

Chairman; Dr Tony Buti; Mrs Liza Harvey; Ms Simone McGurk; Mr David Templeman; Mr Nathan Morton; Mr Shane Love; Mr Chris Hatton

Division 24: Education, \$4 126 224 000 —

Mr I.M. Britza, Chairman.

Mrs L.M. Harvey, Minister for Police representing the Minister for Education.

Ms S. O'Neill, Director General.

Ms J.A. McGrath, Deputy Director General, Finance and Administration.

Mr J. Fischer, Executive Director, Infrastructure.

Mr L.R. Hale, Executive Director, Statewide Services.

Mr S.A. Baxter, Acting Deputy Director General, Schools.

Mr P. Titmanis, Executive Director.

Mr J. Peckitt, Chief Finance Officer.

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

The CHAIRMAN: This estimates committee will be reported by Hansard. The daily proof *Hansard* will be available the following day.

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

The minister may agree to provide supplementary information to the committee rather than asking that the question be put on notice for the next sitting week. I ask the minister to clearly indicate what supplementary information she agrees to provide and I will then allocate a reference number. If supplementary information is to be provided, I seek the minister's cooperation in ensuring that it is delivered to the principal clerk by Friday, 3 June 2016. 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.

Minister, can you introduce your advisers, please.

[Witnesses introduced.]

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

Dr A.D. BUTI: I refer the minister to the asset investment program on page 266 of budget paper No 2, which states —

The Department's planned Asset Investment Program in 2016–17 totals \$300.4 million and relates primarily to providing educational facilities to meet enrolment growth, and improving infrastructure for public schools throughout the State.

The Liberal Party made a commitment at the last election for the redevelopment of secondary schools built before 1980. Has any of that redevelopment taken place? Specifically, has there been redevelopment of John Forrest Secondary College, which was built in 1961? I have five schools to ask about. Shall I list the five schools or go through them one by one?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Probably one by one would be easier. I will ask Mr Fischer to answer.

Mr J. Fischer: No specific works are identified in this budget for the redevelopment of John Forrest Secondary College.

Dr A.D. BUTI: So there is nothing in there. What about Balcatta Senior High School, built in 1967?

Mr J. Fischer: No specific money in this budget has been identified for Balcatta Senior High School.

Dr A.D. BUTI: What about Morley Senior High School, built in 1971?

Mr J. Fischer: My response is similar: there is no money in this year's budget identified for Morley Senior High School.

Dr A.D. BUTI: What about Mount Lawley Senior High School, built in 1955?

Mr J. Fischer: Mount Lawley Senior High School is not a pre-1980 school; it was rebuilt in, I think, 1996, or perhaps a little later than that. Money was allocated in the last few budgets for additional facilities at that school, including facilities for year 7.

Dr A.D. BUTI: But that is a post-1980 school?

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B — Wednesday, 25 May 2016]

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Mr J. Fischer: That is essentially a post-1980 school; it was rebuilt.

Dr A.D. BUTI: What about Southern River College, formerly Gosnells high school, built in 1974?

Mr J. Fischer: No specific money is identified in this year's budget for Southern River College.

Dr A.D. BUTI: As we have been told, there has been no money allocated to the redevelopment of those schools. Does the minister concede that the government's election commitment has been broken?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: No. The secondary schools for which an allocation has been made at this time for new schools, as I understand it, under the scheme —

Dr A.D. BUTI: Excuse me, minister, that is not my question. My question was about the Liberal Party election commitment for the redevelopment of secondary schools built before 1980; I am not talking about new schools. According to Mr Fischer's answer, none of the schools I mentioned that were built before 1980 has received funding for redevelopment. My question again is about the schools built before 1980: has the government breached its election commitment that they would be redeveloped?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: No. That election policy included a commitment, as the member says, to rebuild secondary schools with a focus on schools built before 1980. The policy noted completed works at Applecross Senior High School, \$61 million; Willetton Senior High School, stage 2, an \$80 million redevelopment; Kalgoorlie–Boulder Community High School, \$45 million; and Collie Senior High School, \$7.5 million, which is not as yet funded.

An audit was conducted by the Department of Education during 2012 of 52 senior high schools built prior to 1980. That audit identified areas within the schools that required upgrading or additions to meet current benchmark standards for the optimal delivery of learning programs. The business case is currently being developed to consider various options to respond to the audit findings. Of those, the cost of total refurbishment and additions is estimated to be around half a billion dollars. Hamilton Senior High School was included in the assessment. That school has now been closed and students have moved to the new Fremantle College, and \$30 million was provided to establish that college. Armadale Senior High School was included in the assessment. An amount of \$4 million was provided as part of the 2015–16 budget. As I said previously, improvements have been completed at Applecross and are underway at Willetton and Kalgoorlie–Boulder, and improvement works are proceeding at Armadale, Fremantle College and Geraldton Senior High School.

The commitment has definitely not been abandoned. There is a large number of schools. As the member for Armadale is aware, when the Liberal Party came to government a large number of schools had been neglected over a long period. We are not able to complete every single refurbishment in the time frame we have, but we are well underway to ensuring that for a large number of high schools that commitment is underway. It is a long-term piece of work. It will obviously need to be funded over many years. Certainly, the government has had a massive capital infrastructure improvement program running through the Department of Education to ensure that it can fulfil that commitment.

Dr A.D. BUTI: With regard to those four schools—John Forrest, Balcatta, Morley and Southern River—is the assessment that they do not need to be redeveloped?

[2.10 pm]

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: No, the assessment has been done on a priority basis, so the prioritisation within a range of criteria has been looked at. A strategic planning framework has been put in place. As I said, this is a long-term project. Those other schools may or may not be considered. They are not considered as part of this budget framework, but they are part of that audit and they will need some attention at some point in the future.

Dr A.D. BUTI: My question, therefore, is: have they actually been assessed? By the sounds of it, other schools are higher up in terms of priority. What I want to know is whether those schools have been assessed. If they have been assessed or audited, will the minister be able to provide information, by way of supplementary information if she does not have it now, about the assessment of those schools?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I am advised that the audit is still under consideration by the minister's office at this time with respect to future budget submissions. I will not commit to releasing that. If the member would like to put the question on notice to the Minister for Education, it is more appropriate that the minister makes the decision about whether those audit results will be released. It is not for me, as his representative here, to make that decision.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I understand that, but my question is: has an assessment been made of what needs to be done for those schools?

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Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I will ask Mr Fischer to please advise whether those schools were included in the audit, if he has that information to hand.

Mr J. Fischer: There are approximately 50 schools that are pre-1980-built schools. That includes regional and metropolitan schools. Each of those schools has been assessed against the standard brief to identify what would be considered deficient if that school was built today. That provides a basis for having a discussion about what works should happen at each school but it does not necessarily define the works that might be approved or programmed in the future, because providing a standard brief school in those locations might not be appropriate, but it certainly has identified all those needs.

Dr A.D. BUTI: The minister mentioned that she is not in a position to determine whether this information is to be released, but unfortunately she is the minister today and we cannot have her say to every single question that she will have to defer to the actual minister. The minister is going to have to make a decision. I do not think it is controversial. If the assessment has been done, we would just like the information on what was the outcome for those schools.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: As I said, if the member for Armadale can put the question on notice, the minister will make that decision.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I am putting it as a supplementary question; that is how estimates works.

The CHAIRMAN: The minister has the right to either accept or not accept a supplementary question.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Of course the minister has that right, but I hope we are not going to work over the next four hours with the minister saying that I can put my questions on notice and they can go back to the minister. This is the first time in the four or five years I have been in estimates when the acting minister is going to always defer to whether the minister should release the information. That is not how it normally works.

The CHAIRMAN: Two things, member. This is the first time so the member cannot use the word “always”, because it may not be the same for other issues. However, the minister does not have to provide an answer by way of supplementary information. If notice does it, the minister can direct a member to put a question on notice and the member will still get the answer.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I want to put it as a supplementary question. I am not putting it on notice; I am putting it as a supplementary question for that information to be provided.

The CHAIRMAN: If the minister wants to accept it as a supplementary.

Dr A.D. BUTI: That is it, but I am putting it as a supplementary question. I want it noted that the supplementary question is: in respect of John Forrest Secondary College, Balcatta Senior High School, Morley Senior High School and Southern River College, which we have been told have been assessed, what is the detail of those assessments?

The CHAIRMAN: The minister does not have to provide supplementary information if she does not want to.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: As I have said, I am happy for this particular question to be put on notice, because my understanding and the advice I have received is that this program is under active consideration by the minister at present. I believe it is Minister Collier’s prerogative to determine whether he will release that information at this time. If the member puts the question on notice, I am sure that the minister will give him an answer that he is happy with. I am not prepared to take that question and put it forward as a supplementary question because, as a supplementary question, we have only until 3 June to provide the information. The advice I have received is that the minister may not be happy with that time frame. That is why I have requested that the member put the question on notice. It is not my intention to do this through the whole of estimates, member for Armadale; it is for this specific question. That is the advice I have received, that is my response, and I will not be changing my answer.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I am not asking the minister to provide a minister’s decision on whether he is going to approve any redevelopment. All I am asking for is information. I think the public of Western Australia is entitled to know what assessment has been made and what has been the outcome of the assessment with regard to these schools. It should not be a secretive process. We are not asking the minister to commit the Minister for Education to make a decision on whether redevelopment is going to occur. All we are asking for is the information of the audit.

The CHAIRMAN: Member, the minister has already indicated that she is not going to take a supplementary, so I will go to the next question.

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B — Wednesday, 25 May 2016]

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Chairman; Dr Tony Buti; Mrs Liza Harvey; Ms Simone McGurk; Mr David Templeman; Mr Nathan Morton; Mr Shane Love; Mr Chris Hatton

Ms S.F. McGURK: I have a further question on this matter. When the minister was listing the schools that money had been allocated to and for which assessments had been done, I noticed that she mentioned Collie Senior High School but that there was no budget allocation for that school. Is that correct?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Mr Fischer, could you elaborate on that? I was reading from a note.

Mr J. Fischer: There has been no money allocated to Collie; that is correct.

Ms S.F. McGURK: But the assessment has been that that school requires work. It is a pre-1980 school. Does it require refurbishment or redevelopment?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Mr Fischer, if you could respond.

Mr J. Fischer: As I mentioned, over 50 schools have been assessed, including Collie. They were audited against the standard school brief.

Ms S.F. McGURK: In response to the member for Armadale's question, the minister ran through a list of schools and said that some assessment had been made and an allocation had been made, but when she got to Collie Senior High School, she said that an assessment had been made but that no budget allocation had been made. Why was that school mentioned in the list as distinct from any of the other 50 schools that fit into the category of being built before 1980?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I am happy to clarify that. When I opened with that response I was going over the 2013 state Liberal education policy, which was what the question was prefaced on. That was a commitment to rebuilding secondary schools with a focus on those schools built before 1980. The schools specifically listed in that policy were noted as Applecross Senior High School, with works of \$61 million; current works at Willetton Senior High School, with stage 2 of an \$80 million redevelopment; Kalgoorlie–Boulder Community High School, with works of \$45 million; and announced works at Collie Senior High School of \$7.5 million, but that was yet to be funded. That was the policy commitment in 2013. I was reading that out to clarify how that commitment had been worded.

Ms S.F. McGURK: The work has been identified and costed but no money has been allocated to do that work.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Not at this point, but as I said, that audit is under active consideration by the minister's office, which is why I requested that the question be put on notice to the minister.

Dr A.D. BUTI: But it is not in the current budget, so the government has broken its election promise.

Ms S.F. McGURK: And it is not in the forward estimates.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I think I have answered that question a number of times.

Dr A.D. BUTI: The question I originally asked was: has the government broken its election promise? In its election promise the government mentioned that there would be funding for these works, including for the Collie school. The minister just mentioned that the funding has not been allocated. It is not in the forward estimates. Therefore, it is a broken election promise. There is no other way of interpreting it. As the minister read out herself, the government planned to improve secondary education et cetera, including \$7.5 million for eight new classrooms at Collie Senior High School. It is not in this budget, it has not been in the budget for the last three years and it is not in the forward estimates; therefore, the government has broken its election promise. Would the minister agree with that; and, if not, why not?

[2.20 pm]

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Of course I am not going to agree with that.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Why not?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Because this is budget estimates and I have already answered the member's question. It is not funded. I am not going to make a comment on the member's opinion.

Dr A.D. BUTI: So it is not funded.

Ms S.F. McGURK: I refer to the line item for capital appropriation on page 261 of budget paper No 2. This question relates to maintenance funding. I note that \$155.4 million has been allocated for capital spending, which is \$11 million less than the figure in last year's budget. By my calculations, that is a reduction of 6.5 per cent. How much is being spent in 2016–17 on maintenance in schools, and what is the current maintenance backlog?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: As the member can see from the figures, massive funds have been put into maintenance in schools over the past few years in the budget process. I will let Mr Fischer update the allocation of that maintenance budget. What was the member's question?

