

Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr John Day; Mr Nathan Morton; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Shane Love; Mr David Templeman; Mr Chris Hatton; Chairman; Mr Peter Tinley; Ms Simone McGurk

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**Division 23: Education, \$4 133 590 000 —**

Mr P. Abetz, Chairman.

Mr J.H.D. Day, Minister for Planning representing the Minister for Education.

Ms S. O'Neill, Director General.

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

Mr J.F. Fischer, Executive Director, Infrastructure.

Mr L. Hale, Acting Deputy Director General, Schools.

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

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

Mr B. Roach, Deputy Chief Finance Officer.

Mr M. Clery, Acting Executive Director, Statewide Services.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Ladies and gentlemen, the clock says nine o'clock, so we begin. Welcome everyone.

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 he 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, 30 May 2014. 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 his advisers to the committee.

[Witnesses introduced.]

**The CHAIRMAN:** We will begin with a question from the member for West Swan.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** I want to go through some of the financials underpinning the budget for this year. I refer to the "Service Summary" on page 271 of the *Budget Statements*, and specifically to the item on primary education. What are the enrolment numbers underpinning the 2013–14 and 2014–15 financial years on which the government has based its cost per student full-time equivalent figures?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** Did the member want the figures for primary schools only?

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** I want primary and secondary figures. I am starting with the primary figures. I ask the minister to give me a breakdown of the number of primary students underpinning the government's estimates in 2013–14 and 2014–15, and also of secondary students, which the department must have to have done the calculations in the budget papers.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** Does the member want them for this calendar year?

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** No, for the financial years.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** Schools operate on a calendar year basis, so it would be a bit more straightforward to approach it in that way.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Sure, but the budget papers have a total cost of service and then a calculation of cost per student FTE. To derive that, the department must have student FTE numbers.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** I will ask John Leaf to answer the question as he has the details.

**Mr J.W. Leaf:** For financial years, we have to do a certain amount of averaging of enrolment numbers. The 2012–13 actual primary average student number was 185 154. For 2013–14, the primary average student number is 189 984 and the estimated actual figure for 2013–14 is 191 597. The 2014–15 budget estimate figure is 187 650. Did the member ask just for the primary figures?

Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr John Day; Mr Nathan Morton; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Shane Love; Mr David Templeman; Mr Chris Hatton; Chairman; Mr Peter Tinley; Ms Simone McGurk

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**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Yes. I will go to the secondary numbers in a moment. What was the 2013–14 estimated actual figure again?

**Mr J.W. Leaf:** It is 191 597.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Can I have the same numbers for secondary education?

**Mr J.W. Leaf:** Yes. For secondary education, the average for 2012–13 was 77 478 and it is 78 691 for 2013–14; that was for the budget, but the estimated actual for 2013–14 is 79 325. For 2014–15, the budget estimate is 92 555.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** To clarify, has there been an increase in secondary numbers from 2013–14 to 2014–15, from estimated actual to budget, of 13 200 students?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** That would appear to be the case.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** And for primary students, has there been a reduction, because of the year 7 issue, of 4 000 students?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** I agree that the member's maths appear to be right.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** I have a further question. Is there a figure that shows how much funding is required just to fund the net increase of around 9 000 students for 2014–15?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** It is on the page that the member has already referred to in the *Budget Statements*—page 271. The budget estimate for the provision of primary education is \$2 783 417 000, and for secondary education it is \$1 792 168 000, which totals \$4 575 585 000. That is an increase, when compared with the estimated actual for 2013–14, of a little under \$200 million. In fact, my recollection is that there is an increase in current expenditure of \$188 million, or 4.3 per cent.

[9.10 am]

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** I have a further question. That is the total amount allocated for primary and secondary education. I am trying to determine, if the government were to fund students at the 2013–14 level—that is, no change in government funding for students at 2013–14 level—how much would be required to fund those students. I have a calculation of about \$200 million. I am multiplying the increase in primary school students by the average cost per primary school student in 2013–14, and I am doing the same for the secondary students. If everything stayed equal, how much would the government need to fund those extra students in 2014–15 compared to 2013–14?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** Does the member mean if it were done on a same per-student cost basis?

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Yes.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** It is a bit hard to hypothetically use that because there is change occurring to year 7s, as the member knows, and there is a higher per-student cost for year 7s in high schools as opposed to primary schools.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** That has been included in my analysis, because I have used the average cost per primary student and the different average cost per secondary student. I am asking, as a starting point, how much the government would need to fund the increase in its student population just to keep up with its 2013–14 levels.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** I am not sure whether that has actually been calculated, but budget target for the cost per student is in the budget papers here. The full-time equivalent for primary education is \$14 833 per student, an increase from \$14 745 per student as the estimated actual for 2013–14; and for secondary students, the estimated actual for 2013–14, as shown on page 274, is \$19 700; and for 2014–15, the prediction is \$19 363, so that is a reduction of around \$340 or so. That is not unreasonable given the greater economies of scale and the larger number of students in the high school setting. I do not think we can conclude that there will be any reduction in the resources available to students as a result of that. There will be more students in high schools and, therefore, the administrative costs and so on can be spread over a greater number of students. I might ask the director general to elaborate on that.

**Ms S. O'Neill:** The costs that have been quoted in the budget papers include an attribution of all costs, including central, et cetera, so they are not all enrolment driven in entirety. We cannot extrapolate directly from student numbers to these costs because these include the centralised costs that are also fixed. We should remember in 2015, it is not only the year 7s, but we have the restoration of the half cohort; it is an unusually large cohort. I guess the basis of the member's question is all things being equal for 2015, but all things are not equal given the many changes occurring in the system—commonwealth money in and out, new primary schools. That is all part of the calculations. The minister is right; the budget papers express the cost per student for full-time equivalents for that next budget period.

Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr John Day; Mr Nathan Morton; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Shane Love; Mr David Templeman; Mr Chris Hatton; Chairman; Mr Peter Tinley; Ms Simone McGurk

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**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** I am always surprised when departments produce budget papers and then do not want to stand by the figures they produce. Basically, the budget papers show a reduction in resources per secondary student. I am not sure why the government would argue against that, because it is clearly shown.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** There might be a reduction in the dollar cost per student on average, but as we just explained, there are a larger number of students in secondary schools. We do not need to increase all of the administrative high-level FTEs and so on at the same rate as we would increase the number of students because of the economies of scale. The other point I make is that the rate of funding per student of nearly \$15 000 per primary school student and around \$19 500 for secondary students is a pretty substantial amount, and the highest in Australia, as I understand it. I think a lot of funding is being provided there to enable a very good education to be provided to both primary and secondary school students. If secondary school students cannot get a decent education with that amount of per-student funding being provided to them, then there is something wrong with the system.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** I have a final question just on this issue. I have done the calculations. I believe that if the government were to keep funding per student at the 2013–14 level, it would be \$200 million just on that basis alone. By way of supplementary information, could the Minister for Planning, representing the Minister for Education in the other house, provide how much additional funding would be needed for 2014–15 to keep funding at 2013–14 levels?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** The budget has gone up. The recurrent budget, as I said, has gone up by \$188 million, so that is probably not very far off from the member's \$200 million extrapolation.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** But can the minister provide that analysis?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** I am not sure whether we can do it, because it is a completely hypothetical situation. The world is changing in part because of the student-centred funding model being introduced, which maybe we will get to later. It is just a completely hypothetical non-real situation that I think the member is asking about.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** No, it not a non-real situation. As a follow-up question or as a final comment —

**The CHAIRMAN:** The minister is not obligated to agree to provide supplementary information. So if the minister does not wish to, that is perfectly acceptable. You can always lodge a question on notice, if you wish.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Or we can do our own analysis, and the minister can try to disprove it, I suspect.

**Mr N.W. MORTON:** I refer the minister to budget paper No 2, volume 1, page 272, the first dot point, towards the bottom of the page, the heading, “Meaningful Pathways for Students”, which begins with “Changes to secondary schooling” and goes on about the minimum level of literacy and numeracy; it also refers to students attaining Australian tertiary admission rank or certificate II qualifications. One of the bugbears, when I was working in the system, was that a number of students, once they finished year 12, would maybe do a stage 1 course, finish it, but not necessarily undertake either an ATAR pathway or a certificate II qualification. I think changes are coming in the Western Australian Certificate of Education as well, which will mean that students need to leave with a certificate II or an ATAR. What certificate IIs are available in schools currently? How many students are achieving certificate IIs by the time they finish? Could the minister give an indication as to how that may change over the coming years with the changes to WACE?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** I will just make some initial comments and then I will ask Sharyn O'Neill to elaborate. As the member indicated, it is intended to introduce a change from 2016, so that, to gain a WA Certificate of Education, students will need to either achieve an ATAR score of 55 or above or receive a certificate II. I will ask for further information about how many students are not achieving that at the moment.

It is also intended to introduce a requirement for students to meet a minimum standard of literacy and numeracy through an online assessment process, which has started off, I understand, and that will encourage all schools and teachers of years 7 to 12 to strengthen their focus on literacy and numeracy across all areas of the curriculum. As implied in the member's question, there is quite a substantial concern, which I have myself from my limited observation, that there has been a very substantial increase in the amount of resources put into our school system to try to ensure that students are well supported and given every opportunity, but big questions exist about how effective all that increase in resources has been, and whether the outcomes are substantially improved or not. I think a lot of people would question whether they have actually improved much at all, but the member for Forrestfield might be able to comment about that, having been directly in a school setting himself. It is a very important issue that needs to be addressed more widely, in my view, but I will just ask the director general to elaborate on this issue.

[9.20 am]

Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr John Day; Mr Nathan Morton; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Shane Love; Mr David Templeman; Mr Chris Hatton; Chairman; Mr Peter Tinley; Ms Simone McGurk

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**Ms S. O'Neill:** I will talk about 2013 for a moment because we are obviously still in 2014. There were 19 696 public school students across year 12 participating in vocational education and training in school programs. There has been an enormous explosion—the member would have seen when he was in school himself—in the number of students participating in VET. I am pleased to say that VET certificate completion rates have improved steadily over many years. In fact, in 2013 8 740 VET certificates were achieved by full-time students—an increase over the year before, when it was about 6 200. So, we are seeing many more completions. This is a really important point: it is one thing to enrol, but it is another thing to actually complete the course, to have the certificate in hand and to move off with it. Of those enrolled at certificate level, about 75 per cent are at certificate II level or higher, which is what industry is looking for—and that is terrific. That is up from the 2012 figure of 59 per cent. We are seeing real growth in not only the uptake of VET in schools, but also the quality and completion rates of students, which is important.

The kinds of certificates that students are doing varies from school to school depending on student choices, facilities and the competencies and skills base of the teachers. Remember that not all VET is done in schools. A fair bit of VET is delivered through TAFE colleges, training providers and privately. Before the new Western Australian Certificate of Education changes were announced, the department received \$3.1 million this financial year to train more teachers to deliver VET, because the new requirement for graduation is ATAR or a VET certificate. We will train more teachers and partner TAFE colleges, training providers and external providers to train and have greater delivery. It is a good story. It is certainly improving the number of students, quality and outcomes, but there is more work to be done to deliver on the new WACE.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** I refer to the “Service Summary” table and the line item “Total Cost of Services” on page 271 of budget paper No 2 that shows that in 2013–14 the budget was \$4 377 856 000 and the estimated actuals were \$4 387 910 000. I refer to the cuts the department has sought to implement on the school support program resource allocation funding, the long-service leave levy et cetera. What cuts have actually been achieved in the various identified areas? Could the minister go through those? For instance, with regard to the per student allocation of K–2 educational assistant, how much has actually been saved?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** In relation to the allocation of resources and the reduction in the specific areas the member referred to, putting all that in context, decisions were made towards the end of last year—later than desirable in the school year, I think everybody would accept—in reaction to the substantial pressures on the state budget. The education budget was growing substantially, but it was also to put in place changes that were logical to a large extent—in particular the reduction in the number of education assistants. I recall that the number of education assistants had grown over five years or so from around 4 000 to 7 000, which was completely unsustainable. Quite a few education assistants were in place to deal with anaphylaxis issues. There has now been training provided to teachers and other staff in schools to deal with that, so the assistants are no longer needed for that role. A lot of schools had got used to having the education assistants and got very comfortable —

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** Just to short-circuit the minister’s answer, I am not looking for a rationalisation of the cuts; I just want to know, as of now, how much has been saved in these areas? We can debate the cuts at another time.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** Is it just the K–2 area?

