

Mr Nathan Morton; [12.10 Pm]; Ms Simone McGurk; Mr John Day; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Chris Hatton; Dr Tony Buti; Chairman

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**Division 24: Education Services, \$444 564 000 —**

Ms L.L. Baker, Chairman.

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

Mr T. Werner, Acting Chief Executive Officer.

Mr J. Jurkowski, Chief Financial Officer.

Mr D. Lloyd, Executive Director, Corporate Governance and Resources.

Mr M.R. Brown, Director, Education and Training Regulation.

Mr R.B. Miles, Acting Director, Teacher Registration.

[Witnesses introduced.]

**The CHAIRMAN:** Thank you, minister. Member for Armadale.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** I refer to “Service Summary” on page 285 of the *Budget Statements* and to the line item “Regulation, Review, Funding, and Policy Advice”. How much, if any, of the 2014-15 appropriation will fund non-government schools?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** As I understand it, this line does not refer to funding that is provided to non-government schools, but I will ask John Jurkowski to advise further.

**Mr J. Jurkowski:** I refer the member to page 284 of the *Budget Statements*, where he will find the total cost of services of \$50.9 million, which is basically for general operating and for low-interest loans scheme finance and interest costs. The total amount that will be funded for non-government schools is in the line above, which is the “Administered Transactions” line of \$424 689 000.

**Mr N.W. MORTON:** I also refer to page 285 of the *Budget Statements* and make specific reference to the first dot point under “Significant Issue Impacting the Agency”, which states that the department will be administering \$3 million to support curriculum and re-engagement schools. Can the minister elaborate on how the state government plans to support CARE schools, and how disengaged and disfranchised students who attend CARE schools will benefit from that?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** This came up in the previous division under the Department of Education but, in fact, the program is funded through the Department of Education Services. CARE schools will be provided with an extra \$3 million as part of the 2014-15 state budget. In total there are 10 CARE schools, which provide education support for some of the most troubled teenagers in the school system. They provide individual case management for students who struggle to meet the requirements in the mainstream education setting. Students are typically at severe educational risk with a long history of very poor attendance and have often displayed behaviour of disengagement from predominantly government schools. That is an overview. As I said, the additional funding is \$3 million, or \$1 million a year for three years. That honours an election commitment and provides an increase per student of about 20 per cent above the base grant. Is there any further information the member wants on that?

[12.10 pm]

**Mr N.W. MORTON:** No.

**Ms S.F. McGURK:** I refer the minister to page 285 of budget paper No 2, that is, the significant issues affecting the agency. Could the minister tell us what the review of funding of non-government schools is looking at and the scope of the review?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** I am advised that work has commenced on this review. It is being conducted by the Departments of Education, Education Services and Treasury and will provide recommendations to the Minister for Education in October this year for consideration in the 2015–16 budget. I am advised that the government will continue to provide for students at non-government schools, on average 25 per cent of the cost of educating a student at a government school.

**Ms S.F. McGURK:** What formal mechanism is there for consultation with non-government schools or the stakeholders affected by this?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** I will ask David Lloyd to elaborate on that.

**Mr D. Lloyd:** The minister has approved the formation of a consultative committee that will include representatives from the non-government school sector.

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**Ms S.F. McGURK:** Will that include representatives of parents and friends associations in non-government schools?

**Mr D. Lloyd:** The intention, I think, is that that the committee would include members from the Association for Independent Schools of Western Australia and the Catholic Education Commission. The department and the minister have received a communication from parents and friends and have written to them to arrange a meeting about their interests.

**Ms S.F. McGURK:** I have a further question. The actual consultative committee has not commenced yet?

**Mr D. Lloyd:** That is correct.

**Ms S.F. McGURK:** Sorry, the minister may have said this in his answer, but when is the review expected to be completed?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** Yes, I am advised that the recommendations will go to the minister in October of this year.

**Mr P.C. TINLEY:** I refer to page 286, budget paper No 2, and the cost of review services, under the heading, “Regulation, Review, Funding, and Policy Advice”. The line item is “Cost of Review Services per School”. The cost of review services for schools has been halved, if I get that right. What was the government spending money on last year that it will not be spending money on in 2014–15 for review services?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** I will ask David Lloyd to advise on that.

**Mr D. Lloyd:** The figures reflect the way the efficiency indicator is constructed, which needs to be revised. So those costs are spread not as they should be over the number of independent public schools that have been reviewed by the department, but over the total number of independent public schools, which, as the member would be aware, is growing quite considerably. The halving reflects the growth in the total number, rather than the workload the department is engaged in. The department will be seeking to work with Treasury and the Office of the Auditor General to revise that indicator in the future to give a more accurate impression of the department’s efficiency.

**Mr P.C. TINLEY:** I have a further question, just for clarification. I am sorry, I am a bit slow here. There are more independent public schools. The department has the same money, but it has just divided it by a larger number.