Ms S.F. McGURK: How much is being spent in 2016–17 on maintenance, what is the current maintenance backlog, and is there a dollar figure on that?

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Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Mr Fischer will provide the information on how much of that allocation will go towards maintenance.

Mr J. Fischer: The estimate of the backlog is best understood by what we identify in the building condition assessment. That was last done in 2013, when maintenance was estimated at \$135 million. There are qualifications about those dollars, because that is a condition assessment; it is not the actual cost of works, but that is the best estimate of the outstanding work. We do not revise that figure each year, so we do not reduce it by work that we undertake, so until we do the next building condition assessment, it is hard to get an assessment of the outstanding maintenance. We typically spend about \$110 million a year on maintenance. As announced in the 2015–16 budget, additional money has been allocated; \$15.7 million was allocated for high priority and safety maintenance. In addition to that, in November or December, the minister announced the allocation of a further \$33.8 million to restorative or preventive maintenance work. That is the type of work that addresses the items identified in the building condition assessment. In the 2016–17 budget, the allocation from the recurrent budget is yet to be announced, but in the asset investment program members will see a number of items that address the preventive maintenance-type items. That includes works on the replacement of air conditioners and bores, and also the roof replacement program, which has been significant in reducing the backlog of maintenance work.

Ms S.F. McGURK: Did Mr Fischer just say that the actual allocation for 2016–17 has not been made?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I will refer to Ms McGrath.

Ms J.A. McGrath: The allocation for 2016–17 will be in the vicinity of \$156 million.

Ms S.F. McGURK: Is there detail about where that money will be spent? To answer the questions being asked at schools about the work that needs to be done, will that information be available?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: My understanding is that we do not normally release the entire list of maintenance schedules, because that is quite cumbersome and quite big, given the number of public schools, but I will ask Mr Fischer to elaborate.

Mr J. Fischer: The maintenance budget is generally managed centrally. The majority of the maintenance is allocated for what we call either routine or breakage repairs. Routine maintenance is work that is scheduled each year, and there is generally a statutory requirement to do that—for example, testing of residual-current devices, cleaning of gutters, air conditioner maintenance et cetera. The majority of our money is spent on faults and breakdowns, in response to needs as they occur. We do not allocate that money by school.

Ms S.F. McGURK: I guess if no work has been done on the schools built before 1980, some additional maintenance may be needed.

I am looking at the line item that I originally drew attention to—that is, the capital appropriation. I am assuming that the maintenance budget that was given—\$156 million in 2016–17—cannot be directly drawn from that figure of \$155.4 million.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I will ask Ms McGrath to answer that question.

Ms J.A. McGrath: The \$156 million allocated for maintenance comes under recurrent funding, not out of the capital appropriation. That is for capital works.

Ms S.F. McGURK: How much of that money, or additional money in 2016–17, will be spent on asbestos removal, and does the minister have a list of schools in which asbestos removal has been identified?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I will ask Mr Fischer to elaborate further.

Mr J. Fischer: The cost of dealing with incidents involving asbestos-contaminated material is included in our normal maintenance budget. The budget papers refer to future programs to provide for the removal of asbestos. Those programs do not commence until 2018–19 and 2019–20, when \$3 million will be allocated in each year.

Ms S.F. McGURK: Is a list of the schools that have been identified for asbestos removal available?

Mr J. Fischer: Similar to the building condition assessment, we do an asbestos survey every two or three years. That can vary; sometimes we do it at a shorter interval, depending on the condition of the asbestos material. That identifies what we call high-risk sites where asbestos may be deteriorating. We automatically deal with anything that has a risk rating of 1 or 2. I will get the numbers in a minute, but we address those as soon as they are identified, rather than leave those issues outstanding. All the items that are identified as risk rating 1 or 2 in the last survey, which was in 2013, have been addressed. I think the cost was about \$130 000.

Ms S.F. McGURK: In relation to the identification of asbestos in schools and the condition of that asbestos, Mr Fischer said that an inspection is done every couple of years, but he also said that the last inspection was in 2013. Was that the building condition assessment, done in 2013, or was it a separate asbestos assessment?

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Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Does Mr Fischer have that information to hand?

Mr J. Fischer: The asbestos survey is undertaken in conjunction with the building condition assessment, but it is a separate survey.

Ms S.F. McGURK: When was the last specific asbestos survey done, either as part of the building condition assessment or separately?

[2.30 pm]

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Perhaps Mr Fischer could explain whether that is done on a school-by-school basis around maintenance or refurbishments or whether there is a staged calendar event, if you like, whereby somebody is employed to do the asbestos assessments at school as a matter of site maintenance.

Mr J. Fischer: Every school is assessed for asbestos every three years. The last survey would have been done in 2013. Notwithstanding that, there are some locations where we would have done repeat surveys, and that would have been done on the basis that when the initial survey was done, the assessor would have suggested that there be a follow-up survey at a shorter interval than the three years. In other words, if there was some concern that there might be a more rapid degradation of the material, that would be inspected on a shorter span than three years. I do not have the data with me, but we would have reinspected quite a number of locations.

Ms S.F. McGURK: Is that information available so that we can see the 2013 inspection details? I remember seeing something in the last couple of years, but it might have been 2013–14. Is information available on the assessments of those places that might require a revisit?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I am not certain whether that is available in a specific format, but perhaps Mr Fischer could respond. The reason I caveat that is that I know the state government has an asbestos plan across the public sector. Schools are captured as part of that plan and I understand that we report on that. But perhaps Mr Fischer could elaborate on whether this inspection process is part of the state government asbestos management plan or whether this is more of an internal process.

Mr J. Fischer: The inspection plan that we have is developed between the Department of Education and Building Management and Works. As a result of that survey, there is an individual report for every school, and that report is then distributed to every school so that that information is available to anyone who attends that school. It is really focused on people who may want to do improvement works or contractors going onto the site so that they are aware of where there is asbestos at the site and are not inadvertently exposed to material and do not create some danger or cause for concern for others because of their work practice. Those asbestos registers are located at every school.

Ms S.F. McGURK: I remember the list came out and was made public in 2013, because one of the kindergartens in my electorate had some asbestos in the kitchen floor and that was a concern for the community, and a number of high-profile cases came out of the release of that report. It would be useful to understand which schools have been identified as requiring specific work to be done prior to the next inspection, which must be coming up. I think it is in the public interest for that to be made available. I cannot understand why, if the 2013 report was made available, the report on the schools where that specific work will be done cannot be made available, particularly if it is available to individual schools.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: My advice is that we do not believe there is one consolidated report, because the inspection reports are basically sent out to each school so that the schools can manage the asbestos if they have contractors on-site and people within the schools can understand where the asbestos is and where it is not. If there is one consolidated report that pulls together all that information and it is available, I will provide that by way of supplementary information, if the member would like. There is not a consolidated report, so the member would need to put a question on notice requesting information about specific schools.

Ms S.F. McGURK: I think it beggars belief that the Department of Education and the state government do not know what is happening with asbestos in schools since 2013 and do not know which schools require additional work and additional inspections because, as Mr Fischer said, asbestos has been identified as being in a potentially unstable situation. I find it pretty difficult to believe that the Department of Education does not have a good handle on where that work needs to be done. It has allocated money, admittedly in the forward estimates in 2018–19 and 2019–20, for particular work to be done, but the minister has said that that work gets done as part of maintenance now. I repeat the request for the list of schools for which revisits were considered necessary and particularly the amount of money that has been spent in 2016–17 on asbestos removal as part of the maintenance program.

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Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I will get Mr Fischer to elaborate. The assertion that the member is making that the Department of Education does not have a handle on asbestos management in schools is 100 per cent incorrect. Mr Fischer has been quite clear that asbestos inspections are done and that the schools that have been identified as having asbestos that has further degraded or is degrading at a higher rate and so may cause issues are re-prioritised for inspections. Asbestos removal takes place as part of the general maintenance schedule and then there is a specific asbestos removal program, which, as the member can see in the budget papers, starts in 2018–19. Since 2014, all the asbestos-containing materials in schools that have a risk rating of 1 or 2 have been removed or remediated. That work was undertaken by contractors that were engaged by Building Management and Works through the Department of Finance. A rigorous program is in place. Perhaps Mr Fischer can provide further information on how that is managed.

Ms S.F. McGURK: Can we just be clear that Mr Fischer said that there is a list of schools that have been revisited since 2013. Can we have that list of schools that have been or are planned to be revisited since 2013?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Mr Fischer, is that list available easily?

Mr J. Fischer: We can provide a list of all the schools that were identified for a reinspection in a period shorter than three years, if that is what the member is seeking.

Ms S.F. McGURK: That would be useful.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I will provide by way of supplementary information a list of schools for which a reinspection for asbestos has been identified since 2013.

[Supplementary Information No B51.]

Dr A.D. BUTI: I believe that the risk rating for asbestos at the building at John Forrest Secondary College has been graded by the Department of Education as being in poor condition with only a medium chance of disturbing the asbestos. Can the minister please inform us when funding will be allocated to replace the building?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I ask Mr Fischer whether he has specific information with him on John Forrest Secondary College. Perhaps the member could repeat the question.

Dr A.D. BUTI: When will funding be allocated to replace the building at John Forrest Secondary College that has asbestos in it?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I ask Mr Fischer whether he is able to provide a response or perhaps we can provide that by way of supplementary information or ask the member to place the question on notice, whichever will be easier.

Mr J. Fischer: I am not sure that I fully understood the question. The department's position on asbestos is that if it is in good condition and is left alone, it does not present a hazard or risk to those in schools. The purpose of the asbestos surveys that we do is to identify any changing conditions so that we are able to take appropriate action and remove it. I am not familiar with the details of the condition of asbestos at John Forrest, but unless it was rated below 1 or 2, there is no need to establish a program to remove the asbestos.

[2.40 pm]

Dr A.D. BUTI: Is it possible, minister, to provide as supplementary information details of the John Forrest Secondary College assessment; and, if the assessment is that work needs to be done at that school, when that work will take place?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Certainly; we can provide by way of supplementary information the asbestos-risk rating that has been assigned to John Forrest Secondary College.

[Supplementary Information No B52.]

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I refer to the third dot point on page 262, which states that “young children's development and learning set the foundation for future success”. The minister would be aware that her government has ceased the parenting program and the Best Start program. The Best Start program particularly focuses on Indigenous young children. Does the department propose to continue to fund these programs through its own resources? The Department of Local Government and Communities cut the Best Start program. If the Department of Education will not fund the program, why not?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: As the member for Mandurah said, Best Start was funded through the Department of Local Government and Communities. The Department of Education has the KindiLink program, which is a pilot program that started this year. The program provides one year of kindergarten, for six hours a week, for three-year-old Aboriginal children who attend with their parent or caregiver. There are 37 KindiLink locations— 11 at new sites, and 26 at existing Aboriginal kindergartens. Therefore, we have a policy around engagement,

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particularly with Aboriginal families and children, that is separate to Best Start, and I believe that is a good program.

Ms S.F. McGURK: I understand that Best Start focused on zero to three-year-old children but KindiLink picks up three to four-year-olds.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I will ask the director general to respond.

Ms S. O'Neill: KindiLink is a play and learning initiative primarily for three-year-old Aboriginal children. The program is also designed to assist the parents and the caregivers of those children to develop a broader range, and perhaps a stronger range, of parenting skills and support skills to preschool learning. When the parents attend the program, they very often bring younger siblings with them, and we encourage that. Although Best Start was in another portfolio, not the Department of Education, and in some different locations to where we have the KindiLink program, our response to zero to three-year-old children is to involve them in those sorts of schooling or preschooling programs; for example, KindiLink. As well as that, we will have 21 child and parent centres, and \$48.7 million has been put into funding those centres. Those centres offer integrated health, education and parenting services for babies and children up to eight years of age and their parents. Therefore, with KindiLink and the child and parent centres, the Department of Education's reach back into the early years to pre-formal schooling has grown in the past few years.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: So the department does not intend to support the Best Start program with its own resources?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: No; we are not picking up the Best Start program. As we have elaborated, the Department of Education has its own programs.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Could the minister provide as supplementary information the sites of all the KindiLink programs? Did the minister say the department was going to extend the program?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I have a list of those schools here.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I do not want to waste time. I do not want the minister to go through the list, because we have too many questions to go through. I would just like the minister to provide as supplementary information a list of those locations.

The CHAIRMAN: The minister can read out the list if she wants to, or she can provide it as supplementary information. The minister has the choice. I am just letting the member know. You have the choice, minister.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I understand that, Chair. If I can get my answer out without a preamble, there are 21 KindiLink schools. I will provide by way of supplementary information the list of those schools, member for Mandurah.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Thank you.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Thank you for letting me answer the question.