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** I have a number of different areas, but that is the first one.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** In the K–2 area, I am advised the amount of savings for education assistants is \$2.03 million, and that is expected to be achieved. We are only four months into the school year, of course.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** Are you on target to achieve that, as of the end of the first term this year?

**Ms S. O'Neill:** Perhaps if I could just clarify that.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** Yes.

**Ms S. O'Neill:** There was an estimated saving for education assistants in 2013–14 of \$2.03 million. Of course that only commenced in term 1 of this year, because of the calendar financial year. Our projection is that we would deliver that financial saving for the period.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** How much was saved in the first term?

**Ms S. O'Neill:** The \$2.03 million is an expression of the total financial year, and we are only four months into that. It is four months of that figure.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** What are the estimated savings in that area for 2014–15?

**Ms S. O'Neill:** I understand the \$2.03 million is a recurrent saving, so we would continue to save \$2.03 million.

Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr John Day; Mr Nathan Morton; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Shane Love; Mr David Templeman; Mr Chris Hatton; Chairman; Mr Peter Tinley; Ms Simone McGurk

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**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Given the saving of \$2.03 million is for 2013–14, and it commenced in term 1 and is therefore only a half-year impact —

**Ms S. O’Neill:** That is what I am saying. The difference is that the \$2.03 million is for the 2013–14 savings, and we could only start that at the start of the year, so we are only four months into that program.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** I know we operate in the school year versus financial year, but the budget is presented in the financial year. Would the full-year impact for the 2014–15 financial year be twice that amount?

**Ms S. O’Neill:** Yes, the \$2.03 million is for the half-year and the full year would be \$4.06 million.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** I ask the same question about the secondary stage weights regarding the full-time equivalent allocation for years 8 to 12.

**Ms S. O’Neill:** For the half-year, it would be \$6.96 million for the secondary stage weights. Using the same methodology, it would be twice that for the full financial year.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** Are you confident that it will be achieved?

**Ms S. O’Neill:** I am confident that these will be delivered, because they need to be put in place at the start of the school year. We have already put in place the strategies such that those allocations have been changed and they flow through the calendar year and therefore through the financial year.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Before we go any further, I remind members and advisers that if they want to ask another question, say “Further question” and I will give them call. It then goes to the minister and the minister gives the nod to whichever adviser if he wishes that to take place.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** As a further question, I ask the same question regarding base teacher allocations.

**Ms S. O’Neill:** Before I go to that figure, I want to be clear that these were always projected savings, and we are on track for those projections, but there will be minor variations to those savings. The base teacher allocation is \$17.87 million for the half-year, so the full-year effect of the financial year saving would be double that.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** With respect to confidence in the numbers, can the minister tell us the actual number of teachers—that is, whether there is an increase or reduction in the number of teachers?

**Ms S. O’Neill:** I will track back over the previous questions. Going back to K–2, the target reduction associated with that was projected to be 91 FTEs for the K–2 education assistants. The second question about the base and the target or projected expression of that in terms of FTE was 342. The third question about the target FTE associated with that funding is 117. The point I made about them being projections is because they are FTE, and part of that is driven by enrolments. There will be some variations in those numbers; they are targets.

[9.30 am]

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** I am more or less following on from that discussion. On page 135 of the *Economic and Fiscal Outlook* there is a discussion about the student-centred funding model transition and under “Significant Issues Impacting the Agency” on 271 of budget paper No 2 there is also mention of student-centred funding. The term “transitional funding” infers that there will be a period of adjustment from the current system to the student-centred model of learning, which throws up a number of things. One is this discussion on full-time equivalents. I do not know how and when the student-centred model comes in, but at that stage the whole allocation system will perhaps no longer be relevant, so I would like some comment on that about the projections and trying to work out what staffing there is in schools. Could the minister also explain how the \$10 million will be used and how the time line of the rollout to student-centred funding will proceed? Will it be a sharp cut-off at the end of this year or will it be a transitional phase with additional support for schools to accustom themselves to these issues that the student-centred model will bring? Wrapped up in that is a concern in my own area that two of the allocations mooted are made to schools, not to students—that is, the locality and the small schools’ allocations—and I wonder whether the minister has determined how they will be arrived at yet?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** This raises the subject of the change of model of how resources are allocated to schools and the move towards the so-called student-centred funding model. That follows the review undertaken by the University of Melbourne headed by Professor Richard Teese, and as has been widely publicised, the conclusion was reached that in very general terms more resources need to be proportionately allocated into the early years and there should be some transition of resources from the higher years to the earlier years to achieve that. Another aspect of that is that the process used at the moment, and which has been used in the last 20 years or so, is extremely complicated and there is a whole range of individual factors taken into account, some which are rational and others which are much more historical and probably not very rational in relation to particular schools. It is, therefore, much better that there is a transparent and understandable model put in place. So the new model will involve a base amount per student across the state, and then four other factors will be taken into account to potentially increase the amount per student; they are, Aboriginality, disadvantage, disability, and students having English only as a second language. They will be the factors taken into account, generally

Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr John Day; Mr Nathan Morton; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Shane Love; Mr David Templeman; Mr Chris Hatton; Chairman; Mr Peter Tinley; Ms Simone McGurk

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speaking. The determinations about how the changes are put in place for each specific school have not been finalised yet; they are under consideration by the minister. As the member said, there is \$10 million in the budget to assist with the transition already intended for schools, mainly high schools, where because the new model, if strictly applied, would produce quite a large change—that is, a decrease—in the resources available to the schools, and that \$10 million will help to smooth that out over the next year or so at least as a transition, so there is not such a shock to the system, so to speak. However, as I said, the details of exactly how all of it is allocated have not been finalised at this stage. In relation to the specific support for smaller country schools and so on that the member asked about, I will ask the director general to add some more information and to make any other general comments that may be useful.

**Ms S. O'Neill:** When the minister made the announcement, he certainly talked about the student-specific characteristics that Minister Day has just referred to. In addition to that there are school characteristics that will be taken into consideration in the model. It is clear to everyone that there are geographical locations around Western Australia that simply cost more, and we had a good example over the last few years of costs of very basic things in places like Karratha, but not only Karratha. Therefore, there will be consideration in the model for some of those costs unique to particular areas and they will be built into the model as well. It will be ensured that schools have sufficient resources such that they can run the effective and required program. In terms of training, I would anticipate that with any reform we bring in place the key people will have training made available to them. The final form of that training will obviously be a decision of government, so I am not in a position to go through those recommendations in detail at this stage. We anticipate, obviously, that principals, as the accountable officers in schools, be able to access training, but also the people in schools who really deal with the finances on a day-to-day basis—registrars, school officers et cetera. They will be required to undertake, and will want, further training, on not only the model, but the tools that go with the model, such as any subsequent IT system, and policy changes that might come as a result. The first part of the member's question was about how the concept of FTE might get expressed in the model, and he made a good point that we are between two models and two years, so on one hand in answer to the previous question we were projecting some idea of FTE, and we need to do that in the transition, but in the new model, schools will be receiving one-line budgets, and it means exactly that; that is, they will receive a one-line budget and out of that develop their staffing complement. This is quite a significant change being proposed and the government will deliberate and provide the policy decision, but in principle, around Australia one-line budgets are being rolled out across most states. That very much reflects the higher order principles, I guess, of models such as Gonski et cetera. The member is quite right regarding one-line budgets: FTE becomes a concept or an expression that will be less relevant to schools. Nonetheless, whether it is FTE or dollars, schools will receive sufficient funding to put in place the required curriculum programs and support.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** The question I asked specifically concerned small schools because I hope there will be no closures or matters like that resulting from these changes. I would like to know whether there is thought in the strategy given to the setting of benchmarks of minimum performances, duty of care and all of those types of issues to ensure all the existing schools are able to stay open and be funded to do that.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** I presume that the schools that might otherwise be the most likely to be considering closure would be primary schools—the smaller ones—and as a result of this changed model being put in place, generally speaking, there will be more resources available to primary schools and a reduction, to some extent, in resources to some of the high schools. Therefore, I do not think there will be the effect achieved of schools facing closure as a result of this decision. The wider question of what the critical mass is and what will produce the best educational outcomes for students in really small schools is another issue, of course, and there have been changes and amalgamations put in place, both for the metropolitan area and, to a lesser extent, probably in country areas. It is an issue that needs to be addressed, mainly from the point of view of what is best for students in having contact with other students and access to a range of courses. However, I do not think that will be impacted on by this particular issue. I will ask Sharyn to elaborate.

[9.40 am]

**Ms S. O'Neill:** There are two things. The normal process we go through annually and across all of the years of looking at school size, school operations, new buildings and closures continues on in any case. It is not necessarily changed by a new funding model. The member talked about duty of care standards et cetera, and any funding model, including the one being proposed here, must provide sufficient funding to schools such that they meet all of the set standards. We simply would not be in a position in which we would introduce a model under which schools could not meet the standards expressed in the School Education Act. The funding model would have to deliver sufficient funds to meet agreed union industrial provisions, for example, regarding class size and duties-other-than-teaching times—all the things that are in awards and in the enterprise bargaining agreement—and the relevant duty-of-care provisions, which the member referred to, in the act. In Western Australia we have

Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr John Day; Mr Nathan Morton; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Shane Love; Mr David Templeman; Mr Chris Hatton; Chairman; Mr Peter Tinley; Ms Simone McGurk

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always had quite a number of small schools. I am sure that we will continue to have some small schools, but we continue to look at those schools, their size, their operability and the effect on student outcomes on an ongoing basis. It is not a new review of those schools based on a funding model. That process that we go through year in and year out just continues afoot.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** I refer to page 270 of budget paper No 2. My question is about the transition of teachers to secondary schools as a result of the year 7 transition. In the budget, the government has announced that there will be 546 teachers in 2015, but is this not just what the department needs to meet the transfer of year 7s to secondary schools and keep up with enrolment growth? Can the minister give us an indication of the split of the 546 announced teachers between primary and secondary schools?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** I will ask Mr Leaf to provide some information, but we do not seem to have the breakdown that the member is asking for.

**Mr J.W. Leaf:** If the member would like to refer to page 273 and the section headed “Services and Key Efficiency Indicators”, he will see that we break down total full-time equivalents between primary and secondary. In 2014–15, the member will see that there are employee full-time equivalents of 23 153 in primary education and, over the page, on page 274, 12 987 in secondary education. I believe the member asked for the teacher numbers.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** Yes.

**Mr J.W. Leaf:** I am just checking whether we have that. No. Our budgeting for estimates purposes tends to be at a much higher level than that based on total enrolment projections, and the distribution of teachers between year groups to some extent will depend upon the finalisation of the student-centred funding model that we have been discussing, because there will be some degree of change to the allocations as part of that work, which is yet not complete or signed off by government.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** When is that information expected to be available, because this is a major transition issue? Is there a threat to not have enough teachers to address the year 7 transition at the beginning of the year?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** The answer to that question is no, we do not believe there is a threat to not have sufficient teachers for the year 7 transition, and the director general has just reminded me of the Auditor General’s report last week, which was very positive about the arrangements that the department has put in place. As I understand, it expresses confidence that there will be sufficient teachers for the transition of year 7s to secondary schools.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** In relation to the Switch program—I think that is the correct title—how many primary teacher numbers are confirmed to be switching over to accommodate the transition at the start of February? I understand that there will be enrolment changes et cetera, but the department must have a figure that says, “Okay; we have on the books X number of primary teachers who are part of the Switch program and will effectively, on day one next year, start in the secondary schools.”

