



WESTERN AUSTRALIA

# Parliamentary Debates

(HANSARD)

THIRTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT  
FIRST SESSION  
1997

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 6 May 1997

## Legislative Assembly

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**THE SPEAKER** (Mr Strickland) took the Chair at 2.00 pm, and read prayers.

### PETITION - PUBLIC TRANSPORT FARE CONCESSIONS

**DR GALLOP** (Victoria Park - Leader of the Opposition) [2.03 pm]: I present the following petition -

To the Honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly in Parliament assembled.

We the undersigned petitioners call on the State Government to reverse their increases in public transport fares, in particular the changes to concession fares and time constraints on transfers in that they will impact most severely on pensioners, the unemployed and other low income earners.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that you will give this matter earnest consideration and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

The petition bears 693 signatures and I certify that it conforms to the standing orders of the Legislative Assembly.

The SPEAKER: I direct that the petition be brought to the Table of the House.

[See petition No 22.]

### PETITION - TELECOMMUNICATION TOWERS

**MR TRENORDEN** (Avon) [2.04 pm]: I present the following petition -

To the Honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly in Parliament assembled.

We the undersigned, respectfully request that land at Mt Henry be urgently sacrificed to telecommunications carriers for the erection of a mobile tower because:

- i We object to the State Government taking out Supreme Court action to prevent the erection of a mobile tower at Mt Henry, said to protect government property values, and whereby despite the government losing the case, subsequent negotiations were undertaken which led to approval being given for the erection of a tower at the Canning Highway/Canning Bridge/Kwinana freeway interchange precinct.
- ii None of the negotiators i.e. telecommunications carriers, Main Roads or the South Perth City Council consulted with nearby residents.
- iii There is to date no *substantiated* research or evidence to prove that towers do not pose *long term health risks* to nearby residents.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that you will give this matter earnest consideration and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

The petition bears 52 signatures and I certify that it conforms to the standing orders of the Legislative Assembly.

The SPEAKER: I direct that the petition be brought to the Table of the House.

[See petition No 23.]

### PETITION - POLICE ANTI-THEFT SQUAD

**DR GALLOP** (Victoria Park - Leader of the Opposition) [2.05 pm]: I present the following petition -

To the Honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly in Parliament assembled.

We the undersigned petitioners call on the State Government to establish a permanent and properly resourced Anti-Theft Squad for Victoria Park, East Victoria Park, Bentley and surrounding suburbs.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that you will give this matter earnest consideration and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

The petition bears 54 signatures and I certify that it conforms to the standing orders of the Legislative Assembly.

The SPEAKER: I direct that the petition be brought to the Table of the House.

[See petition No 24.]

### PETITION - POLICE

#### *Removal of Demonstrators from Parliament House*

**MR KOBELKE** (Nollamara) [2.06 pm]: I present the following petition -

To the Honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly in Parliament assembled.

We, the undersigned condemn the use of police to arrest and remove from the grounds of Parliament House, people who were peacefully demonstrating their opposition to the Court Government's extreme, unnecessary and anti-democratic Labour Relations Laws.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that you will give this matter earnest consideration and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

The petition bears 220 signatures and I certify that it conforms to the standing orders of the Legislative Assembly.

The SPEAKER: I direct that the petition be brought to the Table of the House.

[See petition No 25.]

### STATEMENT - MINISTER FOR LABOUR RELATIONS

#### *Proposed Amendments to Labour Relations Legislation Amendment Bill*

**MR KIERATH** (Riverton - Minister for Labour Relations) [2.07 pm]: I rise to make a brief ministerial statement on the proposed amendments to the Labour Relations Legislation Amendment Bill 1997. These key amendments are in response to discussions with a wide range of interested groups, including the union movement, and demonstrate the State Government's willingness to listen to positive contributions made by the community on this issue. The State Government has agreed to make the following amendments to the legislation in the Legislative Council. I have sent a copy of these amendments to the Trades and Labor Council and I hope it responds in a positive manner to these changes.

In the area of secret ballots, the definition of "strikes" has been amended to exempt reasonable stop work meetings, and action over legitimate safety issues is to be exempt. In the case of essential services, limited industrial action would be exempt where continuity of supply agreements were in place and being followed. Individual union members who break secret ballot provisions will no longer be subject to criminal penalties. Although no amendment has been made, current union misunderstanding was corrected confirming that the legislation allows the Industrial Relations Commission to authorise unions to conduct secret ballots. The Government accepts the Labor Party's recommendation that unions have access to sites where they have union members without having to identify to the employer who are the members.

In the area of unfair dismissal, because there is a union misunderstanding of these provisions, they will be amended to make it clear that the first option is reinstatement and, if reinstatement is not possible, compensation is payable.

Regarding political donations, the ACTU and the TLC agreed to give the Government an alternative proposal, but have since declined to participate in any negotiations. They have already agreed to add penalties to the existing provisions in the Act, covering political donations, as they were not passed previously.

On the issue of federal awards, despite their promises, the ACTU and the TLC did not provide alternatives for the Government to consider.

Mr Marlborough interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr KIERATH: The Government believes it is unnecessary to make changes to union dues provisions because the legislation will harmonise Western Australia's laws with the federal system, under which there is no power for the Australian Industrial Relations Commission to deal with deduction of union dues.

Annual leave entitlements provisions have been redrafted to accommodate the TLC's concerns that they should be brought into line with award provisions. There is general agreement by all parties about workplace agreements, and no changes are included. The Government will invite further amendments during the debate in the upper House.

Mr Marlborough interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! Member for Peel.

Mr Marlborough interjected.

The SPEAKER: I formally call to order the member for Peel for the first time.

**[Questions without notice taken.]**

**MATTER OF PUBLIC INTEREST - PUBLIC TRANSPORT FARE INCREASES**

**THE SPEAKER** (Mr Strickland): Today I received within the prescribed time a letter from the member for Armadale in the following terms -

Pursuant to Standing Order 82A I propose that the following matter of public interest be submitted to the House for discussion today.

This House calls on the Government to recognise the extraordinary burden placed on students and their families and on pensioners by the increases in concession fares on public transport and in particular the banning of use of Dayrider fares before 9 o'clock.

This House calls on the Government to reverse these changes to concession fares immediately and to abandon plans to undermine our public transport system by moving further towards a user pays system.

The matter appears to be in order. If sufficient members agree to this motion, I will allow it.

[At least five members rose in their places.]

The SPEAKER: The matter shall proceed on the usual basis, with half an hour allocated to members on my left, half an hour to members on my right, and five minutes in total to the Independent members, should they seek the call.

**MS MacTIERNAN** (Armadale) [2.44 pm]: I move the motion.

This is a matter of public importance because since the Budget was announced it has become very clear that thousands of Western Australian students and pensioners have experienced bus and train fare increases between 50 and 100 per cent. The Opposition has also identified some examples in which the fare increases have been as high as 150 per cent. The Government has attempted to gloss over the true extent of these fare increases. In the budget speech the Treasurer spoke, quite deceptively, of a 9 per cent rise in public transport costs. Any cursory glance will show that is the minimum increase, and the average figure is much higher. In certain classes the increases are very much higher. From the examination of figures in examples that have come to light over the past four weeks, it is clear those hardest hit are students, both secondary and tertiary, and their families and other concession card holders who must travel regularly and early in the day. These massive increases in fares fall disproportionately upon students and pensioners, who are the most financially disadvantaged in the community.

I will set this out for the Minister and for some other government members who I note, from their dorothy dixers, are concerned about how these increases are impacting in their electorates. Students and other concession card holders who need to travel regularly and early in the day have routinely bought Dayrider tickets. Students travelling four or more zones have for many years bought such tickets, but they now cannot do so because the Government has changed the rules and banned the use of the Dayrider tickets before 9.00 am. The Government has told us it has done so because the system was being rorted, and it was never intended for that purpose. That is a complete nonsense. The system has been in place for many years, and it has become part of the normal process adopted by people on low incomes to ensure their limited means go a little further to allow them a reasonable standard of living. It is not in any shape or form a rort and neither is it an unintended consequence. This practice was well known to this Government and previous Governments, and there is nothing improper or rortish about the use of this fare.

I will set out some real life examples of the impact, because the Minister for Transport denies them whenever the matter arises. The first example is Maurice Clark who lives in Quinns Rocks and is a full time student at Murdoch University. It takes him two hours to travel each way between home and university. His all day concession Multirider before the Budget cost him \$1.70 a day. He can no longer use that ticket because he must travel before 9.00 am. He must now buy a full fare Multirider at a cost of \$3.15. It must be borne in mind that he is exploiting the availability of the Multirider. Even with that saving this is an 85 per cent increase from \$1.70 to \$3.15 a day.

This phenomenon is being replicated all over the metropolitan area. Daniel Grimwood lives in Armadale and studies physics at the University of Western Australia. He is in precisely the same situation. He and his sister contacted my office and said the situation was worse for them and many other students because some subject areas of study require

students to travel during the day to a number of different campuses to obtain material from the closed reference system.

Another example is young Karen Tassell who lives at Westminster and travels to Murdoch University each day traversing four zones. Again, she will experience an 85 per cent increase in fares, and of course, students travelling from Dawesville and Mandurah to a city business college will find their fares have increased from \$2 to \$5 a day, an increase of 150 per cent.

It will affect not only tertiary students but also a number of secondary students. Those living in areas such as Armadale who buy Dayrider tickets to Mercedes College will experience the same increases. Chris Hodder, who lives at Two Rocks, contacted the Opposition. His two children attend Wanneroo High School and he pays \$600 a year in transport fares for his children. He has calculated that he will be paying \$1 200 a year under this regime.

Mr Omodei: When this matter was discussed just after the fares were brought down, the Premier and I, representing the Minister for Transport, said that we would review that issue - we have done so. Today in response to a question without notice, we said that the Government would review the matter and allow the concession card holders to use the concession before seven o'clock. That relates to all those matters you have mentioned.

Ms MacTIERNAN: With respect, that is a piffling concession. It will not deal with 95 per cent of these cases as most of this travel occurs between the hours of 7.00 am and 9.00 am. The Minister makes an absurd suggestion. Will he tell the 55 parents with students at Wanneroo High School who live at Yanchep and Two Rocks to be at the bus stop at 6.30 am because they cannot travel at 7.30 am? In all of the examples given, people commence their travel between the hours of 7.00 am and 9.00 am. It is a most pathetic attempt to address this issue.

Although we have set out a range of examples on a number of occasions, the Minister for Transport, and it seems now the Minister for Local Government as well, refuses to accept that it is a widespread problem, not something confined to a few special cases. It affects not only students, although they will bear the brunt of the increases as they usually travel each day before 9.00 am, but also pensioners in outlying suburbs who must come into Perth to attend major hospitals for kidney dialysis treatment on a regular basis perhaps two or three times a week. They have no control over appointment times. They face massive fare increases of between 50 and 150 per cent in order to undertake required treatment.

Before I finish on students, particularly those whose parents are struggling with a number of children, I point out that this increase of 85 and 100 per cent in fare costs comes on top of a range of increasing education costs, and it makes the notion of free education even more illusory than it was in the past.

The examples we have set out today are but a taste of things to come. Notwithstanding the clear evidence presented last week to this House that fare increases reduce the use of public transport, and fare reductions increase use, the Government proposes to continue to increase fares at a level well exceeding the consumer price index. The fare increases in this Budget will take revenue from covering approximately 28 per cent of operating costs to covering 31 per cent of costs. Also, it is the announced intention of the Government to take us up to 40 per cent of revenue. Let us consider what Western Australia can expect under the new regime, which presumably will be in place by 2000.

Mr Omodei: That is distorting the facts again. You're extrapolating -

Ms MacTIERNAN: Of course I am.

Mr Omodei: You promised a new railway line to Rockingham; how will you pay for that?

Ms MacTIERNAN: We will certainly not pay for it by trying to destroy the public transport system!

Mr Omodei: It was well and truly destroyed before we came to government; under the previous Government, there were rust buckets out there!

Ms MacTIERNAN: That is an absurd suggestion. The Minister will have an opportunity to respond. The last Labor Government can be most proud of its contribution to the public transport system in this State.

I want to give a little taste of what we face in the future. I am doing some comparison here, Minister, which requires consideration of the numbers. I will outline the fares of the last year of the Labor Government in 1993, the current fares after the increase and what they are likely to be in 2000 to achieve the Government's desired goal of covering 40 per cent of operating costs.

Mr Wiese: Does that not prove your charges were far too low?

Ms MacTIERNAN: No. The Opposition tried to educate members opposite the other night on this matter. The member must think about why we have public transport, and then decide how one sets fares: If they are set in a

certain way, they will effectively deny people access to, and deter people from using, public transport. The Government has lost the plot regarding the purpose of public transport.

In 1993 one could buy a standard ticket from Armadale to Perth for \$2.20 and it costs \$3.70 four years later. In 2000, in current money terms, leaving out inflation, the fare will be \$4.70. An increase of 27 per cent will be experienced over the next three years, and this will lead to a total increase in fares from Perth to Armadale, or any other four zone run, of 113 per cent over the life of this Government.

Also, the situation is much worse for concession holders. A concession holder, say a pensioner, travelling from Rockingham to Perth in 1993 paid 70¢ for a single trip. That pensioner is now required to pay \$1.70. By 2000, that person will be expected to pay \$2.80, an increase of over 65 per cent over the next three years and a total increase of 300 per cent all up. It is not only pensioners or students who are affected by the increases, as other people are caught up in this regime.

I set out now the example of Alex, the young apprentice chef from Mundaring who works in a city hotel. She is employed under a workplace agreement under Mr Kierath's legislation.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member's reference should be to the Minister.

Ms MacTIERNAN: As Alex is 15 years old, she is entitled to the princessly sum of \$132.80 a week. On that wage she cannot afford \$111 up-front to buy the 40 trip Multirider, so she uses the small Multirider for use over 10 days. At the moment she pays \$7.40 a day, or \$37 per week. It is more than 27 per cent of her income. That is the situation now and what will happen when the Government moves to the 40 per cent? The fares she will be required to pay will increase from \$37 to \$47; that is, approximately 33 per cent of her income. It is completely unsustainable.

Mr Bloffwitch: Where does she work?

Ms MacTIERNAN: She works in Perth and lives in Mundaring, which is only four zones. Tens of thousands of Western Australians who routinely travel four zones or more will experience these fare increases. The fare increases proposed over the next four years are outrageous. Fare increases of 300 per cent over the life of this Government and quite standard fare increases of 65 per cent over the next three years must be projected if the Government is to achieve its desired 40 per cent recovery of revenue.

Members must consider the impact of fare increases on young workers who are not entitled to any concessions. It is absolutely outrageous that even now they are paying 27 per cent of their income on public transport. It is even more unacceptable that it is proposed they pay 33 per cent of their income.

Members must understand the reason this State provides a public transport system is, firstly, to provide access to travel to people who, because of age, disability or lack of resources, are unable to provide their own transport and, secondly, for the benefit of all the people who use the roads. If the State had to provide sufficient road space to cater for everyone using private transport, the state Budget would be shot. There would be enormous increases in taxes and charges to achieve that aim. Therefore, people who use public transport are doing everybody a favour. The third reason for a public transport system is that the State must contain the greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution. Members will know that vehicle emissions are the greatest source of air pollution.

**MRS ROBERTS** (Midland) [3.03 pm]: Public transport is an area of great shame for the coalition Government in this State. It has decreased expenditure on buses and trains and increased expenditure on roads. It has failed in its social and community obligation to the people of this State.

A Government has a responsibility to govern for the poor and the wealthy, the disabled and the able, children and the elderly, the disadvantaged and the advantaged. When the Labor Government was in office the transport concessions were much greater than they are under this Government. The member for Wagin said by way of interjection that perhaps when the Labor Government was in office public transport fares were too low. When the Labor Party was in office, the concessions were particularly low and were running at approximately one-third of the standard fare, because that Government believed concession holders were entitled to concessions and deserved cheaper fares.

The motivation for providing public transport should not be based on user pays, but on assisting those people in the community who are not well off. The Government has an obligation to families who are struggling to make ends meet. It disgusts me that, after hearing the Treasurer say this State is doing very well, in the 1997-98 Budget the Treasurer and the Minister for Transport have supported increases in fares which will affect the most vulnerable in the community. The Treasurer and the Minister are not in touch with the people of Western Australia if they believe families are doing it easily at the moment, because they are not. If they talk to small business people and families and consider the level of job insecurity and family budgets, they will find that there is no way that anyone with any degree of humanity would increase fares to the extent they have. The Treasurer and the Minister for Transport are

shameless. In his budget speech the Treasurer said that not only is the Government increasing fares across the board this year, preventing the use of concessions by students and other concession holders before 9.00 am, and disadvantaging the elderly by restricting the time a ticket will be valid to one and a half hours, but also further increases are proposed in future Budgets until the level of concessions compared with normal fares has increased. Reference has been made to concession fares increasing to as high as 50 per cent of a standard fare.

