing is done across all schools for students in certain years to work out where that child and that school fits in the system across the nation. Prior to NAPLAN, we used to have the Western Australian Literacy and Numeracy Assessment. Parents have been coming into my electorate office with concerns about their children being stressed out about the testing, and I have spoken with them about the whole process in that NAPLAN is to try to get a picture of where their child and their school is in the system so that as a government we know where the needs are. The WALNA results were never public; why was the system changed to start making the results public? Why are the results public?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I understand that the WALNA results were published, and I will ask the director general to comment on that. They were published and available. They were not available on a website, as NAPLAN is, but those results were published. I will ask the director general to comment on WALNA and the transition to NAPLAN.

Ms S. O'Neill: The WALNA tests results in this state for government and non-government students were always provided to parents, as they are for NAPLAN, and we always reported the results of WALNA publicly in Western Australia. The difference, as the minister just alluded, is that the national tests are published on the My School website, which is new and is to do with NAPLAN; we did not have that before. Previously, the results were made available, and I recall commentary in the media about WALNA results. But they were not provided in perhaps the same depth and detail as the NAPLAN results, and did not allow for the ranking of schools in the

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same way that the member might be seeing through the NAPLAN results. That would be the difference between the two.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I can understand individual parents coming to talk to the member about this because it has received a lot of publicity. Putting aside the publicity, I have found that many parents are very keen to see how their children are progressing, and this is just one piece of important information amongst a whole lot of information that parents receive about their children's progress. To understand how well their children did in relation to children of the same age or the same stage in their schooling is very important.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I have a further question on this, and then I hope I am next in line for an actual question.

The CHAIRMAN: You are next in line, I assure you.

Mr P. PAPALIA: With respect to the NAPLAN results, I have had an approach, through a member of Parliament, from a parent whose children are at a remote community school and who feels that the principal is inadequate, and, as a consequence, the children's NAPLAN results have been appalling. What is the process for that parent to seek redress or seek some sort of contact with the department, noting that the principal is someone they have a problem with? They do not want me to name them or anything like that.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: If there is an issue with the performance of a principal, it is the province of the director general, so they either write to the director general or to the regional executive director to open up a dialogue about that. That is how it would go.

Mr P. PAPALIA: It is obviously a sensitive issue, so can we get an undertaking that this particular complaint will be dealt with in a pretty sensitive fashion?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I can assure the member that —

Mr P. PAPALIA: It is not just the obvious issue; there is a cultural issue as well.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: — the Department of Education deals with all sorts of issues all the time and is well aware of individual sensitivities, so that is how that would normally be dealt with. Sometimes as minister people write to me with an individual issue, and I do not deal with that; it gets dealt with by the department, through the director general. That is the avenue they should go through.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Noting the time constraints, is it okay if we maybe avoid dorothy dixers for the next 10 minutes, in an attempt to try to finish this division at a quarter past 12?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: Every member is entitled to ask their questions, and we will leave the Chair to deal with it.

The CHAIRMAN: I will deal with that.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am just seeking the minister's assistance in regard to this.

The CHAIRMAN: If you want to finish this division at a quarter past 12, is everybody happy with that?

Mr P. PAPALIA: That is not what I am saying. I am saying that if we get the opportunity to complete our questions by a quarter past 12, then I would like to finish then.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: Let us just keep going.

The CHAIRMAN: Member for Warnbro, I think you should start and then let us see whether we can do that.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I refer to the first dot point on page 396 of budget paper No 2, "Supply of Teachers", where the minister acknowledges all the different factors that result in challenges for the teaching workforce. As the minister is aware, 2015 will be particularly challenging, noting that we have the half-cohort going through years 11 and 12 in the next couple of years—reduced demand—followed by probably the biggest demand for high school ever. What is the projected challenge around teaching numbers in high schools in 2015; and, beyond one year 7 teacher per primary school being trained for high school teaching, what is the minister's plan for those teachers? Does the minister have an overall holistic plan for teacher management in the next three years?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: There certainly are plans. The member has touched on one of the major issues that has been going for some time—teacher supply. When the opposition was in government, it started to deal with it and put in place a number of successful initiatives. I do not have it in front of me, but from memory the member recently asked a question on notice about this. When the results of the then government's projections came out in 2008, they showed projected teacher shortfalls in 2009 and 2011 to 2017, so we have known about this issue for a long time. It was known when the opposition was in government, and we have continued to monitor this as closely as we need to, but it has been managed very well to this point. The teacher shortfalls anticipated in 2009

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to 2012 did not eventuate because of the work that the opposition started and this government continued in attracting teachers to make sure we have an adequate supply of teachers. One of the major reasons I think this has been well managed to this point is that we now pay our teachers well. They are recognised as the highest paid teachers in the country. We have had two enterprise bargaining agreements that have placed our teachers in that position. I think that is a feather in our cap.