**Mr D. Lloyd:** Correct. It is approximately the same money per school reviewed.

**Mr P.C. TINLEY:** Therefore, it gives the illusion—the impact is a decline in spend per school.

**Mr D. Lloyd:** That is correct.

**Mr P.C. TINLEY:** We will now reshape, if I understood Mr Lloyd correctly, the model by which we do this. Maybe Mr Lloyd could expand on that for me?

**Mr D. Lloyd:** The amount of resources the department spends on reviewing each independent public school has not changed substantially, and that is not reflected in that indicator.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** It would seem to me that now that independent public schools have been operating for three years or so, the program has settled down, and probably fewer reviews need to be undertaken for the schools that have been operating in that way for two or three years.

**Mr P.C. TINLEY:** How many independent public schools are there currently?

**Mr J. Jurkowski:** There are 264 as it stands now. I think the intention is that they will be increasing to about 509 in the next year or so.

**Mr P.C. TINLEY:** I suppose this is probably more of a policy question, but at what point do we no longer see review services as a line item at all? The normal governance responsibility and oversight responsibility that the department provides would just be folded in as part of the normal functions of the department. Why is it set out there as a separate item now?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** I will ask Mr Brown to advise on that.

**Mr M.R. Brown:** The intention at the moment is that, in policy terms, the reviews will occur at each point that a school completes a delivery and performance agreement with the director general. In 2012 we completed a number of reviews of the first schools that commenced in 2010. They will come up for a second review in 2015, which will add to those new ones coming on as well. Those that began in 2011 had their review in 2013. They will then be reviewed again in 2016, so it is an ongoing review program.

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**Mr P.C. TINLEY:** There is no intention to change the system. IP schools will always come in for special attention, as opposed to the standard, non-IP schools that are under review all the time?

**Mr M.R. Brown:** When the programs were set up as part of the accountability arrangements for independent public schools, the intention was that they would be required to undertake an independent review at the end of each of their delivery and service agreements with the director general. At the moment, that is every three years.

**Mr C.D. HATTON:** I refer to the outcomes and key effectiveness indicators on page 286. Under the heading “Outcome: Education and training providers, and teachers”, the fifth point relates to the percentage of teachers compliant with the Teacher Registration Act 2012. I note that it is 100 per cent, which is fantastic, but has the department had to implement measures to get to that point of 100 per cent compliance, and what are some of the measures?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** I will make some initial comments. The Teacher Registration Act 2012 has been in place for just over a year. There have been challenges in developing effective registration processes under the act. One of those involves the flow of information about teachers registered to schools and employers, given that it is an offence to employ teachers who are not registered in WA. There has been a lot of development work on what is known as the Teacher Register Information (Professional). Previously, there was scope for principals to get only limited information on the registration status of teachers in their schools through the register of teachers available on the board’s website, and this was a lengthy process for schools. Hopefully, it has been streamlined somewhat, but I will ask Richard Miles to provide a bit more additional information.

**Mr R.B. Miles:** The professional register came online in March 2014. So far about 350 schools have actually taken up the opportunity to engage with the professional register. Basically, the professional register provides principals and their delegates in the school setting with richer information about the registration status of their teachers, including, for example, whether there are any conditions on teachers as well.

[12.20 pm]

**Mr C.D. HATTON:** I refer to the first line item, “Percentage of non-government schools complying with registration requirements of the School Education Act 1999”, under the outcomes and key effectiveness indicators on page 286. I notice that the non-government school compliance with registration is below 100 per cent and is estimated to increase. Is that to do with teacher registration or is it a different registration under the act compared with the Teacher Registration Act 2012?

**Mr M.R. Brown:** The figure for the first line item is related to the registration of non-government schools. Every school in Western Australia that does not fall under the government school system has to be registered with the minister to be able to operate as a school in this state. It refers to those schools that were able to comply with the requirements for that registration. We have a program of undertaking regular reviews of those schools on the basis of the termination of their registration date to determine whether they comply with those standards, and, if they do, they are then re-registered to operate.

**Mr C.D. HATTON:** So that registration is quite different from teacher registration.

**Mr M.R. Brown:** Yes; it is the registration of the school to operate.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** I refer to the line item regarding the percentage of registered training organisations complying with the Australian quality training framework. As was noted by the member for Balcatta, there has not been 100 per cent compliance. What has caused that; which registered training organisations did not meet the standards; and which elements of the standards did they fail to meet?

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

**Mr M.R. Brown:** I need to find my information, but the figure refers to the number of RTOs that have undertaken a reassessment of their capacity to undertake training in Western Australia during the year. If they are not able to meet those standards, they are considered by the Training Accreditation Council to have not complied with their registration. In one moment I will be able to give the member the exact information he is asking for. There were eight organisations, and I have some more particular information that I am trying to locate. I cannot find it. If I can give that as supplementary information, I will be able to provide exactly the information that the member wants.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Can the member please repeat what information he wants?