[*Supplementary Information No B53.*]

Mr N.W. MORTON: The fourth dot point on page 262 refers to "high expectations of success for every student". I want to ask a question about the online literacy and numeracy assessments. I know that students get a number of chances to pass that test, but an issue was raised with me by one of my local principals about two year 12 students at her school. By all accounts these students are doing very well in their general English courses. I think one of these two students was the top student in general English last year. However, those students are now faced with the situation that they are getting close to graduating year 12 but they are struggling to pass the Western Australian Certificate of Education online test because of their dyslexia. I understand that these students get extra time and all those sorts of things. However, by all accounts from the staff and the principal, although these students are passing what they consider to be every element of general English, because of their disability they are unable to pass the online test. As a former educator, it seems disappointing that we have a situation in which two students who potentially meet the criteria for English and literacy might not necessarily get their WACE. Are some support measures available, or is there capacity for potentially principals to provide a sign-off in these rare circumstances so that students are not affected and essentially leave school without their WACE because of one element? I am sorry for that long-winded question but it is important to my local community.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I am advised that this is probably more a question for the School Curriculum and Standards Authority that runs the test, but I think the director general has further information to answer your question.

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Ms S. O'Neill: The standards authority will be able to talk about the policy implementation of that testing regime. To answer the other part of the question about support for students who struggle with literacy—I think the member mentioned students through to year 12—the department is putting in place a broad range of strategies to support students who have concerns and struggle with literacy. Obviously, at the school level, individual support is provided to those students. Schools use their own resources to do that. The strategies that we put in place are to support capability and capacity building for teachers. But it is true to say that some students will continue to struggle with their literacy outcomes throughout their schooling. Some students will prequalify and will not have to re-sit the test, but some students will have to re-sit that test, and teachers work specifically with those students to give them the support that they need.

Mr N.W. MORTON: If there is another division in which I should ask this question, I am happy to take advice on that and ask it then. In those case-by-case instances, can those kids be assessed individually?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I understand that, yes, students can be assessed individually, and that opportunity is available to them.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Further to the member for Forrestfield's question—I know that it refers to another division, but we are talking about the online literacy and numeracy assessment—the minister mentioned that individual support is provided. What sort of individual support is available? What about students who are very good at mathematics and science, but English is their second language and they may have learning difficulties in English? Rather than make the global statement that individual support is provided, what actual support is provided in those cases?

[2.50 pm]

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I will ask the director general to answer that.

Ms S. O'Neill: Potentially, there are 800 answers to that question, depending on where the students attend school, or a fewer number if we are talking about high schools around OLN. Schools will structure that support in a highly individualised way. In fact, some students will have individual education plans to support their particular and specific needs because in some schools students will be drawn into small groups and others will be individual. To go to the heart of this, some students have learning difficulties rather than disabilities. Some students with disabilities will have an individual disability allocation. Under its new funding model, last year the department provided \$20 million that is allocated across the schools. That funding is designed specifically for students who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities who are not captured in the disability allocation. That is a new allocation. They have not had that before. How schools will use that will be vastly different. Some schools might put on individual staff members—for example, an education assistant—to run a particular program for short periods for an individual student with a literacy difficulty. If that adjustment is not needed in another school, it might run a completely different program; it might pre-purchase or have an online program. It is very hard to determine from the central office the specific support needs for a portion of students who are suffering from that problem.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I am prepared to stand corrected but we all go to school graduations and in some of my schools there are students with intellectual disabilities who graduate. It was brought home to me by a senior education bureaucrat at one of those graduations last year that that would be the last year they would be able to graduate because most of them will not be able to pass their OLN requirement. Is that true?

Ms S. O'Neill: I think the policy component of the member's question is best put to the School Curriculum and Standards Authority as it fits into its section of the budget. I might say that it is a very broad generalisation to categorise all students with disabilities as perhaps falling into that category. For example, some students with physical disabilities will meet the —

Dr A.D. BUTI: I did not say that; I said “intellectual disabilities”.

Ms S. O'Neill: Again, an intellectual disability does not necessarily mean that every child is not going to graduate.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I do not think that was my question. My question was —

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Excuse me, Chair; it is not a debate. The director general was trying to finish her answer and I think, to be fair, she needs to be able to provide her answer without being interrupted.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Mr Chairman, it would be nice also if the words of my question are not twisted. I did not say “all”. I asked about situations involving students with intellectual disability as a result of this measure. It is not even a criticism; I am just trying to get information.

The CHAIRMAN: Member, you would have been given the opportunity to say that the answer was not being given but you need to let the director general finish her answer.

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Mrs L.M. HARVEY: If the director general could finish her answer, she is quite clear that the member was referring to students with an intellectual disability.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I said that; I did not say “all students”.

Ms S. O’Neill: I will just repeat what I said. The standards authority can answer the policy part of the question. The point I was trying to make is that in any given year there can be students with intellectual disabilities who may or may not graduate. Whether this new policy could draw the likelihood of more not graduating, as I said, that question is best put to the standards authority.

Ms S.F. McGURK: Particularly considering OLN, how many schools have raised internet capacity issues that can make it difficult to deliver the online literacy and numeracy assessment? How many schools have raised that as an issue? Can we have a list of those schools?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I will ask the director general to answer that.

Ms S. O’Neill: I am not aware that we have a list of schools that have made specific complaints about the internet in relation to OLN. Anecdotally, I have heard that some have raised that during the testing period but we do not have a consolidated list of the number of schools that have raised that issue that I am aware of. In saying that, on the basis of some of the criticism or suggestion around the bandwidth capacity, the department has committed additional funds to address the bandwidth issues but that is just a broader concern than just under OLN. From my perspective, a handful of people have raised the internet capacity in relation to OLN but not just OLN—more broadly.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Has the department received any complaints from Cecil Andrews Senior High School about internet capacity because a number of parents have approached me to inform me that the internet speed at that school is so bad that many students are not even worrying about going onto the internet at the school.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I will ask the director general to provide some further information.

Ms S. O’Neill: That school-specific complaint has not been passed on to me. It may have been passed on to someone in the system but it has not been drawn to my attention. Certainly, the overall need for internet download speed and bandwidth is an item of development for any education system, particularly us. It was interesting that the internet download for March 2016 reached 120 terabytes. That has risen from 90 terabytes at this time last year. The overall demand for internet access is continuing to grow at a rapid rate. That specific school issue has not been drawn to me and if it was, we would look at it.

Ms S.F. McGURK: The director general said that a specific amount was being allocated to increase the bandwidth for schools. Is that for specific schools? Perhaps she can give us the line item and the list of schools that would benefit from the improvement.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I will ask Ms McGrath to provide the answer.

Ms J.A. McGrath: The department centrally provides bandwidth to schools at a cost of \$19.3 million per annum. As the director general just pointed out, the pressures on our bandwidth are increasing constantly; they have quadrupled since 2013. We have various strategies in place to improve that situation, including additional infrastructure that can be put in to better optimise the bandwidth at schools and to better manage the downloads et cetera within schools. We recently signed a new agreement with Telstra that will provide an increase to bandwidth to more than 210 sites across the state. This is at no additional cost. Basically, we are trying to improve the baseline for all schools. The rollout of these 210 sites for secondary schools will be based on the number of students within a school. For schools with fewer than 400 students, the base will be 10 megabits; schools with 400 to 800 students will have 20 megabits; schools with 800 to 1 500 students will see an increase to 50 megabits; and schools with over 1 500 students will get 100 megabits. For primary schools in the metropolitan area, the minimum will be 10 megabits a school, where available. The agreement that we have just signed with Telstra will also assist us in helping improve the bandwidth in regional areas.

Ms S.F. McGURK: I am not sure how many schools there are. Are there 800 primary and secondary schools or thereabouts?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: There are 799 schools in total.

Ms S.F. McGURK: That is good news for 210 of those schools. Is there a list of schools that will benefit from those programs?

Ms J.A. McGrath: Yes, we can provide that.

Ms S.F. McGURK: Are the widths that were mentioned that depend on the number of students at a particular school guaranteed as part of the agreement with Telstra?

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[3.00 pm]

Ms J.A. McGrath: Yes, that is what we are working to implement. It will take a few months but over the next six months it will be rolled out.

The CHAIRMAN: Before I hand over to the member for Armadale, was the minister going to provide some supplementary information?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: In response to that request, we will provide by way of supplementary information a list of the schools that were part of that expanded bandwidth program.

[*Supplementary Information No B54.*]

Dr A.D. BUTI: I have a series of questions about the total appropriation for the Department of Education on page 261. One of the issues factored into that total appropriation is the public sector workforce renewal policy. We know that the general policy is that staff are to be replaced at 60 per cent but teaching staff are replaced at 90 per cent. A decision was made that that would not really work in the Department of Education and that the department was to take that as a central hit. The Minister for Education's answer to a question raised in the Legislative Council on 17 May last week about the public sector workforce renewal policy was that the education department would make a saving of \$50 million in this financial year, \$77 million in the next financial year and \$105 million in the year after that. The minister said, "This has been absorbed within the Department of Education's overall budget", so he means the overall appropriation. If that is the case, can the minister tell us what the department is not able to do in 2016–17 that it was able to do in 2014–15 and 2015–16?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I will ask Ms McGrath to respond to that. My understanding is that the funding rates for 2017 have not been set and that the workforce renewal policy will not impact delivery in schools. However, I will ask Ms McGrath to respond.

Ms J.A. McGrath: As mentioned, the savings associated with the workforce renewal policy that were included in last year's budget estimates across the forward estimates have now been absorbed into education's overall budget and will not impact the 2015 or 2016 school years. This has been possible through the zero-budgeting exercise that was undertaken in collaboration with the Department of Treasury in the development of the new cost-and-demand model for funding requirements for the Department of Education in 2016–17 and onwards. The appropriations for 2016–17 and the out years show an increase of 1.7 per cent in 2016–17 and corresponding increases in the following out years of 2.7, 2.8 and 3.4 per cent. Through the zero-budgeting exercise and the cost-and-demand model this covers enrolment growth, wages growth and some growth for general cost in its escalation.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I will just add some further clarification and then ask Ms O'Neill to further qualify the answer. My understanding is that the Department of Education has been involved with the Department of Treasury in working on a new funding model for schools and that those savings measures have been incorporated into the new funding model. Ms O'Neill can add a little more.

Ms S. O'Neill: I will just confirm what has been said. The department's whole budget was zero based to develop a new cost-and-demand model, which is something we have not had before, as was referred to. As part of that process rather than having a historical budget methodology, it was reset with Treasury to line up with our student-centred funding model and the things that have already been mentioned. That is why the minister was right in saying that it was absorbed as part of the department's new budget setting.

Dr A.D. BUTI: It is magic. The Minister for Education in his answer confirmed that there would be \$50 million for this financial year, \$77 million for the next financial year and \$105 million for the year after that. They are quite significant amounts. He said that they would be absorbed by the Department of Education's overall budget. I do not think it is believable to say, "We have now come up with a new funding model and nothing has been affected." I will repeat my question. With regard to those savings that the minister has confirmed, what is the impact on services in the education department? How does Treasury work out that the education department will make this amount of savings? What is the education department doing with this zero budgeting? I do not really understand what that is, but can the minister please tell us? These are the figures: \$50 million, \$77 million and \$105 million. Where are the savings and what services are actually being affected? How are those savings being made?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I will ask Ms McGrath if she can provide further information.

Ms J.A. McGrath: The cost-and-demand model uses a zero-based approach that is based on cost drivers and parameters. Those include the current student enrolment growth; per-student funding rates, as informed by our student-centred funding model; consumer price index rates; enterprise bargaining agreement wages policy outcomes; and any other changes to specific costs, like insurance. In making that adjustment we can see that in some of the major spending changes on page 261, for example, some money has been taken back for reduced

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student numbers. In previous years the forecast projections for students were higher than is forecast now. There are some adjustments both ways and in those adjustments is included the bringing back to that zero base.

Dr A.D. BUTI: What is meant by “zero budgeting” and the “cost-and-demand model”? My understanding—correct me if I am wrong—is that there has been an increase in student growth. It may not be as fast as once predicted but at least there is a student growth of 1.2 per cent. I believe that the total budget has increased by about 1.7 per cent. If we were to take inflation into consideration, the budget should have increased by at least 2.95 per cent rather than the 1.7 per cent just to keep the status quo. We talk about this zero budgeting but the minister said that we have already had a saving of \$50 million. I think that happened in the last financial year so it is not really relevant to the projected student increases. Are there actual savings or, if there are no real savings, is this just another black hole? If there is no black hole and we have actual savings, what are they? I do not want to hear about this accounting method for a new model; I want to know what saving the department is actually making. What does that mean in real terms for the education department?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I will ask Ms McGrath to further elaborate but I will go back to what that zero-based funding model is all about. Instead of looking at a formula for funding that has been around in the Department of Education for years and then adding CPI and an efficiency measure and all of that on top of that budget, the education department and Treasury have gone back to the beginning and looked at the basis of that student-centred funding model and came up with a new funding model based on that policy. We cannot necessarily compare apples with apples, but it is definitely a more efficient way of administering a budget for education that is based on student numbers, student requirements and student needs in the context of what the Department of Education needs to provide for them. I will ask Ms McGrath to elaborate. I think the member is asking whether programs and services to schools will be cut. Is that the basis of the question?