Mr P. PAPALIA: What will the demand for high school teachers be in 2015, when there will be this big demand?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I will get the exact figures and Mr Gillam will answer that in a moment.

Mr P. PAPALIA: What is the plan to ensure that we address that demand; and what is the plan to deal with the excess of year 7 primary school teachers who will not be offered training to move into high school teaching?

[12.10 pm]

Dr E. CONSTABLE: The offer for training, as I said earlier, is a conservative number of 525. If more people are interested, more primary teachers will have that opportunity.

Mr P. PAPALIA: But you have not budgeted for it.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I said it was a conservative number, so the \$22.5 million will provide funding to retrain more than 525 teachers if more show an interest; the director general is confirming what I just said. It is also important to note that on page 73 of budget paper No 3, *Economic and Fiscal Outlook*, there is a very helpful comment about this. It states, in part —

In February 2012, the Commonwealth Government released the final report of the *Review of Funding for Schooling* (also known as the ‘Gonski review’). As the Commonwealth has not yet responded in detail to the review’s recommendations, the future impact on both government and non-government primary and secondary school funding cannot be quantified. Therefore, it is not possible to accurately forecast the full financial impact of the transition of Year 7 students to secondary settings in Western Australian government schools in 2015. Some recurrent expenditure that is required prior to 2015, such as retraining of primary school teachers, has been approved in the 2012-13 Budget process, but other recurrent expenses, such as teacher costs, have been deferred to the 2014-15 Budget process when greater certainty about the funding model will be available.

I anticipate more funds to deal with the issue that the member has raised. This is a multifaceted approach, and one very important part of the approach is retraining primary teachers because there will be an oversupply, and we want to make sure those people have the opportunity to continue teaching. Many of them, I think, will be interested in lower secondary.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Is the minister suggesting that the results of the Gonski-driven process may result in further funding?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: Yes, and there is a lot more work to do on Gonski, and until that is done, it is more about the model than about funding.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Will the minister be negotiating on the model in July?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: No time line has been agreed on Gonski. To get back to teachers, we know that one of the things that the previous government did, and did successfully, and which we have continued with, is recruitment outside Western Australia. The previous government looked outside Western Australia when it knew that there was going to be a shortfall, and we will do the same thing. New South Wales has 36 000 teachers who are not employed and Queensland has 16 000. We will look at a supply of teachers from interstate as well as overseas.

Mr P. PAPALIA: On that specific issue, in 2010 I raised with the minister the issue of Helen Francis, who is a New South Wales teacher. She is married to a member of the defence force who was posted to Western Australia in that year. She had permanent employment in New South Wales but cannot get permanency here without starting all over again. When the minister responded to me, she said that Ms Francis has the options of applying for 0.4 or greater vacancy in an independent public school; the country teaching program; the metropolitan teaching program; and the remote teaching service program. However, none of those options acknowledges her circumstances which are, I would suggest, probably pretty common circumstances, in which teachers are married to defence personnel; we have half the Navy over here, so there are quite a few people. Can the minister not give Ms Francis and others in her situation an undertaking to do more to get cross-border permanency recognition? We now have the national curriculum and all these other processes in place; I concede that that has been going on, but can the minister give her a better assurance than just advising her to start all over again?

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Dr E. CONSTABLE: The member has raised an important issue—important for this individual and important for others in similar circumstances. Ministers are not allowed to be involved in the employment of public sector employees. I am going to ask the director general to address the issue that the member has raised, and employment matters generally.

Ms S. O'Neill: There are longstanding questions and discussions around mutual recognition between various states, regardless of whom someone is married to; in real terms, that does not come into consideration because for every one special case, there are hundreds of other special cases. Going back to where we started, and leading up to 2015, we will be looking in the area of secondary teachers because that is where the need will be—particularly in the areas of design and technology, science and maths. If the person the member is referring to specialises in any of those areas, we will certainly look forward to her applying for a position. However, I am not in a position, as an employer, to privilege one application over another; there is a process to go through, but we would certainly welcome that, and try to make connection on an individual basis with anyone who is seeking employment in this state. That being the case, there is a registration process that applicants go through and that we do not manage, but once a person is registered to be employed in this state—as the minister pointed out in answer to the member's previous question—there is a process and various means through which that person can seek employment. As the employer, I am not in a position to bypass all the established processes under the Public Sector Management Act and immediately accept someone as a permanent employee. We will have national certification of teachers; that is new work that is being done now and it should assist someone in that situation. There will be much less red tape involved in that movement and much more seamlessness involved in moving between states for the purposes of employment.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Will national certification encompass mutual recognition of permanency?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I think I am correct in saying that it is mutual recognition in terms of qualifications. The director general can answer the question about status of employment.

