

**Division 24: Education — International Education, \$ 4 626 000 —**

Ms M.M. Quirk, Chair.

Mr D.A. Templeman, Minister for International Education.

Ms L. Rodgers, Director General, Department of Education.

Ms S. Spencer, Deputy Director General, Strategy and International Education.

Mr A. King, Executive Director, Strategic Policy.

Mr R. Sansalone, Chief Financial Officer.

Ms R. Robb, Director, International Education.

Ms J. Healy, Executive Director, School Curriculum and Standards Authority.

Mr R. Perera, Associate Director, International Education.

Mr B. Jolly, Executive Director, Service Delivery.

Ms R. Lee, Executive Director, Strategy and Policy.

Ms T. Widdicombe, Chief of Staff, Minister for International Education.

Mrs R. Brown, Director General, Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation.

Ms K. Ho, Director General, Department of Training and Workforce Development.

[Witnesses introduced.]

**The CHAIR:** I give the call to the member for Roe.

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** I turn to page 354, note 2, which states —

The increase in income in the 2023–24 Budget Target relative to the 2022–23 Budget is due to the continued expansion of the International Education Program.

Can the minister provide details about the Department of Education and the expansion of the international education program?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** I thank the member for the question. The School Curriculum and Standards Authority is undertaking a phased expansion of its international education program. As the member would be aware, the authority supports overseas schools implementing Western Australian kindergarten to year 12 curriculum programs. Under the international education program, the curriculum has been implemented in a number of countries, including Bangladesh, China, Japan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mauritius, Singapore, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam. Obviously, the work of the department in its international education program continues to be done in a measured way. Schools in India, Indonesia, Lithuania, Malaysia and Turkey have been approved to commence in the 2023–24 financial year. Strategies have been implemented to pursue an expansion of the program in Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Pakistan and Turkey. The authority is undertaking foreign board recognition processes and working with SCSA associates to grow its international education program. The Western Australian curriculum has a very good reputation in the market countries in which it is working.

We recognise that we need to establish firm grounding in both the markets that we have and those in which we seek to expand. It is an important part of the work of our trade commission teams in market. It is also an important area for our international education program participants to be actively engaged in. I know that our department has regular engagements in market in all these countries throughout the year. New schools and new relationships are established and we continue to get increased interest in our highly regarded Western Australian curriculum. It is one of the reasons why international education has been a part of the narrative and engagement for ministerial delegations. All ministers who have been in market have been charged with representing and conversing about the international education program. It is an exciting area.

One thing that I find remarkable about some of the countries that we have been working with is that they literally have thousands and thousands of schools and we be might be working in only one or two of them or a cluster. We will continue to work diligently. It is a very important part of the international education program more broadly for Western Australia.

[7.50 pm]

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** I assume that the Department of Education does not have a marketing role as such and that it is more about the curriculum side of it, as the minister mentioned. I remember at one stage visiting a school in China

that basically had all its ATAR students tied into Perth schools. Has there been an increase in that or has that stayed at the same level?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** I am happy to allow the director general or one of the appropriate staff members to respond to that question. I will ask our representative from the School Curriculum and Standards Authority.

**Ms J. Healy:** Our offshore international schools where we have students enrolled in ATAR courses are well supported by SCSA. They undertake exactly the same programs, moderation processes and ATAR course examinations as our local students here. They are supported. They are taught on site in their country and officers from the authority visit once or twice a year to ensure that their assessments are in accordance with and comparable to those of local students who are undertaking those ATAR courses.

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** Is there a rough figure on the number of schools and students that SCSA is providing support to?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** I am sure we have a figure. The reach that we have in various countries is impressive. Once a school like Sunshine Grammar in Bangladesh is well and truly underway, it then draws the attention of other schools within the precinct or country. The need to make sure that our entry into a country is successful helps build further success going forward. In terms of enrolments, I can highlight that over 3 000 students are currently enrolled at some 24 schools. They range from the Beijing Aidi School, which has a Western Australian Certificate of Education program and nearly 180 students in years 11 and 12, through to Saigon International College, with nearly 130 students in years 11 and 12. One Sunway College in Malaysia has 40 year 12s enrolled, while a second Sunway College in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia has 382 students enrolled. There are various schools with smaller cohorts, but these numbers continue to build. As interest in our curriculum and the quality of our curriculum increases, there will be further collaborations in these markets and the number is expected to increase.

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** Thanks, minister. I have just one final further question on that division. I know the director general had quite a bit of interaction with boarding schools, obviously with the COVID arrangements and the like. How did that pan out with international students once the borders were open? Did the Department of Education have a lot of interaction with boarding schools, whether in the public or private systems?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** A lot of those students have traditionally been within the homestay market. A number of them are very young so they are with family or close relatives who live here. In those cases, homestay is the primary means of accommodation for those students. My understanding is that many of them remained here during COVID. In terms of boarding in the independent system, I can ask the director general to make a general comment on that.

**Ms L. Rodgers:** We were involved with the boarding school rules, if you like. We worked closely with the Chief Health Officer, and the public education system worked in collaboration with the Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia and the Catholic system to make sure that provisions were in place for students who boarded. I do not have on hand the number of international students who were in the independent sector, but we endeavoured to put in place the same conditions, as determined by the Chief Health Officer, across all our boarding facilities.

**Dr D.J. HONEY:** What is the estimated cost of supporting the international education program in terms of the curriculum being exported to overseas schools?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** The director general will be able to find a budget line figure for me to highlight that. I refer the member to page 354 of budget paper No 2, volume 1, and to “Support to the School Curriculum and Standards Authority”. This is just for SCSA. The line items under that heading give the total cost of service and then the total less income derived. Note 2 under “Explanation of Significant Movements” states —

The increase in income in the 2023–24 Budget Target relative to the 2022–23 Budget is due to the continued expansion of the International Education Program.

There is also, of course, Canning College, which is an institution that takes only international students. We might be able to find a line figure for Canning College. I have referred to the SCSA figures and we will try to find a figure in the budget that might identify Canning College.

**Dr D.J. HONEY:** That was not the question I asked. The question I asked was about the cost of providing this curriculum service to students or schools overseas. Is there an estimate of that cost? There is an income. I take it from note 2 that the income is mostly associated with being able to sell that program to other schools. I am interested in what it costs the Department of Education to do that.

[8.00 pm]

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** I am advised that it is \$1.485 million, but I do not want to —

**Dr D.J. HONEY:** It is somewhere around \$2 million.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** I am advised that the figure is around \$1.5 million.

**The appropriation was recommended.**