[3.10 pm]

Dr A.D. BUTI: I am trying to find out where the savings are.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Ms McGrath, if you could elaborate.

Ms J.A. McGrath: I will not go over what the minister just said about zero budgeting because that was well explained. In relation to the member’s comment about a 1.7 per cent increase, that is right; that is the total for the whole department. Ninety-five per cent of our funding goes directly to schools in the funding model. The actual increase that will go to schools will not be 1.7 per cent; it will be 3.3 per cent. That is because of some other large savings that have been achieved through centrally funded supports to schools, including Government Regional Officers’ Housing and insurance. In comparison with the previous year, 2015–16—that was an unusual year—we had additional commonwealth Students First funding, which allowed the department to do some one-off programs in infrastructure and information technology. That was also centrally funded, hence the increase to schools for 2016–17 is in effect 3.3 per cent. When it is said that actual student growth is only 1.37 per cent, that leaves the rest for salary increases and other growth.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I believe the director general would like to add to that answer.

Ms S. O’Neill: To go to the heart of the question about whether savings and programs will be taken out to make up \$260 million over the forward estimates period, our 2016–17 budget is \$4.841 billion. Colloquially, there are what we would call swings and roundabouts. There have been some savings in Government Regional Officers’ Housing and insurance premiums and things like that. This amount in each year is a proportion of the total budget and it is not unusual for us to have efficiencies in various programs. Perhaps there were fewer students or a program finished earlier than planned. It is not enormous as a total proportion of our budget. There are not many other ways for us to answer it except that when the budget model was changed, we were given a budget and in it we can afford to run the programs and commitments that we have made and we are not in a position that we have to cut programs to bring forward that \$260.3 million in the forward estimates for the renewal. I do not think we can answer it many other ways. We do not have to cut programs to do that.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Firstly, I assume the department is not saying that Government Regional Officers’ Housing and the insurance changes will achieve a saving of over \$230 million. Secondly, how has the student-centred funding model changed to allow this saving to take place? Many principals I have spoken to have been told it is in the student-centred funding model. They have been told it is up to the school to fund it—the department has not cut anything; it has just provided an allocation of money. How do we get savings of over \$200 million? Surely it is not from insurance and GROH. What changes have been made to the student-centred funding model?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Just to clarify: I was listening to the response the director general gave and she did not say that \$260 million over the forward estimates would be achieved through savings from Government Regional Officers’ Housing and insurance. Those two areas were mentioned in the context of a range of other initiatives

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that have allowed the department to achieve those savings, and in the context of the new funding model, without having to cut any programs. I will ask Ms O'Neill whether she has anything further to add.

Ms S. O'Neill: I was making the point that in a budget of our size, the movement of finances through things like that can accrue a fair amount of funding. Remember that the \$260 million is over the forward estimates. The department does not set the price per student rates until about August. We are in the process of doing that. We know that the public sector workforce renewal savings of that amount over the forward estimates will not impact on the price per student that will be set in August. It is not a factor in setting the price per student.

The other comment the member made related to principals saying everything is in the price per student. That is the case because the majority of the department's funding goes out to schools in that way. There is an increase in recurrent expenditure of \$81 million this year. Schools will benefit because funding to schools will increase by more than three per cent in 2016–17. The initiative that is being referred to will not impact on the price per student under the student-centred funding model.

Dr A.D. BUTI: In regard to the total appropriation savings that are being made over time, budget paper No 3—I know we are not dealing with that now—refers to the need for the Department of Education to also apply a 3.5 per cent savings target. My understanding is that that will apply only to central and district office costs rather than schools. If there has already been considerable absorption of savings through GROH, what further savings are possible in central and district offices? What further cuts can be made to absorb any further savings in central and district offices?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Which line item in the budget is the member talking about? The member mentioned a 3.5 per cent saving but I cannot find it.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I am talking about total appropriations and savings over a period. A figure of over \$230 million was mentioned. My question is: part of education policy is that schools will be exempt from that, but the education department still has an obligation and that is being centred into the central and district offices. What further measures can possibly be made to absorb that cost saving?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I believe Ms McGrath is able to respond.

Ms J.A. McGrath: Those savings are identified in the Treasury papers. In 2017–18, it is \$6.78 million; in 2018–19, it will be \$6.7 million; and in 2019–20, it will be nearly \$7 million. That is \$20 million over those years. We have only just been advised of those figures and we are still to work through what they will be. They will obviously not impact on school funding for 2017, but the areas we will look at are still to be determined. We work through that process with Treasury.

Dr A.D. BUTI: There have been substantial cuts at the central and district offices over time. I do not think that can be disputed and I do not think the education department would dispute that. What further cuts can possibly be made in that area to reach \$20.5 million?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I will ask the director general to answer.

Ms S. O'Neill: I cannot give a specific answer because we are going through that budget process at the moment. There has been a reduction in numbers in the central office and that would also be expected in a more devolved, autonomous model of schooling. Talking about regional and central offices, if we are restricting ourselves, the kinds of areas—I can talk only about the “kinds” because we are in that process—would be to reconsider or review whether the programs in place need expansion or reduction. Some programs come to an end. We consider whether we need to continue with them. We always look at our staffing complements, which change over time. Open to us are staffing and goods and services considerations. In past times, when we have wanted to contract, we might give consideration to central staff—because they do not service schools directly—perhaps not travelling as much. There is a range of things that we can consider in terms of program efficiencies. The department is going through that budget distribution at the moment. I guess the department is making the point that they will be restricted to backroom work, not the work that is directly in schools or directly supports schools.

[3.20 pm]

Dr A.D. BUTI: The minister knows that as a result of the independent public school system, there is a need for considerable support from the central office and district office. If that support is going to be further cut, will it impact on the functioning of the IPSs? The director general mentioned the possibility of reduced travel. I understand that the south west district office is in Bunbury. If travel is going to be restricted or reduced, how will the people who work in the district office travel to the various schools in the south west to ensure that they are doing the job they are paid to?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I will ask the director general to elaborate, but I was listening to what she said and she said travel within the central office, as I heard—just to clarify that answer. She also said that programs that

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support the schools would not be considered as part of the efficiency savings. Could Ms O'Neill elaborate further on those specific questions from the member for Armadale?

Ms S. O'Neill: There were two things—the IPS and the direct support. I talked about “in schools” and “support to schools”. They are obviously the areas we give consideration to during our planning, and we would not want to reduce those things. I talked about the backroom work, and when I talked about travel I specifically said the backroom people, just to be quite clear about that.

Dr A.D. BUTI: What does the director general mean by “backroom”?

Ms S. O'Neill: I refer to policy officers sitting in central office, for example.

Ms S.F. McGURK: Presumably they do something. They assist schools at some level, so it would be good to understand.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Chair, once again the director general has not finished her answer.

The CHAIRMAN: That is correct. I was going to say that members need to direct their remarks to the minister.

Ms S. O'Neill: Of course all our people work very hard. I was making the point about direct support to schools. In terms of the IPS agenda, the research agrees with what the member is saying; that is, support for autonomous schools needs to be continued. That is why we have a dedicated unit that we have expanded that works specifically with IPSs. But IPSs have available all the support that every other school has available, and we are not looking—our budget considerations do not look to—to reduce that level of support. It is very important that they get that, remembering that IPSs receive additional financial support as part of that program.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Minister, I would like this information by way of supplementary, because I, probably unlike the minister, do not have access to this information. By way of supplementary, could the minister provide information on the positions that have been removed from either the central or district office in the last three years?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I think the director general might have some figures she can provide now, if the member will bear with us while we find them.

Ms S. O'Neill: There has been very little reduction in the past year or so. If I cannot find it, I will make it available. I looked at it just last night. Central office, in May 2012—we would have to clarify whether the Department of Training and Workforce Development was part of us then—had 1 290 staff; it now has 995.7 staff. That is a reduction, but we have had different functions come in and out of the central office, and we devolved some support staff from the central office to regions and then to schools. I do not have the same figures for regional staff, but the member will remember the policy position whereby regional staff were put into schools to provide direct support to schools; I refer to school psychologists, engagement and transition and others. There was an about 38 per cent reduction in regional staff. That was part of the government policy under which there were to be fewer people in offices and more people providing direct support to schools and networks of schools. On top of that, the government funded, through the department, networks of schools to work together. Although there was a reduction on paper in the central and regional offices, those people moved into schools.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I have a further question. Firstly, the supplementary information I am requesting is not only the quantity in the numbers, but I would also like to know the eliminated positions. Secondly, if staff move from the central or district office into the schools, how is it possible to have savings? Their wages need to still be paid. How are we making and going to make these massive savings if no-one is losing their job? If they are just moving from central office into the schools, where are the savings?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: The answer to that question is that the reduction through central office and the regional offices that the director general was referring to was not about savings; it was about providing the support from centralised office directly to schools. It was a shift in where the position was located. If the member wants further clarification on each of those positions—where they have transitioned to and whether any of the positions have not been transitioned to a different location and have been, in effect, made redundant—we can provide that, but the member would need to put that question on notice because that is a very detailed piece of work. We would not be able to provide that by 3 June.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I have a further question. It has been stated this afternoon that substantial savings have been made in the central and district offices. When we talked about that, the director general through the minister or the minister through the director general—whichever way we should say it—stated that staff have been moved from the central and district offices into the schools. Therefore, the question is: where are the savings; where has Treasury ticked off on these savings? Something has to happen. The minister cannot just say, “We made a saving.” What are the savings and where have they been achieved?

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Mrs L.M. HARVEY: The director general would like to clarify her answer.

Ms S. O'Neill: Sorry; I do not want this to be confused. The member earlier asked how we might give thought to meeting any reductions that might be in front of us. I said at the time that we are giving thought right now to a range of strategies because we are distributing our budget as we speak. I was asked where we could find savings, and I said that one methodology is to look at staffing in central office. Just to be clear: I was not relating that to the historical data; it had moved on a bit in discussion. The member asked me about the reductions in the central and regional offices. I answered the question on the basis of the policy of the government of the day, the government of the time—it is still the government—that moved the support services closer to schools. That was not a cost saving; in fact, it was made very clear to us that the regional changes are not about cost saving, and that we were to spend the same amount of money. What we could give by way of supplementary, as the minister said, is the list of positions that went and were relocated to schools. In fact, they did not save us money. We had to make sure they were adequately resourced and connected. On top of that, we gave that network funding. When I answered the question about how we might give thought to it in our budget distribution, and that if we had to find the money, how we would, that was quite separate to the historic information I gave the member about reductions. The question and answer were theoretical. We are distributing our budget now. We have just found out about this reduction that Jennifer referred to, and we are going through that process as we speak.

Dr A.D. BUTI: It is not hypothetical, because the minister has confirmed that \$50 million has been saved in this financial year. Savings have also previously been talked about. Over \$260 million will be found from the central and district offices. I will ask the question again. The minister cannot just say there will be savings but not be able to identify where the savings will be. The minister mentioned that insurance would not take up the whole \$260 million. Where are the savings in the education department that Treasury is happy with, and that the minister has confirmed have taken place in this financial year? I presume when the minister talks about “this financial year”, she is talking about this financial year.

[3.30 pm]

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Once again—I am trying to pull all those answers together, because we are going around in circles—the savings have been absorbed as part of the reconstruction of the budget to the student-centred funding model. We have said that. The reason the member for Armadale is not seeing a line item here with harvested savings is because the funding model has been completely readdressed, with Treasury and the Department of Education, around the student-centred funding model. Therefore, we cannot provide the member with further information. With regard to the efficiency measure that we have been talking about, which needs to be applied, that does not appear in these budget statements either. The director general was looking at the sorts of areas in which those savings could be found, and the department has not articulated specifically where those savings will be found because that work is still in progress. We do not have any further information on that. I know the member would like us to be able to identify a series of programs that have been cut. That is not the case; it has not occurred. As part of the new funding model, some of those efficiencies have been absorbed, bearing in mind that this is a significant budget.

Dr A.D. BUTI: The minister’s answer is that the savings have come about because there is a new funding model. If that is the answer to the question of where the savings in the education department are being absorbed, can the minister please explain—because it is quite important—how the new funding model will result in \$50 million of savings for this financial year and how it will result in further savings? How will the new funding model result in actual savings to the education department?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Perhaps Ms McGrath could elaborate on the cost and demand model that the government has moved to. That might provide some insight into how the new budget arrangement works.

Ms J.A. McGrath: I think we have covered off so I do not want to go over that ground again, but I will talk about the \$50 million that the minister mentioned as a saving in 2015–16, if that was for the workforce renewal—that was 2016–17. That \$50 million has been absorbed, not saved, because of the rebaselining for 2016–17. The \$24 million as a workforce renewal for 2015–16, which was prior to the rebaselining, was saved within this current financial year.

Dr A.D. BUTI: How?