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** I have some information, but it is probably better to ask Ms O’Neill to provide a comprehensive picture.

**Ms S. O’Neill:** The program being referred to is the Switch program, which allowed not only primary teachers to train and make the transition, but also some secondary teachers who find themselves in areas of curriculum that are no longer, I guess, sought after or used to the same effect. In that program we had a target that was made available. I think the target was for about 410 teachers to be trained this year, and we have 404 in training, so that is on target, and there is also some further short course work for the end of the year. So, we are on track to meet the target that was put forward for the Switch program. It must be remembered that every year there are graduates who gain employment during the year, and some of those are in training for graduate certificates with various universities now. We also have short courses. There is the Switch training of around 400 teachers. We also have quite a number of graduate teachers—probably 500—who get employment during the year. That happens each year. In addition, we have relief teachers or teachers on leave who have expressed an interest in teaching. The Auditor General said in his report last week that he felt that with the combination of the university-based graduate certificates, the short courses, people in the community, teachers available to teach and the graduates, we would be in a good position at this stage to staff the year 7 program.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** In regard to that, page 270 of the budget papers shows that the department has provided transitional funding of \$10 million for 2015. Is that related to the new funding model only or is it part of the switch of students?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** The \$10 million is intended to assist with the funding model change.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** Okay. I will have a question on that later.

Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr John Day; Mr Nathan Morton; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Shane Love; Mr David Templeman; Mr Chris Hatton; Chairman; Mr Peter Tinley; Ms Simone McGurk

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**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** I go back to the original question about teacher numbers. Is the minister able to tell us how many teachers the department has for this year and next year?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** I am sure we can tell the member how many teachers there are at the moment.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** And how many are budgeted for next year for both primary and secondary schools?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** It is an average of 21 000 across this year, and we are on track to maintain that number for this year, and there will be an increase for next year of 546.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** I would like real numbers as in exactly how many teacher full-time equivalents are employed this year and how many will be employed next year in primary and secondary schools?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** I will ask the director general to answer that.

**Ms S. O'Neill:** As the member can imagine, it is variable on any given pay date, but the information I have in front of me for the pay date as of 8 May—it can vary by hundreds, depending on whether it is a vacation period or other—shows a head count of 23 941 teachers, and that is an FTE of 20 712. That is at that pay period.

[9.50 am]

**Mr C.D. HATTON:** I have a question on the topic of the Switch program, raised by the member for Mandurah. I refer to page 271 of the *Budget Statements*. I believe the Auditor General's recent report stated that the Switch program is on target and going along quite fine and is ready for the transition next year, and that the questions about teacher numbers are all valid. There has maybe been a problem with the shortage of mathematics and science teachers in the past; is the Switch program on target to facilitate those specialist areas, minister?

**Ms S. O'Neill:** The member is quite right; the areas the member is referring to are historically more difficult to staff, but, as I said, the Auditor General said that the supply chain for those areas, although it would be tight, looks reasonable. Page 24 of the Auditor General's report actually goes through, by learning area, the demand and supply figures and the sources of additional teachers, including the Switch program. At this stage it looks like there is a reasonable match of supply and demand in those areas, but I think it would be true to say that it would be tight in the areas the member mentioned. But it is tight every year, and we have particular targets with universities and through Switch for those areas.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Back to the original question: how many teachers has the department budgeted for this year in primary and secondary, and how many has it budgeted for next year?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** I will ask Mr Leaf to provide what information we can, but I am advised that the breakdown between secondary and primary teachers for next year is not determined as yet; I guess that would be determined in part by the student-centred funding model outcome.

**Mr J.W. Leaf:** The question is in two parts. The first was how many teachers in total, and the number for the 2014 school year, which was to maintain teacher numbers at the average throughout an entire school year at 2013 levels.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Yes.

**Mr J.W. Leaf:** That was 20 902 teacher full-time equivalents, not headcounts.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Was that for 2013-14?

**Mr J.W. Leaf:** That is a school year.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Sorry; the 2014 school year.

**Mr J.W. Leaf:** We can give the member information on the averages we have experienced for 2013 and 2014 to date. As at pay period 10 in May —

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** I am just really looking at what underpins the budget.

**Mr J.W. Leaf:** We staff schools based on a school year, not a financial year.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** I do not mind having the teacher numbers by school year.

**Mr J.W. Leaf:** For school year 2013 we had 20 902 average actual. We are committed to meet the government's objective to maintain that number throughout 2014 at the same number of paid FTEs—20 902. As to the 2015 year, the budget provides for—this is an approximate number—546; at this particular point in time that is what

Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr John Day; Mr Nathan Morton; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Shane Love; Mr David Templeman; Mr Chris Hatton; Chairman; Mr Peter Tinley; Ms Simone McGurk

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the estimates would point to, but it could be plus or minus a certain variation around that. It will be 20 902, plus 546 for the 2015 school year.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** The average FTEs for the 2013 school year is 20 902; the average for 2014 is 20 902; and for 2015 there is funding available to increase the FTE allocation by 546?

**Mr J.W. Leaf:** Yes; we are talking about teacher FTEs only in those numbers, not total FTEs.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** In relation to the Switch program transition of year 7s that was being asked about, I want to provide a bit more information, if I may, to indicate the support that is being provided. There is a year 7 establishment grant of \$250 for each year 7 student enrolled as at February next year; that will assist schools to a reasonable extent. The government has committed \$258 million to the project as a whole, including \$230 million to accommodate year 7 students in the secondary school locations. Twenty-nine secondary schools are receiving additional accommodation, and there is \$22.4 million over three years for the Switch program itself, which is, as members know, to ensure the adequate supply of secondary teachers in 2015. There is \$6.1 million over four years for project management of the year 7 change, to ensure high-level support is available to schools and principals.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Back to those numbers: is the minister able to provide the primary and secondary split for those relevant years—2013, 2014 and 2015?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** I think we can probably provide it for the current situation. It is complicated; district high schools are neither one nor the other—they are both—and K–12 schools are obviously both.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** I know, but the budget breaks it down between primary and secondary; I have not done that, you guys have, so is the minister able to provide that?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** We are happy to provide some supplementary information to the extent possible. As far as can be reasonably determined, we will provide an estimate of the breakdown between secondary teachers and primary teachers for the current school year, 2014.

[*Supplementary Information No B57.*]

**The CHAIRMAN:** I would like to exercise my right to ask a question from the chair. I turn to page 278 of the *Budget Statements*, and about three-quarters of the way down that page there is a line item “Remote Schools – 2016–17 Program”. My question relates to the situation in Warburton—the Ngaanyatjarra lands—where the educational outcomes are far from what we would like them to be. For the students there, English is a second language, and obviously for educational advancement they need to be very fluent in English. My understanding is that the community is very keen to have students immersed in English language culture for six weeks at a time, similar to what is done at Woolaning Homeland Christian College in the Northern Territory. I am just wondering whether there has been any progress; is that what this line item is about or is that a different program?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** Which location is the member referring to?

**The CHAIRMAN:** Warburton or the Ngaanyatjarra lands; I think the Ngaanyatjarra Lands School is the term used.

**Ms S. O’Neill:** The initiative that the Chair is referring to is not expressed in the budget papers; that line item does not refer to that issue. I went and met with some of the Ngaanyatjarra council members who expressed, together with us, their concern about the outcomes particularly of the secondary students in the area. There are multilayered issues, as the Chair would be aware. They have some students who leave the lands and go into some areas of boarding with mixed results for a range of reasons, including the disconnection with land and family. Some of the lands council members asked if we would contemplate having an on country–off country immersion process similar to the one the Chair is describing of perhaps six or eight weeks for girls and boys, so we have been working with some members of the lands council on various options. At this stage that is a continuing discussion, but we are spending quite a bit of time with them working through what the expected outcomes would be, what we could or could not deliver, what is reasonable and what is required under the act in any case. It is a continuing discussion; it is probably more than a discussion, we are in quite deep discussions with them about what is possible. It is very complex, and I think because of a range of the other social, emotional, mental health and physical needs of the students it would require an across-government consideration, and so we are working with other agencies about whether this is a new initiative that we could together work on for the benefit of that very small number of students with very high needs.

[10.00 am]

**The CHAIRMAN:** So what is the remote schools 2016–17 program about? That is on page 278, about three-quarters of the way down. It is only for 2016–17; there is \$600 000 in the budget.

Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr John Day; Mr Nathan Morton; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Shane Love; Mr David Templeman; Mr Chris Hatton; Chairman; Mr Peter Tinley; Ms Simone McGurk

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**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** Yes, it is a \$600 000 infrastructure project. I will ask Mr Fischer to provide a bit more detail.

**Mr J.F. Fischer:** The remote school item is to provide facilities, such as new transportables, in remote communities so that those communities can provide schooling. As the Chairman is aware, education changes depending on where people might be or move to, so that is the allocation to allow those facilities to be provided.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** I return to the issue of cuts; I might ask for a response by way of supplementary information, but before I do that, I will ask another question relating to the funding issue. There is \$188 million in new recurrent funding. If we take into account the extra students coming into the system and the transition of year 7s to high school—I know that part of that will be capital funding, but some of it will have to be recurrent—would it be true to say that actual net funding per student will be decreased in the next financial year?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** The actual estimated amount per student, which we referred to earlier, increases for primary school students up to \$14 833, and for secondary students, a marginal decrease per student from \$19 700 to \$19 363 per year. That is the estimate for the next calendar year and that is on page 274. That is not a big change; it is, as I said, explained largely by the fact that there will be more students in secondary schools because of the year 7s and there are greater economies of scale as far as the administrative overheads are concerned. As I mentioned earlier, the rate of funding per student on behalf of taxpayers in this state is the highest in Australia; it is a substantial amount, and there is no good reason why a very good education cannot be provided with that amount of funding, in my view, for both primary and secondary school students.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** Of course, as we know, the cost of education in Western Australia is higher because of remote areas. With regard to the funding issue, what were the average student levels in 2013 and 2014?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** Does the member mean numbers of students?

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** Yes.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** While we are looking that up, I am reminded that Western Australian secondary schools are apparently regarded as the least efficient in terms of the student-to-teacher ratio. I will ask the director general to elaborate on that. We want to ensure that we have the best possible outcomes for students being educated and preparing themselves for the wider world, but we also have a responsibility, as I am sure the member will agree, to ensure that there is efficient and value-for-money use of taxpayers' funds. There is debate about levels of state debt, whether there is a deficit or a surplus, and where funds should be allocated for a whole range of other needs in the community, so it is all part of that balancing act and we want to ensure that there are effective outcomes for our schools as well as good, value-for-money use of the large amount of taxpayer funding being provided. That is the overall comment, but I will ask the director general to provide further comment on that aspect.

**Ms S. O'Neill:** When the member asked about levels, was he asking for the number of both primary and secondary students, including K and P? Okay, for 2014, based on semester 1 data, we have for K and P 48 600 students, public only; and for years 1 to 7 it is 155 000, to round it up. For public schools, years 8 to 12, on semester 1 data, it is 80 200, so total public first semester data is 283 739.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** And 2013?

**Ms S. O'Neill:** The comparative figures for total public in 2013 in the same period—these are full-time students—is 276 275. For K and P for the same period in 2013 it was 48 330; for public years 1 to 7, 149 381; and for public years 8 to 12, 78 564.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** Could I ask the director general to repeat the total figure for 2014?

**Ms S. O'Neill:** The total figure, public only, for first semester 2013 was 276 275, and the same time frame for 2014 was 283 739. That is from our census. There were around an additional 7 400 public school students, based on a semester 1 comparison.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** I will leave it up to the minister whether he wants to respond to this via supplementary information. I refer to the various areas that the government has listed as areas in which it seeks to make savings with regard to the levels that were provided to the Education and Health Standing Committee. I may not have explained myself properly, but what I want is the actual savings that have been made for term 1, 2014, in all those areas, not the projected savings.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** The assessments are not done on a term-by-term basis; they are done across the whole year —

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** But the minister must have an idea of the savings.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** Roughly speaking, it would be a quarter of the total year projection, given that there are four terms in any year.

Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr John Day; Mr Nathan Morton; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Shane Love; Mr David Templeman; Mr Chris Hatton; Chairman; Mr Peter Tinley; Ms Simone McGurk

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**Dr A.D. BUTI:** Is the minister able to provide by way of supplementary information—even if it is not done term-by-term—the current savings? There must be a running tally; good governance would demand that the minister would want to know that those savings are being accomplished. Can the minister provide, by way of supplementary information, the actual savings that have been made in the various identified areas from which the government has sought to cut funding?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** We agree to provide what information can reasonably be determined about the expected savings in the current financial year, which we are getting close to the end of. It will be an estimate of savings that we have been able to achieve. The department will produce a balanced budget at the end of the financial year, so it is on track to achieve all of that. I recall, of course, that the funding increase for the current financial year, 2013–14, was \$300 million. There was also a substantial increase last year, and it will go up by another \$188 million in 2014–15. The department is operating within that context; there is substantial growth overall, but within some specific areas there are obviously some savings, so we will provide by way of supplementary information as much as is reasonably possible to determine.

[10.10 am]

[*Supplementary Information No B58.*]

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** I have a follow-up question about the cuts, particularly the long service leave liability, which is really a tax. That is one of the areas in which the most concern has been expressed to my office. Can the minister please provide any information on whether that will continue into the distant future or whether there is a cut-off point for that tax that has been levied on schools?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** In short, the levy itself, which was applied to schools in the past year, will not be continuing under the new funding model but obviously the department will need to make provision for the long service leave liability. As I am sure the member will understand, because of the very generous long service leave arrangements that we have in the Western Australian public sector, which is another issue, the problem is that there has been a substantial build-up in leave liability within the education department. Obviously, teachers need to be in front of classrooms, so if they take long service leave, they need to be replaced. Teachers also have quite a substantial amount of annual leave. Up until the last year or so, there has been a reluctance to take long service leave in a lot of cases. They have not really needed to because they have had quite a lot of annual leave. That has been a liability to the state. It is a financial reality that has to be addressed somehow or other. We are now on track to clear most of that long service leave liability of about \$290 million over the next four years. That means that teachers are now taking their long service leave entitlements and they are being replaced in schools. Somehow or other, that has to be funded. The arrangements put in place in the last year have achieved that. We are on track to clear the liability to a large extent, and I think that is a credit to the efforts that have been put in by the department and schools in the past 12 months or so.

**Mr C.D. HATTON:** I refer to “Year Seven Students Relocation to High Schools” on page 275, division 23, and the associated capital works. The amount that has been allocated includes \$42 million from royalties for regions, which is important in the sense that the capital works program is saying there is enough money for the year 7s to be transferred to the high schools, with classrooms and other things. Just yesterday I was at my local Balcatta Senior High School.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Could I have a question please, member.

**Mr C.D. HATTON:** Is enough funding being allocated for play areas for the culture of year 7s going to high schools?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** I will ask for an expert comment on that in a moment but first I will provide a bit more background. As I mentioned earlier, almost \$230 million has been allocated to fund the relocation of year 7 students. Twenty-nine schools are receiving money for capital works to provide additional accommodation. Four of those projects have been completed. They are at Byford Secondary College, Broome Senior High School, Carine Senior High School and Wanneroo Senior High School. The other 25 schools are on schedule to be completed by December this year. I will ask an educational expert to comment on the specific arrangements for year 7 students to have their play time. Obviously, they are moving into a secondary school situation so it will be a different setting from the primary schools that they have been used to. With the change in school-age entry that has occurred over the past 12 years or so, on average they are now six months older.

**Ms S. O’Neill:** An audit of each school’s facilities and their capacity to take in those year 7 students was carried out in broad terms. By and large, the capital works are for classroom blocks and specialist facilities. An assessment was done of the area of schools. Many of our secondary schools are on good sized land, remembering that, unlike primary schools, they do not so much have play areas but physical space, including gymnasiums. A couple of our schools have swimming pools et cetera. Quite a number of our senior high schools

Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr John Day; Mr Nathan Morton; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Shane Love; Mr David Templeman; Mr Chris Hatton; Chairman; Mr Peter Tinley; Ms Simone McGurk

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and schools have lost enrolments over the years, so they certainly do have plenty of space. When there is any issue with that, we have worked with schools. It has not been brought to my attention that we particularly have an issue of space. It does not mean that schools will not have to reorganise their space but certainly on the assessment that we have done, there is sufficient space for student movement not only in the playground, but also between classes and gathering space for assemblies et cetera. I am not aware of schools coming forward and saying that they have insufficient space. Based on our analysis, that has not been the case thus far. Obviously, if a school felt that it was going to be stretched, as is normal, it would come forward and speak to us about that. I will check to see whether we have had any further commentary on that.

**Mr J.F. Fischer:** The location of all the year 7 builds took into account the need for students to have breakout areas and areas in which to congregate in the recess periods. The planning was taken in conjunction with the schools to ensure that the location of the building allowed other space to be provided and utilised. That took into account the fact that in some cases they would combine years in their play space. In some schools there was some discussion about mixing the younger kids with the older kids, so the recreational areas are separate. That was all part of the planning for the year 7 build.

**Ms S. O'Neill:** A couple of large schools already have what they call split shifts for canteens, for example. That is more an issue of ensuring access in a timely manner because of the large number of students. That has not been driven by the year 7s; that has been in place in a couple of schools for some time. They have different playtimes, as it is called in primary schools, and recess times in secondary schools. That is more about access to equipment and the orderly nature of the number of kids moving around. That is not something that is driven by year 7s; they are decisions made by the schools because it suits their timetable better in any case.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** My question relates to current liabilities on page 281. We mentioned long service leave liability earlier. What were the levels of long service leave liability at 30 June 2013 and what is the expected long service leave liability at 30 June 2014 and 30 June 2015?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** The total leave liability at 30 June 2013 was \$823.68 million. I will ask Mr Leaf to provide some more information.

**Mr J.W. Leaf:** If we examine what the government wanted the department to achieve over a period of time, it was to bring our long service leave liability under control. We have put in steps and the mechanisms to achieve that. The minister quoted the liability at 30 June 2013 as \$823.6 million. If we were to look at the forward estimates and go to the 2017–18 year, we will see that that grossed \$834.85 million. If the measures that we were required to put in place had not been put in place, that liability in 2017, based on actuarial assessment, would have grown to \$1.1 billion. The department has put measures in place that will achieve a reduction of \$21.8 million in 2013–14.

[10.20 am]

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Sorry, which year?

**Mr J.W. Leaf:** I will tell the member what the saving relates to in a minute. For 2013–14 we believe that we will achieve \$21.8 million, which is a better outcome than originally actuarially forecast. That was against a target saving of \$61.9 million, so in 2013–14 we are falling about \$40 million short. That is partly because we have to stagger the impact on the schools by looking at secondary schools this year before the transition next year and then primary schools the following year. It is not possible for the department to tackle everything at once, so we have negotiated these numbers with Treasury through the estimates period. In 2014–15 the target saving was \$70.2 million and we are predicting that we will actually achieve slightly more than that, with \$78.6 million. In 2015–16 the savings target was \$77.2 million. We are predicting that we will exceed that quite substantially as we make inroads over those previous years, with a reduction of \$97.7 million. Over those four years, that will achieve a saving of \$282 million compared with the target of \$293 million. We will still be about \$11 million short at that stage, but to be honest, over that period that number really is not that consequential.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** In simple terms, as I understand it, most of the long service leave liability will be cleared over that time. The large figure that I gave at the beginning includes normal annual leave, so obviously that will not change.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** I have a follow-up question. The overall leave liability as of June 2013 was \$823.6 million. There was a target saving for 2013–14 of \$60 million and the department is achieving \$21 million.

**Mr J.W. Leaf:** That is right. There was a target savings strategy, which appeared in last year's budget estimates, of \$61.9 million.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** What is the expected overall leave liability for June 2014 compared with the \$823.6 million figure for June 2013?

Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr John Day; Mr Nathan Morton; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Shane Love; Mr David Templeman; Mr Chris Hatton; Chairman; Mr Peter Tinley; Ms Simone McGurk

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**Mr J.W. Leaf:** Is the member asking for the 2013–14 estimated actual figure?

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Yes.

**Mr J.W. Leaf:** There are two numbers on page 281.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Does that combine the current and non-current liabilities?

**Mr J.W. Leaf:** Yes. I refer to the item on “Employee provisions” under “Current Liabilities” on page 281 of the *Budget Statements*, which has a figure of \$689 million, and to the item on “Employee provisions” under “Non-current Liabilities”, which has a figure of \$174 million, so that is \$850 million or thereabouts.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** That is fine; if those numbers are there, I can add them up. I want to ask a follow-up question in relation to the management of leave liability. There was a program of levying each school per employee to cover the cost of the additional leave liability. What has been said now is that the levy will continue for the 2014 calendar year but will not be there for 2015; is that correct?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** It was a requirement for schools to contribute to part of the cost, not the whole cost, of dealing with the long service leave liability. That applies throughout 2014, but when the new funding model is put in place in 2015 that levy will not be applied to schools individually. Obviously, it will have to come out of the total education budget, but it will not be applied to schools individually in the way that it has been this year.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** How much will that levy collect in 2014?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** For 2014 it is about \$15 million.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** That levy will not be in place in 2015 but it will be taken into account when determining the per student allocation—so, in a sense, it will still be taken into account.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** It has to be funded out of the global education budget, which for next year is about \$4.6 billion. It has to come out of that—it has to come from somewhere—but it will not be charged on an individual school basis.

**Mr N.W. MORTON:** I refer to —

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** Before we go on I want to clarify something. The leave provision allows for and ensures that classroom teachers can take leave and that their replacements can be funded. That is an important thing to consider.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** I have a further question on that. What about non-teaching staff such as education assistants who may be eligible for long service leave? Is their position replaced if they take long service leave?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** Where necessary they are replaced.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** What does “where necessary” mean?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** It depends on each principal, I am advised.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** I have a follow-up question.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** Wait. This is very important.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I acknowledge that.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** Can I just clarify the question?

**The CHAIRMAN:** I had just given a follow-up question to the member for Armadale.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** I did ask the actual follow-up question.

**The CHAIRMAN:** He jumped in ahead of you.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** We will try to give a quick answer. I ask Mr Gillam to provide some clarity.

**Mr C.W. Gillam:** In terms of the replacement of school support staff who take long service leave, education assistants are generally replaced. It is only when a period of leave is to be taken and there is a sufficient degree of supernumerary education assistant staff in the school that the person would not be replaced, because there is the FTE to cover the absence. We carry some supernumerary education assistants. When a school officer who is part of the administrative regime of the school takes long service leave, it is a matter for the principal to decide whether that person needs to be replaced to maintain school operations. The discretion is entirely that of the principal.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** What about a registrar of a school or a person who is doing registrar work? Is the department saying that because it is up to the discretion of the principal, if that person goes on long service

Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr John Day; Mr Nathan Morton; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Shane Love; Mr David Templeman; Mr Chris Hatton; Chairman; Mr Peter Tinley; Ms Simone McGurk

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leave, that position might not be covered? The responsibility for that decision and the budget is being placed on the principal; it is not being based on the FTE and the grant entitlement that is given to the school by the department.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** That is the general trend that has been put in place over the past few years with independent public schools being established and a desire, generally speaking, by principals to have greater control over how the resources in their schools are used. From what I am advised, it has always been the case that principals make those decisions about whether particular staff need to be replaced, say for a month or two months, or whether there might be some multiskilling across their other staff and so on to fill the gap. This happens across the public service. In my own ministerial office, people go on leave and are not necessarily replaced. The responsibility is shared around in some cases. That is a common-sense approach to take.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** If they do not have teachers, do the students run it?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** We are not talking about teachers; we are talking about support staff.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** Including education assistants. I have a follow-up question. I have heard from principals who are not in the independent public school system that they are being told that they have to fund the leave from their own budget. It is all right to say that it is at the discretion of the principal, but if it has to be funded by the internal school budget, it makes it incredibly difficult. What is the situation with regard to a non-IPS?