It is interesting that the Minister representing the Minister for Transport in this place suggested that he, the Treasurer and the Minister for Transport were willing to talk about this issue and perhaps make some concessions. It is the first time that changes to public transport fares have not been implemented on 1 July. In other Budgets, changes to fares have been implemented on that date to allow people to budget for the increases. In this instance, the Government said the increases would be implemented on 14 April to prevent people buying up Multirider tickets. It is a lame excuse. There are ways of getting around that sort of activity, but the Government was not prepared to look at them. If the Treasurer and the Minister for Transport are so keen to resolve the situation, they should have made the announcement and looked towards implementing the increases on 1 July.

The proposed change mooted in this place by the Minister representing the Minister for Transport is that perhaps concession card holders will be able to use them before 7.00 am, but not in the peak time between 7.00 am and 9.00 am. It is the biggest load of nonsense I have heard in my life. Children quite often attend activities after school, for example, sports training. It is good for children to be involved in this activity instead of vandalism or graffiti. As a result, they arrive home late, especially if they live in the areas categorised as zones four and beyond. They are now being told that they must use their concession fare before 7.00 am. It is a nonsense. It comes down to a matter of principle. Concession holders should be entitled to use their concessions at any time of the day. It is a nonsense to say that they should use their concessions before 7.00 am, when there are spare seats.

The Government has not taken into account the poor service offered outside peak hours. It is one of the problems affecting the elderly. People from outer city areas have phoned me saying that if they cannot catch, for example, the 8.37 am bus - the last bus before 9.00 am - they must wait for up to two hours for another bus. I am sure that if members look at bus timetables, they will find that the option for children and the elderly to catch a bus before 7.00 am is not always available. The Government must acknowledge that it has done the wrong thing and has victimised families by the changes applying to students, pensioners and the elderly which decrease the time in which a ticket is valid.

The new time frame has limited the trips they can make. It is interesting that the Minister first said that some of the concession holders were rorting the system by using their tickets early in the morning but has now said he was not referring to the disabled, pensioners, or students! To which concession holders was he referring? We knew what he meant. He is a member of a Government that is pushing for user pays, and it thinks these people should pay at any cost. As the member for Armadale said, the new policy shows no proper understanding of the public transport needs in this State. The disgrace is that this Government inherited one of the best transport systems in Australia when it came to Government in 1993. *Choice* rated it the best transport system in Australia. It was very highly regarded in a number of independent reports. The system now rates poorly Australia-wide. Only this week, an Evatt paper referred to the lack of expenditure on public transport in this State. I can only ask the Government to have some heart and some principles and acknowledge that concession holders should not have to pay for the budget blowout. It should rethink this issue and rethink it hard.

**MR MacLEAN** (Wanneroo) [3.12 pm]: Mr Speaker -

Several members interjected.

Mr MacLEAN: My tie? It is the Labor Party in the northern suburbs. There are only two and they are both extinct!

I want to raise my concerns about the restrictions placed on concession card holders also. Wanneroo is one of the fastest growing areas in not only the State but also the nation. Combined with this rapid growth, some areas such as Yanchep and Two Rocks are relatively isolated, not only because they are a long way from major centres, but also by a bus service that is battling to keep pace with the growth in suburbs such as Merriwa and Clarkson. MetroBus operates the 486 service from Yanchep. There are three morning services, the 6.55 am, the 7.28 am, which is primarily a school service, and the 9.40 am. There are two afternoon services, with the last one leaving Yanchep at 4.10 pm. The first service into Yanchep is at 8.30 am from the Joondalup train station. The last service is at 6.11 pm. With a service that is so restricted and with these places so difficult to get to -

Ms MacTiernan: Is this the Government's response?

Mr MacLEAN: No, it is not the Government's response. The member has not improved.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mrs Roberts: Are you on our side? Are you agreeing with us?

Mr MacLEAN: No. I am looking after my constituents and I have some bones to pick with the member for Midland. With such a bus service, concession card holders need some access to the early services.

Mrs Roberts interjected.

Mr MacLEAN: The member is an empty vessel. If one rattles an empty pail, it makes a lot of noise. Concessions are still available from Yanchep. The concession fare is \$2.50. Unfortunately it is also \$2.50 return, which makes it a \$5 round trip. Children in Yanchep are also affected because many of them travel from Yanchep to Wanneroo High School because Yanchep High School is a district high school and only goes to year 10. Wanneroo is five zones from Yanchep and the concession fare is \$1.70, or \$3.40 for the round trip. This equates to an increase of \$7 a week in round figures. If two children are involved, the total is \$14. That is quite a bite out of anyone's pocket. Multirider tickets are not always the answer because they cost, in round figures, \$30 a week.

Yanchep is not the only area with bus problems. The Merriwa area also has a problem. The first bus leaves the terminus outside the RAAFA Estate at 8.57 am, which means that pensioners in that area are not able to access a service until 9.57 am, which is very inconvenient. The one hour bus services in these areas make it difficult for people on concessions to travel any great distance without falling foul of the new regulations. Only three ticket groups of approximately 56 ticket groups are affected by the changes. I hope that the Minister will make the necessary changes so that constituents in my area at least are not disadvantaged any further.

Ms MacTiernan: Are we going to have separate policies for Liberal marginal seats?

Mr MacLEAN: That sounds like a very good idea. Bus services in the northern areas are stretched. A member who preceded me in this debate made the point that the Government had not made any substantial changes and was winding back services. In June 1995 a new bus service, No 485, was introduced into the Clarkson-Merriwa area, which effectively doubled the number of services available when the Opposition was in government. In February 1997 a new bus service which catered for students at the Clarkson Community High School began.

Mr Carpenter: There was no-one in Clarkson five years ago.

Mr MacLEAN: Yes, there was.

Ms MacTiernan: You just told us it has been rapidly growing. You can't have it both ways.

Mr MacLEAN: When the vacuous members opposite were in power, they left people stranded at the Joondalup rail station because the then Government would not introduce a night service. This Government introduced an evening service to the Merriwa-Clarkson area. These changes were required. Unfortunately, their impact has been greater than intended. I hope the Minister will make the changes that have been requested.

**MR OMODEI** (Warren-Blackwood - Minister for Local Government) [3.18 pm]: I oppose the Opposition's motion and will move to amend it. The Opposition is making a lot of noise outside this place about fares. I acknowledge that the changes to the fares have impacted on some students, particularly those who leave home before 9.00 am. We have signalled already during debate in this House that we will do something to ensure that those students' concerns and needs are met fairly and equitably. I contrast that with the actions by members opposite who are spreading fear among the elderly and the disabled, although I hope they are not successful.

Ms MacTiernan: They are coming to us and telling us about their concerns.

Mr OMODEI: Surely if the member for Armadale had a problem with the fares that were announced by the Minister for Transport, she should have sought a briefing from the Minister or the department. It is very significant that rather than choose that option, the Opposition has gone to the public to frighten people about how they will pay these fares.

Ms MacTiernan: We have used the same facilities as are open to everybody else. We have obtained the information from the government agencies.

Mr OMODEI: I have checked. I understand the member for Armadale and members opposite have not been briefed on the subject, nor have they sought that advice. I will give an undertaking that if the member for Armadale wants a briefing on this subject, I will ensure it is provided by the Minister for Transport.

Mr Brown: Will that change the fares? I am interested in how the fares have been changed. You made a decision on that. Just come out and say you made a decision about that. You are hopeless.

Mr OMODEI: The member should get his hearing checked. It is well known that the concessional Dayrider was introduced originally to promote travel outside the morning peak period and the standard Dayrider ticket did not have that ability and could be used only after 9.00 am. That was an inequity in the system.



Ms MacTiernan: Why is that an inequity? You cannot say a concession was an inequity.

Mr OMODEI: The concession fare was always to be used after nine o'clock. That was the case even when the mob opposite were in government.

Ms MacTiernan: It was to serve quite a different purpose.

Mr OMODEI: I think the member will find the fares were structured in that way to encourage people not to use the transport system in peak periods. That is exactly what the Minister and the department are trying to achieve at the moment.

Ms MacTiernan: Students don't have a choice. You misunderstand the whole debate.

Mr OMODEI: I may have interjected on the member for Armadale once or twice, but I ask her to give me a go and she might learn something. I do not misunderstand the situation. Those opposite could have gone to the Minister and been given a briefing.

Ms MacTiernan: We went to the department.

Mr OMODEI: Oh, come on. Those opposite went straight out of this place and put the fear of God into pensioners around Western Australia. The truth of the matter is that inside zone four there were very few changes. The increases shown in the schedule of fares for zone five -

Ms MacTiernan: Students are unable to attend their studies.

Mr OMODEI: We are trying to spread the weight of traffic over the whole of the day. Fifty per cent of the buses are in the depots between 10.00 am and 2.00 pm every day.

Ms MacTiernan: So what?

Mr OMODEI: We are trying to encourage people to use the Multirider and Multirider Plus fares. The member for Armadale will know that a Multirider Plus ticket in zone eight costs \$1.90 a day for one person, and a Multirider ticket is about \$2.20.

Ms MacTiernan: We have set out examples for you.

Mr OMODEI: I know that.

Ms MacTiernan: Will you respond to them?

Mr OMODEI: I admit that most of the examples related to students who travelled from Quinns Rocks -

Ms MacTiernan: And Armadale and Kwinana.

Mr OMODEI: Armadale is still inside the zone five fare.

Ms MacTiernan: It is a zone four fare.

Mrs Roberts: I have a map with me and it shows it is in zone four.

Mr OMODEI: I also have a map. Those opposite are exactly right; Armadale is in zone four. Those opposite have made comments about the terrific new rail system to the northern suburbs and the reduction in the duration when a ticket can be used, from two hours to 90 minutes. They know that that happens for fares only outside zone four. The situation is the same as it was before the changes. Those opposite have been saying publicly that it is impossible for people to go from the outer zones to the metropolitan area in an hour and a half. It was always intended that it would be a one way trip. The people in the Department of Transport from whom I am receiving advice are exactly the same as those who gave advice to members opposite when they were in government. Those opposite should not try to tell me that things have changed dramatically.

Ms MacTiernan: We have not raised that issue.

Mr OMODEI: The member for Armadale has raised the concerns of the students relating to these changes in fares. Students who travel from Quinns Rocks to a high school, I expect, must catch a bus at about 6.30 am. The Minister has already made a statement that he will look at the fares in that area for travel before seven o'clock. If necessary, more buses might have to be put on to cater for those who travel at that time. There is no doubt that travel before nine o'clock in the morning is congested.

Ms MacTiernan: What about the students at Armadale, Kinross and Rockingham?

Mr OMODEI: Going where?

Ms MacTiernan: Are you saying that the only way to accommodate them is for them to get a bus before 7.00 am?

Mr OMODEI: We are saying that is one option. As I said in my opening remarks, we acknowledge there is a problem for students catching the bus before 9.00 am and we are reviewing that - the Premier said it; the Minister for Transport said it; and I said it. It might be very difficult for those opposite to accept; however, we are trying to have an efficient transport system. I must commend the former Labor Government on the completion of the northern corridor railway line. It was a major initiative - one that was needed. However, as a result of that, the bus system in place to serve that railway service was an absolute shambles when we came to government, and we are moving to fix that. We intend to put out a tender for a 12 year contract to renew the bus fleet. Some of the buses are 23 years old.

Ms MacTiernan: It was because we had the Midland Workshops to maintain them.

Mr OMODEI: Most of those buses have no access for the disabled. The new central area transport system that we put in place has full access for the disabled, as will the new buses that are being brought on stream.

Mrs Roberts: We used to have one of the newest and most up-to-date systems.

Mr OMODEI: I am told that the buses are up to 23 years old, so how can the member say it is one of the newest bus systems? I reiterate: Over 10 years or so we are replacing those buses with modern buses that have access for the disabled and will be capable of transporting people from the regions as well. By the way, people in my electorate receive very few concessions if they use public transport and very few of the Westrail buses have access for the disabled. We are also addressing those matters so that people who are wheelchair bound or have low mobility can access the transport system.

Members opposite have said that this Government is doing nothing about public transport. We have a very good central area transport system. We are moving to replace the buses. A new ferry has been ordered. The railway line to Kwinana will be built. Those opposite must acknowledge that when we are returning by way of fares only 28 per cent of operating cost compared with the normal average over the States in Australia and worldwide of 40 per cent, we should move progressively to that higher figure. That is what we intend to do. We are not doing it all in one hit; therefore, I hope those opposite will not go into the public arena and say that we will move to 40 per cent overnight. That is not the Government's intention. We want to increase fares within reason so people can access the transport system.

The SPEAKER: Order! There have been a lot of interjections. I have allowed them from the member for Armadale, in particular, who moved the motion, because they have enhanced the debate. However, I must point out that several members cannot interject at once. The Minister, of course, is well aware that if he is prepared to take interjections, generally the Chair will assist in accommodating that. I suggest to members that we have fewer interjections.

Mr OMODEI: To minimise the interruption in the debate, I will address my remarks through the Chair. I merely wanted to respond to some of the comments by the member for Armadale, who was quite incorrect to go to the public and suggest I said that pensioners were roting the system. It is well known that the concessional system has not worked ideally over the years and that it has not been used for the original purposes stated by the Labor Government, which established it. This Government is trying to set up a transport system which works efficiently and which spreads the load over the day. If there is a problem with people having to attend hospitals before 9.00 am, the department can consult the hospitals to ensure that appointments can be organised outside those hours. If that is a problem, I am sure the Minister for Transport will investigate the issue further.

Apart from putting in place a very good central area transport service, replacing buses and the ferry and giving a commitment in relation to a railway line to Rockingham and Mandurah, this Government has also implemented special one-stop express services to and from Mandurah and Yanchep and the city. In the past, those journeys took one and a half or two hours; they now take an hour or less. They are the sorts of things this Government is doing with the intention of streamlining the transport system and providing a modern system that will be the envy of every other State in Australia.

Mr Thomas: Did you say earlier that the Government intends building a railway line somewhere?

Mr OMODEI: It is a government commitment.

Mr Thomas: To where?

Mr OMODEI: To Mandurah.

Mr Thomas: In what time frame?

Mr OMODEI: I do not have access to the timetable, but the Government has made that commitment. Members opposite were in government for 10 years and I did not see much work going on. The member should refer that question to the Minister for Transport. I do not profess to be an expert on Perth city transport matters; I have a responsibility to represent the Minister, and he has done a very good job. If anomalies arise in the fare system, the Government has said that it is prepared to look at that situation.

*Amendment to motion*

Mr OMODEI: Given those comments, I move -

To delete all the words after "House", and substitute -

recognises the additional costs imposed on some users of public transport which have been brought about by variations to concession fares.

Accordingly, this House requests the Government to review concession fares and their impact on public transport users.

**MR COWAN** (Merredin - Deputy Premier) [3.33 pm]: We appear to have lost sight of some of the main objectives of a public transport system. There is no doubt that all Governments, irrespective of their colour, will provide a heavily subsidised public transport system. The extent of that subsidy will always be a concern. However, it is this Government's aim to ensure that it recovers from transport users up to 30 per cent of the total cost of the transport operation, which does not occur at present. One of the reasons for that is the extent to which passengers can use concessional fares. Perhaps the best example of concessional fares is that referred to by the member for Armadale, particularly the Dayrider ticket, to which she referred constantly during the course of her contribution. The non-concessional Dayrider ticket was only ever available to those people who purchased it after 9.00 am. However, because of an anomaly, or whatever one might wish to call it, the concessional Dayrider ticket was available at any time. That meant many transport users could purchase that ticket, and naturally they did because it was the cheapest way to travel.

Just as there is a desire on the part of Government to ensure the establishment of a first-class transport system, there is also a requirement that at least some of the costs of that system be met by its users. As I said, that figure is 30 per cent.

Ms MacTiernan: You have 31 per cent.

Mr COWAN: One of the difficulties for the member is that she has a tendency to find statistical data not properly qualified or authenticated and to use that as the basis of her argument. The Government does not recover 31 per cent of the cost of the system; I wish it did. Nevertheless, it is hoping to achieve a 30 per cent recovery rate. Ultimately, some future Government might decide to aim for a higher recovery rate.