Ms J.A. McGrath: That was saved through additional commonwealth funding that we had through StudentsFirst. Basically, the commonwealth gave us more funding based on our enrolment growth, so we had some additional funds and we were able to absorb it there. That is not the case for the future. As I mentioned, the future workforce renewal has now been picked up in the rebaselining.

The increase in appropriation from 2016–17 onwards is \$1.7 million, but, as I mentioned, 3.3 per cent will actually go to schools. With the savings we can make in Government Regional Officers’ Housing and

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insurances, we will be able to get that figure. Of that \$1.7 million, 3.7 per cent is for students, and the remainder is for wages growth; that covers wages growth and growth in other expenses. It is similar for the out years. For example, in 2017–18 there is an increase in our budget of 2.7 per cent, and our growth in the number of students is much lower. In each of the out years, there is a percentage increase in our budget, but that is lower than our student growth, which is sufficient to cover wages growth and non-salary growth.

Dr A.D. BUTI: You mention rebaselining of the model. What does rebaselining mean?

Ms J.A. McGrath: Zero-basing.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: As I explained previously, rather than take last year's budget and add a percentage increase and an efficiency saving and whatever, which has been the practice for many years, Treasury and the Department of Education have been working on a project for some time around the student-centred funding model. That is a new way of funding. It is a complete paradigm shift. Basically, they have started from zero and built up to, with the student-centred funding model, what they need to service the students in the 799 schools in Western Australia. It is a different funding regime. A better word with respect to that \$54 million might be "absorbed". The director general assures me that under this new funding arrangement, schools can continue with business as usual, along with the additional programs we have already talked about.

Ms S.F. McGURK: A few specific line items were given, including savings from GROH and insurances. Could we have the specific amounts that have been saved from those line items?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Ms McGrath, do you have the projections for GROH?

Ms J.A. McGrath: Yes, the adjustment for GROH over the forward estimates is \$43.6 million.

Ms S.F. McGURK: Is that saved, or was that the total amount spent?

Ms J.A. McGrath: That is the amount saved. The insurances are \$63 million over the forward estimates.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Just to clarify, that saving in GROH is because of a reduced cost in the provision of GROH. It is not a reduction in the number of houses provided; it is a saving in the cost of providing GROH because of the changes in regional WA.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I have a much more detailed question in the sense that it is more specific at least. I refer to new works on page 269. Some allocations are made for "Other School Facilities", including ground developments. Last year the minister visited Toodyay District High School and viewed the kiss and drop-off area for the junior school. I believe they have been waiting since about 2002 for that area to be improved. In my view there is a safety and amenity issue in that area—it is wet and muddy, with a lot of cars coming and going and small kids running across and interacting with that traffic. It is very dangerous. Is Toodyay District High School included in that ground developments allocation this year or in the future?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Mr Fischer is the appropriate person to respond, if he has that information to hand.

Mr J. Fischer: I am not familiar with the details of Toodyay District High School but I would certainly be pleased to see what can be done to improve the ovals.

Ms S.F. McGURK: My question relates to the first dot point under "Significant Issues Impacting the Agency" on page 262, which states in part —

The wellbeing, resilience, emotional regulation and behaviour of children and young people continue to be challenging issues in the community that have an impact in schools.

I refer to a recent advertisement for the employment of an education assistant for a high-needs student with a disability. The ad referred to the need for the successful applicant to be experienced in the use of deflections and restraints where needed, as well as being able to manage the use of a protective isolation room within the regulatory requirements of operation. I have a copy of the ad and can give it to the minister after the session. What are the policies on the use of restraints and the isolation room? How often are restraints used? What kinds of restraints are used? To what extent is parental consent required? Are parents advised after each incident when restraints or the isolation room is used?

[3.40 pm]

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I believe the director general can respond to this question.

Ms S. O'Neill: Protective isolation is pretty rare; it is used as a last resort, and can be used only when other less restrictive strategies have proven unsuccessful. It can involve a range of settings, but it usually involves a protective isolation room, for which there are four specifications: it must be accessible to the student, it must have reverse-cycle air-conditioning, all the harmful fittings must have been removed, and there must be viewing

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windows in the door and in the wall for staff to constantly monitor the student for safety. We have taken action to improve monitoring and reporting on the use of those isolation rooms. I think we had this discussion last year.

As at 10 March this year, six rooms have been approved for use across the department, for 10 students, because they are directly linked to students, in seven schools. There have been 25 instances to 10 March of the use of protective isolation. We did some upgrade work during this year at one of those sites.

We have done a lot of work in the area of policy. We are establishing a central register of the schools that are using those approved protective isolation strategies. I think that is one of the things we talked about previously. We now have, I believe, better communication between the regional executive directors who have had some governance of this, so that we can provide better support for those students from our statewide services when isolation is proposed as part of that strategy. We have a mandated regular review of the plans and a regular inspection of the facilities, and mandated reporting of every instance of a protective isolation occurrence. We are upgrading our online systems so that we can facilitate that reporting. We have created a safety checklist.

I think the member asked about the involvement of parents. My understanding—I will just confirm this—is that the parents have to give approval and are part of the planning process. My understanding is that the school and the parents partner up in that planning process. That is why I think it is fair to say that, on the basis of some instances last year, we have made some really important improvements.

Ms S.F. McGURK: Are parents advised after each incident? The director general mostly talked about protective isolation, but are restraints different? Do they only occur within the isolation room?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Can the director general provide an answer?

Ms S. O'Neill: Just to clarify, is the member asking about restraints for a disabled student? I think the ad she referred to originally might have been for an education assistant for a disabled student.

Ms S.F. McGURK: That is right. The ad referred to deflections and restraints, where needed, as well as managing the use of a protective isolation room within the regulatory requirements of operation.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I will ask Mr Lindsay Hale to provide further information.

Mr L.R. Hale: Although the protective isolation rooms are only ever used, and a plan is only ever put in place, with the written agreement of the parents, that is not quite the same for the use of restraints. If the use of restraints is part of an individual plan for a child, that would be agreed by the parents; it would be planned. In many cases, when a child has particularly challenging behaviours, perhaps as a result of a disability, and self-regulation issues, and restraint is useful for their own protection and the protection of others, that is often in the plan, and it is often agreed to. However, unfortunately sometimes circumstances will emerge in which trained staff have to use restraints, regardless of whether or not it is planned. In either event, it would be normal for the school to have a further communication with the parents to make them aware of that.

Ms S.F. McGURK: Just to reiterate that question, are parents advised after each incident when restraints or the isolation room are used?

Mr L.R. Hale: We would expect that, where a restraint is used, it would be normal, as with any significant behaviour issue, for that to be reported to the parents and discussed, yes.

Ms S.F. McGURK: Are restraints and isolation rooms used in all jurisdictions in Australia?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Mr Hale has that information.

Mr L.R. Hale: I do not have the detail, but my understanding is that both those forms of restrictive practice are used across all jurisdictions in Australia. I think it is fair to say that all jurisdictions, including our own, seek to minimise the use of any sort of restrictive practices. We would be typical, in that we do everything we can to avoid that being the case. These are measures of last resort and, particularly in the case of protective isolation, very unusual. Restraint is a little more common, but protective isolation is a very unusual strategy.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I have been advised that a detailed policy on protective isolation is available on the Department of Education website as well.

Ms S.F. McGURK: Does the minister have figures for how many children used these rooms, or were restrained, last year?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I refer to the director general.

Ms S. O'Neill: I think I quoted figures up to 10 March this year.

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Mrs L.M. HARVEY: The director general quoted the figures for protective isolation up to 10 March 2016. Six rooms are approved for use by 10 students at seven schools. There have been 25 instances of protective isolation up to 10 March 2016.

Ms S.F. McGURK: Thank you, but what about students who were restrained? Does the minister have those figures?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: We do not have that information.

Ms S.F. McGURK: Is that information not maintained?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: No, we do not keep it centrally.

Ms S.F. McGURK: This is my final question. Does the school need to record or report on the use of restraints and the use of the isolation room; and, if so, to whom?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: The school needs to report use of the isolation rooms, but not centrally with respect to restraints. However, as has been articulated, the expectation is that schools liaise very closely with parents and ensure that the parents are aware of those instances in which restraints or protective isolation have been required. They can also make an online incident notification, if required.

Ms S.F. McGURK: The minister said that there is no obligation for the school to notify the central office of the use of restraints, but it would be obliged to keep that information within the school, so the teachers or the education workers would be required to notify within the school or the district.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I will ask Mr Hale to further clarify, because my understanding is that there are different levels of restraints, depending on the special needs of the student and the arrangement that has been put in place with the parents. Perhaps Mr Hale can elaborate.

Mr L.R. Hale: It is a little difficult to answer, because it is a matter of the degree of the restraint that is applied. I am confident that our schools, where significant restraint is applied, would keep that as part of the student's behaviour record. In most of the incidents where this occurs, it is part of a planned approach to responding. In that event, the plan is monitored. Where it is not part of a plan, it would often form part of what would be considered a critical incident, and be reported. It is a bit tricky. Frankly, I do not think we have a broad reporting mechanism, but I think within that range of possibilities, schools would be recording information to have a clear picture of what is happening with a student.

[3.50 pm]

Mr C.D. HATTON: My question relates to independent public schools. I refer to the sixth dot point on page 262 of the *Budget Statements*. It is fairly well understood that independent public schooling has been operating for a number of years now and it is my understanding that probably 400 or 450 schools, or half the number of schools, are such and that there is quite an extensive waiting list, so to speak. A couple of schools in my electorate have been asking me questions not so much about the philosophy and concept of greater community empowerment and the quality of teaching and so forth. Can the minister give me some information about the transitions and processes taking place specifically in relation to the advanced leadership strategy and school board training? Then maybe she can tell me what will happen with the 2017 intake. Is there any new information on the advanced leadership strategy and school board training?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Certainly, the independent public schools initiative has been extremely popular. There are 445 schools in our community that have achieved IPS status to date. The IPS initiative was founded on the basis of autonomy, and a range of factors are taken into consideration as part of the IPS program. The advanced leadership program will build the capacity of up to 500 IPS principals to use autonomy to maximise its impact on teaching and learning. Part of that program is the IPS principals' fellowship program, which is focused on selected school principals being developed to lead change and innovation in public education. There is a partnership between the Department of Education and Harvard Graduate School of Education. It is a really good leadership development program.

The school leadership board program is incredibly important. It is designed around providing training to board members of IPSs to ensure that they can build the skills and knowledge they need to fulfil their obligations and roles, particularly in the school planning areas of budgeting, performance monitoring, annual reporting, governance and those sorts of issues. It will be complemented by a full suite of online resources that will be accessible right across Western Australia.

The capacity building programs have been initiated to support the IPS program and, as I understand it, a development and selection program has now commenced for another 50 or so schools to commence as IPSs in 2017. It is good news. One hundred and twenty-four schools aspire to become IPSs in 2017. Of those, around

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50 will achieve the status. Part of the development and selection program is to ensure that the schools have the best chance of being selected into the program. A comprehensive transition program is also being developed and pushed through the schools so that the schools and the community can transition to more effectively manage an IPS structure. One-off grants of between \$20 000 and \$40 000 are being provided, depending on location and circumstances. That will go to those 50 schools to support the transition to an IPS should they be successful. All in all, it has been a very successful program. A large number of schools want to be part of the program. Hopefully, if the member for Balcatta's schools are interested in that, they may become part of that capacity building program and leadership development program.

Dr A.D. BUTI: The first dot point on page 262 of the *Budget Statements* refers to the wellbeing, resilience, emotional regulation and behaviour of children and young people. I want to focus mainly on children with special needs. I know that the freeze on external recruitment has now been lifted, but I need to ask this question because it has ongoing ramifications. One of the primary schools in my electorate had four children with special needs, including one with autism, appear at the beginning of the year. Of course, that presented some problems with the recruitment freeze at the time. I know that an exemption could be instigated, but the principal concerned sent me an email stating that he gave up applying because he thought the process was very frustrating and time consuming. He said that the request had to go through six or seven people before it got to the approval stage by the Treasurer and at each stage, they came back to the principal with more and more questions asking him justify the request. This involved requests going to the staffing manager, the manager of the staffing manager, a couple of other people, then Sharyn O'Neill, then the minister and finally the Treasurer. This was incredibly frustrating and he actually gave up. I wonder whether the minister has any comment on the comment by this principal about the process that was involved while the freeze was in place.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: No, I have no comment on that. I am here to answer questions, not to comment on a process.