[10.30 am]

**Ms S. O'Neill:** A principal can decide whether a person needs to be replaced. Remember that people can now take long service leave one day at a time, so judgements are made about whether that person will be replaced. Sometimes leave is taken for four weeks or longer periods. From my experience and knowledge of schools, they are usually replaced. Gardeners and Aboriginal and Islander education officers are not replaced when they take long service leave, which is a longstanding practice going back many years. It depends on the role that other support staff play as to whether or not they are replaced when they go on long service leave; indeed, not every education assistant is designated to work with a student, because they have varying roles. If an education assistant spends one day a week on resource development, it is conceivable that that person will not be replaced.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** That is now a luxury for most schools in my area.

**Ms S. O'Neill:** Actually, it is the choice of most schools, rather than a luxury, about where they put their priorities. The point is that the decision is made by the school. If a school support staff member goes on leave and is replaced, the replacement staff member is funded from central salaries; there is no impost on the school to scrape together the funding. Leave is an entitlement; if they go on leave and are replaced, the school is funded for it.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** That is absolute rubbish! I will not announce it now, but later I will point out to the director general the school in my electorate at which the principal has been told to fund the replacement staff member from his internal budget; and, it is not an independent public school.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** For what position?

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** For an education assistant in front of the classroom. The luxury of being able to do research or whatever the minister talked about does not exist—what a load of cob-wobs!

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** Given that an assertion has been made, I will ask the director general to respond.

**Ms S. O'Neill:** Given that that assertion has been made, I am happy to look at the operation of that school and how that information is being conveyed. It is long-standing practice that when a person goes on leave and there is no funding in the school—and it is not an IPS—the funding comes from central salaries. Perhaps the principal might need assistance in this regard, because there might be some confusion. I am very happy to take that individual case on notice and assist the principal to work things out.

**Mr N.W. MORTON:** I refer to “Additions and Improvements to Primary Schools” on page 276 of the *Budget Statements*. The list underneath that heading specifically refers to Maida Vale Primary School and to an allocation of another \$4.5 million in 2014–15. I have received queries from people in my community about Maida Vale Primary School. Can the minister outline the exact works that will take place at the school?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** The government has a substantial capital works program in schools, with the capital appropriation for 2014–15 about \$331 million, which will allow for the upgrading of many schools and the building of a large number of new schools, albeit there is always more to be done. Five million dollars’ worth of works at Maida Vale Primary School is under construction to provide a new four-classroom block, administration and canteen, an extension to the covered assembly area, additional parking and upgrades to amenities for teachers. Works are expected to be completed next year and will greatly benefit Maida Vale

Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr John Day; Mr Nathan Morton; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Shane Love; Mr David Templeman; Mr Chris Hatton; Chairman; Mr Peter Tinley; Ms Simone McGurk

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Primary School, a school that I know well because it used to be in my electorate, but is now in the Forrestfield electorate. That is part of the good news of what is happening at a number of schools. Other schools that are receiving upgrades include Beachlands Primary School, Meekaway Aboriginal Kindergarten, Wembley Primary School, North Cottesloe Primary School, Spencer Park Primary School, Albany Primary School and West Morley Primary School.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** I refer to the fourth dot point under the heading “Engagement of Students” on page 272 and to Curriculum and Reengagement in Education schools on page 136 of the *Budget Statements*. A total allocation of \$3 million will be spent on CARE schools over the next two years. Can the minister detail how that money will be spent?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** I point out that these schools are funded through the Department of Education Services. We can answer that better when that division comes on.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** I am happy to take on as supplementary information a list of CARE schools and enrolment numbers.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** We need to do that in division 24.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** In that case, I refer to the fourth dot point on page 272 under the heading “Engagement of Students”, which refers to family dysfunction and unemployment impact on student wellbeing and behaviour. Where in the budget is the funding for behaviour centres? Is it the government’s intention to close behaviour centres?

**Ms S. O’Neill:** There is no specific line item for behaviour centres in the *Budget Statements*. The minister recently talked about behaviour centres in the media and, obviously, with us, and is keen to take another look at what is being achieved at behaviour centres in the context of the total behaviour management framework and where they fit in in the way in which behaviour is managed in schools. We are starting that piece of work now. We obviously review our programs on an ongoing basis, but we will have another look at behaviour centres to ensure that they are totally delivering what we want them to deliver, remembering that they were set up for specialist support for students for whom all other strategies had been exhausted. Those students usually have multiple academic, personal and other issues. A lot of work has been done in these schools with some fantastic individual stories of success. The minister has asked us to look again at the 12 behaviour centres to see whether we are getting the very best out of them.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** Has the Minister for Education told the director general that he wants to close the behaviour centres?

**Ms S. O’Neill:** The minister has not told us that he wants them closed.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** The Mandurah behaviour centre is very crucial. I have spoken to a number of principals who are very concerned should the minister direct the department to close them. Will the minister provide as supplementary information the total budget for behaviour centres, a list detailing the names and locations of the behaviour centres and the current enrolment numbers for each behaviour centre in the state?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** We can do better than that by providing that information right now.

**Ms S. O’Neill:** I will refer to the 2013 summary data, because it will give the spend for a whole year. The total cost, including salaries, funding, superannuation, accruals et cetera was \$15.4 million. That is the total cost. There are 12 behaviour centres; there are eight in the metropolitan area. Given that the member asked specifically about where they are, I will go through those for him.

[10.40 am]

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** I would rather not take up the time. I am happy for the director general to provide that as supplementary information, as long as that includes enrolment numbers.

**Ms S. O’Neill:** Enrolment is complex in that students come in and out and behaviour centres do not have fixed enrolments for a year. We could give the member the number of students who have been seen, for example, in each behaviour centre over that period, which would give an indication of engagement.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** I would be very happy with that.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Is the minister clear as to what supplementary information needs to be provided?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** We will provide information about behaviour centres, the estimated total number of students, locations and enrolments.

[Supplementary Information No B59.]

Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr John Day; Mr Nathan Morton; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Shane Love; Mr David Templeman; Mr Chris Hatton; Chairman; Mr Peter Tinley; Ms Simone McGurk

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**Mr R.S. LOVE:** I have a couple of questions about the changes between what was the budget last year and what is in the budget this year as it pertains to my electorate. Given that there are not many people here to take questions, I might as well do so!

I refer the minister to page 276, budget paper No 2. About one-third of the way down, there is the heading, “Additions and Improvements to District High Schools”, the subheading, “Upgrades to Specialist Facilities”. The program amount is still \$20.5 million over the full program. That was the budgeted amount last year but during the year, a number of changes to the program occurred. Specifically in my own area, Gingin District High School lost an allocation of \$3 million; Toodyay, \$1.1 million; and I think Jurien Bay District High School, \$1 million. The fact that those numbers still correspond, and that there is a significant spend of \$10 million this year, am I to take it that those programs have been put back in place and will be carried out as originally announced?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** I will ask Mr Fischer to answer that.

**Mr J.F. Fischer:** The 2012–13 budget actually allocated \$40 million to the upgrades of district high schools. As part of the budget process last year, those funds were reduced to \$20.5 million. The reductions occurred in the schools the member mentioned. To go from \$40 million down to the \$20.5 million meant that works at Gingin, Toodyay, York and Yanchep were removed and the scope of works at Jurien Bay was reduced, so that the total program could fit the \$20.5 million. Those items are still being considered to see how we can fund upgrades, but that will be part of other budget processes.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** To be clear, have those programs not been and will they not be carried out?

**Mr J.F. Fischer:** There is no funding for Gingin or Toodyay in the current budget.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** I have one other matter of some concern. I refer the minister to page 278, budget paper No 2, under the heading, “Other School Facilities”, with the subheading, “Rural Integration Program”, which, in previous years, had been forecast to carry on. It has now been curtailed from the end of 2013–14. In fact, it probably finished at the end of the school year 2013. That rural integration program used to provide for schools, as I understand it, which had a diverse number of classes with a single teacher. Specifically I was led to believe from a briefing I was given by staff from the department that, although that program may be discontinued, we will still see a situation whereby, if a kindergarten student is in a classroom, an aide will be provided in a multiyear classroom setting. The feedback I have got from schools right throughout my electorate is that that is not occurring. Will sufficient funding be provided to ensure that when kindergarten students are present in a multiyear classroom, an aide is present?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** On page 278 is the capital works program, of course. Some \$600 000 for each of the next three financial years is provided, so that program is continuing. The member is asking about the recurrent funding where we have staffing arrangements. I do not know whether we can comment further, but I will ask the director general whether she can comment on that.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Just to clarify, the copy I have does not have any funding continuing.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** Towards the bottom of page 278, under the heading “Rural Integration Program”, there is \$1.8 million in total, and \$600 000, as I said, in each of the next three financial years.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Yes, okay. Good.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** Is all okay?

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** It is not okay, because it is not happening in the schoolroom. The schools in my electorate are reporting that they are not getting sufficient staff to put an aide in front of a class when kindergarten children are there.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** I will ask Sharyn to comment.

**Ms S. O’Neill:** It goes back to the previous conversation. The member is quite right. Historically, any formation of what has been called a rural integration program class, which typically is kindergarten to year 3, in a small school of varying year levels, would have accrued an education assistant straightaway. The changes that were announced last year for the beginning of 2014, changed the allocations for early year assistants, so that it was based on student enrolments, not just on the formation of a class. That change has already been made. There were occasions in some of those schools where there was a K to year 3 RIP class, but very few students in it. Judgements were made whether in fact a full-time aide was needed to attend to, in some cases, six students. There was a teacher and an aide in some classes. I have taught those classes myself; I know they can be challenging. I am not being demeaning, of course, because there are different levels of students and abilities in class. But the formula that was announced and put in place last year is driven on the student enrolment. The

Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr John Day; Mr Nathan Morton; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Shane Love; Mr David Templeman; Mr Chris Hatton; Chairman; Mr Peter Tinley; Ms Simone McGurk

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member is quite right, we do not ordinarily or automatically get an education assistant. That is in place, as we speak.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** I refer to the line item “Student Centred Funding Model Transitional Funding” on page 270 of budget paper No 2. I see that funding of \$10 million has been allocated for the new student-centred funding model over two financial years. Of course, this funding model has come out of the Teese report, which is supposed to be all about equity and a transparent funding model. From my understanding of the report, it also refers to a sufficient allocation of resources. If that \$10 million has been allocated for the new model, then from my calculations, if that is to be distributed among all the public schools in Western Australia, it will fund 87 senior high schools; eight senior colleges—so that is, 95 schools—and then 63 district high schools up to year 10. That works out roughly to be around \$31 600 per school. I am just wondering whether that will be sufficient to ensure that this new student-centred funding model can operate in the manner in which the government has indicated. Who will be eligible for that funding and how will it be spent?