The other important principle in this issue relates to the extent or rate of concession. Just as we wish to recover a percentage of the cost of the total public transport operation from its users so that it does not become too great a burden on the broader public, acknowledging that the greater proportion of the cost of operation will always be met by the consolidated revenue fund - as it should be - we should also ensure that the concession is limited to a certain extent. In this case, we are indicating that the concession must be as close as we can get it to 50 per cent of the full fare. Most people would acknowledge that that is reasonable.

Mrs Roberts: We do not.

Mr COWAN: Why not?

Mrs Roberts: Because it is at a level that is causing hardship to families and the Government is not aiming to increase patronage on public transport. Patronage is affected by the price.

Mr COWAN: I am sure that, like me, the member for Midland is parochial and very much interested in what happens in Western Australia. I know she is well aware that in every other State concessional fares are always set at 50 per cent of the full fare and that that is acknowledged as being a reasonable concession.

Mrs Roberts: Some of our standard fares are much higher than those in other States.

Mr COWAN: I would like the member to present me with examples of that. I have just said to the member for Armadale that one of her greatest failings is that she has a tendency to use statistical data that cannot be substantiated.

Ms MacTiernan: Give an example.

Mr COWAN: The member has been talking about fare increases, and her figures were not accurate.

Ms MacTiernan: I have given the names of the individuals and the tickets they buy. You cannot get more precise than that. These are all documented cases.

Mr COWAN: Whatever the case might be, in respect of the member of Armadale, perhaps with the exception of the name of this particular person, as far as I can see, the figures and details she has given about concession fares are wrong. The member should look again at the fares and talk to people in the public transport system. They will be very pleased to provide the details and comparisons.

The member for Midland made it very clear that she subscribes to the belief that a 50 per cent concession is too high. That is a philosophical argument we will always have because I believe that is just right. She then argues that these fares are higher. I challenge her to show me where these fares are higher than comparable fares in other States.

Mrs Roberts: I will take up that challenge.

Mr COWAN: I would be very grateful if the member did.

We have recognised that students in particular have some difficulty with the structuring of the new fares. That matter will be reviewed. Some pensioners are told by the staff of a hospital or a doctor's surgery, "We want you to be here by nine o'clock", and we understand that means they cannot use the concession fare during those peak hours and we must deal with that anomaly. However, it must be borne in mind that the bus and train services that are provided by any State must always be provided to meet peak traffic, and the responsibility of government is to try to flatten out the peaks and troughs. In this instance, to limit the number of concession users during peak hours, where possible, is clearly the right thing to do. However, we do not want to put impossible burdens on students or people who need to use public transport between 7.00 and 9.00 am. Those issues will be reviewed by the Government, and I am sure the Minister for Transport will be in a position to announce changes to clear up those anomalies which exist.

**MR CARPENTER** (Willagee) [3.41 pm]: I oppose the amendment and support the original motion, because it is clearly preferable to the amendment. However, the amendment is worth considering, because it is an improvement on the position that was adopted by the Government before this debate. The Government is now starting to back away from the stupid position that it adopted in the Budget, and I congratulate the Government on that, but it has not gone far enough. The Government should have conducted the review process before it handed down the Budget. It should have recognised that the position as outlined in the Budget was unjustified and unfair.

We have heard some strange justifications for the original position. The member for Wanneroo, who is not here at present, argued with some considerable cerebral dexterity about how his constituents had been disadvantaged by this decision. He is quite right. He said that a single student in his electorate was now paying \$7 a week more to travel to school, and if there were two students in the same family, it would have to shell out another \$14 a week, or \$56 a month. The Government has made a bad mistake in increasing fares and devaluing concessions by restricting the times at which those concessions can be used. We would all be better off if the Government decided to scrap the changes, rather than move this amendment, because that is where we are heading. Most members opposite are starting to recognise that the changes that have been made are most unfair to those who are least able to afford them; that is, pensioners and students, and people who have to use public transport because they are too poor, or relatively too poor, to use private transport.

For those reasons, the Government should scrap all the changes it has made to the public transport fare arrangements, stop the stupid comments that have been made by some members opposite that people have been roting public transport, stop the stupid idea that concession holders can be made to use public transport before 7.00 am, and return to the system that we had previously, which was perfectly reasonable. If the objective is to get more people onto public transport, that cannot be done by increasing fares, in some cases by \$60 or \$70 a month.

Amendment (words to be deleted) put and a division taken with the following result -

Ayes (29)

Mr Baker	Mrs Holmes	Mrs Parker
Mr Barnett	Mr House	Mr Shave
Mr Barron-Sullivan	Mr Kierath	Mr Sweetman
Mr Board	Mr MacLean	Mr Trenorden
Mr Bradshaw	Mr Marshall	Mr Tubby
Mr Court	Mr Masters	Dr Turnbull
Mr Cowan	Mr McNee	Mrs van de Klashorst
Mr Day	Mr Minson	Mr Wiese
Mrs Edwardes	Mr Omodei	Mr Bloffwitch ( <i>Teller</i> )
Mrs Hodson-Thomas	Mr Osborne	

## Noes (18)

Ms Anwyl  
Mr Carpenter  
Dr Constable  
Dr Edwards  
Dr Gallop  
Mr Graham

Mr Kobelke  
Ms MacTiernan  
Mr McGinty  
Mr McGowan  
Ms McHale  
Mr Pental

Mr Riebeling  
Mr Ripper  
Mrs Roberts  
Mr Thomas  
Ms Warnock  
Mr Cunningham (*Teller*)

## Pairs

Dr Hames  
Mr Ainsworth  
Mr Nicholls

Mr Grill  
Mr Brown  
Mr Marlborough

Amendment thus passed.

Amendment (words to be substituted) put and passed.

*Motion, as Amended*

Question (motion, as amended) put and passed.

**SESSIONAL ORDERS - TIME MANAGEMENT**

**MR BARNETT** (Cottesloe - Leader of the House) [3.49 pm]: In accordance with the sessional order for time management, I move -

That the following items of business be completed up to and including the stages specified at 5.30 pm on Thursday, 8 May -

- (1) Curriculum Council Bill - all remaining stages;
- (2) Iron and Steel (Mid West) Agreement Bill - all remaining stages.

I have responsibility for both pieces of legislation. They are important Bills. The first seeks to establish a Curriculum Council as part of our reform of education, which should have broad support within the House. It is an important Bill which deserves debate, and we should be able to deal with it today and this evening. The second item is the Iron and Steel (Mid West) Agreement Bill relating to a proposal for a major iron and steel project to the north of Geraldton. I recognise that if the project proceeds, it will have major implications for development in this State. A significant part of the Bill relates to the development of a new industrial estate at Oakajee and a new deep sea port. They are important issues which should be properly debated in this House. We will have more than adequate time to debate both Bills this week. During the interim periods available we will continue to debate the Budget. I hope that we will complete that debate this week also. The budget Bills will not be guillotined.

**MR THOMAS** (Cockburn) [3.51 pm]: As always, the Opposition is opposed to the guillotine process, on principle, because the guillotine is used by the Government to ram through legislation in a way which means that the Parliament does not have the opportunity to properly discharge its function to scrutinise matters put before it. An excellent example of that is the legislation which the Leader of the House proposes to guillotine through the House this week - first, the Curriculum Council Bill and, secondly, the Iron and Steel (Mid West) Agreement Bill, known in the vernacular as the Kingstream Bill. The latter legislation is of considerable significance to me. It is worthwhile members pondering precisely what will happen as a result of that legislation.

The Iron and Steel (Mid West) Agreement Bill will commit the Government to spending hundreds of millions of dollars on the development of a port to service the project. Essentially the Government is taking a punt on future development that will use the port. If there is no future development apart from the Kingstream development, the Government will have made a very bad judgment. We support the provision of infrastructure in advance of its immediate use. Nonetheless, no duty is cast on this Parliament which is more important than ensuring that those judgments are made properly and that the decisions are properly based. That responsibility resides with every member in this House.

At the same time as a matter of such significance is to be considered, we must also consider a mechanism for the determination of the curriculums for state and private schools, and undertake debate on the Budget. The Leader of the House has indicated that we will be able to complete the budget debate to the second reading stage, as well as consider the new mechanisms for the establishment of a body to determine the curriculums for state and private

schools, at the same time as we will consider a Bill which will commit hundreds of millions of dollars of taxpayers' money to one project. This is a matter of considerable judgment, and we must get it right. If we do not, the taxpayers will suffer considerably.

Not only does the Kingstream Bill involve a commitment by the State to the development of a port, which will require judgment by us and by the Government about whether it is a wise investment, given the likelihood of developments other than Kingstream -

Mr Barnett: You can always vote against the Bill. That will show the community where the Labor Party stands.

Mr THOMAS: The Leader of the House is about to spit the dummy.

Mr Barnett: I will do that later in the week.

Mr THOMAS: Every time someone wants to scrutinise any matter the Leader of the House brings to the House, he suggests that people are not interested in the true development of the State and invites them to vote against the legislation. The Opposition is as committed as the Leader of the House to the proper development of this State but we want it to be done on a sound basis. That requires scrutiny and circumstances where legislation is not rammed through. This should be done so we do not have on a Thursday afternoon a mantra chanted and the Bills going through, with the goons on the other side voting for the legislation not knowing in most cases -

*Withdrawal of Remark*

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member knows it is unparliamentary to refer to his colleagues as goons. I ask him to withdraw.

Mr THOMAS: I withdraw.

*Debate Resumed*

Mr THOMAS: They are automatons. Is that the correct term, Mr Deputy Speaker? They do not know what they are voting for. The Minister for Resources Development, or the Leader of the House, or the Minister for Education, depending on the capacity in which he is acting, will press a button and members opposite will say "Aye". I suggest that for the most part they will have no idea what they are voting for.

The Kingstream Bill has significant implications for the future of the gas transmission industry, one of the most important industries in this State. The legislation will provide a form of infrastructure which has implications for the development of other industries. This is probably one of the most important economic matters to be considered during the life of this Parliament. This matter should be considered properly. That cannot be done under circumstances where the guillotine hangs over the House.

**MR BLOFFWITCH** (Geraldton) [3.56 pm]: Once again, I join the debate on time management. I remind members opposite that in the Federal Parliament every week Bills are put through using time management, not the guillotine. The Federal Government undertakes that process because it has a responsibility to the public to make sure that a reasonable number of Bills are passed each year. Despite the delaying tactics or the stunts pulled by the Opposition, the Federal Government believes it has the right to use time management. The Federal Government has changed but there has been no change to the time management process, which makes for good order and good sense. Despite that fact, members opposite have the hide to say that part of the reason for not using time management here is because it will affect the time allowed to debate the Iron and Steel (Mid West) Agreement Bill. If everyone had the same blinkered attitude as the member for Cockburn, we would not have a pipeline to Kalgoorlie. His argument would be that it would cost a lot of money to take the pipeline to Kalgoorlie and there may not be a gold industry there! That sort of blinkered thinking has no place in this House.

The Iron and Steel (Mid West) Agreement Bill will allow the Government or a private enterprise the opportunity to build a deep water port in the mid-west. In the past it has not been possible for Panamax or other large ships to be loaded in the area. Also the legislation will allow an industrial area to be established 25 kilometres north of Geraldton, instead of 5 km from the current port. That will provide a reasonable buffer for the people of Geraldton and allow us the opportunity to move much of the heavy industry which has dominated Geraldton to another industrial site. This Bill is critical for the people of the mid-west. We do not want to waste time. An Feng (Australia) Pty Ltd and Kingstream Resources must have confidence that the Government is treating the project with respect and urgency. If this legislation can be passed through this House by the end of the week, they will have that confidence.

We have two Bills to debate and we have many hours to go through the Committee stage -

Mr Thomas: This is a commitment of hundreds of millions of taxpayers' dollars, and this must be done properly.

Mr BLOFFWITCH: It will be done properly.

Mr Thomas: It cannot be done properly with the guillotine hanging over our heads.

Mr BLOFFWITCH: If the member cares to look at the Bill, he will understand that this has been done properly. Taxpayers' money will not be spent until we know that a major industry can be established in the mid-west. I can tell the member that another float will occur in July for a second steel mill. I would not be surprised if that second steel mill, the Mt Asia steel mill, was completed before the Kingstream project. Those two industries will result in an extra one million tonnes of steel being moved through the new deep port by the year 2000. The improved price of gas, as a result of the pipeline, and access to a deep water port will result in not a lack of industry but the community's concern over the increasing number of industries that want to be established in that area.

**MR MARSHALL** (Dawesville - Parliamentary Secretary) [4.00 pm]: I too support the motion because the privilege to debate legislation in this House is often abused. The rules must be changed to invoke positive solutions rather than the House's indulging in long hours of debate that amount to the Opposition's stalling. Rules must be modernised to keep up with trends and they must be changed when they are not adhered to. Although I always use the game of football to illustrate my arguments, I must do so again. For years Australian Rules Football was played in four 25-minute quarters. However, players eventually realised that in the last quarter, if a team was leading and kicking into the breeze its members needed only to kick the ball out of bounds to maintain their lead. When the ball was thrown back onto the field the winning team would play the dead flank and once again kick the ball out of bounds. Although that was a good tactic, it was contrary to the spirit of the game. It did not take long for the Football Commission to change the rules. Today if a player kicks the ball out of bounds on the full, a free kick is given and the ball is brought back into play. That results in a better game and in something of which everyone is proud.

Often in this place we perform the way football was played in the old days; that is, we kick the ball out of bounds as a stalling tactic. If the Opposition sees that as a good tactic and can get away with it, by all means it should try it. However, after a while it will have a very negative effect on debate in this place.

Mr Thomas: You misunderstand the point. We support the legislation, but we want it to be debated thoroughly.

Mr MARSHALL: I would like to see members get on with the job and pass a resolution after not too many hours of debate in this House.

**MRS ROBERTS** (Midland) [4.02 pm]: I am disappointed that members opposite did not offer a higher calibre of debate than they have this afternoon. If people want an example of how legislation of this nature can be dealt with efficiently they need look no further back than last week. I stood here at probably the same time last week and pointed out that there was no need for the three or four Bills in question to be guillotined. They were not very contentious and by any indication they would not have taken very long to debate.

When the Deputy Premier spoke to the guillotine motion he pointed out that debate on the three Bills combined took only three and a half hours in the upper House. I suggested to him that the guillotine should not be used as a matter of routine. When uncontentious Bills are listed there is no problem with their passing through the Parliament in the normal course of events, as occurred in this very House for decades. I am sure the Government was surprised that the Bills listed for the guillotine last week were substantially dealt with by Wednesday. They did not even take until Thursday. At most, by Thursday the third reading of one of the Bills was left. That took all of five or six minutes to deal with.

Last week there was no need to guillotine three uncontentious Bills. I am not saying that the guillotine will not be needed this week. I am saying that when legislation is uncontentious and has fairly minor ramifications it does not take very long to debate. Our record, particularly this year, will show that we have not filibustered to any substantial degree on legislation before this House.

Last week we dealt with all those Bills fairly expeditiously. I imagine that the Curriculum Council Bill will be dealt with fairly promptly. I am aware that some very serious questions will be raised in the debate on the Iron and Steel (Mid West) Agreement Bill. However, the Government may be able to answer them satisfactorily, resulting in the Bill being dealt with promptly and avoiding the need for the guillotine. However, if serious questions are raised during the second reading debate and Committee, they must be addressed fully. This House must be satisfied that legislation is adequately debated. It makes a mockery of this institution when it becomes nothing more than a rubber stamp for executive government. That is what happens when the Government has determined that, come what may, a major agreement Bill such as this, which will have huge consequences for our State, will be guillotined.

Mr Barnett: If you look at the record you will see that in cases where new issues have arisen I have been prepared to take legislation off the guillotine.

Mrs ROBERTS: The difficulty is that the Minister starts the week by taking a big-stick approach and putting the guillotine in place rather than a cooperative approach. For many decades this House operated on a cooperative basis

without the need for the guillotine. I do not think any examples in recent times indicate the need for a guillotine in this House. It is inappropriate this week, firstly, because the Curriculum Council Bill is not contentious and in no way needs guillotining. Secondly, the Iron and Steel (Mid West) Agreement Bill is significant legislation about which serious questions must be debated and answered fully. It is all very well for the Leader of the House to say that if issues arise the guillotine will be reconsidered. It is very much a standover tactic for the Government to put in place the guillotine with the proviso that it will let us know if it chooses to remove the guillotine. That is not the way this House should operate. It should not be a matter of executive government determining every week what legislation will go through this House at the fall of the hammer.