Ms S. O'Neill: It is not mutual recognition of anyone's employment status—there is a process to go through for that purpose—but rather mutual recognition in terms of qualifications and their readiness and fitness to teach. Permanency is another issue, and that is assessed once teachers become employees of the department.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I understand what the director general is saying in respect of the process and considering one individual as opposed to another, but in 2015 we will be facing a big challenge in acquiring the number of teachers that we need. We have government ministers making public calls for people to come to Western Australia, yet we have large numbers of defence force personnel here, including half the Navy, special forces people and Air Force personnel at RAAF Base Pearce, who have no choice about where they are posted; their partners either join them over here or stay in their home state and live separately. These are people we should be seeking to attract and keep in the state. What is the minister going to do to make things a little easier for them, rather than saying, "When you come over here, you're going to sacrifice something that you have over in New South Wales in the form of permanency,"—which is just as valuable over there as it is here—"but we're not going to give that recognition to you here. We want you to come, but we want you to go back to being one of the mob that comes out of the graduation system each year."?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I will ask the director general to continue her remarks on this issue.

Ms S. O'Neill: We will be proactive, and it cannot be left until 2015. We are going to be very proactive in terms of recruitment. We have a range of strategies in place to make sure that the numbers that we need in secondary schools are going to be there, offset by a number here that want to retrain and go into this area. We have recently had discussions with the defence forces on the very matter that the member is talking about; not only the defence forces, but other groups where partners of people are coming into this state. We want to make it easier. Over the past five years and earlier, we have streamlined a lot of our processes to ensure that. For example, it is now all done online, whereas previously applicants from the eastern states would have had to write to us and go through that whole process. We will be doing whatever we need to do; all stops will be pulled out to ensure that we have the appropriate supply of people in place. I am not suggesting that we would just say to anyone, "Go through the normal process and get on with it"; we will be as proactive as is necessary to ensure that we get the right people. In saying that, though, we also have to be clear about what is actually needed. No-one has ever suggested that there will be an overall shortage of secondary teachers in 2015; the shortages are in specific, specialist areas, and it is also a matter of distribution.

It is all well and good if someone in the Defence Force has a partner who is coming over, but if our shortage is in Kununurra, we need people in Kununurra. So I cannot go out and give a blanket agreement that I will take on anyone who wants to come to Western Australia and give them permanency. It is no good for me to have a bundle of permanent teachers sitting in Perth when I need them in Karratha, Newman, Hedland, Albany and

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everywhere else. We have a number of issues happening. We have supply coming through the university, so we have that issue to deal with; we have the specialist need for teachers—it is not a general shortage necessarily; and we have a distribution problem. So the supply and demand model around our workforce is very complex, and therefore the range of strategies that we need to have in place is also very complex. We have arrangements with, for example, the University of Tasmania, and other universities, so that we can pitch to the right graduates in the right specialist areas. We will be talking during this period, as I said, with any specialist groups, such as the Defence Force, that can represent to us some increased recruitment pools. But I want it to be very clear to everyone that distribution is important, and specialisation is also going to be important to us, and those things need to be considered once we have dealt with all of our permanent staff. I am responsible for 21 000 teachers. So if our permanent year 7 people want to retrain, or anyone else wants to retrain, we will facilitate that process. My first responsibility in the WA public system is to those teachers who are already permanent in the government system, and our redeployment of them. There are also other considerations for me that need to be thought through. That is why I cannot go out and give a blanket approval to bring in people on a permanent basis. It needs to be identified after we have considered the permanent workforce that I am already paying for now, and the primary teachers—not just the year 7s—who want to consider a shift into secondary teaching.

[12.20 pm]

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I refer to page 400, new works, the Willetton High School redevelopment and the issue that was raised by the member for Warnbro this morning regarding the priority given to Willetton versus John Curtin. In answer to that question, the minister made reference to the member for Warnbro's family. How was the minister aware of where the member for Warnbro's son goes to school?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I do not know.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The minister made a claim —

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I have no idea. Somebody told me. I have no idea.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Who told the minister?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I do not know. I cannot remember.

The CHAIRMAN: Member, what does this have to do with the budget? I thought we had been through this this morning. I do not think we are going anywhere with this whole thing, quite frankly, on both sides.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Mr Chairman, you were not here, but it was raised by the minister.

The CHAIRMAN: I was here this morning when it was raised, and I think this is going nowhere either way, to be honest. That is my personal opinion. So I think we should really move on.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Okay. If the minister is not willing to answer, fair enough.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: It is not that I am not willing to answer. I honestly do not know. I get told things all the time by people.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Who told the minister?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I have no idea.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The minister has no idea?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I cannot remember who told me.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The minister cannot remember?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: No.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Someone in the Premier's office?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: No.

The appropriation was recommended.