[10.50 am]

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** I made some comment on this earlier, but just to explain further; it is a total of \$10 million, so it applies to the 2015 school year, which is, of course, across two financial years. It is not intended to be spread around all schools. A lot of schools, in fact, the greater majority of schools—mainly primary schools—will be receiving an increase in resources as a result of the new model. This \$10 million is to assist in the transition at schools that, because of the new model, would otherwise face a much more substantial change or reduction in their allocation because of the agreed model that Teese has recommended by which, generally speaking, more resources need to be put into the early years with not as many resources going into the upper level years in some cases. It is to smooth out the transition in some schools that would otherwise face a much bigger change, and generally speaking, if not entirely, this \$10 million would therefore be applied to secondary schools.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** Will the minister be able to provide either now or by way of supplementary information the name of the schools that will be the beneficiaries of this \$10 million and how much each of those schools will receive?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** No, I cannot because that has not been finally decided as yet. The minister is working through all that at the moment and I am sure he will make an announcement when the deliberations are concluded, but they have not been decided yet so I cannot provide that information. Just before the follow-up question, I reiterate that additional funding is being provided for training school staff in relation to this new model.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** As the minister said, it has not been determined exactly how many schools and which schools will require this funding. What if it is found that more schools than it was first assumed would need the funding required? What will be done; will the government go over and above this \$10 million to provide additional funding?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** I do not expect so; this has been approved as part of the overall state budget process. If the minister happens to think there is some compelling case for why more is needed, I guess it can always be argued for. But we need to operate within the constraints of the total state budget, which is growing, but under a lot of pressure for all the reasons we know in relation to the amount of revenue available in the state, the share we get out of GST, the problem of the Australian dollar staying high and iron ore prices becoming lower. That all feeds into the budgets for all state government agencies. If there is a compelling case about where the impact of the new model will have a disproportionate or unreasonable effect, it will be considered, but generally speaking the schools will be funded out of this \$10 million. Generally, secondary schools will benefit from this—probably the largest secondary schools.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** The budget is under immense pressure and I am sure the money spent on Muja would have gone very nicely in the education budget.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** That will be recovered through electricity generation; the project is being made to work.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** Can the minister please inform us when the student-centred funding model will be made public?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** I cannot say exactly, but it is expected to be in the next two months. Schools need that information by the start of term 3. That is the expectation but obviously it needs to be considered within the government.

**Mr C.D. HATTON:** I refer to “New Primary Schools” on page 274 of the *Budget Statements*. Reference is made to the allocation of schools to be completed—four schools, I think—by 2016, and others are in progress. Could the minister please state the government’s investment for new primary schools from 2015 to 2017? There is a figure in the forward estimates of \$28 741 000, but could the minister give me an idea about that projected across, taking into account the growing population of students in new primary schools for that period?

Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr John Day; Mr Nathan Morton; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Shane Love; Mr David Templeman; Mr Chris Hatton; Chairman; Mr Peter Tinley; Ms Simone McGurk

---

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** As I mentioned earlier, there is a substantial capital works program for new schools and school upgrades in this year's budget, in particular for primary schools. Between 2015 and 2017 there will be \$168 million provided for 12 new primary schools, 11 of which are in the metropolitan area. Next year four new primary schools will open. They will be at Golden Bay; Smirk Road, Baldivis; and north Broome; and there will also be the completion of the Lakelands Primary School. Those new schools will provide relief for the existing schools at Settlers, Makybe Rise, Meadow Springs and Roebuck, in Broome. In 2016 another four private schools will open in the rapidly growing areas of Alkimos—the Trinity area specifically—The Rivergums in Baldivis, Annie's landing in Ellenbrook, and Harrisdale, at a total cost of \$56 million. In 2017 four new primary schools will open: in south Alkimos; Kerosene Lane, Baldivis; Caversham; and east Landsdale. Obviously, the new schools construction program will continue past that date, but that is what is happening in the next three years.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** Just on this point, referring to "New Primary Schools" on page 274, Lakelands Primary School will be completed by the end of the year to open fully in February. Only kindergarten and preprimary classes are now operational. Given the experience of growth that occurred in north Mandurah, with Meadow Springs Primary School having a population of, I think, 1 000 students now, and given that the department has indicated that by 2016 Lakelands Primary School could in fact have a population upwards of 800 students—it is projected—why is there not planning now for another school in north Mandurah? Why is that not happening given what we now know was exponential growth and the problems associated with Meadow Springs Primary School? The second part of the question is: where is the planning at for Lakelands senior high school, which is in the north west of the Lakelands locality?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** I am not familiar with the detail of the planning for the north Mandurah area, but I am sure John Fischer is, so maybe he can provide a bit more information about what is being thought about further in the north Mandurah area and in relation to Lakelands senior high school.

**Mr J.F. Fischer:** We analyse the growth in student numbers of existing schools and also look at what is happening with the development around schools, particularly housing development. That assessment gives us an idea of where the priorities for new schools should be, the location where we would like to establish a new school and perhaps the timing of that. Lakelands and Meadow Springs have been growth areas that probably have surprised us a bit, particularly Meadow Springs, but Lakelands Primary School will provide relief for that. I am not sure about the prediction of 800 students; I will have to assess that number. Certainly the growth areas we have identified have been provided for in the budget, those around Baldivis and Alkimos in particular, and that is why a number of new schools are being located in those areas. I am not quite sure what the question was about the high school. We have identified a high school site, as the member indicated, just north of the Lakelands Primary School site. We are planning for that at the moment and negotiating with the City of Mandurah about shared land use in that area.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** Just further to Lakelands senior high school, I received a response from the minister only recently about Lakelands. The problem is that there are some decisions to be made on secondary education in Mandurah that will impact on the Lakelands situation and they are associated with the Mandurah Senior College, or now John Tonkin College, and the Tindale site. I understand there is a sort of dispute between the Department of Education and the Department of Training and Workforce Development with regard to whether a years 7 to 10 build on the John Tonkin site is being proposed. I really want an update on where this all fits, because if the decision is made to build for years 7 to 10 on the John Tonkin College site, then I assume that will impact on the Tindale campus site in terms of rationalisation or other use and on a decision on the Lakelands Primary School. These are decisions that have to be made, and I am very keen to know where the department is heading on this.

[11.00 am]

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** Obviously, there are a range of issues that need to be considered about how secondary education is provided in that area. I am not sure how advanced all of that consideration is.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** I will try to tighten up my question. Are there any comments on the proposal to build for years 7 to 10 at the Peel Education and Training campus, which accommodates years 11 and 12 at John Tonkin College?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** I understand that no decision has been made, but Mr Fischer will provide an update.

**Mr J.F. Fischer:** We continue to work with the Department of Training and Workforce Development to assess what opportunities there are —

Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr John Day; Mr Nathan Morton; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Shane Love; Mr David Templeman; Mr Chris Hatton; Chairman; Mr Peter Tinley; Ms Simone McGurk

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**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** The Department of Training and Workforce Development does not want to give the Department of Education the land. It owns the land and it does not want to give it to the Department of Education.

**Mr J.F. Fischer:** At the moment, it is a shared site; we have the senior school located on the Challenger Institute of Technology land, and with them we have looked at relocating the Mandurah High School years 7–10 to that site. The member is right, it is the Department of Training and Workforce Development's site and we have to accommodate its plans for growth and see what available land is left. We have not finished that planning process, but we are certainly a long way down the track. I understand that various comments have been made, like the ones the member made, but that is not the way that the Department of Training and Workforce Development has approached it with us; it has assisted us with an open model to see whether we can have a joint site.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** I am sure the Minister for Education and the Minister for Training and Workforce Development can talk to each other if necessary about this issue.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** The member for Dawesville should have an interest, given that it is his area too.

I ask one last follow-on question about the statistics on student numbers entering the public system. We have had a bleed over the years, particularly in the secondary system, with students bleeding from the secondary system to the private system. I would like to know the current numbers and trends with regard to this, particularly for secondary students. Is the bleed from the state public secondary system to the private sector continuing; and, if so, what is the department doing about that?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** In short, the proportion of all students in the public system has increased over recent years. In semester one, 66.2 per cent of students were in public schools. Last year, it was 65.9 per cent of students.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** So it has declined.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** No; the proportion has gone up.

**Ms S. O'Neill:** As the member mentioned, our market share has declined for many years, and we can track that right back to 1985. From 1985 until the last three years, we have been on a steady decline in terms of our market share.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** Is that for secondary and/or primary?

**Ms S. O'Neill:** It is total. I do not think I have it broken down. I will talk about the total for the minute. It has been declining for 30 years, but in the last three years our proportion of market share has increased. It is an interesting outcome for us. For the third consecutive year the annual enrolment growth for public schools was higher than that for private schools. Their annual growth is still strong, because there are lots of people coming into the state. The annual growth for private schools is 1.68 per cent, but for the third consecutive year our annual growth has been 2.7 per cent. We have certainly turned around our proportion of market share and there has been a lot of effort on a range of issues to achieve that. We can point to a range of factors; of course, one would be the economy, we always see changes in market share around changes in the economy; and, certainly, Western Australia has been the strongest growing state until this last year—I think we are now second—in the National Assessment Program — Literacy and Numeracy scores. Standards always mean something to parents choosing where they send their kids, and I think we have good stories around that. Certainly, through the Independent Public Schools initiative, when we look school by school, we see that there has been strong growth back into our schools. The member asked about these strategies. There are a range of these sorts of strategies that we would point to when we look at market share.

On the primary–secondary split, we have enrolment trends in primary and secondary since 1994. It would appear that both those areas continue to grow.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** Anecdotally, I assume the minister would hear from many schools—particularly schools in my electorate—about parents who are very happy with the primary schools, but as their child gets closer to secondary school they start looking closely at the options. In places like Mandurah, the trend has been that lots of parents are starting to take their children out of state schools earlier. They used to let them finish year 7, but now they will go into high school earlier in year 7. Is the department doing some real analysis of primary schools, particularly as we go into year 7 transition next year, and tracking the number of students going into the private system leading up to the transition and the effect that has on secondary enrolments? If this continues, I can see that we will get to the stage where we keep building wonderful primary schools, but the building of secondary schools in the public system will stagnate, because we will not have a strong flow of students. It is a serious issue, because we want to have good quality secondary schools. As we know, there are good quality secondary schools, but there is a perception issue out there, as the minister would be well aware.

Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr John Day; Mr Nathan Morton; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Shane Love; Mr David Templeman; Mr Chris Hatton; Chairman; Mr Peter Tinley; Ms Simone McGurk

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**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** As the member knows, there has been large growth in the options available to parents and families in the past 20 years. There has been a huge increase in the diversity and number of independent schools and low-fee paying schools. There is a pretty extensive debate nationally about whether that is a good thing, but generally speaking people in the community believe in parents having choice. A lot more options are available to parents these days; they may want to send their children to school because it is religious based or because of the overall environment. I think peer group issues are part of it; tradition may well be a part of it in some cases. There are all of those issues to deal with. The number of students in public schools, including secondary schools as we just heard, has grown in the last two to three years or so and that is a bit of a dilemma for the state government and taxpayers, because it actually costs taxpayers more on a per student basis. Funding students in public schools actually costs the state more than funding students not in public schools. There are some very good facilities in a lot of public schools, including secondary schools, particularly the newer ones and those that have received upgrades, but there are others that need further work to be done, which I would like to see achieved. It is a complex issue and there is a range of issues on why people make the move. I will ask the director general to comment on how much information the department tries to get about the reasons for people moving.

[11.10 am]

**Ms S. O'Neill:** We have information at two levels. Going back to the member's question about what we know about the year 7 shift, this year we did extensive enrolment projections based on where we think students will end up. Originally we looked at enrolment patterns. We keep enrolment data right down to each year level and percentage changes in each year level so that we can track percentage shifts. We need to be able to do that to predict funding required, for example, for the year 7 shift. We have quite specific level fine grain in terms of enrolments at year levels, and shifts over the years and between semesters as well, because there is some change between semesters. There is that level of information. Of course, schools are very much across the destinations of students, if the parents want to declare it, and whether they are going to go public or private. The member talked historically about the bleed, as he referred to it, in secondary schools in particular, over many years. That is why I point to the 30-year trend that the member talked about, which is the case. That has been shifted somewhat, and it is a positive move. In relation to the split between primary and secondary of that sort of shift, most of the shift happened for high school, and then sometimes during high school, particularly for years 11 and 12. Interestingly, since about 2010, years 11 and 12 numbers have been reasonably stable, so I think we have seen a consolidation and not the drift to the same extent that happened previously. It is fair to say that some parents still want to make that choice. They always intend to make that choice long before they come to us. There are some students whose families are in a different position and do not have the same level of choice, so schools have to be of high quality. But I am really pleased to say that that public school market share has changed and is on a positive incline.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** I have a follow-up question.