**MR BROWN** (Bassendean) [ 4.07 pm]: I also oppose the guillotine motion both as a matter of principle and in relation to the Bills before the House. I understand from opposition spokespersons that both Bills will be substantially supported. However, they are very important Bills. Does the Government deem that it is appropriate that the Parliament give full consideration to these matters? The Minister for Education said in his second reading speech that the Curriculum Council Bill deals with the education curriculum from preschool to year 12. It is an extremely important issue. Judging by what he said in his second reading speech, it will be 1999 before the weight of the Bill is felt in schools in this State. Nonetheless, the Government is allowing only three days to consider the Bill. The other Bill involves potentially only \$300m of taxpayers' money! It is a disgrace for the Government to have chosen to apply the guillotine to a Bill with ramifications of that magnitude.

Question put and a division taken with the following result -

Ayes (30)

Mr Baker	Mrs Holmes	Mrs Parker
Mr Barnett	Mr House	Mr Prince
Mr Barron-Sullivan	Mr Kierath	Mr Shave
Mr Board	Mr MacLean	Mr Sweetman
Mr Bradshaw	Mr Marshall	Mr Trenorden
Mr Court	Mr Masters	Mr Tubby
Mr Cowan	Mr McNee	Dr Turnbull
Mr Day	Mr Minson	Mrs van de Klashorst
Mrs Edwardes	Mr Omodei	Mr Wiese
Mrs Hodson-Thomas	Mr Osborne	Mr Bloffwitch ( <i>Teller</i> )

Noes (18)

Ms Anwyl	Mr Graham	Mr Riebeling
Mr Brown	Mr Grill	Mr Ripper
Mr Carpenter	Mr Kobelke	Mrs Roberts
Dr Constable	Mr McGinty	Mr Thomas
Dr Edwards	Ms McHale	Ms Warnock
Dr Gallop	Mr Pental	Mr Cunningham ( <i>Teller</i> )

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Pairs

Hames	Marlborough
Ainsworth	McGowan
Nicholls	MacTiernan

Question thus passed.

**MOTION - GOVERNMENT BUSINESS, PRECEDENCE**

Resumed from 13 March.

**MR TRENORDEN** (Avon) [4.11 pm]: When debate on this motion was adjourned some weeks ago the Deputy Leader of the Opposition had just given a passionate speech about the work of the Select Committee on Procedure and I had only just got to my feet to speak about my role on that committee. Although country members are not happy about a shorter tea break, the whole point of this debate is about making changes to the operation of the House. Traditions are important, and it is important that when making changes to the operation of the House members are prepared for that change. I support all the Procedure Committee's proposals for change and their introduction in this House. Of course members, particularly metropolitan members, would prefer that the tea break not be shortened because a one and a half hour tea break enables them to interact with their families. It is also a time in which I am able to contact my family and constituents on the phone and from time to time see people in Parliament House.



Mr Marlborough interjected.

Mr TRENORDEN: There is always talk about after-lunch speeches, but after-dinner speeches can sometimes be deadlier. Of course, the change cannot suit all members, but I support the principle behind the Leader of the House's motion. Opposition members roundly criticised him for not introducing all the suggested changes of the Procedure Committee, and I hope that he will do so in the not too distant future. There is no reason why the Leader of the House should not put this proposition to the House so that we can collectively make up our minds about the change. However, I am happy with the hour and a half tea break.

*Amendment to Motion*

**MR BLOFFWITCH** (Geraldton) [4.12 pm]: I move:

That the motion be amended by deleting the words "5.00 pm until 9.00 pm" and substituting the words "4.30 pm until 10.00 pm".

**MR BARNETT** (Cottesloe - Leader of the House) [4.13 pm]: I second the amendment. The motion seeks to shorten the dinner break by only half an hour, from one and a half hours to one hour. I assured members that it would have been possible to make an arrangement behind the Chair not to have divisions and not to deal with contentious matters during that time so that members, if they wished, could attend functions or go home for dinner. That minor reform would have saved the House an hour and would have meant that members would be able to go home at 10.30 pm instead of 11.00 pm.

For a long time members have complained about long sitting nights. The motion was aimed at introducing a simple change that would have allowed us to go home half an hour earlier. It is incredible that opposition members will not allow that minuscule reform.

Mrs Roberts: And members on your side.

Mr BARNETT: At least government members were prepared to try it and see if it would work.

Mr Thomas: What is the effect of the amendment?

Mr BARNETT: The effect is to restore the status quo. When this motion was first debated I assured the House that the Government would not use its numbers to force this procedural motion through, and it will not. If the motion does not have broad support - in other words, the support of both sides of the House - we will not proceed with it. Therefore the Government is not proceeding with it. That is a great pity. It would have allowed us to have half an hour less debate at night and members could have gone home half an hour earlier to spend time with family and friends.

The public thinks we are crazy sitting the hours we do. They think we are loonies. We do nothing to raise our image as a Parliament or as parliamentarians in the public eye when we cannot make a minuscule change to the sitting times with no cost and no downside. The status quo will continue. Private members' time will now start at 4.30 pm. I have explained to members that will mean grievances will be taken from then until 5.30 pm and the business of the Opposition will commence at 5.30. The irony is that the Opposition will lose. The offer by the Government was an improvement over what occurred last year for the Opposition. Under the Government's proposal the Opposition would have been able to bring on its motions of substance at 5.00 pm, and at least have one hour's debate on them at a time when the debate would have attracted media attention. From now on, grievances will take up the first hour and debate on the Opposition's motions will commence at 5.30 pm, half an hour before the dinner break. If I were in Opposition, I would have jumped at the Government's offer but the Opposition declined to do so. I am sorry, I cannot do anything about it. The Opposition has made a mistake.

**MRS ROBERTS** (Midland) [4.21 pm]: I question how hard the Leader of the House was trying to implement this change. As he left this motion on the Notice Paper for so long, I thought he would have put a written proposition to the Opposition. It is all very well for him to stand up in this place and say that we could reach agreement behind the Chair that there would be no divisions or non-contentious matters dealt with during a stated time, but he neglected to say that the Opposition would be giving up something if it gave up its right not to call a division at a certain time. He asked the Opposition to take the Government on its honour that it will not deal with contentious matters -

Mr Barnett: Have I ever misled you?

Mrs ROBERTS: The Leader of the House does not take the Opposition on its honour when he moves a guillotine motion. It comes down to dealing with people fairly. If the Leader of the House deals with the Opposition on this issue in the same way as he treats the guillotine motions, it is not likely that the Opposition will reach a compromise with him.

The Leader of the House said his proposal would give members more time to spend with their families. Many opposition members have told me that they can spend an extra half hour with their family between 6.00 pm and 7.30 pm far better than they can after 10.30 pm. I imagine that most children of members on this side of the House would be well and truly asleep by that time.

The Opposition supports the Leader of the House in his intentions to reform this place. He said the public must think that members are crazy for working the hours they do. I think we are crazy, but I do not think the public would think we were any less crazy because we went home one night a week at 10.30 pm instead of 11.00 pm. It will not change their opinion of how this House operates one little bit. The Leader of the House said that his proposal would have led to a moderate change, but the Opposition believes it is tinkering at the edges. The operations of this House need a complete overhaul to be brought into the twentieth century, let alone the twenty-first century.

I am hopeful that with a new Speaker and new members on the Standing Orders and Procedure Committee consideration will be given to more radical reforms to this House which will be agreed to by members on both sides. I know that there are members on both sides of the House who support the Leader of the House's proposition. I also know that there are members on both sides of the House oppose it. There were far more members of the Opposition opposed to losing the half hour at the dinner break than there were in favour of the proposal.

It is worthwhile for the Opposition to have the opportunity to debate its motions earlier, but it is not so wonderful that it wants to give up half an hour of the dinner break. The television evening news has already been determined by 5.00 pm and it would not make any difference. With the daily newspaper, the deadline would be after 7.30 pm. I do not know how much the Opposition would gain from the Leader of the House's offer. However, the Opposition believes it has made the right decision.

This House does not give enough time to private members' business. With the increase in the number of Independents in this Parliament and other Parliaments -

Mr Barnett: I disagree. We give too much time because it is on the one day. It would be better to have private members' business every day.

Mrs ROBERTS: The Leader of the House makes a very good suggestion and I look forward to discussing with him, the Speaker and other interested parties the proposition of allocating more time to business other than government business.

The Opposition supports the amendment.

**MR THOMAS** (Cockburn) [4.26 pm]: I support the amendment. The question of sitting hours is not one in which the interests of members are divided on party lines. Some members have said that the division of interest is between country and metropolitan members. I guess there can be a divergence of interest on those grounds.

I find the hour and a half dinner break convenient. I often attend functions in my electorate during that time and generally one night a week members of my family join me in this place for dinner. That time gives me the opportunity to help my children with their homework on these premises. Many members who speak about the efficiency of this Parliament and the hours it sits suggest that we should look at how the Commonwealth Parliament operates, where members sit through the dinner break. Very often that Parliament operates with very few members in the Chamber. That comparison has limited validity for two reasons. Firstly, virtually every member in the Commonwealth Parliament is from out of town. Nobody has the prospect of going home to have dinner with their family or to work in their electorate. As they are from out of town they might as well sit through the dinner break to complete the business of the House so they can return to their home State. I understand that. That does not apply to most of the metropolitan members in this House.

Secondly, the Commonwealth Parliament has very good resources available on the premises and members can attend to useful things in and around the building. Even though the Chamber is virtually deserted, most of the members are working busily within the building. By comparison, members in this place have very few resources and the scope for being involved in productive work while the House is sitting is much less. I suppose that a comparison with the Commonwealth Parliament is a good starting point, but it is limited. This is a state Parliament which is situated in a state capital and the majority of members represent metropolitan electorates. I hope that in years to come, after the introduction of one-vote-one-value, there will be more members representing metropolitan electorates and they will be within driving distance of their electorates and families.

I would rather have the extra half hour break between 7.00 pm and 7.30 pm than between 10.30 pm and 11.00 pm. It is a matter of judgment, and for that reason I support the amendment.

Amendment put and passed.

*Motion, as Amended*

Question (motion, as amended) put and passed.

**JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON DELEGATED LEGISLATION - ESTABLISHMENT**

**MR BARNETT** (Cottesloe - Leader of the House) [4.30 pm]: In response to Legislative Council message No 5, I move -

That this House agrees in the following terms -

- (1) The Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation - the "committee" - shall consist of four members of the Legislative Assembly and four members of the Legislative Council.
- (2)
  - (a) The Assembly members of the standing committee shall be chosen as the House may determine but, where there is a party in the Assembly of not less than five members, other than a party whose leader is either the Premier or the Leader of the Opposition, one of the Assembly members of the standing committee shall be a member of that party;
  - (b) the term of office of each committee member extends from the time of election to the committee until the expiration of that Parliament during which he was elected;
  - (c) when a vacancy occurs on the committee during a recess or a period of adjournment in excess of two weeks, the President or the Speaker, as the case may be, may appoint a member to fill the vacancy until an appointment can be made by the Council or Assembly, as the case may be;
  - (d) a member may resign from membership of the committee at any time in writing addressed to the President or Speaker, as the case may require, and the appropriate Presiding Officer shall thereupon notify the House of the vacancy, and any member elected to fill that vacancy holds office for the balance of the vacating member's term and is eligible for re-election.
- (3) A person shall not be elected to, or continue as, a member of the committee if that member is -
  - (a) a Minister of the Crown;
  - (b) the President of the Legislative Council;
  - (c) the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly; or
  - (d) the Chairman of Committees of the Legislative Council or of the Legislative Assembly.
- (4) At its first meeting and thereafter as the occasion requires, the committee shall elect from its members a chairman who belongs to the party or parties supporting the Government, and a deputy chairman.
- (5) It is the function of the committee to consider and report on any regulation that -
  - (a) appears not to be within its power or not to be in accord with the objects of the Act pursuant to which it purports to be made;
  - (b) unduly trespasses on established rights, freedoms or liberties;
  - (c) contains matter which ought properly to be dealt with by an Act of Parliament;
  - (d) unduly makes rights dependent upon administrative, and not judicial, decisions.
- (6)
  - (a) If the committee is of the opinion that any of the regulations ought to be disallowed, in whole or in part, it shall report that opinion and the grounds thereof to each House before the end of the period during which any motion for disallowance of those regulations may be moved in either House, but if both Houses are not sitting, it may report its opinion and the grounds thereof to the authority by which the regulations were made;
  - (b) where a report is made to the regulation-making authority pursuant to rule 6(a), a copy of the report shall be delivered to the Clerk of each House, who shall make it available to any member of Parliament for perusal, and any such report shall be tabled in each House not later than six sitting days from the start of the next sitting of each House.

- (7) If the committee is of the opinion that any other matter relating to any regulation should be brought to the notice of the House, it may report that opinion and matter to the House.
- (8) A report of the committee shall be presented in writing to each House by a member of the committee nominated for that purpose by the committee.
- (9) The committee has power to send for persons, papers and records, and to sit during a recess or an adjournment of either House or both Houses.
- (10) A quorum for the conduct of business is four members of whom not less than two shall be members of the Assembly and not less than two members of the Legislative Council.
- (11) Except to the extent that they impinge upon the functioning of the committee, its proceedings shall be regulated by the standing orders applicable to select committees of the Legislative Council.

and amends paragraph (9) by adding after "records," the words "to move from place to place,".

Question put and passed.

#### *Appointment*

On motions by Mr Barnett (Leader of the House), resolved -

That the Assembly appoints the member for Geraldton, the member for Girraween, the member for Rockingham and the member for Wagin as members of the committee.

That the Legislative Council be acquainted accordingly and its concurrence sought in the amendment to paragraph (9).

### CURRICULUM COUNCIL BILL

#### *Second Reading*

Resumed from 9 April.

**MR RIPPER** (Belmont - Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [4.34 pm]: I am pleased to say that on this occasion the Opposition supports the legislation, as do the various interests groups within the education sector. That general level of support and lack of complaint indicates the good work that has been done by the interim Curriculum Council under the chairmanship of Therese Temby.

One of the objects of this Bill is to abolish the Secondary Education Authority and replace it with a curriculum council. The council will have responsibility not only for what occurs in years 11 and 12 and assessment and tertiary entrance matters but also for education from kindergarten to year 12. It will be responsible for preparing a curriculum framework that will be mandatory, apart from limited exemption procedures, for all government and non-government schools in the State.

I will canvass what I believe are some of the strengths of the Bill and then deal with some of the Opposition's criticisms before I discuss specific curriculum issues in Western Australia, matters which are important for the development of curriculum in Western Australian schools but which will not be addressed by the Bill and general issues relating to the future of curriculum development not only in Western Australia but also in other advanced countries.

I refer first to the strengths of this Bill. In the past, curriculum development has been concentrated within the Education Department of Western Australia; that is, it has been a function largely performed by public servants within the education bureaucracy. As such, it has had the strengths and weaknesses of most bureaucratic processes. From the point of view of people in the community, it could be described as an opaque rather than transparent process. As a result, there have not been systematic procedures for community and stakeholder consultation. In particular, the non-government school sector has often been forced to follow along in support of departmental initiatives in which it might not have had a chance to participate fully. The First Steps program might well be a case of the non-government sector having no alternative but to follow a departmental initiative and the same might apply to the Good Start program and the changes to the school starting age. Those programs were developed within the bureaucracy and the non-government sector was compelled to accept them because of the department's power within the overall system.

In contrast to that, this Bill promotes collaboration between all school sectors in the State and hopefully between all stakeholders in our education system. The processes for the development of curriculum and the curriculum framework will be more transparent than those that have applied in the past and there will be more scope for

systematic community involvement. The Bill attempts to have the Curriculum Council represent all stakeholders in the education system. I will comment later on the position in which the State School Teachers Union has been placed. The Opposition has some criticisms of the lack of explicit recognition of the major industrial professional association within the education sector.