Dr A.D. BUTI: The minister has no comment, but does she feel that it is rather worrying and disconcerting that a principal felt the need to make the comment to me that he was so incredibly frustrated by the process that he gave up and did not apply for an exemption to employ an education assistant to assist children with special needs?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: The principal's role in the school is to ensure that all the students are being provided for. Even though some bureaucratic processes are frustrating, their job as principal is to ensure that the students in the school are being supported. So, yes, it does concern me if I am hearing that principals are abandoning that process, because the welfare of the children needs to be put forward.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I have a further question.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I have not finished. I will ask the director general to elaborate further on how students were provided for during that recruitment freeze, because I understand that a large number of exemptions were achieved for schools that applied for them.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Mr Chairman, on a matter of clarification, I asked a question. It is not the role of the minister to decide that my question will be used in a different manner. I have asked a specific question about a concern by a principal who found the process very frustrating. That was the question. I do not now need to know that, I think, 91 exemptions were made. We know that. Let us save time and not go through all that. If the minister does not want to make any further comment, let us leave it at that. I do not want to spend five minutes being told how many exemptions there were. We know how many exemptions there were. There were 91 exemptions. I believe that was reported in the newspaper. I asked the minister a specific question about a principal. The minister gave me a glib answer and put the onus back on the principal, which was very interesting. It is the fault of these hardworking principals; it is not the fault of the process. Incredible!

The CHAIRMAN: Member, from my perspective, the minister gave an answer and was going to get the director general to confirm it. You have put words in her mouth that you were going to get a whole heap of statistics. If that had been the case, I would have agreed with you, but we have not even heard that. I thought we were going to get the protocol of what happens when that situation occurs.

Dr A.D. BUTI: But I have not asked about that.

The CHAIRMAN: No; you asked that of the minister, and the minister was clarifying it and then said that she was going to ask the director general to confirm that. I am going to go ahead with that and ask the director general to confirm that through the minister.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I think that the member for Armadale has made it pretty clear that he is not really interested in the number of exemptions that were granted.

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Dr A.D. BUTI: I just told you that I know the answer to that.

The CHAIRMAN: Member!

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Actually, you do not, member for Armadale, because you quoted an incorrect number. My advice is that 109 requests for exemptions were put forward —

Dr A.D. BUTI: You have no concern about principals under stress!

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: — and 71 were exempted.

Dr A.D. BUTI: You have no concern about people!

The CHAIRMAN: Member for Armadale!

Dr A.D. BUTI: Kids with disabilities are missing out in the process, so do not tell me what I do not have an interest in!

The CHAIRMAN: Member for Armadale!

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: And do not tell me how I answer! Go and check *Hansard*.

The CHAIRMAN: Minister, just wait. Member for Armadale, do not shout over me when I am trying to make a point. I understand exactly what you are saying. You are going to force my hand to call you in this unusual circumstance. Whether or not we like it, we need to hear the answer, and then in your response, you can declare what you feel or need to do or even register that you are not satisfied with the answer.

[4.00 pm]

Dr A.D. BUTI: Mr Chairman, I do not take kindly to the minister putting personal assertions about a member during an estimates committee hearing. It is first time I have ever had that happen to me.

The CHAIRMAN: Member, from my perspective it was going both ways. I feel that right now we need to settle that issue and we either go ahead with that question or we go to a new question from the member for Mandurah.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Mr Chairman, as I said previously, if I can respond to this question, I would like to be able to respond.

The CHAIRMAN: Can I clarify something, minister.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: My response is—as I said previously—that I am here representing the Minister for Education with a large contingent of representatives from the Department of Education to give our best efforts to answer questions during this estimates committee hearing. It is not my role as a minister to comment on opinion that is put forward by other members and I will not do it. I was asked to comment on opinion earlier, in the first question put to me at the estimates committee hearing, and I said that I am not commenting on opinion. Once again, I am not commenting on opinion.

The CHAIRMAN: At this point, minister, I have had a request for a comfort break of 10 minutes and this may be a good time to do that if you would agree.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I do not need a comfort break, but if other members would like to have a comfort break I am amenable to that.

The CHAIRMAN: Are we happy to go ahead with that?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: We are happy to keep going.

The CHAIRMAN: Okay, that is fine by me.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I would like to refer the minister to page 262 and the fourth dot point that refers to high expectations of success for students.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I am sorry, member, what page are you referring to? I do apologise.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: It is page 262.

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

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Thank you.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The fourth dot point refers to success for every student and best possible teaching et cetera. I have a table from the Australian government Department of Education and Training that records the propensity for Tertiary Admission Centre applications by state. The table relates to the number of year 12 students applying for admittance to tertiary institutions. Western Australia's statistics from 2011 to 2014 have

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remained the lowest in Australia. The department may have the figures for 2015, but according to this table the figure for Western Australia in 2014 was 51.4 per cent of year 12 students. Compared with other states, we are just under 10 per cent below New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory and much lower than the other states and territories. Why is it the case that Western Australia continues to have a lower number of year 12 students with a propensity to apply for university? The fourth dot point on page 262 states that the department's focus will be on —

... increasing students' university aspirations, especially in low socio-economic and country areas.

What does the department propose to do in low socioeconomic and country areas to improve this statistic?

Ms S. O'Neill: I do not think that I have the figures that the member is referring to in front of me.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I understand that Professor Andrew Taggart quite regularly updates the director general with these figures.

Ms S. O'Neill: Okay, I understand what the member is referring to now in terms of what we might do to assist those students or at least set targets for them. The minister has introduced the government's new Western Australian Certificate of Education and the aspiration there is for students to achieve an Australian tertiary admission rank or a vocational education and training certificate. I have attempted—Professor Taggart and I have talked about this on a number of occasions—to meet with schools that have data in this specific area that is of greater concern rather than use a broadbrush approach across all schools. Professor Taggart has talked about—we agree on this—the aspirations of students wanting to go to university. It is difficult to explain why some of those aspirations or outcomes might be different in Western Australia. I am not sure whether in that particular data there is a data collection differentiation between states. But on a practical basis, we are working with individual schools. We have a team of senior secondary people who talk with individual schools to try to understand the issues and I meet with the principals each year directly to try to ascertain from them why they think some students do not want to go to university. We know from low socioeconomic—status schools that there are historical factors involved, such as students who might be the first person in their family to go to school. It is, in part, about trying to break that cycle. Some students are simply not interested in a university pathway; other students need greater support to even see university as an aspiration, which is something Professor Taggart has talked to us about.

From our perspective, with our high-performance, high-care plan we are trying to work with individual students from that particular background, as we do with Aboriginal students in the Follow the Dream program, to provide them with support so that, first of all, they have mentors and can meet people who have gone through university or they can have individualised help to aspire to enter university. For us, it is about more individualised support to individual schools rather than support across the whole system, because it is not an issue for every senior high school, obviously. It is an issue that is more for schools in low socioeconomic—status areas.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: And schools in the country. Given the last line of that dot point states —

... and increasing students' university aspirations, especially in low socio-economic and country areas.

Does the department have a list of target schools that the minister can provide where this will be a focus?

Ms S. O'Neill: We could provide a list, but the list will be almost all our low socioeconomic metropolitan and country schools. Although Professor Taggart probably is more familiar with schools in the south metropolitan and Peel areas, the issue of increasing students' university aspirations is very much linked to socioeconomic status as a whole school or as individual students in other schools. We would probably be providing the member with a list of secondary schools in low socioeconomic areas.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I would be happy with that because it is a priority that is stated in the budget papers at this dot point. I would like that as supplementary information, as the director general has indicated that she is able to provide that list.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: The director general will provide by way of supplementary information a list of schools in low socioeconomic areas.

[*Supplementary Information No B55.*]

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I have a further, more general question on this issue. I am aware that some schools have, effectively, an aspirational target; schools that have made a target of, let us say, 50 per cent of students aspiring to university entry. Is that something that the department encourages or something that is asked of schools that perhaps do not have an aspirational target to pursue? I will give an example. In my electorate, in the Peel region, I understand that Comet Bay College has an aspirational target of X number of students aspiring to go to university that has been developed by the school board and, I think, the principal and the leadership team;

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whereas, other schools in the Peel region do not necessarily have an aspirational target. Is that something the department would pursue with the schools it is targeting, particularly those in low socioeconomic areas or in the country?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I understand that some schools have a more formalised process than others, and the department encourages schools to set those aspirational targets. I will let the director general respond.

Ms S. O'Neill: We published a statement in our annual statement of expectations, "Focus 2016", that we strongly encourage and expect schools where this is an issue to attempt to set a reasonable target based on the history of the students that they have enrolled. Whether that is done formally and appears in a school plan or not, certainly the overall encouragement and expectation is there.

[4.10 pm]

Mr N.W. MORTON: I refer to the seventh dot point on page 262, which relates to effective school leadership. I draw the minister's attention to the recent *The West Australian* article about schools that had undergone the expert review group process. The reason I ask the question is that two of the schools named are in my electorate. Obviously, some things have been identified at these schools. What support is being provided to those schools moving forward?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I will ask the director general to provide some further information on that.

Ms S. O'Neill: As the member said, some matters were reported in the newspaper. We asked the expert review group to report to us on the sorts of commonalities that there might be when schools are struggling. Very often in a school that is struggling we might find performance concerns of leadership, lack of school planning and lack of attention given to certain aspects of the curriculum. As a system, we take those and build that into our leadership development. For every individual school that goes through a full expert review group review, we have a case conference of the relevant people across the central office and the regional office to see what level and kind of support we might want to give. For example, if it is around literacy and numeracy planning, we have experts at our statewide services centre who will go out and assist the school. If it is a financial matter that the school has a weakness in, we will provide people from our finance and administration area to go out and assist. It might be information, it might be tools; it could be a range of things. We wrap that support around those individuals. The schools are required to develop a plan for implementation. Where necessary, we provide support to that. Then we have follow-up reviews at six, 12 and 24 months. It is a very active school improvement process. We have been very happy with the number of schools whose performance operationally and in terms of outcomes has turned around as a result.

Mr N.W. MORTON: Is that process of information or knowledge or whatever being actively undertaken with those schools that have been identified as we speak?

Ms S. O'Neill: As I said, we have a case conference for every school that is reviewed. It has to develop a plan and then we will discuss it with the school if it needs any further support, apart from that which it can source itself.

Ms S.F. McGURK: My question relates to the asset investment program on page 266 of the *Budget Statements*. There is \$1 million for planning for a new school and \$49.5 million to accommodate an extra 1 000 students at Shenton College. The new City Beach high school has been pushed out to 2027. What site options and financing are currently being explored or developed to provide additional secondary schooling for students from inner-city and western coastal strip areas in addition to Shenton College and Churchlands Senior High School?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I thank the member for the question. The western suburbs high school has not been pushed out to 2027. That is the year that the international school's lease expires. I know that there has been some confusion about those dates. I will ask Mr Fischer to provide some further information about the work that has been done for a western suburbs school. Additional capacity has certainly been built into Shenton College. I believe that we are looking at additional capacity potentially being built in to Mount Lawley Senior High School, Churchlands Senior High School and some of the other schools. The search for a site for a western suburbs school is very much an active project.

Mr J. Fischer: The strategy for the western suburbs is that we are looking to manage about 3 500 additional students by about 2026. That projection has probably dropped a little from our earlier enrolment projections. As mentioned by the minister, we have strategies to increase the capacity at the three existing schools—Shenton College, Mount Lawley Senior High School and Churchlands Senior High School. Last year funding of \$38.8 million was provided for Churchlands and work is underway at the moment to increase capacity there. As announced in this budget, nearly \$50 million was allocated towards Shenton College. That work will commence and be ready for 2019. The development of Mount Lawley will be part of future budget processes.

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In terms of looking at sites, we have been examining many sites. I think the minister announced four sites last year that we had a close look at that potentially could assist in managing the enrolment growth. The final decision on those sites is yet to be made by the government. We are still presenting options to the government to manage that.

Ms S.F. McGURK: Mr Fischer talked about additional capacity or money going to Shenton College and Churchlands. I think that was already understood. What new sites have been looked at and has consideration been given to North Metropolitan TAFE on the corner of Lord and Harold Streets in Highgate, Subiaco Oval, Princess Margaret Hospital for Children or the East Perth power station? Have any of those sites been examined as possibilities for a new school?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: A range of sites are being considered. Obviously, this is one of those areas that is very relevant to my electorate. I can advise that a range of sites are being considered at this point. Due diligence is being done with respect to which of those sites would be suitable, bearing in mind the catchment and where the growth in students is coming from—all those considerations. It is not a decision that can be made quickly. Obviously, the first option is looking for government-owned sites. I can advise that a number of sites have been considered but the minister has not yet made a decision about which site will potentially be the site of a new high school. In the interim, I understand the capacity that we are building into Shenton Park, Churchlands and Mount Lawley does buy us some time for building a brand-new high school.

Ms S.F. McGURK: How much time does it buy the government and what is the capacity of Churchlands and Shenton College, for instance? What are the numbers that the government is looking at for these schools?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I will ask the director general. I think we might need further clarification on what the member is asking.

Ms S. O'Neill: I just want to clarify whether the member was asking what the total capacity of Churchlands is at the moment or the projected capacity.

Ms S.F. McGURK: I am asking about the projected capacity. The minister said that the department was looking at extra capacity for those schools and that will buy the government some time. How much time does it buy the government and what sort of capacity are we talking about at those schools? How many students does the government envisage?