**The CHAIRMAN:** No. I want to go to the member for Forrestfield.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** Give the member for Armadale the call. It is the opposition and we do have certain responsibilities!

**The CHAIRMAN:** I know that, but I had told the member for Forrestfield that he could ask this question.

**Mr N.W. MORTON:** I again refer to page 276 of budget paper No 2, volume 1, and the line item for child and parent centres, which is just above the Maida Vale Primary School line item that I referred to. I see a further allocation in this year's budget for those centres. I want to get, basically, a bit more detail around those centres, where they are going and what sort of services they will provide to families at those centres and, of course, the students. Having worked in low socioeconomic index schools, I understand, obviously, the importance of that early intervention and positioning our kids to achieve their educational potential. If the minister could outline that in a bit more detail, I would be very interested.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** This is a very important positive development in the education system and also involves the Department of Health, the Department for Child Protection and Family Support and the Department for Communities, so it is an across-government program, but the centres will be located on school sites. It is well recognised that the early years of development are the most crucial for an individual's development. If children are missing out on gaining literacy skills, language skills, communication and the ability to interact with other children, and also if parents do not have adequate parenting skills—unfortunately, some do not—it is important to try to address that. These child and parent centres are being established for that purpose. The building program is underway at the moment. Some centres are under construction and others are due to be constructed by the end of 2015. As the member mentioned, they are generally located in areas of greater need, as identified through low

Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr John Day; Mr Nathan Morton; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Shane Love; Mr David Templeman; Mr Chris Hatton; Chairman; Mr Peter Tinley; Ms Simone McGurk

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socioeconomic status factors and so on. The locations where they are being provided in the first instance at least are Brookman Primary School in Langford; Calista Primary School; Carey Park Primary School in Bunbury; Challis Early Childhood Education Centre in Armadale; Dudley Park Primary School in Mandurah; East Maddington Primary School, which, I am pleased to say, is in my electorate of Kalamunda; East Waikiki Primary School; Gosnells Primary School; Mount Lockyer Primary School in Albany; Neerabup Primary School in Banksia Grove; Rangeway Primary School in Geraldton; Roseworth Primary School in Girrawheen; South Hedland Primary School; Warriapendi Primary School in Balga; Westminster Junior Primary School in Westminster, obviously; and Wilson Park Primary School in Collie. That provides some background. They are the first 16, and other locations are identified for a second group of them. I will not go through all those at the moment.

**Mr N.W. MORTON:** I will ask a quick clarifying question. Is the minister saying that there could be further rounds of these centres?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** The 16 that I have identified are the ones being delivered at the moment. There may be more in the future, but they have not been committed to as yet.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I actually went to Rangeway Primary School and I am now on the board of the school. I want to declare a short break, at the request of the minister.

*Meeting suspended from 11.16 to 11.24 am*

**Mr P.C. TINLEY:** I refer to page 276 of budget paper No 2, where I see we are getting down into the gutter—the toilet replacement program! I have a particularly burning question if the minister would indulge me: can the minister tell me whether Melville Senior High School figures in that program?

**Mr J.F. Fischer:** We have not committed the funds for that one yet. We are certainly aware of the need to do some work at Melville high school, but we have not committed the funds for that refurbishment yet.

**Mr P.C. TINLEY:** So it is not part of this allocation?

**Mr J.F. Fischer:** The allocations for toilets for individual schools have not been determined as yet.

**Mr P.C. TINLEY:** If they have not been determined, what was the criteria for coming up with the estimated figure of \$651 000?

**Mr J.F. Fischer:** There has been a nominal allocation for improvement works at schools, such as in administration areas and toilets and covered assembly areas, and that amount has been carried forward historically. It is a program amount, and projects are the identified priorities allocated to meet that allocated amount.

**Mr P.C. TINLEY:** When will the department know which schools will get the dough, and can I get an indication of when Melville high school is going to get the dough?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** Has the member taken it up with the Minister for Education?

**Mr P.C. TINLEY:** Yes, several times; so has the headmaster directly with the minister when he was gracious enough to visit.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** Can we advise when decisions are likely to be made about this year's allocation?

**Mr J.F. Fischer:** The program is usually announced early in the financial year, and that is done by the minister.

**Mr P.C. TINLEY:** Beautiful.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Page 272 of budget paper No 2 is headed “Closing the Gap in Aboriginal Education”. Could the minister outline some of the programs that are helping close that gap? One of my schools, Mullewa District High School, to my understanding, has an entirely Aboriginal population so it is a matter of some interest to me.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** I will ask the director general to advise.

**Ms S. O'Neill:** We have a range of Aboriginal education programs in place. They will be varied in different schools, but I will touch on a few of them. We have the Aboriginal early childhood speech and language initiative, on which we spent about \$1.5 million, as we will this year. That is obviously targeted support for students who have oral language and literacy needs and that would flow across some schools. We spend about \$12.5 million on the Aboriginal Tutorial Assistance Scheme. Did the member mention Mullewa?

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Yes.

**Ms S. O'Neill:** That school would be a beneficiary of that sort of program money. We have the Follow the Dream: Partnerships for Success program; the total cost of that program last year, for example, would be in the

Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr John Day; Mr Nathan Morton; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Shane Love; Mr David Templeman; Mr Chris Hatton; Chairman; Mr Peter Tinley; Ms Simone McGurk

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vicinity of \$3.7 million. We have the high achievers project, which has a focus on Aboriginal students particularly around science, and we have school and community partnerships. I was interested to see in some of our results that for Aboriginal students in particular between 2008 and 2013, the percentages—in public schools I am talking about—of Aboriginal students who achieved at or above the minimum standard increased by more than two per cent in 13 of the 16 assessments. That sounds like a small percentage increase, but it is a significant performance improvement for Aboriginal students. Mean scores for public Aboriginal students have increased by more than 10 scale points over the same time period. This is on the back of many years of very little improvement in Aboriginal education, so I think that is something that we should celebrate, albeit certainly as we continue to improve and work on it, because there is still a long way to go in terms of closing the gap. There are lots of strategies in place, they differ in different schools, and that will continue to be a feature into the future as part of the funding model.

[11.30 am]

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** The extra Aboriginality payment under the student-centred funding model will take into account all the existing programs. What happens when the number of students is insufficient to put all those programs in place? How will schools with a lower number of Aboriginal students be helped to address those issues?

**Ms S. O'Neill:** Under the new model, the minister announced that one of the student characteristic elements would be Aboriginal students, and in his brochure he referred to it as being a per-student amount. The member is right; it changes from a heavily programmatic response, but most of those programs were derived on the basis of the number of Aboriginal students a school had. Under the new model, there is a per-student amount, which is the day-to-day funding for all kids; there is also that characteristic of Aboriginality I just talked about. It is also likely that some schools will continue to receive some program money for particular items—for example, if it was specifically commonwealth funded or if it was a service provided on the basis of a range of other schools. These things are obviously yet to be finalised with government, so there might be some programmatic injection. The basis of the new model is not that schools are necessarily funded to maintain a current set of programs; they will make those decisions—that is the point of it. But they will certainly be funded to achieve all of the requirements of the curriculum, industrial provisions et cetera. In this case with Aboriginality high-cost students, there will be some supplementation on top of the normal amount received for being a student. We expect schools such as Mullewa, as the member suggested, would derive funding by virtue of the number of its Aboriginal students. We cannot guarantee that that means people will be able to do everything in the same way; a lot of schools do not want to do everything in the same way. They have been locked in to programs where we require them to behave in certain ways. That will all be evident when the minister and government announce the new model, but in principle we expect that if a school had a lot of—or any—Aboriginal students, it would get funded on a per-student basis.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** In order to plan properly for this change, what date are we looking at for the announcement? Things are going to take some time to be put in place for these schools.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** It will certainly be within the next two months or so. The Minister for Education is considering the issue at the moment and it will be considered more widely within the government soon. Schools need to have the information by the beginning of term 3, so it is certainly under consideration at the moment.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** I refer to “New Primary Schools” on page 276 of budget paper No 1; there is a list of primary schools there. Can the minister please provide the projected enrolments for each of the primary schools listed under “New Primary Schools”? Can the minister also provide information on when they will all have the capacity to take students through the whole year process, from kindergarten through to year 6, for each of those primary schools?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** The projected enrolments are obviously growing. I am not sure that we have that information here. When the member says “projected enrolments”, does he mean maximum enrolments after they are fully established, and when they will be able to take the full range of students?

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** Exactly, yes.

**Mr J.F. Fischer:** When schools are built, they have capacity for 430 students and have capacity from day one for the full kindergarten to year 6. Primary schools at opening generally operate the full range of classes from kindergarten onwards.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** Thank you; I did not realise that. Will all those primary schools have full capacity from day one—for example, will Baldvis Primary School have its full capacity from 2015?

**Mr J.F. Fischer:** That will have permanently built capacity for about 430, yes.

Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr John Day; Mr Nathan Morton; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Shane Love; Mr David Templeman; Mr Chris Hatton; Chairman; Mr Peter Tinley; Ms Simone McGurk

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**Dr A.D. BUTI:** Thank you. When we look at projected enrolments, not just for new schools, but for schools generally, there are some schools at which there is a massive transitional number of students per year. I do not think that is an educational problem; it is a housing problem, but how do schools cope with that? How are the student transitional problems managed at some schools? There is a school in my electorate that has 40 per cent change throughout the year.

**Ms S. O'Neill:** It depends on what basis we are looking at it; it is rare to have a 40 per cent change over a 12-month period, but it is not unheard of, particularly in those high-growth areas. From an infrastructure perspective, our quick response would be transportable buildings to accommodate them. From a staffing perspective, we monitor staffing right through the year. If a whole bunch of new kids were to turn up, which sometimes happens, we would respond, in negotiation with the principal, immediately. When I say immediately, if one or two or even 10 new kids come, it depends on their spread. If they go into a class where there are only 24 and it can take 30, that is not a problem. But if we had, for example, 12 year 7s turn up and we had to construct a new class, we would immediately respond with staffing. If we saw that sort of swing, and that would be unusual, then we would be working directly with the schools. Otherwise, on a year-to-year basis, schools project their enrolments. They are the ones talking to parents, so they have close information. On the basis of those projections, we give them preliminary funding amounts and staffing numbers, and we start planning for the transportable shifts reasonably early. Therefore, we are well placed to manage that sort of shift, but sometimes we get, for whatever reason, a massive out-of-the-blue shift, and we work pretty quickly with the schools around that.

**Mr P.C. TINLEY:** I refer to page 277 and the line item “Concrete Cancer Remediation”. The estimated expenditure for that is \$1.2 million, but when I look at new works, I do not see any allocation for concrete cancer remediation. Am I looking in the wrong spot or is it just not allocated at this stage?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** It would not be listed twice and this, as the member says, is under completed works. I presume the issue has been largely addressed, but I will ask Mr Fischer to elaborate.

[11.40 am]

**Mr J.F. Fischer:** The concrete cancer program was part of what was called the big four program for preventive maintenance, which I think started in 2011–12. This is the final expenditure on that program. It was derived from an analysis of the building condition assessment, which said that if we put our effort into particular areas, we could reduce maintenance costs, so that is where the program derived from. That program has substantially been completed.

**Mr P.C. TINLEY:** So there is no anticipation of rolling that program forward; and, if not, why has Hamilton Senior High School not received any funding when it is considered one of the worst in the program?

**Mr J.F. Fischer:** Priority was given to those schools that were seen to be the worst at that time. That is not to say that there is no concrete cancer at other schools. The program tried to address a significant part of that outstanding need. There will always be needs that are not met.