The Bill provides for the Curriculum Council to take a comprehensive approach to deal with education from kindergarten right through to year 12, which should provide for more cohesion and consistency in the whole system. The Bill attempts to strike a balance between uniform requirements and those necessary for flexibility at a system or school level. It does that by developing the concept of a curriculum framework, which will be mandatory in all schools. The curriculum framework will be mandatory but not the curriculum itself. It also provides for an interesting balance between uniformity and flexibility by its focus on outputs rather than inputs. Schools and school systems will have an opportunity, firstly, to decide whether they will adopt a specific piece of curriculum to achieve an outcome within the curriculum framework. That particular piece of curriculum may be designed to achieve the same outcome in the framework as that adopted by another school or system but the curriculum itself may be different. Therefore, although the outcomes are the same, the inputs can be different. Secondly, I understand that the stage of education at which particular outcomes are expected to be realised will also be a matter which is the subject of flexibility at the school or system level. Thirdly, the Bill provides for a balance between uniformity and flexibility by promoting a collaborative approach in the development of the curriculum framework and by specifically providing that the Curriculum Council must take into account the capacity, financial and otherwise, of a school and a school system to implement the requirements of the curriculum framework. Hopefully it will give consideration to the particular ethos of different school systems and schools.

I stress that those are all aspirations. Whether they are realised will depend on the practice of the Curriculum Council. The legislation has the strengths that I have outlined but the hoped for outcomes will not necessarily be realised unless the council is properly resourced and the decision makers in the Curriculum Council are able to act consistently in detail with the aspirations of the legislation.

I will turn to some criticisms that the Opposition has of the legislation. I am concerned about the way in which provision is made for representation of the teachers' unions on the Curriculum Council. The State School Teachers Union of Western Australia is a very large organisation and the major industrial and professional organisation of teachers in the State. The Bill provides for a teachers' representative. However, it provides for the Minister to consult the SSTU and the union in the private school sector. The Minister is not required to consult only those unions but can consult with other people. The Minister is not obliged to act on the outcome of his consultations. He may well choose someone who is not recommended by either of the teachers' unions. Therefore, the teacher who is appointed to the Curriculum Council will not be a representative, in the full sense, of either union and so will not be accountable, in any sense, to the union or its representative structure. A big opportunity is being missed. I will talk mainly about the SSTU but my comments apply also to the union in the private sector.

The State School Teachers Union represents about 15 000 teachers. It is not merely an industrial organisation but also the major professional organisation for teachers. The union has an infrastructure and network which enables consultation with members and could support the work of the teacher representative on the Curriculum Council. If the union were entitled to representation on the Curriculum Council, all those representational and organisational resources could be used to support the work of that representative. If, on the other hand, the Minister appointed someone else, that teacher on the Curriculum Council would not be accountable to the union and would not really be able to take part as a representative of 15 000 teachers. That person would present his personal view. He would be an example of a practising teacher but not be representative. The 15 000 teachers and those in the private sector will have to implement the curriculum framework.

Mr Barnett: I will answer your comments later, but if the teachers union were to put up a credible person, the Minister would normally accept that nomination. The Minister is not bound to, but I am talking educationally, not industrially.

Mr RIPPER: The teachers union has a long and proud history of involvement in professional as well as industrial matters. It would be a matter of pride for the union to select someone who would be a capable representative on the Curriculum Council. I am pleased to hear the Minister say that he would, generally speaking, appoint someone whom the union had recommended - although there is a difficulty with the legislation because there is just one position and the Minister must consult two unions. To the extent that the SSTU was represented, the private school teachers union would not be and vice versa. I will cover this in more detail at the Committee stage, but an opportunity has been missed. I hope it is not because of the attitude which the Government has traditionally adopted, particularly more recently, to industrial organisations in the education sector. The teachers union has a very important role to play in professional and curriculum matters.

The second area with which I have some concern is the powers in the Bill for the Curriculum Council to charge fees. I imagine that the Curriculum Council will be using consultants on many occasions to prepare documents for the development of the curriculum framework and to prepare curriculum material, such as teacher manuals. Those consultants may retain the copyright to their documents and, consequently, someone must pay for the use of the documents. I am concerned that we may see a further extension of the devolution within the government school system and the development of a user pays system where schools must pay for curriculum material developed by the Curriculum Council.

Mr Barnett: The Secondary Education Authority already has the power to charge fees for various things.

Mr RIPPER: That may be the case and the Minister for Education may advise in his response or during Committee whether some of the Bill's provisions are lifted out of the Secondary Education Authority Act. This is a major shift of responsibility for curriculum development from the Education Department bureaucracy to the Curriculum Council. The council's budget will be about \$6m, and it will not have a huge staff. Most of its staff will be involved in the assessment and recording of tertiary entrance matters with which the Secondary Education Authority is involved. Inevitably the council will contract consultants for the development of curriculum materials. Those people who apply to the Curriculum Council to accredit courses or curriculum materials will want to recover their costs. In some cases they will want to retain copyright. One could imagine a circumstance developing under this legislation in which schools must pay for curriculum materials, and some schools will be advantaged and others disadvantaged because of their access to resources. I look forward to the Minister's response on those issues.

I turn now to specific issues with which, I hope, the Curriculum Council will deal. This legislation does not ensure they will be dealt with; it only sets out a process and a structure for the development of a curriculum framework. It does not require that that curriculum framework specifically deal with some of the issues that I will raise. As the legislation does not define a curriculum framework, I am sure there will be arguments about what is a curriculum and what is a curriculum framework.

Mr Barnett: Educationists can argue semantics no matter what.

Mr RIPPER: Perhaps; however, the important issue is the balance between mandatory uniform requirements on every school and local flexibility. Although the legislation takes account of both of those needs and tries to establish a balance, the balance that will apply in practice will depend on the behaviour of the Curriculum Council and how it defines issues such as curriculum framework in operational terms. The legislation does not ensure an appropriate balance between mandatory requirements and local flexibility; it provides an opportunity for that to occur. We must examine it.

Mr Barnett: One of the functions of the council is to ensure that the objects of the Act are achieved and to see that a balance exists. At the end of the day it will evolve in each of the subject areas.

Mr RIPPER: The sector appears to have confidence in the legislation as whole. If there were major difficulties, the Opposition would expect to be flooded with proposed amendments and complaints and arguments to put to the Parliament. There appears to be a general acceptance of the legislation, and that is one reason the Opposition is pleased to support it.

I hope the Curriculum Council will deal with these issues. Some attention must be given to curriculum issues in the early years of high school. Curriculum development for years 8 to 10 has some problems. It has not had the attention in recent years that, perhaps, other parts of the education sector have had. We have problems with the transition from year 7 to year 8, and from year 10 to year 11. Both of those problems will be further exposed by the later school starting age for at least half the cohort from the year 2000 onwards. A group of students will be in year 7 who, under current arrangements, would be in year 8; and a group of students will be in year 10 who, under current arrangements, would be in year 11. On average, students in year 7 on will be older than they are at present.

Mr Barnett: Fortunately we have 11 or 12 years to think about that problem.

Mr RIPPER: We have some time to think about it. However, as it comes around it will expose and perhaps exacerbate those problems about which I have been talking. A more immediate development is the Government's aspiration to implement local area planning in our secondary education system. The Government's policy will involve in many instances the separation of years 11 and 12 to senior colleges, and the development of middle schools involving years 7, 8, 9 and 10. A lot more thought must be given to the curriculum issues related to those developments. That will not occur in 11 or 12 years. I imagine that the Government is about to begin consultations with the community; in other words, it will try to persuade the community to accept local area planning and all sorts of changes to high schools. Already the Kewdale Senior High School Parents and Citizens' Association, of which I am a member, has had certain ideas put to it about the future of Maddington, Cannington, Belmont, and Kewdale

Senior High Schools. I would not be surprised if similar ideas were being seeded in the school communities in, for example, Swanbourne and City Beach.

Mr Barnett: And in the Peel area.

Mr RIPPER: If those development come to pass, a bit more thought to transitions and the curriculum that will apply will be more urgently required than in 11 or 12 years. In the long run we must consider whether year 7 should be located in the primary or secondary sector. In most other States year 7 is located in the secondary sector. It would be an expensive move in Western Australia to move year 7 from the primary schools to secondary schools, although it is argued that will be required. Certainly many children find year 7 to be boring, and they are ready to move on at the end of year 6 rather than spend another year in primary school.

Mr Barnett: Are you aware that in Ballajura Community College year 7s are in high school? I think that trend will continue.

Mr RIPPER: That will require further thought to the curriculum, and perhaps the Ballajura experiment is the sign of things to come. I have already referred to the issues of collaboration and consistency between the education sectors. The non-government sector has had to tag along with initiatives which were undertaken by the Education Department without there being sufficient opportunity for their involvement.

Another issue that concerns me is the resourcing of curriculum development. An enormous amount of money is spent on education. In the government school sector \$966m will be spent on wages and salaries alone in 1997-98. That investment will be compromised if sufficient attention is not given to the curriculum that expenditure is designed to impart. To be used effectively that amount of investment must be supported by adequate curriculum development. That area has been compromised in the past. I talked to a teacher today who said most teachers would say there have been many good curriculum development initiatives in the State over the years, but that most have been compromised by a lack of resources for implementation. Achieving educational and curriculum change is a lot more difficult than simply preparing attractive and effective curriculum materials. Teachers must be trained in the use of those curriculum materials. They must be motivated to use them and a professional development program must be in place. The State has experienced difficulties in the past in providing an adequate professional development program and adequate resources for the development of curriculum.

That leads me to my next remarks; that is, what the Bill will not do. The Bill will provide a structure and process for the development of a curriculum framework, but it will not guarantee any outcome. In particular, it will not guarantee adequate resources for curriculum development. The Curriculum Council will have a budget of about \$6m. That is not enough to do the job it has been allocated by this legislation. The budget will also result in the erosion of head office staff in the Education Department - and it is the head office people who develop the curriculum. The Education Department will in a sense lose its mandate for curriculum development at the same time as it faces serious financial pressures. The combination of the de facto loss of mandate and those financial pressures will lead to less curriculum development in the Education Department.

Mr Barnett: There will be more coordinated curriculum development. You could make the criticism that curriculum development has been somewhat ad hoc and disparate in parts of the overall education sector; however, this Bill will bring it together. Although the Education Department will not have a mandate, to use your term, it will not be disfranchised from participation in curriculum work and it will be a key player. It must be.

Mr RIPPER: I know how bureaucracies work. When finances are tight there is a natural tendency to say that an activity is not part of the core business of an agency but the responsibility of a new agency that has been created and that the new agency must be accountable for that; therefore, the original agency will reduce its commitment. It is my fear that the Education budget is under pressure, despite the fact it has been increased. In due course I will deal with figures that will demonstrate how the budget is under pressure. The natural reaction to that financial pressure and the legislation will be to say that it is the Curriculum Council's responsibility. That will result in the contracting out of much curriculum development because the employees of the Curriculum Council will not have the resources to do the work. There will be a tendency to use more consultants and to outsource work. That will lead to a loss of public sector expertise in curriculum development. That is an issue the Minister should address in his response to the second reading debate.

To make the large investment in education effective it must be ensured that sufficient resources are devoted to curriculum development. Recent examples exist of curriculum initiatives not getting off the ground. I understand that the First Steps mathematics program was effectively put on hold at the end of last year due to a shortage of funding. That program was due to be implemented in 1997, but cannot be because the funding is not available. Likewise, the Physical Steps program, a three year program, has had its third year of funding abandoned.

There are other examples of quality curriculum initiatives that have not been fully implemented because of a lack of resources. In particular, there is a shortage of resources for professional development. There are historic problems with professional development. The State has had an inflexible system in which teachers have undertaken professional development in school hours and have been replaced by relief teachers for the time they have been out of the classroom. That is an expensive system. Perhaps partly as a consequence of that and partly as a consequence of a lack of understanding in government about the needs of teachers in professional development, inadequate professional development has been undertaken. That has stymied some good work that has been done in curriculum development and has affected the implementation of some important curriculum initiatives.

Mr Barnett: You would concede that was addressed in the enterprise bargaining agreement two years ago, which is coming up for renegotiation. The major thrust was the trade-off in achieving more professional development, and, when I took over responsibility for that negotiation, giving far more autonomy for teachers to make their own decisions on professional development, too. It must be evaluated.

Mr RIPPER: Yes, some progress was made towards addressing those issues in the enterprise bargaining process. One solution is to concentrate on raising the professional status of teachers and to ask teachers to accept the obligations professionals should accept to participate in professional development activities as a consequence of that status. If teachers are asked to accept those professional obligations, they must be paid as professionals are paid. Members will agree that teachers' pay lags behind the pay of people with comparable professional responsibility. The solution I suggest is to raise the professional status of teachers and for teachers to accept the full obligations of that professional status but to be rewarded with the full income that comparable professionals enjoy.

Another issue I would like the Curriculum Council to address is the orientation of the curriculum framework to the future needs of students. The potential always exists that educational practitioners will not necessarily be fully aware of the latest state of play in other sectors of the work force. I would like to see a much more vigorous exchange scheme that has teachers move into other sectors of the work force for a period and then return to the education system. I concede a problem with that proposal; that is, once the teachers are let go, it is sometimes difficult to get them back because they enjoy the conditions in the rest of the work force more than they enjoy the conditions in the schools. It must be ensured that the school curriculum is orientated to the demands that will be placed on students in the future rather than to the demands that might have been placed on them in the past.

The last issue I would like the Curriculum Council to deal with is the need for the education system to provide education for all. Western Australia has a good education system. It serves well the majority of students. A proportion of students are alienated from school, are hostile, are not succeeding in school and never have. Persistent and chronic truants are among that group, and there are others. The education system must accept responsibility for 100 per cent of the student intake and not just 90 per cent or 95 per cent. If the education system washes its hands of the minority who are alienated, hostile and not succeeding, the results must be picked up by the justice system or Family and Children's Services. The community eventually pays a lot more to deal with the crisis that results than if there had been some early intervention and adaptability within the education system.

Mr Barnett: I accept that too many children fall through the cracks one way or the other, but I do not think there is any lack of commitment in the education system to do that. More intervention is needed. Aboriginal kids are another example. I know the member did not mean to imply a lack of commitment to get the quality education to everyone. The people do a terrific job but we can always do more.

Mr RIPPER: I speak partly from my experience as the former Minister for Community Services, and I know there was a view in that bureaucracy that the education bureaucracy was not sufficiently adaptable and flexible. It is not that people are unwilling to deal with the problem, or that they are uncaring, but there are rigidities in the education system. I refer, for example, to the requirements on class sizes, staffing formulas and so on which make it difficult for a school, even if it can identify a group that needs an alternative program or particular attention, to deliver that alternative program or particular attention. I do not say I am happy with the way the education system is currently responding to the needs of that group of people, particularly chronic truants. That problem needs more attention.

In the second reading speech and in its media statement on the Curriculum Council, the Government placed some emphasis on values. The press stories were to the effect that as a result of the Curriculum Council Bill, a focus on values would be mandatory in all schools. I found this misleading because values have always been part of the curriculum. For example, in subjects such as English and those in society and environment streams, values education is an integral part and has been for a long time. The Government was playing to community fears about the moral development of our young people with these statements. After all, the Curriculum Council legislation will not ensure there is a focus on values. Values have traditionally been dealt with in the curriculum. The Curriculum Council is about a process and structure rather than an outcome.



Despite those comments I will express my opinion about issues which I think the Curriculum Council should consider for the curriculum framework. There is much anxiety within the community about a range of social developments. People are upset about family breakdown, drug abuse, crime levels, health issues such as AIDS, and the environment. The traditional response is that education is the answer; we should have something in the curriculum about drug abuse, make sure it includes a section on AIDS, and deal with the issue of domestic violence. That is a problem because the curriculum is already overloaded, and there is tension between dealing with the new needs and the old basic needs. To the extent that material is provided to deal with these new social issues, the core business of schools, teaching literacy and numeracy, may be compromised. There is always a need for judgments to be made about educational priorities. Literacy and numeracy are also not just to be considered as the old basics. In many ways they are the new needs because there are no longer any jobs for unskilled workers. The level of skills required is much higher than it has been in the past, and, if anything, the community is demanding higher literacy and numeracy standards than it has in the past. If we look to the schools to deal with every new social problem and to alleviate the social problems, the core business may be compromised at a time when it is all the more important.

It is no surprise to members of Parliament that there is an information explosion. I have seen accounts of executives in Australian business and industry suffering from information overload. Perhaps you, Mr Acting Speaker (Mr Osborne), are like me and suffer from information overload whenever you look at your in-tray. Members of Parliament are increasingly bombarded with all sorts of information, not all of which is useful. This increasingly will be the experience of people in the community. Much of the information people will acquire at school will be rapidly outdated. It seems to me that in the curriculum framework more emphasis must be placed on skills and values, rather than on simple information, because people must continually sort out information from among the enormous amount of material that will come their way. Much of the information they pick up at school will not be useful, but they need an attitude about learning and the skills to keep learning throughout their lives.