Ms S. O'Neill: I will get that answer for the member. We had the original \$10.7 million expansion and then funding of \$38.8 million, which has already been allocated. I will ask Mr Fischer to tell us how many students that will allow Churchlands Senior High School to grow to.

Mr J. Fischer: Capacity at Churchlands will be about 3 000 students. That will not all be permanent accommodation. There will be permanent accommodation for about 2 300 or 2 400 students. I am not quite sure of the exact number. There will be capacity for 2 600 students at Shenton and they will all be in permanent accommodation.

Ms S.F. McGURK: The minister said that the current minister is looking at a range of sites but has yet to commit. What is the time frame for parents in that area to know what alternatives are being looked at? For instance, Mr Fischer just said that Churchlands could accommodate 3 000 students but not on a permanent basis; it would be looking at fewer than that, so 3 000 would be temporary. What is the time frame for when we will know what alternative sites are being looked at for another school in that area or for other schools?

[4.20 pm]

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: The Minister for Education has not set a specific deadline, if you like, to make that decision, but obviously he would like to make the decision as soon as possible. The decision needs to be made in the context of due diligence on all those sites to ensure that we cater for the catchment and growth that we are experiencing in the primary schools. I would very much love to give the member a date, but it is impossible for us to do that until the minister has made a decision on the site. I know the minister personally. I know from conversations I have had with him that he would like to settle on a new location as quickly as possible.

Ms S.F. McGURK: It is good that the minister knows the Minister for Education personally! I imagine she might spend a bit of time with him in cabinet.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I have talked to him a lot about western suburbs high schools because —

Ms S.F. McGURK: This issue has been known about for quite a while. Parents and the community would be concerned that the department is now talking about pushing the capacity of Churchlands Senior High School out to 3 000 students and the minister is yet to settle on a site for a new school. Is the government looking at having the private sector build the new high school?

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Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Those decisions have not been made.

Ms S.F. McGURK: Is the possibility of refurbishing an existing inner-CBD building under consideration?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: As I said, a wide range of options are being considered. Some sites were being considered as part of the move for the international school, for example. A number of sites are currently under consideration and the minister and department are doing due diligence on them. However, we need to keep it in context. The western suburbs high school is part of the solution to the problem. The other part of the solution to the growth in student numbers for western suburbs high schools in general has always been the expansion of existing facilities, including those at Carine Senior High School, Mount Lawley Senior High School, Shenton College and Churchlands Senior High School. All of those options working together will enable us to ensure that we have the capacity to cater for students into the future.

Ms S.F. McGURK: What is the standard cost to build a year 7–12 secondary school on a greenfields site?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I am advised that it costs around \$80 million depending on the site, but I expect there would need to be a range of caveats on that. I will ask Mr Fischer to elaborate if he can.

Mr J. Fischer: An estimate of \$80 million is pretty close. We generally build our high schools in two stages. The budget papers give a number of examples. For the new schools at Harrisdale, South Baldivis and Yanchep, stage 1 will cost between \$53 million and \$56 million, and stage 2 of those facilities will generally cost around \$30 million, depending on what facilities are included. For example, the cost is increased if the school includes support for higher-needs education. However, the standard cost for a year 7–12 school is close to what the minister mentioned.

Ms S.F. McGURK: I will try this question one more time. We are being told that there is a need for a new school in the western suburbs. The old City Beach high school site will not be available until 2027. At existing schools like Shenton and Churchlands, the number of students is blowing out to 2 600 to 3 000, which is a quite significant number. People want to know what sites are being considered by the government for an alternative school. People are actively asking about this and would like an answer from the government.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I understand that, but speculating about different sites before a decision has been made about whether the site is suitable is not helpful in this sort of scenario, because as soon as a site is mentioned an entire community gets behind it and gets attached to that site. Therefore, unless due diligence has been done and we know we are building a high school on a particular site, those announcements are generally not made. That is why I say that a range of options are being considered. The preferred location was the City Beach high school site. Obviously, that is problematic. It is still our preferred option. However, work is being done on looking at alternative sites. The minister is obviously keen to resolve this and to settle on a site and make that announcement in due course. I am confident that he will be doing that in the near future.

Ms S.F. McGURK: This is not a new issue for the community. We have known that these numbers are blowing out and that there is a need for a new site. For how long has this matter been before the current minister and when can we expect a decision? It is a reasonable question to ask.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: The member can expect an answer when the decision has been made and the minister makes the announcement. That is the only answer I can give because we have not settled on a site. However, it is not necessarily an exact science because the estimated projections for student growth do not necessarily land where they have been assumed. It is a work in progress. There is a fluctuating demand for those high school places. As I have said a number of times, the minister is keen to resolve this issue and make an announcement. I expect that he will make an announcement on the preferred site in due course. Until that time, I am not prepared to throw out the names of half a dozen suburbs and for people to debate the merits of each site. The department needs to do its due diligence on the merits and the suitability of the sites being considered, including the site works required and the suitability of that site for the catchment predictions. All those sorts of things need to be considered. Until we have settled on a site, looked at project planning and determined that the site is suitable, there will be no announcement or speculation around which sites are being considered as part of the process. The minister is keen to resolve it and I am confident that it will be resolved in the near future.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I refer to the table “Appropriations, Expenses and Cash Assets” at page 261 and the line item “Total Appropriations”. I assume that the total appropriation spent on education includes money spent by the department on Bigger Picture advertisements.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Yes, that is correct.

Dr A.D. BUTI: If that is the case, how much money has the department spent since 2013–14 on the government’s Bigger Picture advertisements?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I will ask the director general to provide a response.

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B — Wednesday, 25 May 2016]

p350d-378a

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Ms S. O'Neill: The total budget for our campaign, which we combined with the broader government Bigger Picture campaign, is \$1.8 million over three years, being 2014–15, 2015–16 and 2016–17. It has been undertaken in two phases. We have put aside funding in the budget for phase 2. We have already done some work on independent public schools and we will also look at early childhood as part of that overall campaign. That campaign was based on our initial market research in 2014 that showed that many people in the community were not knowledgeable of the reforms that the department was undertaking in schools.

[4.30 pm]

Dr A.D. BUTI: In the 2016 calendar year, how much will the department spend as part of its Bigger Picture advertising campaign and what will it be advertising?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I am advised that the allocations are done in financial years. I think the director general just articulated how much had been allocated over three financial years. I will ask the director general to clarify that again.

Ms S. O'Neill: Phase 1 of the campaign was \$1.095 million out of that total I mentioned of \$1.8 million. At the time, a large amount of that was for the changes to year 7. That campaign ran from July 2014 to March 2015 on television, radio, online and other forms of advertising. There were some really good success factors. It significantly raised awareness among the general population from 14 per cent to 26 per cent, and for school-aged population parents, it raised awareness from 31 per cent to 60 per cent. Phase 2 is expected because it is budgeted at \$555 000. The member asked what that was for. The focus would be independent public schools and early childhood education. That is broken up into \$450 000 for media, and smaller amounts for a website et cetera. Phase 2 started on 28 February 2016 and runs through until the end of December 2016.

Dr A.D. BUTI: How much will be spent, and on what, in the 2016–17 financial year?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I am unsure whether the director general is able to drill down into that.

Dr A.D. BUTI: There must be an amount allocated.

Ms S. O'Neill: I cannot see the break-up for 2016–17. Is that what the member asked for?

Dr A.D. BUTI: Yes; whatever has been put aside for 2016–17.

Ms S. O'Neill: I think that will be phase 2 at a cost of \$555 000.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Is the director general certain of that?

Ms S. O'Neill: Phase 2 runs from 28 February this year to 16 December. Taking out January, that \$555 000 would be for most of 2016.

Dr A.D. BUTI: It was mentioned previously that the funding is allocated in financial years. I think what the director general just told me covers two financial years.

Ms S. O'Neill: The information I have is that the total is \$1.8 million. Phase 1 went from July 2014 to March 2015 and cost \$1.095 million. Phase 2 is expected to cost \$555 000 and will run from 28 February 2016 to December 2016.

Dr A.D. BUTI: What is the \$550 000 for phase 2 being spent on? Further, the director general said it is dealt with in financial years. The department must have apportioned the amount that will be spent on advertising in the next financial year—the whole 2016–17 financial year.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I can provide that by way of supplementary information. We do not have that breakdown at present. Phase 2 of the campaign finishes in December 2016. The phase from 28 February 2016 to December 2016 has a value of \$555 000 attached to it, but I can provide, by way of supplementary information, the breakdown to 30 June 2016 and then from 1 July 2016 onwards. I think that is what the member is after.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Yes. I will clarify: the minister will provide, by way of supplementary information, the budget for the next financial year for the education department's spending on the Bigger Picture advertising campaign.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Yes; I will provide the Bigger Picture advertising portion of the education department's media allocation from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017, with the understanding that I believe the expiration of the campaign is December 2016.

[*Supplementary Information No B56.*]

Ms S.F. MCGURK: Ms O'Neill mentioned that part of the \$555 000 to be spent from February until December this year will be to promote IPS and early childhood education. Can the director general give us a bit more detail about what is being promoted, particularly around early childhood education?

Ms S. O'Neill: We have already completed the IPS piece. Perhaps the member has seen some work around that. We are scoping out the early childhood work. It is not so much for the promotion of these areas, but more to inform parents. For early childhood, particularly child and parent centres, it is to ensure that people understand the range of services they provide and their accessibility. The availability of KindiLink to Aboriginal people is another example in the early childhood years. There is also the fact that four-year-old schooling is not guaranteed at local schools, so there is information about enrolments for four-year-olds—sometimes they have to go to a nearby school. Preprimary is now compulsory. Our market work originally said that some parents are not aware of all the details of that information, so we are looking for greater penetration around information for parents on those key changes.

Ms S.F. McGURK: To me, anyone looking at that would feel a little cynical. I am not directing this at Ms O'Neill, but in 2016, months before a state election, money will be put into promoting child and parent centres, for instance, and programs like KindiLink, when other programs have been cut. Those centres feel that they would prefer more investment in them. I guess that is by way of comment really. Was any consideration given to putting that sort of money into early childhood education or into education assistants rather than promoting the government's achievements just before an election?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I understand why the member would make that assertion, but this project started in July 2014. The marketing budget to advertise the early childhood centres was part of the original funding submission. The Department of Education knew, as it was starting up the early childhood centres, there would need to be a public education campaign about what those centres were for and where they were located; informing parents of the opportunity of those early childhood centres. This was not an additional allocation demanded from the agency for a specific marketing campaign; this was a marketing campaign that was always going to take place as part of the public education process for early childhood centres.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Questions were asked earlier about the student-centred funding model. I understand that in the past year there have been a number of refinements and that additional schools have been brought into that system. I am referring to the last dot point on page 262. I wonder whether the minister could provide some information about whether there has been an assessment of the effect of the introduction of the student-centred funding model on some district high schools, which comprise a significant portion of my electorate, and in rural areas. Also, could the minister provide information about the future of the Western Australian College of Agriculture in Morawa, Cunderdin and Denmark, and the School of the Air?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I can answer part of that but I might need some help with some of it. The student-centred funding model targets funding towards students' needs. The structure of it is a base level of funding per student and additional allocations with respect to student characteristics. Those characteristics may include Aboriginality, disability, social disadvantage, or English as a second or additional language. The schools operate on a one-line budget. That provides greater flexibility about where they allocate the funding and how funding is spent. That includes trying to deliver the best education for students and also looking at the school's staffing profile in order to deliver that. It is a very significant reform. There is increasing evidence that the culture in schools is changing with respect to the resourcing of schools.

The student-centred funding model school budgets were finalised and provided to schools on 23 March 2016. They were compiled using the February 2016 census data. Those school budgets have seen an increase of 2.5 per cent in student characteristic allocations—that is, specific allocations for special needs or characteristics that may require additional support—and a 2.56 per cent increase in the per-student enrolment-linked base and location allocation. That takes into account increases in salaries, utilities and the consumer price index. A total of 735 schools were funded through the student-centred funding model in 2015. In 2016, in addition to the four new primary schools—Anne Hamersley, Alkimos, Rivergums and Harrisdale—35 schools provided unique educational programs and unique models of delivery. There were five language development centres, 22 remote community schools and five Schools of the Air were funded. I am not sure whether the director general can elaborate any further on that information.