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** As we know, RTO compliance did not meet the 100 per cent target. I want to know what caused it; which RTOs did not meet the standard; and which elements of the standards they failed to meet.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** We agree to provide that.

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[*Supplementary Information No B60.*]

**Ms S.F. McGURK:** Can the minister clarify something about registered training organisation accreditation not being compliant with standards? Does that apply to all RTOs across the training sector—all vocational training providers et cetera—not just schools? Does it apply to all RTOs in the state, not just RTOs operating in conjunction with schools?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** That is correct.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** I refer back to the part of the question that the member for Forrestfield asked regarding the significant issues impacting the agency on page 285, and in particular the first dot point relating to the curriculum and re-engagement schools. I know that the minister addressed some of this previously, but in regard to the \$3 million that is mentioned, can we be provided with a list of CARE schools that that money will be spent on and the enrolments at those schools? It may need to be provided as supplementary information.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** I will provide the number of enrolments as at this month at the relevant schools. Firstly, under Alta-1, which involves ConnectEd, Canning Vale, Malaga, Albany, Belmont, Como, Joondalup, Merriwa and Mullaloo, there are 238 students. I am not quite sure how that operates; it is obviously spread over a very large area. It is a multi-campus school run by the provider Alta-1. The Caversham Training and Education Centre has 70 students, the Communicare Academy in Cannington has 62 students, Corridors College in Midland has 77, Port School in Hamilton Hill has 47, Sowilo Community High School in Kelmscott has 54 students, SMYL Community College in Rockingham has 77, Clontarf Aboriginal College in Waterford has 152, St Clare's School in Lathlain has 32 and the Geraldton Flexible Learning Centre has 53. That is a total of 862 students. All these schools are non-government operated, with the last three I mentioned run by the Catholic system and all the others are independent.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** Does the minister know the total amount of state government funding for CARE schools?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** We will provide that as supplementary information; we do not have it at the moment. We will provide the total amount of funding provided for the CARE schools in the next financial year.

[*Supplementary Information No B61.*]

**Ms S.F. McGURK:** The second dot point under “Significant Issues Impacting the Agency” on page 285 refers to the department administering teacher training in relation to vocational education and training in schools in anticipation of changes to the WA Certificate of Education. Can the minister outline what those changes are and how they will affect VET in schools?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** Yes. The \$1.4 million comprises \$825 000 of additional funding in 2014–15 and \$575 000 in 2015–16, and it is for teacher training costs in relation to VET in schools, with the implementation of amendments to the WACE system, as the member mentioned. I am advised that further funding support will be considered in the 2014–15 midyear review for teacher training costs. I will ask Mr Werner to add a bit more.

**Mr T. Werner:** The member may or may not be aware that under the new WACE requirements, to be eligible for a WA Certificate of Education, a person needs to have done a course that culminates in an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank score or a VET certificate II or better. The expectation is that quite a number of students will undertake the certificate II or better route, and this funding is directed to helping the independent and Catholic schools get ready to deliver the VET that they will need to deliver from 2015 onwards. The uncertainty is around enrolments—just how many children will take that route, hence the midyear review having another look at it.

[12.30 pm]

**Ms S.F. McGURK:** Considering the answer, how did the department arrive at the \$1.4 million and across how many schools will that apply?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** Mr Lloyd would be better able to answer that.

**Mr D. Lloyd:** That was done by looking at the current pattern of enrolments and projecting an increase based on the fact that students who are presently doing non–certificate vocational education and training or certificate I will now have to move into certificate II. That was projected from the existing base. It works out to be an average of five additional teachers trained per school, but the actual amount will vary depending on the enrolment pattern school by school.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I just remind members that it is half past 12. I know that you have probably already discussed this, but we have two more divisions to deal with.

**Mr P.C. TINLEY:** Going back to the previous question on the efficiency indicators and the cost of review on page 286, how many people are dedicated to reviewing independent public schools?

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**Mr M.R. Brown:** We have five staff in the actual team at the department working on IPS reviews. We employ a number of reviewers to undertake those reviews. They also undertake the work that we do, as I answered in the previous question, in relation to non-government schools, but the number there is 25.

**Mr P.C. TINLEY:** I am sorry; can Mr Brown clarify the 25 for me?

**Mr M.R. Brown:** There are 25 reviewers. They are independent people whom we employ to go out to the schools to undertake those reviews, so they are employed on a casual basis.

**Mr P.C. TINLEY:** On a casual contract.

**Mr M.R. Brown:** Yes. We have a dedicated team of five staff in the office who actually coordinate and run the review programs.

**Mr P.C. TINLEY:** Does every review require a visit to the school?

**Mr M.R. Brown:** Yes.

**Mr P.C. TINLEY:** And does that occur in every case?

**Mr M.R. Brown:** Yes.

**The appropriation was recommended.**