They will also need life skills. Many people will have not just one career, but will be required to have two, three or even more careers. Many people will find their careers are compressed and they will retire from the work force much earlier than anticipated. On the other hand, they will live much longer. A new age is emerging of a very long period of retirement or part time work, small business or contracting after people have served their main period in the formal work force. Many people will find there is no place for them in traditional full time, long term employment in a large organisation. They must put together a portfolio life, where they draw income from a variety of different activities and draw the social status and companionship that people normally get from their participation in the work force from a variety of other activities. People will face an incredible period of change in the decades after they leave school. There will be a need for much emphasis on the psychological skills necessary to deal with all these new developments. People must be more flexible if they are to have happy lives. They must be more willing to keep learning, and to be motivated and skilled at adapting to all the changes that will come their way.

Life skills are increasingly important in another area: The community has a great deal of concern about two issues, both of which relate to the family; namely, parenting and family breakdown. I chaired a review of parent education services for the Minister for The Family in a previous Government when I was on the backbench. The review concluded that a great deal could be done to head off various social problems if parental skills could be enhanced. Some discussion ensued on the committee about the need to start providing that education at school. However, the committee concluded that people at school were not really considering parenthood, and did not have a preparedness to undertake that learning. We concluded that it was necessary for them to acquire some personal skills valuable in their lives generally, and which translate into a good performance as parents when the time arises.

Similarly, many young people at school are not ready to learn about relationships, yet they face a world with a very high divorce rate and in which many relationship break up. Many people experience a lot of grief and pain as a result of their lack of skills in handling modern demands of marriage and family life. Again, a lot of benefit would be gained from students acquiring increased focus on personal skills. Students are not ready to learn about marriage at high school, but acquiring skills in handling themselves personally will advantage all aspect of their lives, particularly relationships. I argue for a strong focus on life skills because of the changes which are affecting our family and working life, both of which will place pressure on young people now at school when they move into adult life.

In conclusion, I revisit the question of resources. The claims for the Curriculum Council - the aspirations embodied in the legislation - might not be realised, and the efforts of people involved with the council may be wasted, if the council becomes just another agency harassing schools with new ideas and new reporting and accountability requirements. We must devote proper resources, first, to the work of the Curriculum Council, second, to the curriculum development work still undertaken in the Education Department, and third, to the professional development of teachers necessary to implement new curriculum. The resources required will be considerable.

Probably more than 20 000 teachers are in the government sector, and another large group of teachers work in the private sector. We have eight learning areas. If the curriculum framework is to produce real change in schools, the Government must adequately resource the Curriculum Council, curriculum development and professional development. The Curriculum Council's budget is only \$6m. The Education Department budget has been increased, and the Government can claim an increased allocation even accounting for inflation. However, that is not the whole story.

I looked at the wages part of the Education budget in 1997-98 compared with that of 1996-97. The budget allocation in 1997-98 equates to \$40 823 per full time equivalent in the Education Department, and in 1996-97 the figure was \$39 126 per FTE. Therefore, the allocation has increased by \$1 697 or about 4.3 per cent per FTE. That sounds good.

Mr Barnett: It's a funny way of measuring it. One can tell that you were a maths teacher. It is a strange way to measure education - it's almost bizarre.

Mr RIPPER: It is not strange because of the point I am about to make; stay with the argument, Minister.

In passing, the increase in the salary budget per FTE may be affected partly by the loss of low income employees, such as school cleaners whose jobs have been contracted out. It is not as though every employee in the Education Department will receive a 4.3 per cent wage increase. The main reason for the increase is the full year's effect of the last salary increase for teachers which applied from 1 January 1997. For six months of the last budget year, the Government had to pay 7.5 per cent extra to teachers, and that amount must be paid in the 12 months of the next financial year. This will take up virtually all of the 4.3 per cent increase in funding per FTE.

The Government faces the difficulty about which the Minister spoke of the enterprise bargaining agreement with state school teachers earlier, which expires at the end of this year. At the beginning of July, the Minister and the department are expected to enter negotiations for a new enterprise agreement. Nevertheless, no money is allocated in the Budget to pay the additional salary which teachers will no doubt expect as a result of the new round of enterprise bargaining negotiations. The Government will have an obligation to pay something additional to teachers from the beginning of next year. However, the Budget has no capacity to meet that obligation, which will result in pressure on all activities in the department.

It is no wonder that the Education Department is considering a radical reduction in head office staff and the local planning initiative which will result in a rationalisation of schools with the closure of some schools and changed programs in others. Considerable financial pressure will be placed on the Education Department.

My initial point was that the additional pressure on the department will be combined with the de facto loss of its mandate for curriculum development. At the time we are considering the legislation, which the Opposition supports, the prospect for curriculum change within schools is under threat as a result of financial pressure. The Opposition is pleased to support this legislation, but it does not, for the reasons I have outlined, fully endorse the Government's expectations for the outcome of the implementation of the Curriculum Council. At the moment, the Government is overselling what will result from the establishment of the Curriculum Council. It will achieve what the Government hopes it will achieve only if the Government gets behind it and provides additional resources for curriculum development and the professional development of teachers necessary to implement the changes.

**MR TUBBY** (Roleystone - Parliamentary Secretary) [5.30 pm]: I support this legislation. Prior to the 1993 election, I was shadow Minister for Education and had a large part to play in writing the Liberal Party's policy leading into government. One of the issues which the policy committee debated for some time was how we would address the establishment of curriculum for not only state schools but also the whole State's education sector. From my perspective the dilemma was that the Education Department was responsible for setting the curriculum and writing curriculum materials. With 25 per cent or more of our students attending non-government schools, that sector did not have a large enough input into the curriculum process. As part of our policy leading into government, we proposed that something should be done about establishing a curriculum and the possible future contracting out of the curriculum writing process.

The Curriculum Council Bill lays down a compulsory framework in eight curriculum areas with which all students must adhere. It will not matter whether they are in government or non-government schools, or whether they are being educated at home, through distance education, through the School of the Air, or through any other form of education; they will have to conform to the eight curriculum areas unless they apply to the Minister for exemption. That will not dictate how they will fulfil the requirements. The Curriculum Council will be designing curriculum material which schools can use if they want. However, the material will not be compulsory. As long as the schools abide by the overall framework, they will be able to purchase their materials from anywhere, including that produced by the

Curriculum Council. I am not suggesting that all of the material will be written by the Curriculum Council; much of it will be contracted out to other bodies.

I commend Therese Temby and the members of the interim council for the work they have done so far and the work they have put into writing this legislation. It is a first for this State; in the past the procedure has been carried out by the Education Department. The Bill slots comfortably into the new education Bill, which the Minister is hoping to release for public discussion in late May or early June. We contemplated incorporating the Curriculum Council into the education Bill but decided it was better for it to be a stand-alone piece of legislation with the education Bill referring to it. It slots in with what we will do in the future. I commend all of those people who have put so much work into getting it to this stage.

**MS McHALE** (Thornlie) [5.33 pm]: I support this Bill. The Bill has the endorsement of the major stakeholders in the education system, albeit with some qualifications. We support the Bill to the extent that it provides a very strong framework in which the curriculum will be developed. As my colleague the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has outlined, the success of this Bill and hence the Curriculum Council will depend very much on the infrastructure that will be provided to the council. I suppose the proof of the pudding will be in the tasting, so to speak.

This is a very significant Bill. It is incumbent on all of us to be familiar with what this legislation tries to do because in my view it sets the scene for education into the twenty-first century. In that regard I see it as a significant Bill and I hope that it will be a progressive piece of legislation.

The Bill grew out of the 1993 review on education, the Vickery report. It recommended the establishment of a curriculum organisation involving government and non-government school sectors. In June 1994, the then Minister for Education formed a committee which was chaired by the director of the Catholic Education Commission to review the process of curriculum development in this State. Out of that review came the recommendations for this Curriculum Council.

The objectives of this Bill are to provide for the development and implementation of a curriculum framework for schools in a number of key areas. Those areas include the knowledge that our students will require, the understanding of our students, the skill levels of our students to move on to the workplace or to tertiary institutions, and very importantly - I will come to this issue later - the values and attitudes that our students are expected to acquire. It will provide also for the development and accreditation of courses in post-compulsory schooling. It will take over the role of the Secondary Education Authority - this Bill repeals the legislation relating to that authority - and it will also take over the curriculum development role of the Education Department.

There are a number of concerns about this legislation, which the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has outlined, and which I also want to canvass in less time than my colleague. One concern relates to the membership of the Curriculum Council. The council will consist of a chairperson, a chief executive officer, and 11 other persons who will be appointed by the Minister. One of our concerns is that august bodies such as the Western Australian Council of State School Organisations and the State School Teachers Union will not be able to nominate a representative to the council. That is a worry for members on this side of this House. While on the one hand the Catholic Education Commission and the Association of Independent Schools will be able to nominate representatives, only through consultation with the Minister will a teacher or parent representative be appointed to the council. Those bodies, one representing teachers in this State and the other representing parents of children in our government schools, will not get a guernsey other than by appointment by the Minister on advice from those two lobby groups. It was pleasing to hear the Minister say that if the teachers union nominated a competent person, he would give it serious consideration. However, the legislation stops short of giving those bodies the right to nominate. The teachers union has a highly professional and responsible attitude to these matters and would consider seriously its nomination if it had the right to nominate. In areas of professional concern the teachers union is responsible and would put up a nominee whom the Minister could accept. Putting that aside, because we have canvassed our concerns in relation to the absence of nominees from the teachers union and parent bodies, membership of the council is vitally important because of the responsibility and functions that are vested in the council.

Another reason it is important for the teachers union to have that nomination is the importance of professional development. It is interesting to note that the council has as one of its functions to develop professional development plans which are necessary to support the implementation of the curriculum framework once it is developed. That cannot be overstated, as it is very important to the critical success of the council. Given that, it would be prudent to have a teachers union representative on the council so that it would be there from the outset and could input into professional development discussions. The view of the teachers union on professional development is so critical that the absence of a teachers union representative is a worry.

Mr Barnett: You may not be aware, and this is a slightly tangential point, but I have required over the months that a practising teacher be in each of the learning areas. It is not entirely your point but it partly answers the question you raised.

Ms McHALE: Therefore, they are directly involved in the professional development plans?

Mr Barnett: They are there to ensure that the curriculum retains relevance to classroom teaching.

Ms McHALE: It is important, given the focus that the teachers union has historically, not hysterically, put on professional development.

Mr Barnett: Sometimes hysterically.

Ms McHALE: I could not possibly say that. Another concern I raise is the availability of the curriculum framework. I note that the Minister will make the framework available to every student and to the public. Clause 9(2) states that the curriculum framework will be made available to the public in any manner the council thinks fit. I applaud that. I urge the Minister to ensure that "in any manner the council thinks fit" is broad in order to get the curriculum framework across. In the age of information technology I am sure that the Internet may be an appropriate tool, but not all parents have access to the Internet or other forms of information that some of us take for granted. Given that the curriculum framework is so important, let us look at ways in which it is made available to the public and parents, so that we are not indirectly denying access to information on the curriculum framework.

Another area that intrigues me is the exemption from the curriculum framework. The Minister has the power to grant exemptions to schools not to follow the curriculum framework. I could not see any guidelines or requirement to follow the guidelines, nor could I find any great insight in the second reading speech about why or what situations there might be for exemptions. I understand the concept of a blanket exemption for all schools during the lead-in time, but opportunities for exemptions may arise in the future. I would be interested to hear more from the Minister.

Mr Barnett: Muslim schools in some areas may be an example.

Ms McHALE: Yes. I note that scope already exists in the legislation for schools to follow other elements of the curriculum, and spiritual beliefs is an example.

I have noticed in a number of draft pieces of legislation that the Government has put up, and this is no exception, that the legislation gives significant power to the Minister. Although this Minister's grasp of education is quite sound and, therefore, his judgment might be appropriate, he will not necessarily always be the Minister for Education. I wonder whether guidelines will be established which, while not curtailing the power of the Minister, may set limits to the power to ensure consistency and accountability. I am concerned that a great deal of power is vested in the Minister, for instance in the choice of nominees on the council. I return to that point.

Mr Carpenter: We want a clause excluding the member for Riverton from ever becoming the Minister for Education.

Ms McHALE: Absolutely. I gave a piece of gratuitous advice to the Minister for Heritage. I take the opportunity of this Bill to make the same point on the term of office. The draft legislation provides, and rightly so, for an appointee whose term expires to continue in office until such time as his or her successor is appointed. I raise this because last week the Minister was walking down the Champs Elysees and so was unable to hear the point.

Mr Barnett: Thank you very much. My constituents will be pleased to hear that.

Ms McHALE: I am pleased that the Minister was doing that. I argued during the Statutes (Repeals and Minor Amendments) Bill debate that the provision should not be removed from the Heritage of Western Australia Act. I received the response, which I did not believe then and do not believe now, that it was fairly typical of government legislation. I put on record that I am pleased to see in the Minister's draft legislation that very sensible provision which should not have been removed from the heritage Act.

The desire of the Minister to deal with values in the Bill is a critical area and of greatest interest to me. We must not deal lightly with the concept of values. Our values can be very different. They depend on the principles that underlie them, our perspective of social justice and our own belief and value system. It is critical to the way we provide education to encourage that sense of values and ethics. I am pleased they will be addressed. I am concerned about the way in which the Minister will bring this about, but that is not to say that I do not agree with the philosophy underlying it. If we can focus strongly and meaningfully on the issues we have to deal with in this House, such as those I have raised of attempted youth suicide, juvenile crime and the alienation of our students, we will be providing something for our students and ultimately therefore for the community. The notion of values goes beyond any sense of civic duties. It is not about someone being the youth citizen of the year or taking seriously one's civic responsibilities but is about looking at what we value in our society and what we want to value in our community.

If we can do that, we will be helping our students to improve their self-esteem. I ask the Curriculum Council to focus on that matter and not just on civic responsibilities. It is critical that it deal with that issue in a culturally sensitive way by taking into account the cultural differences in values.

Our curriculum process and content have been reviewed for probably the past decade and a half, going back to the Beazley and Vickery reports. I hope the Curriculum Council delivers on its objects and is a strong move in the right direction. It is an interesting and challenging concept, because it is based on outcomes rather than input, and it does have the capacity to provide a better quality service.

I plead on behalf of parents that the role of the Curriculum Council be promoted to parents, because they feel that education has gone through change and counter change, and they may regard this as yet another change that they do not necessarily understand. It is evident from P & C meetings that all parents share a concern for their children's education. It is important to provide good information about what the Curriculum Council will mean for their children's education.

This Bill will provide a framework and the potential to direct energies and rigours towards addressing some curriculum problems. I hope it will offer a new forum in which we can take our educational curriculum into the twenty-first century and deal with some of the real issues which concern the values that our children have. It is important that the council links closely with other youth issues and other government departments so that the flexibility in our curriculum that it is endeavouring to achieve flows through to the whole of the bureaucracy. That is the challenge the council must face if it is to enhance school flexibility and provide better support for teachers. I support the Bill as a framework and trust that the infrastructure will be provided to support it.

**MR BROWN** (Bassendean) [5.53 pm]: I wish to clarify some matters in the second reading speech so that those who come after us will better appreciate them. The first matter is the development of a curriculum framework. The second reading speech states -

In the past, most schools in all systems used syllabuses developed by the Education Department, with individual schools modifying or adding to the syllabuses as they saw fit. The result was a lack of consistency, cohesion and collaboration between schools with regard to curriculum development and usage.

I presume that the curriculum framework proposed in this Bill will give schools the same flexibility to operate. I would like the Minister to articulate for the benefit of this House, but more particularly for the benefit of people who may not have the opportunity of examining this Bill in detail, whether this Bill will change school decision making and local authority, because that is not clear to me.

Another concern with regard to the development of the curriculum framework is that young students find themselves in a range of different circumstances. Recently, I visited two separate constituents. One constituent lived in a fairly large house, where the children had their own bedrooms, which were a long way from the living area and where they could study in relatively peaceful and comfortable surroundings. They had a computer, through which they could log onto the Internet and use the most up to date technology. The other constituent lived in much smaller accommodation, where the children did not have access to a study area or computer.