**Mr N.W. MORTON:** I refer to the first dot point under “Other School Facilities” on page 275 of the budget papers and the \$19.5 million that has been allocated to complete the state air cooling program. Having worked in classrooms that have air conditioning and classrooms that have not, I can personally attest to the difference it makes. Can the minister outline that allocation of funding and what it will deliver?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** It is quite a significant amount of funding—\$19.5 million in 2014 to complete the final stage of the air cooling program. It will cover schools in the south west part of the state. The program has been staged over four years. It commenced in 2011–12. The first stage was completed in April 2013, and it covered 206 schools. Stage 2, which is underway at the moment, covers 283 schools and focuses predominantly on schools in the metropolitan coast area and the south of the state. I presume that the rest of the state has been covered. The final stage of the program will be completed by 30 June 2015.

It is worth noting that all new schools that are built are air cooled. That is a standard inclusion these days. Evaporative air cooling is provided in most schools because it has a lower life cycle cost, it uses less energy than refrigerated cooling, it is less likely to overload the school’s electrical systems and it is also more environmentally friendly than refrigerated reverse cycle systems.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** I refer to new secondary schools under “Works in Progress” on page 276 of the budget papers. I believe there was a 2013 election promise of a \$10.5 million new facility for Yanchep District High School. It may be somewhere in the budget papers but I cannot see it anywhere. I am wondering what has happened to it.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** I will make a general comment. Is it a new school or an upgrade?

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** It is a new facility for Yanchep district high.

Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr John Day; Mr Nathan Morton; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Shane Love; Mr David Templeman; Mr Chris Hatton; Chairman; Mr Peter Tinley; Ms Simone McGurk

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**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** If it has not been funded yet, obviously this term of government is a long way from being over so it does not preclude it happening in further budgets. It is not included in this year's budget.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** I have a follow-up question about another work in progress; that is, north Ellenbrook senior high school. I understand that the government promised it would open in 2015 and then it was pushed out to 2018. Has the \$500 000 that was allocated in 2013–14 been brought forward? A total of \$53.5 million has been allocated over the forward estimates. What will that buy in terms of the size of the new school, and what enrolments will the school be able to accommodate in term 1 of 2018?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** I will ask Mr Fischer to advise on the expected final capacity of the new north Ellenbrook high school and what facilities will be there in 2018.

**Mr J.F. Fischer:** The funding allocated in 2013–14 will be used to commence the planning for that school. Ellenbrook high school will be built in two stages. It will include an education support centre when it is finally built. The \$54 million includes the first stage, which, from memory, would provide for year 7 to year 10—about 600 or 700 students. Ultimately, when the second stage of Ellenbrook high school is built, it will accommodate 1 450 students plus approximately 70 high-needs students.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** How many students will it accommodate in term 1 of 2018?

**Mr J.F. Fischer:** It will have accommodation for years 7 to 10, so there will be about 600 or 700 students. I am just pulling that number from the top of my head.

**Ms S.F. McGURK:** I refer to the additions and improvements to secondary schools under “New Works” on page 278 of the budget papers. There has been an announcement about amalgamations of high schools in the broader Fremantle area. What resources have been allocated to that project and where does that allocation appear in the *Budget Statements*?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** As the member would be aware, a community survey has recently concluded and public comments were asked for. That commenced on 8 April and finished on 9 May. I understand that the Premier and the minister will be hosting a community meeting on 4 June to discuss the outcomes of that survey and to consult with the community—presumably, the member will be there—on the preferred options for secondary schooling in the Fremantle area. No funding has been allocated at this stage for new construction because decisions have not been made and it is fairly early days to decide what changes should be made. Obviously, if changes occur, funding needs to follow.

**Ms S.F. McGURK:** The government made a clear announcement that high schools in the Fremantle area will be amalgamated. We think that will be Hamilton Senior High School and South Fremantle Senior High School. The decision to amalgamate high schools is not resource neutral; it will require additional money for that process to be undertaken. Can I confirm that there has been no separate allocation for that process?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** Not at this stage but I am sure it is well understood in the department and by the minister and the Premier that resources are needed to bring about such change. As we discussed in a grievance motion in the Assembly a few weeks ago, it is important that there be sensible discussion about the provision of secondary schooling in the Fremantle area and consideration of the best outcomes for the students. It would be right to say that the situation at the moment in which two high schools are less than optimal in terms of their student numbers clearly does not provide the best outcomes for students. It is understood that resources will need to be allocated. That is something that the minister will need to deal with.

**Mr P.C. TINLEY:** The Fremantle area is not the only area in the metropolitan area in a similar situation, with suboptimal numbers to provide the scale for delivering dual academic streams. We know that 1 100 is roughly the number, although the Premier suggested it was 1 400. I can only assume that that relates to year 7s coming in and a natural increase to get the scale there, which nobody on this side is opposed to. Given that Fremantle is not alone, is this part of an initial stage of a wider program to do similar things in that ring around the city, out to, say, 13 kilometres from the city? The department might have a particular view of the geography. Is this the first of a series that the department is contemplating? Is the department contemplating any other options in the other districts?

[11.50 am]

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** These issues are considered on an ongoing basis. Fremantle is not the first and it will not be the last. Going back to the late 1990s when Colin Barnett was education minister, changes were made to Maddington Senior High School and Cannington Senior High School. The former Maddington school is now Yule Brook College, which coincidentally is in my Kalamunda electorate, and provides for years 8 to 10; it presumably will cater for years 7 to 10. Cannington Senior High School was modified to Sevenoaks Senior College for years 11 and 12. It has been a pretty successful outcome for both schools in that location. The changes made in Geraldton have been less successful, I understand, going back to about the same time.

Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr John Day; Mr Nathan Morton; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Shane Love; Mr David Templeman; Mr Chris Hatton; Chairman; Mr Peter Tinley; Ms Simone McGurk

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Consideration needs to be given to other locations in the future. It is an ongoing process. The community needs to take a commonsense and mature view of all of this. We have had quite a bit of discussion about the large amount of funding that is being provided to construct new schools in high population growth areas and that what exists now or what was appropriate 50 years ago is not necessarily appropriate in particular locations now, so it is sensible to have change and a remodelling of how education is provided or the locations in which it is provided in a lot of the older suburbs. That is the process that is underway in Fremantle.

**Mr P.C. TINLEY:** I have a further question to tease it out. The substantive part of my question was: what other districts are actively being assessed?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** I will ask the director general to comment. We had a discussion outside of here about how education is provided in the Armadale area and that that is under consideration. I gather that the Premier visited Armadale Senior High School recently. Whether change will be made there remains to be seen. There is a strong desire on the part of the government, and I am sure this would be bipartisan, to try to ensure that students are provided with opportunities in contemporary facilities, as far as possible—the facilities of a lot of our older schools are certainly not contemporary—and through the provision of appropriate staffing, so that they have access to a range of subjects and support services that may not exist in smaller schools. I will ask the director general to make some additional comment.

**Ms S. O'Neill:** That is right. It is hard to say what is under consideration right now because we continually look at all our schools and their enrolments and positions. Clearly, we are considering Fremantle, and I think the minister has talked about Armadale. We have done work in Carnarvon to look at the beginning of a K–12 school and we have done work in Merredin, so those are examples of past practice where we have brought schools together. The ones that come to mind as being under the sort of consideration that the member has described are Fremantle and Armadale, but they are not new stories. It is not the beginning of a new program; this is just the normal process we go through each year to look at all schools.

**Ms S.F. McGURK:** The concern from the broader Fremantle community is that it appears that no additional resources have been put into this project, which will limit the options that are on the table in terms of consultation. In other cases where amalgamations have taken place, have they been cost neutral? If extra resources are required for this project, where will they come from?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** Generally, it is not a cost-neutral process. Generally speaking, a capital works program is provided for schools where these changes are being made. That is obviously a cost in recurrent terms. Ultimately, I guess, it depends on the number of students at a school, and if there are more students, obviously more funding is provided. It may be more efficient in the longer run to have one school where we had two previously, but that is not really the primary purpose for doing it. We want to get efficient use of taxpayer funds. That is a sensible thing to do, but in the context of providing better educational opportunities for students. Certainly, a cost is expected up-front. It has not been determined what should be done in the Fremantle area at this stage; therefore, we cannot make a decision on what should be allocated. That has not been done, but I am sure it will be addressed.

**Mr C.D. HATTON:** I refer to the bore replacement program under “Miscellaneous” on page 278 of the *Budget Statements*. One school in particular in my electorate, and I am sure it is happening across the state, is in need of a replacement bore. How is that replacement program going?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** I will ask John Fischer to advise.

**Mr J.F. Fischer:** The bore replacement program is a new program that will commence in the next financial year, so it is not part of the current financial programs. Replacement of bores at the moment is met by maintenance requirements, so the school needs to talk to our maintenance people through Building Management and Works.

**Mr P.C. TINLEY:** We might need to consider when we will move to the next division. I refer to page 276 of the *Budget Statements*. In May 2012 the Premier announced an \$80 million investment in stages 1 and 2 of Willetton Senior High School. In 2013 the local member claimed \$96 million for the rebuild and year 7 facilities, but the budget shows that \$23.1 million has been spent to date out of \$52.78 million in total for stages 1 and 2. Where is the \$80 million? How much did Willetton Senior High School get for the year 7 component? The government said it would be \$80 million. That is not shown in the books. Where is it?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** It would be a very large amount of money if \$80 million were being spent on one school.

**Mr P.C. TINLEY:** We would not mind a bit down our way.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** I could nominate a few places, too. What is shown on page 276 is an estimated total cost of about \$43 million. I think the member gave another number.

**Mr P.C. TINLEY:** It was \$52.7 million.

Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr John Day; Mr Nathan Morton; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Shane Love; Mr David Templeman; Mr Chris Hatton; Chairman; Mr Peter Tinley; Ms Simone McGurk

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**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** For Willetton Senior High School?

**Mr P.C. TINLEY:** Yes.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** I do not know where that number is coming from. Towards the top of page 276 it shows an estimated total cost of \$42.98 million.

**Mr P.C. TINLEY:** Okay; we can call my figure a typo.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** There is some additional amount for the year 7 program, I gather, so I will ask John Fischer to advise.

**Mr J.F. Fischer:** When the program for upgrading Willetton was initially announced, it was estimated that it would cost about \$80 million at that time to do the work. There was also an estimate for the year 7 provision, which was about \$16 million, so that is where the \$96 million comes from. In the current budget, \$43 million is allocated in the current program, which is shown on page 276 of the *Budget Statements*. The current estimate for year 7 works is about \$12 million. The difference between the \$16.4 million and the \$12 million is the benefit we have got through a competitive tendering market.

[12.00 noon]

**Mr P.C. TINLEY:** We will not see anything like the \$96 million that was announced because of the various savings.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** The question is: how much is really needed? I am sure a lot can be done with \$57 million or whatever.

**Mr P.C. TINLEY:** I would have thought so!

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** I would have thought so, too!

**Mr P.C. TINLEY:** I am trying to get to the real figure. What does the state expect to spend on Willetton Senior High School to complete stages 1 and 2 and year 7 works?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** The amount that has been allocated to this point is the amount in the *Budget Statements*.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** I refer to page 271 and to the top of page 274 of the *Budget Statements*, which refer to the total cost of service. In some respects this question goes back to where we started because it relates to the money being spent on schools in Western Australia, particularly secondary schools. As enrolments increase, there is, of course, the issue about how much funding needs to be forthcoming to just tread water. In 2014, \$337 less per student was spent on average. If there are 2 000 students in a high school, that equates to something like \$674 000. Has there been a reduction in spending per student in secondary schools?

[Ms L.L. Baker took the chair.]

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** What is shown here, as I mentioned earlier, is a slight decrease per student from \$19 700 this financial year to an estimated \$19 363 in 2014-15. That is a slight reduction, but it does not mean a worse educational outcome necessarily because there will be more students in secondary schools, which means that administrative overheads can be spread over more students. Having said that, the student-centred funding model and the recommended changes, which are broadly supported, provide for additional resources being directed into primary schools, generally speaking, and an acceptance that in some cases there is not a need for the current level of resources in secondary schools.

**The appropriation was recommended.**