[4.40 pm]

Ms S. O'Neill: As the minister said, when we first did the model it was for a total of 735 schools. Then we had to look very deeply at the individual schools, some of which the member named, that are unique in their delivery and set-up. The minister just suggested that in 2016 the language development centres—Canning and Tuart Colleges—the Lands Schools, remote schools and Schools of the Air came into the program. Our belief is that all those schools, and the original 735, are operating well within their budgets. If they have any particular concerns—the member asked a question about district high schools—it is open to any school to apply through the budget review committee. We have set up a particular committee, and if schools have concerns they can apply and put their case for any additional funding. We have had a number of applications, and the majority of schools have received additional funding. The schools that have not yet been put in through the SCFM are the

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five Western Australian Colleges of Agriculture, which the member mentioned, the Schools of Isolated and Distance Education, and the Cocos Islands and Christmas Island District High Schools. The analysis is being undertaken for them now. None of those schools are particularly straightforward. If we take the agricultural schools, we have the teaching part of the school and then the residents, and then the ag programs specifically. We are working through the best way to deal with those, but most likely we will end up with, as with all schools, a price per student, and then some targeted initiatives for anything specialised they offer. We are doing that work right now, so I am not in a position to give much detail around that. That is for next year, and we are trying to finalise that shortly. I think that covers most of the parts of the member's question, unless I have missed something.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Can I ask for a little further information on the ag colleges? Is the director general saying she would compartmentalise the normal school curriculum into the student-centred model? What allocation would be available for the specialist teaching? Would that be a specialist allocation, an additional allocation, or would it all have to come in the same amount? I cannot see how that type of specialist course could be provided within the ordinary funding of the model.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I will ask the director general to answer.

Ms S. O'Neill: We are looking at a range of options for how best to resource those schools, because they are different from normal schools. But what is the same thereabouts is the standard educational program; ag colleges still offer the standard courses. We are looking at what that would look like aside a normal school's offerings and at the funding for that. We are trying to recognise also, as we have with all schools, the standard price for a student. The price per student is there to cover the regular portion of the school, and then quite a lot of schools have what we call targeted initiatives. When they run something on behalf of the department or they are doing something specialised that is different, we recognise it through a targeted initiative. Most schools have a combination of price per student—not all schools, but a number—and a targeted initiative, which attempts to recognise that there are some differences about those schools. The School of the Air and all the language development centres have gone through the same methodology. We are deep into that discussion right now. There is a fair bit of analysis and they have not been looked at for a long time and are quite different in the way they operate, as the member knows.

Ms S.F. McGURK: My question relates to “Spending Changes” on page 261 of the *Budget Statements*. This was raised earlier, and I was remiss in not asking it. The savings under the line item for Government Regional Officers' Housing are quite significant—\$2.5 million this year, and then more over the forward estimates. It was mentioned previously that the savings were made because the cost of housing had gone down. Are all the savings identified there? Can the minister give us a bit more detail about how those figures were reached?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Yes. In November 2015 cabinet approved an option to amend the tenant rent-setting framework. That abolished the 20 per cent discount to Perth's median rent, and increased the annual rent cap from \$10 to \$30 a week. The increase in the employee rent contribution of \$14.9 million over the forward estimates has offset the GROH expenditure, reducing the state appropriation by the same amount. There are some unders and overs. Tied in with that are significant revisions of the values of rents in regional towns such as Karratha, for example, and Port Hedland, where the rents in some of those communities have come down significantly. That has resulted in a revision of the GROH allocation for a number of government agencies. The Department of Education obviously has a very big housing footprint and exposure to GROH in those areas, so it is making significant savings as a result.

Ms S.F. McGURK: I have a further question. Will the current stock of GROH be maintained?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: The department does not manage GROH; the member needs to put that question to the Department of Housing.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I refer the minister to the targeted voluntary separation scheme on page 261 of the *Budget Statements*. In 2015–16 we are looking at \$20 million being spent, and in 2016–17 it is a bit over \$21 million. Can the minister please inform us how many voluntary redundancies she hopes to achieve with that spend?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: That targeted voluntary separation scheme is from the 2014–15 budget initiative to target 1 500 separations across the public sector. Those separations were funded by Treasury in the first instance, and the budget is a reflection of the ongoing savings of those voluntary separations, as in ongoing wages and salary costs that are no longer being funded.

Dr A.D. BUTI: The minister said those redundancies were in 2014. Were the 1 500 from the education department, or across the public service?

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Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I can clarify that. The target of 1 500 was set by the government across the whole public sector; 212 of those came from the Department of Education. There were 81 teaching award redundancies, 92 education assistants, 13 school officers, 18 public service officers, eight cleaners and gardeners, and one other. I am not sure who the one other is, but they are part of our 212.

Mr N.W. MORTON: I will try to combine a couple of questions because I am aware of the time. I refer to the first three dot points on page 262. I will very, very quickly outline the things I would like a bit of a snapshot on, if I can. Firstly, school chaplains: the budget states that there will be increased flexibility for schools. I want to know what that will look like. I am also keen to know whether funding for school chaplains will continue, because there was a bit of a hiccup there in recent history. Also, can I have a snapshot, if there is one, on how the engagement centres are coming along? Also, can I get some feedback, if there is any, on how the child and parent centres are coming along? Basically, my questions are framed around student welfare or at-risk students and how what the government is doing is impacting on them.

[4.50 pm]

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I will start with the chaplaincy program. The government remains strongly supportive of the chaplaincy program, as the member knows. I have chaplains in my area who provide amazing pastoral care opportunities and contribute much to the wellbeing of the young people in our schools. The state government is providing funding of \$9.2 million in 2015–16. All 500 public schools who applied for an in-school chaplain through the commonwealth program were allocated funding. There was a funding change from the commonwealth, and the state government has stepped in. In total, the state government has provided funding to 252 schools for in-school chaplains, and for the 2017–18 budget cycle the state government has committed \$10.48 million to fund school chaplains. We will continue to provide \$5.68 million a year, plus indexation, to YouthCARE to provide additional chaplaincy services to public schools, relief chaplains and, importantly, critical incident response chaplains who come in after critical incidents in schools. I do not think there are too many local members who do not support the school chaplaincy program.

With the engagement centres, there is a new model to strengthen and expand services for disengaged students and students with challenging behaviour in our public schools, and that commenced at the beginning of 2016. Those expanded services are making sure that we get the best support to students where we need it. They have provided increased access for students, staff and parents to ensure well-connected support across the regions. Thirteen engagement centres are located across all regions—in the wheatbelt, the Kimberley, Albany and the south west—and all Western Australian public schools can access a more effective model of support to help address student behaviour. There is a new School of Special Educational Needs behaviour and engagement policy. We are really looking at strengthening the opportunity for students to access these engagement centres to ensure that we can address the needs of children with challenging behaviours and needs. I will ask the director general to further elaborate. I have only a very broad knowledge of those engagement centres, but they are a very good initiative.

Ms S. O'Neill: The engagement centres have only really been on foot since the start of this year, and I think some have developed in a more sophisticated way than others—so we are still working with some of them. Our first point of call with students is always to help them stay in their own schools, so an engagement centre is not a first point of call. The important part of engagement centres is that we have the capacity for students to receive intensive direct support, but we also, through the engagement centres, have the capacity to outreach into other schools, which we think is superior to the previous model that we had in place. In terms of progress, one of the really nice things we have had happening at the Midland Learning Academy is that there are eight students, most of whom have previously not been to school for the past couple of years, and the attendance rate of those students for term 1 was around 98 per cent. That is quite a remarkable turnaround for very dysfunctional, disaffected young people who have multiple issues in their lives. It is a small group, but we are certainly pleased with what is happening there so far.

The other point the member made was about assisting people through the child and parent centres. Another piece of information that might be useful is that from 1 July to 31 December last year, 28 107 young children were either serviced by or came through the child and parent centres, along with nearly 20 000 adults. The level of service and engagement has really improved there, and we are seeing some really positive work, such as the positive parenting program we are running at those CPCs, with 1 065 parents trained through that program. A range of services are offered, including child health checks, referrals, parenting programs, antenatal classes, play groups and allied health services. They are really starting to develop the services that they need to service their local communities. They are a little bit different in each place.

Ms S.F. McGURK: My question relates to the asset investment program on page 266 of budget paper No 2. Wembley Primary School has been given \$3.5 million in the budget even though, as I understand it, it is anticipating a drop in enrolments. What is the money for?

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Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I will ask Mr Fischer to elaborate.

Mr J. Fischer: A number of schools in the inner city will have an increase in projected enrolments in the foreseeable future. Three schools are mentioned in the budget papers in which that increased enrolment projection has been addressed by the provision of additional facilities. Wembley is one of those. The projections for the next few years show that enrolments at the school will increase, and the school will be under pressure. It does not have a lot of scope to expand, so the timing needs to be right to provide the facilities so that they are available.

Ms S.F. McGURK: Sorry, it is a bit hard to hear Mr Fischer. Did he say that there are changes to the student cohort there? I am just finding it hard to hear him.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I think Mr Fischer said that there is projected growth for Wembley Primary School, and the opportunity to expand it is before the growth actually occurs. Perhaps Mr Fischer can clarify a little closer to the microphone.

Mr J. Fischer: I will try again. Three schools are mentioned in the budget papers that are part of a project for responding to inner-city growth, where increased density is occurring due to the Perth and Peel@3.5 million plan. The three schools are identified as being required to provide greater capacity and, as the minister mentioned, Wembley is one of those schools.

Ms S.F. McGURK: My understanding is that Wembley Primary School is anticipating a drop in enrolments. Is the government changing the boundaries for the school? Is that what is going on for Wembley? I understand that the demographics of the overall area might be changing, but for Wembley Primary School itself, the projection, as I understand, is for a drop in enrolments.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I expect that there are probably a range of reasons for commencing school upgrades and refurbishments. If Mr Fischer can elaborate on the reasons for Wembley Primary School requiring this upgrade, I would appreciate it.

Mr J. Fischer: I do not know the numbers that the member is referring to in terms of the drop. Our projections indicate growth over the next 10 years. I am not aware of the source of the member's forecast.

Ms S.F. McGURK: So the government is not looking at changing the boundaries. Is that not why that is occurring?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Mr Fischer just said that the projection of the department is that growth is expected, and that is why the investment has been put there.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I refer the minister to the last line item under "Spending Changes", "Western Australian Schools Public Private Partnership Recurrent Expense", on page 261 of the *Budget Statements*. With regard to the figure for 2016–17, has the minister calculated the cost of delivering the same services by the Department of Education?

[5.00 pm]

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Mr Fischer could perhaps talk a little more to this point. As I understand it, this is the repayment of finance leases associated with the public–private partnership for the delivery across eight schools.

Mr J. Fischer: I think the question is about the cost of services delivered under a PPP versus what is traditionally done.

Dr A.D. BUTI: That is correct.

Mr J. Fischer: In determining whether we should proceed with a public–private partnership, the methodology is to cost the services and the builders, if we are going to deliver it under traditional means. That figure is called the public sector comparator. When the bids come through, we compare the prices submitted by the various consortia against that public sector comparator. In terms of this bid, over the life of the project there was about \$100 million in savings with the delivery of these projects under the PPP arrangement. The details of that will be published shortly on the Department of Treasury's website.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Mr Fischer mentioned the public sector comparator. Can the minister table that or provide that by way of a supplementary answer?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I would need to check. I do not know whether that public sector comparator is ours or whether it is owned by Treasury. Mr Fischer?

Mr J. Fischer: There will be some information about the public sector comparator in the information released by Treasury shortly. Treasury releases information about public–private partnership projects. It is the

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department's policy to release that information on its website. I understand that information is about to be released in the next couple of weeks.

Ms S.F. McGURK: My last question on this division relates to page 261 and the total cost of services for 2016–17. Does this amount take into account the on-call allowance that is not being paid to school support staff who have been instructed to undertake relief coordination outside their normal working hours? I am informed that the minister has told people that when schools can show there is a hardship and they have failed to pay the allowance, they can seek assistance from the department.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I will ask Mr Gillam to please respond.

Mr C.W. Gillam: No, the appropriations do not take into account any specific amount for the on-call allowance. The on-call allowance is a provision of the industrial agreement that is implemented at school level whereby principals require staff to be available to generally manage relief duties for a period. There have been instances when that requirement has not been fulfilled by the obligation to pay the allowance associated with that requirement. What we have said is that when that has not occurred, the responsibility lies with the school, with the principal, and the principal will need to make provision for that allowance when the claim is raised against the school.

Ms S.F. McGURK: The minister is advising staff representatives that when a school can demonstrate difficulties in meeting the cost of a successful claim, it can seek assistance from the department. Has that ever occurred; and, if so, in how many instances?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I am not sure whether we can provide information on how often that has occurred and in how many instances, but there is a budget review committee. The process is that schools can make a submission on these matters to the budget review committee and put forward their case for additional funding. My understanding is that we have not had a submission to the budget review committee for the on-call allowance.

Ms S.F. McGURK: So there have been no requests from schools to the department for additional money for the on-call allowance?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: My advice from the director general is no; however, they have only just found out about this too, so that is not to rule that out in the future, but there is a process and that process is to make application to the budget review committee.

Ms S.F. McGURK: Staff might be heartened to hear that they can make that application because I am told that some of them were cautious making a claim so that they did not disadvantage the school, but the government would be expecting that if there is particular hardship, the budget review committee would hear claims for the on-call allowance.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I make it really clear that individual teachers or assistants would not be making the claim. The process is that the claim would be made by the school principal on behalf of the school.

The appropriation was recommended.