I hope that in the development of the curriculum framework, consideration is given to the different circumstances in which young people find themselves, where young people whose parents have an income stream are able to tap into the latest technology and information but other young people are struggling. I have noticed also that some schools have classrooms where every student has access to a computer for three or four hours a week and can gain those skills, whereas other schools are struggling to provide that infrastructure. The difference between those young people is not their intelligence but their ability to access those resources. It is important that the Curriculum Council, or the appropriate agency, takes into account those wide differences. It would be very interesting for the council to examine whether there are distinctions between students who have a high level of access to technology and facilities and students who do not have the same access to see the degree to which students who come from less financially affluent families are disadvantaged. I understand that the council will measure outcomes, and I encourage the Minister to include that matter in the equation. I am not sure whether it is intended to put that into the equation, but it is an important issue if we are to have an education system that will serve all.

*Sitting suspended from 6.00 to 7.30 pm*

Mr BROWN: I would like the Minister to address the question of how one might make judgments about the values to be taught in our schools. We are all influenced by the value system we hold, and there is no uniform value system across society. Some members say that self-reliance is an important value, but in other instances people interpret self-reliance as a value which excludes or marginalises compassion and concern for others. Therefore, what set of values

is to be instilled in our children, and what does all that mean? I am aware that papers will be produced and the community will be involved in a broad consultation process.

Mr Barnett: It will not be as blunt as, "You will vote Liberal!" - if that is what you are worrying about.

Mr BROWN: The Minister is more subtle than some of his colleagues.

Mr Barnett: It will involve basic values, such as accepting and respecting others, and tolerance. They will be values with which the community will agree.

Mr BROWN: One could imagine that the value of higher education would receive universal agreement, but it does not. There are differences in society relating to the value of education. One need only consult the various surveys on attitudes between people, say, who hold university degrees and their children and the way they inculcate that value in their children, compared with people who have not attended university and the value they place on knowledge and education. Therefore, to the extent that value systems are influenced by the educational process and cannot be divorced from it - and I do not argue that they should be - equally we must be extremely cautious about the value system we seek to instill in young people through the educational process. It may be that without due care and diligence, what is sought to be instilled through the education system is different from the views of the parents and guardians of those children. To the extent it will be materially different, there will be the potential for significant clashes at the local level.

I would like the Minister to place on record his views about how judgments are to be arrived at to measure the outcomes based on the values that have been instilled in young people. To what degree will the Curriculum Council be involved, if at all, in considering the type of support mechanisms that are appropriate for young people who have been marginalised through the education process? I raise this matter because it appears that government agencies have sought to exclude themselves from responsibility for a number of government programs for troubled youth. To give an example, in Midland an excellent program has been operating to assist 13 and 14 year olds who are basically school refusers. For whatever reason, these young people have refused to go to school and are regarded as chronic truants. The program provided an opportunity for the children to gain some life skills and eventually to find work or to return to full time education. The program was run on a shoestring; it was provided a very modest budget by the Government. It is a tragedy that the program no longer exists because of an argument between government agencies and departments about who should take responsibility.

The Education Department maintained that it was not responsible because the children no longer attended school. The Department of Employment and Training argued that attempts would be made to find the young people jobs, by providing the necessary exemptions because they were under the compulsory school age, but it was not the department's responsibility because the children were not of working age. The Ministry of Justice argued that it had no responsibility because the young people, or a substantial number of them, had not been in trouble with the law. Even though there was a propensity for them without full time education or employment to end up clashing with the legal system, they had not been in trouble with the law at that stage. Family and Children's Services argued that it was not responsible, and so it goes on! The tragedy is that this small, disadvantaged group has been neglected.

The program, which was operating on a shoestring budget, had an extraordinarily high success rate. About 70 to 75 per cent of the young people who went through the program finished up either in full time employment or full time education. The success rate was high, yet the program was marginalised and the young people fell through the cracks.

I note that the intention is that the Curriculum Council will consider the educational needs of all students from preprimary to year 12. That will result in very good vertical integration. I also suggest to the Minister that solutions to all the education problems will not be achieved simply by looking vertically. We must also look horizontally. On examining education opportunities for young people we must consider what is happening in their lives and why they are not being encouraged to attend school to gain an education.

The member for Belmont referred to the number of truants from school, particularly of a very young age, and the problems arising from that. I ask the Minister to place on the record whether the Government will endeavour to provide for greater integration and coordination of services to ensure that some of those marginalised young people do not continue to fall through the gaps as we are witnessing.

The other issue concerns professional development. I hear from teachers when I visit schools that they are required to comply with or teach new subjects when the appropriate resources or professional development training have not been provided to enable them to properly cope with the new demand. Again, although I listened to what the Minister said to the member for Thornlie, it will be interesting to know what are the projections for professional development. Although the Minister said in his second reading speech that we are living in a rapidly changing world - there is no doubt about that - and that new demands are being placed on our young people every day, equally new demands are being placed on teachers every day. Unless they have opportunities to update their skills they are unable to impart

knowledge to the young. That is particularly true in this age of technology. I wonder how many teaching staff throughout the education system are computer literate. Many teachers should be computer literate in order to carry out their responsibilities; therefore, a great deal of training must be provided. I would like the Minister to give an indication of the degree to which that will be addressed.

My final point concerns the outcome based approach referred to in the second reading speech. I note that a decision has been made not to rank schools according to student marks. I strongly agree with that approach. I was most disappointed last year, following the release of the tertiary entrance examination results, to read in *The West Australian* some negative comments about Cyril Jackson Senior High School in my electorate. I took great umbrage at the comments. Cyril Jackson Senior High School is a second chance school for both young people and adults. Clearly the people who attend are second chance students.

[Leave granted for the member's time to be extended.]

Mr BROWN: The teachers at Cyril Jackson campus have a far more difficult time than teachers dealing with students of an average or above average ability. I have great admiration for its teaching staff. I was disgusted to read negative remarks about Cyril Jackson school because it was compared with some of the most prestigious schools around the State.

Mr Prince: It was a simplistic, highly misleading report.

Dr Turnbull: We support your comments.

Mr BROWN: We are at one on that issue. That is why I agree with the Minister's view on that inappropriate ranking system. The sooner that policy is implemented, the better. It is an important issue of which we should have an understanding. No matter what we do in life, whether it be at school or at work, we take pride in the institution in which we are involved. If our school is put down or in some way shown to be inferior it can affect students and staff. It can certainly sap morale. To the extent that that practice will not continue, and that other intuitive measures will be used, I support the Bill. I look forward to receiving the Minister's response in this debate. It is an important Bill that will affect education outcomes in this State and, although I do not like the term a great deal, will deal with the value of human capital and is therefore something this Parliament must keep under close scrutiny. I am sure that if the outcomes flagged by the Minister are achieved as a result of this Bill, it will have the support of all members of this House.

**MR GRAHAM** (Pilbara) [7.47 pm]: This Bill will establish the Curriculum Council and repeal the Secondary Education Authority Act. In his second reading speech the Minister said that the Curriculum Council's purpose was to develop and implement a curriculum framework for all schools, both government and non-government, from kindergarten to year 12. He said later in his speech that the council would have expertise and experience in the fields of Aboriginal education, students with special needs and rural and remote education.

I am pleased to hear that because it is about the need to develop in those areas that I will speak this evening. Interestingly, clause 16 provides that the council in the performance of its functions must have regard to the capacity, financial and otherwise, of schools to respond to the decisions of the council and to the impact of its decisions on schools. That is a significant clause because as a city based - and no doubt as a city dominated - council, it will be required to understand its purpose and the effects of its decisions on all schools. Notwithstanding the Minister's remarks in his second reading speech about the council's having areas of expertise I am sure it will have great difficulty. I am not saying that to be critical, but to be constructive. It is an innovative clause and will impose requirements on the council, the implications of which we have not considered in depth. Although I have no way of knowing whether the Curriculum Council or this legislation will work, I wish them both well.

The new electorate of Pilbara is 872 000 square kilometres and contains most, but not all, of outback Western Australia. Problems in education in the bush or the outback are not peculiar to the seat of Pilbara, or even to Western Australia - and that was confirmed for me of late when I travelled through other northern Australian States. It does not matter in which State one is, bush schools suffer drastically from a lack of choice. Achievement levels in secondary schools in what I call red Australia are lower than those in city schools and fewer children make the TEE level or the state equivalent. There are lower retention levels - children in country Australia tend not to go on to higher levels of education than do their city counterparts - students and teachers have lower expectations of what the system can produce for them; and, probably the most condemning of all, literacy and numeracy levels are much lower in country areas than they are in city areas, for myriad reasons.

My electorate also has a much higher percentage of Aboriginal people than the state average and, given that my electorate now includes a large area of the Kimberley, more traditional Aborigines live on outstations, pastoral properties and away from towns and major centres than anywhere else in Western Australia. The towns of Halls

Creek and Wiluna are also now in my electorate and are predominantly Aboriginal towns. The government "Report of the Task Force on Aboriginal Social Justice" of April 1994 pointed out these facts about Aboriginal education -

Aboriginal education is characterised by lower levels of access, lower levels of achievement, lower retention rates and inadequate and inappropriate education. 50 % of Aboriginal four year olds attend early childhood programs compared with 80 % of the total population. 2 % of Aboriginal people aged between 17-24 are enrolled at university compared with 15 % of the total population.

The report refers to unemployment and says -

The Aboriginal unemployment rate is three times higher than that for the total population. 53 % of employed Aboriginal people are in the private sector compared with 72 % for the total population.

The only conclusion to be drawn from those sorts of figures is that there is a problem in education, employment and training for Aboriginal people. Seven years ago in this House I spoke about how industry should do more to develop Aboriginal employment programs, particularly in the Pilbara. Although I cannot claim all the credit, industry did exactly that; but, it came up against various obstacles. For example, even though industry was willing to employ Aboriginal people and Aboriginal people wanted to work, there was a huge gulf between what the employer expected and what the potential employee could achieve from the education system. Significant improvements have since been made, but they are not enough - and industry says similar things. Country people generally receive a lower level of secondary and tertiary education services than city people, and the lowest identifiable group is Aboriginal people. Does that not fly in the face of Madam Hanson's rhetoric about who gets what? Aborigines are indisputably the most disadvantaged group in our society.

Western Australia is not the only State looking into these things. The Northern Territory Public Accounts Committee released its "Report on the Provision of School Education Services for Remote Aboriginal Communities in the Northern Territory". I am not famous for quoting the Northern Territory Legislature favourably, but it has done two good things recently: One is the euthanasia Bill that was knocked off by Canberra and the second is that it has taken an active interest in Aboriginal matters, which of course has to do with the large number of Aboriginal people in Northern Territory electorates.

The preamble to the Northern Territory Public Accounts Committee's report explains what is being done in Aboriginal education in the Northern Territory as follows -

During this Inquiry, the Public Accounts Committee received conclusive evidence that students in remote Aboriginal communities are achieving very low standards in reading and mathematics when compared with students in urban schools. While 10 year old students in urban schools average Year Five (5) levels in both subjects and 12 year old students in urban schools average Year Seven (7) levels, 11-16 year old students in remote Aboriginal schools only average about Year Three (3) level. The Committee believes that about Year Seven (7) level literacy and numeracy are required for a citizen to function effectively in mainstream Australia and that about Year 10 level literacy and numeracy are required to take on a management role within the community.

That means Aboriginal people who want to work in their own community have to be educated to a year 10 level or they are not going to make it! The report also states -

Many Aboriginal parents are unaware how poorly their children are achieving when compared with their urban counterparts. Their aspirations for their children are that they should remain as valuable members of their own communities - able to participate in traditional cultural activities fully and with skills in English and mathematics which will enable them to negotiate where necessary with the wider community. All students in those communities, therefore, will need to be literate and numerate to Year 7 level and people aspiring to leadership roles within their communities will need Year 10 levels.

The Curriculum Committee will need to understand the needs of Aborigines. Thousands of black Australians who live in outback Australia do not receive, even if they want to, the education that could enable them to live in our community. The current education system is condemning them, excluding them and providing them with no hope.

This Bill and the Minister's second reading speech require the Curriculum Committee to consult widely when drawing up curriculums and to consider the implications of its decisions. It should consider what the Northern Territory Public Accounts Committee said about consultation; that is, effective consultation can occur only when the consultant has prior knowledge of the community. If the Curriculum Committee is to live up to its expectations - no doubt it will try - it cannot do the things that are normally associated with white bureaucrats in outback Australia; that is, fly into an Aboriginal community in the morning, spend the day talking to people they think run the place and then fly



out in the evening and purport that they have consulted with the Aboriginal community. Consultation does not work that way.

There are a number of independent and government schools in Aboriginal communities. These schools operate with varying degrees of effectiveness, but they have problems, one of which is poor attendance. I have already touched on that problem and one of the reasons for poor attendance is a poor understanding by their parents of the benefits of education. Generally, the parents are uneducated. It is not widely accepted in Australia that until the 1960s Aborigines in remote areas were excluded from the education system. Therefore, the parents and grandparents of today's Aboriginal children are uneducated. Nobody in their families has had the benefit of, for want of a better description, a white education system.

When considering the benefits of education and the things associated with it, we cannot hang off the end of it that the employment prospects for somebody living in the western or central desert are improved by their getting a better education, because there is no employment for them. Another reason that these schools have problems is the strongly held view that a white education destroys the traditional family values of Aboriginal people in the outback.

It is widely accepted that there is a lack of understanding by educators of matters Aboriginal and how to deal with the widely spread Aboriginal family and community, and itinerant traditional Aborigines.

Great difficulties are apparent in the system of funding by both the State and Federal Governments. It is revealed in the Northern Territory Public Accounts Committee report that the formula for remoteness in federal-state funding does not adequately compensate. Remoteness to Canberra bureaucrats means Sydney. They do not take into account that a teacher who may have to meet his superior must make a 1 000 mile round trip, which cuts out quite a lot of a school week. In addition, they do not take into account that when it rains the school may be isolated for between 10 and 15 days. That is not factored into any sort of consideration by Canberra. It is, to a lesser degree, by Perth. Many of my criticisms of Canberra are valid for Perth. These facts seriously affect the running of schools in outback Australia.

Another problem is that Governments work on a system of annual funding. It is impossible to run a remote Aboriginal school, or any remote school, on the basis of annual funding. Most of the States and Territories in Australia have learnt that, but Western Australia has not. It is a system which must change.

Another problem with remote Aboriginal schools can be illustrated by the fact that a white child in grade 1 or 2 in an urban school who spoke two or three languages fluently and within those languages spoke five or six dialects would be considered a child genius. He would be grabbed out of the education system and put into the primary extension and challenge program. He would be treated as gifted, because to have that level of language skills at that age would be a huge benefit to a child. However, when an Aboriginal child achieves this level and none of those languages is English, and is then taught in English, he is treated as retarded. He is told he is not achieving at the same level as children in other schools. It is a nonsense and in developing curriculums, the Curriculum Council must take that into account. The education system must include teachers who can teach these isolated Australian children in their own language. They do not speak English as their first language and that is a fact of life.

Mr Board: How many children would be in that situation?

Mr GRAHAM: Virtually every child in the western desert communities, the southern part of the Kimberley and the northern part of the central desert, where English is about the third language they speak.

Mr Board: How many kids would be involved?

Mr GRAHAM: Hundreds. This State continues to investigate the situation. I know that the Northern Territory, Queensland and South Australian Governments have considered the issue, but curiously, the Canadian experience is somewhat similar to Australia. I like quoting Canada because there are a lot of similarities between Canada and Australia. Canada has a large population base in the south eastern corner, has States, understands Legislative Assemblies -

Mr Board: And it is not a bad place to visit.

Mr GRAHAM: I am told it is not a bad place to visit and I hope to find that out one of these days. Canada has a lot in common with Australia and it comes as no surprise to anyone who knows anything about Canada to find that it has difficulties in providing education for its indigenous people. A report titled "Aboriginal Literacy and Empowerment" by the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs in Canada states -

The problem of underachievement in schools in the form of school leavers and graduates with fragile literacy skills, is reflected in the statistics reviewed in the introduction to this report. A conservative estimate would be that at least half of the aboriginal population today has reading, writing and numeracy

skills below a functional literacy level. A coordinated effort by all levels of government in the area of in-school remediation at the elementary and secondary levels and adult education seems to be required to deal with this serious literacy problem.

[Leave granted for the member's time to be extended.]

Mr GRAHAM: That committee in Canada is saying that 50 per cent of Aboriginal children are dysfunctional. The same sort of figure came out of the Report of the Task Force on Aboriginal Social Justice in this State. It is interesting to note how things have changed in Canada. The Canadians say that in the early days of colonisation in that country there was a much greater tolerance for Aboriginal languages and less cultural interference with Aboriginal people than is the case today. The Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs states in its report -

Where literacy was introduced with a minimal degree of cultural interference, it quickly and firmly took hold, to the point where literacy levels often exceeded those of the non-aboriginal settler population.

In other words, the Canadian experience is that 100 years ago, when they learnt to take into account the views of Aboriginal people when teaching them languages, it was found they were achieving at a faster rate than the white population. One hundred years on, that has been reversed. The only thing that has changed in that time has been the way in which people are taught. Any number of people profess to know all the answers to the problems of remote and rural education, particularly, the problems associated with Aboriginal education.

There is no simple answer. We have all heard the clichés: Sort the parents out; skip this generation; work with the next one; punish the kids if they do not go; pay them to go - all of those one-liners which have been tried and have failed. However, it is not all doom and gloom. The system is improving, but to achieve a major change things must speed up; the system must work faster so that we do not lose a generation. We cannot afford to do that. I do not want to be overly critical of city people, but they do not understand the problem. I want to make that point continually to this committee.

Three or four years ago I spoke to members of an Aboriginal community in the middle of nowhere. I was invited to speak to the kids because allegedly they were in year 6 and were doing social studies, and I was their local member. I do not think I am that bad on my feet, but I defy anyone to explain our system of government to a group of children who have never seen a town - not a city - or a bitumen road. What hope would anyone have of explaining our system to them? It ended up with their asking me if I was the boss. After an hour and a half, I said that I was the boss and they were happy. As long as they knew I was the boss, it was cool.

Mr Ripper: Others might have reservations about that!

Mr GRAHAM: Of course they might; but they were not there. If the member for Belmont had been there, I would have been more than happy to pass the talk over to him and he could have explained the system. I could not.

The point of my speech is to get the Curriculum Council to understand that Western Australia is a big place, with many schools not located in the metropolitan area which have a lot of needs which those in the metropolitan area have never heard of. In developing a curriculum framework for this State, the committee must realise that people in remote areas are citizens and their views and needs are as important as those of any citizen in the suburbs in the city. In fact, as I will point out to the council if it does not do it right, section 16 of the Act requires it to do exactly that. It is required at law to take those matters into account and to consider the effect of its decisions on those schools once this Bill is passed - and I hope it does that.

**MR CARPENTER** (Willagee) [8.13 pm]: I will take up some of the themes introduced by the previous speaker and try to broaden his comments a little to the metropolitan area. I will make a practical suggestion about addressing the issues raised by him. Before I do so, I remind members and the Minister for Education of the proposed composition of the committee. Of the total of 11 members, three are to have experience and expertise in industry, education or community affairs; two are to be nominated by the director general of education; one is to be nominated by the Catholic Education Commission of WA; one is to be nominated by the Association of Independent Schools; one is to be nominated by the chief executive officer of the Department of Training; one is to be appointed from nominations submitted by the five universities; one is to be representative of the interests of teachers; and one is to be representative of the interests of parents.

When reading that composition I considered the possibility that it was skewed heavily towards the final years of education, to tertiary education and vocational education. I wondered about the emphasis being placed on the early years of education, which the latest research shows are the most vital years of education, from kindergarten to years 3 or 4. In his second reading speech the Minister went on to allay my concerns by telling the House that Hon Barbara Scott will move an amendment in Committee in the Legislative Council to add to the committee a twelfth member with expertise and experience in early childhood education. That change will be for the better.

Given that some degree of flexibility about the composition of the council has already been demonstrated and bearing in mind the issues raised by the previous speaker, in the appointments and nominations of the council I ask the Minister to consider seriously having someone on the council with expertise specifically in the area of Aboriginal education. Last year the Minister raised in the political arena the critical issues that confront our community via Aboriginal education. The development of this Curriculum Council provides the community, the Government and the Minister with an opportunity to do something specifically related to that problem - to appoint an expert in the field of Aboriginal education as a thirteenth member of the council or as one of the people listed as potential nominations.

The first thing we must take into account is the education of Aboriginal children. The second is the importance of the education of other children, non-Aboriginal children, about Aboriginal culture, history and issues, and how that relates to the wider community. In other words, if possible, I would like to see incorporated in the curriculum framework an element that makes Aboriginal studies for non-Aboriginal children a compulsory part of the syllabus in education in this State. I urge the Minister to take that into consideration when the nominations and the composition of the Curriculum Council are being dealt with.

As I have said, this council provides us with an opportunity to address two elements: One is the education of Aboriginal children. I cannot paint a more complete picture of the problems in rural and outback Western Australia than did the previous speaker, but I will talk about the education of Aboriginal children in the metropolitan area. The second element is the importance, as I see it, of educating the non-Aboriginal community about Aboriginal issues via the school curriculum. This question must be addressed as a matter of urgency in the education system of Western Australia.

I will talk briefly about the education of Aboriginal children in the metropolitan area, as opposed to those in country areas about which other speakers are better equipped to talk. A substantial number of Aboriginal people live in my electorate which is in the metropolitan area. The figures I have been given for the retention rates of Aboriginal children in my electorate through the schooling system are quite alarming. I doubt they would be news to the Minister because, as I said, he has raised this issue in the political arena before. It surprised and distressed me to be told by those who work in education that the retention rate of Aboriginal children in the Cockburn district to year 8 is only between 70 per cent and 80 per cent, by comparison with 100 per cent of non-Aboriginal children. That means that between 70 per cent and 80 per cent of Aboriginal children are making it through to the end of their primary school education in the metropolitan area which I represent, and the remaining 20 per cent to 30 per cent are not making it that far. When one considers the importance of education in relation to an individual's capacity to find employment and so on in the community today, one realises that it is a major issue and that it must be addressed.

One of the figures given to me - I have not been able to validate its authenticity, but it was provided by a senior person in the education system - showed that 20 per cent of the Aboriginal children registered for schooling in my electorate drop out of the system in the first year or two. If 20 per cent of the Aboriginal children who register for schooling in my area are not making it to year 3, that presents a massive problem requiring specific and dedicated attention. Hence, my belief that the establishment of the Curriculum Council provides an opportunity for this matter to be addressed specifically by someone who is expert in this area. I urge this as a method of beginning to address this problem.

Mr Prince: Dropping out entirely or transferring?

Mr CARPENTER: I have been told that these children disappear from the system. By year 8, only 70 per cent to 80 per cent of Aboriginal children are still in the system in my electorate.

Mr Baker: What about the parents' responsibilities? What about their assessment of their children's requirements?

Mr CARPENTER: The Government must do everything it can to ensure that all children in the State have access to a good standard of education. For whatever reason, these children are disappearing from the system and we should address that problem. One need only roll on the years to see the problems manifesting for young Aborigines; that is, unemployment, as the member for Pilbara mentioned, and the extremely high rate of contact with the juvenile justice system, which among young Aboriginal male youth is about 50 per cent compared with less than 2 per cent of the non-Aboriginal population. This crisis in Aboriginal education must be addressed and this legislation provides an opportunity to do so.

The Curriculum Council should seriously examine establishing or incorporating in its framework off-campus programs for Aboriginal children, an integrated strategy that involves not only the school curriculum but also non-school activities and curriculums, improved parent and community involvement in the education of Aboriginal children - which was raised by the member for Joondalup - and a systematic training program for Aboriginal education workers so that the people involved in the field have a greater understanding of and expertise in that area and are better able to cope with the problems.

I refer, as did the previous speaker, to the Task Force on Aboriginal Social Justice report of April 1994, volume two - Mike Daube's very good report - and I commend the Government for having established the inquiry. Recommendation 151 was that courses on Aboriginal history and culture be made mandatory in all teacher education courses. I support that and hope that the framework being developed includes that recommendation. If we were talking about non-Aboriginal children - that is, Anglo-Celtic children - and we had a dropout rate of 30 per cent before year 8, the community would be up in arms and demanding that something be done. Because these figures relate to Aboriginal children and the numbers are relatively small, the issue does not attract the level of public attention and disquiet that it should.

I am informed that of the approximately 500 Aboriginal children in the Cockburn district attending government schools we would be lucky if 10 completed year 12, which is about 2 per cent. That again demonstrates a crisis in Aboriginal education that the Government and everyone involved in public policy should address as a matter of urgency, and the establishment of this council provides an opportunity in that area.

That is one area of education I would like to see addressed. As I mentioned previously, another area is the mandatory inclusion of Aboriginal studies in the mainstream education syllabus. This would provide two advantages: Firstly, it might, and I hope it would, encourage more Aboriginal children to remain in the school system; and, secondly, it would encourage and foster a greater degree of understanding and knowledge of Aboriginal culture and the issues related to Aboriginal people among the non-Aboriginal community. One need look only at the community in Western Australia and Australia today to appreciate that that understanding and increase in knowledge is sorely needed.

Acknowledging that I am not a teacher or an educator, I understand that some schools in the government system do have an Aboriginal studies component, but that that component is by and large optional and offered as an elective in the upper school system, and that very few choose it.

One of the criticisms of the proposal to introduce mandatory Aboriginal studies has been voiced by Hon Ross Lightfoot in the other place, when he said that parents would be aghast at such a proposal and there would be a strong community reaction against it. The Karratha High School has a compulsory Aboriginal education program. I have spoken to the people running that course and they have told me that they have never had a complaint from parents about the fact that the subject is compulsory. In fact, the parents who have reacted have done so positively, as have the children. They believe it brings many advantages to the school, the community and the children, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal.

The program is run during year 8 and it comprises approximately 40 hours of the school year - about one hour per week - which are devoted to the study of Aboriginal issues and culture, both traditional and contemporary. The students learn an element of the Aboriginal culture, language and the names of significant sites in the region. The teachers who run the course have told me that it increases manyfold the non-Aboriginal children's understanding and appreciation of the issues facing Aborigines in Western Australia and in the Pilbara and Karratha in particular. I would like to see that model adopted across Western Australia.

Where I did my schooling in Albany there is a very large population of Aboriginal children. We learned nothing about their cultural background or their contemporary position in society. As I said in my maiden speech, I attended a back to Mogumber day at the old Aboriginal mission at Moore River and was shocked to find that I went to school in Albany with so many of the people attending. Their parents had been part of the stolen generation. One can only imagine the number of social problems that the policy of separating children caused for Aboriginal people generally and the Aboriginal children with whom I went to school - problems of which I was blithely unaware. In some senses I was cheated of the history of my own community.

It is incumbent upon the Government and the educators of this State to do all they can to address the lack of understanding and knowledge in the wider community about both traditional and contemporary Aboriginal Western Australia and Australia. I believe that all regions of the State should have a component in their Aboriginal studies courses which is specifically related to their own district, so there is localisation of the program. That should include, if possible, some understanding of the most important words of local language or dialect, and the names and the importance to the Aboriginal community of the local landscape in that area. I believe that children educated along those lines would find it an exciting, innovative and useful development. Aboriginal education is a progressive component of the curriculum in years 8, 9 and 10 at the Port Hedland high school. I am assured it is successful. Members of the local Aboriginal community are involved in the education system and teach the non-Aboriginal children as well as Aboriginal children. Both groups of children find the involvement of older Aboriginal members of the community both educative and rewarding.

I hope that we can take an opportunity in the establishment of this Curriculum Council to do something that is positive and beyond just an expression of sentiment and flow of words to address the twofold problem of, on the one hand, the education of Aboriginal children and, on the other hand, the gross ignorance and lack of understanding of

Aboriginal culture both contemporary and traditional that exists in the non-Aboriginal community in this State. I do not know how difficult it would be to alter the construction of the council, and to find somebody who would be the ideal nominee for appointment to the council, but I do not think it would be impossible. It would be a sad opportunity missed if we did not take the chance that this Bill has provided. I hope the Minister considers my suggestions positively.

**MR THOMAS** (Cockburn) [8.32 pm]: I am pleased to have an opportunity to make a few observations in support of the Bill. The subject of curriculums in schools will often excite debate or comment among people. It is often the case that people in our age group - past the primary and secondary schooling age - will have opinions on the subject of curriculums and schooling. People often come readily to the judgment that young people are not being brought up in the way that they should - perhaps not to the same standard as they were - and if the curriculums were changed young people would be better prepared for life and citizenship or for whatever role those people see them in. One of the reasons for that is one tends to see the past in rosy terms and perhaps that is not very accurate. Also members of each generation see what they have failed to achieve and what they would like to have achieved, and it is easy to say that if young people were educated in a particular way perhaps the future would be better than the present or the past. We do not control the ends, only the means, and curriculums are means. We prescribe the means. Although the ends are not always able to be controlled precisely the means are and that is an attraction in itself, so curriculums are a subject which will often engage people in debate and comment.

Some years ago when I was first elected to Parliament I attended a business lunch with the Kewdale Business Association in my electorate - that is not the electorate that I currently represent. The guest speaker was the principal of the Belmont Senior High School. They were a group of people who very often made complaints that the young people who applied to them for jobs did not know the three R's and were not as well educated as they should have been. They believed that if young people had been brought up with the three R's as they had been, they would be better prepared. The principal handed out a spelling test to those business proprietors and asked them to spell words like parallel that the 16 to 18 year olds who would be applying for jobs in their offices would be expected to know. A significant proportion of those businessmen failed. They were the sorts of people who would often pass judgment on young people of today and say that they do not know their three R's. It is the sort of subject which will invite comment and opinion which is not always accurate, but nonetheless about which people often have opinions. I think there is a natural reason for that.

Mr Tubby: How do you spell parallel? Does it have two r's or two l's?

Mr THOMAS: I do not know; I was never any good at spelling. Fortunately I am sufficiently computer literate to access a spell check. I am waiting for a British rather than an American spell check, before I am completely comfortable.

I am speaking in this debate in my capacity as the shadow Minister for higher education. In the allocation of shadow portfolios for this Parliament the Leader of the Opposition decided to separate the portfolio of higher education from education. That is the first time that has been done in this State at either a government or opposition level. It is not uncommon in other States. It has a lot to commend it.

Higher education is an important part of our society. It is an area in which the State Government has a significant role to play. It is a marginal role compared with the Commonwealth, because the Commonwealth is the primary funding body. Nonetheless, the States pass the legislation which constitutes the universities and the States provide some funding at the margins and state government authorities collaborate with universities in a number of areas which affect the way they operate. The Opposition believes that it is most important the State Government take a considered approach to higher education. For that reason higher education should be separated from education, because the principal role of the Minister for Education is to run the school system. In comparison with that enormous job the Minister's functions in relation to higher education tend very much to be the tail on the dog and are overlooked. It is the Opposition's view, as the shadow government, that the State Government should designate somebody who has responsibility for discharging the State's functions in higher education.

As the Minister for Education indicated in his second reading speech 6 000 or 36 per cent of the number of students who graduate from year 12 will go to university and 5 000 or 29 per cent will go to technical and further education colleges. In each year 65 per cent of the students graduating from year 12 will go to either university or TAFE and the other 35 per cent, one presumes, will seek to join the work force. That means the curriculums that have been devised for the schools must cater for a diversity of outcomes. One of the challenges of the Curriculum Council will be to devise curriculums that cater for the fact that among students in our schools some will go to university, some to TAFE, and some to the work force. I am pleased that the Curriculum Council will be constituted in the way that the legislation provides. A representative from one of the five universities and the Director General of Training will have direct input into ensuring that the curriculums that are devised by the Curriculum Council and therefore followed by the schools within the State are suitable for those tasks.

One often has anecdotal evidence, if not something more comprehensive, that on occasions curriculums are not organised towards satisfying those needs or performing those functions as best as they might be. Members must recognise this fact because it is important that the work force in this State is highly skilled. The skills and qualifications of people in this State are probably more important than the minerals or various other attributes of the State in determining the State's international competitiveness. I do not wish to seem like a complete philistine in this matter, but I am speaking from a position of international economic competitiveness, although I recognise the importance of non-utilitarian aspects of education. When people make that comparison they tend to look at the skills of people who have completed a technical and further education course or a university degree, but that is only the icing on the cake. What comes beneath it is as important in determining the outcome as the education at university or TAFE.

It is worthwhile reflecting on the fact that people who complete a four year degree or a degree and graduate diploma at university will nonetheless have spent 77 per cent of their education within the school system. It is only the last 23 per cent of their education that is determined by the university they attend, if that is their qualification. At a higher level, people who complete a PhD, assuming that takes three years on top of their honours degree, will have spent 66 per cent of their education period in the school system. Obviously the school system is critically important in influencing the final outcome of the skills and, therefore, the international competitiveness of the work force in this country.

Some years ago I had the pleasure and honour of chairing a select committee of this House into science and technology. The committee received submissions from the Education Department and various other people. Of the recommendations the committee put forward, recommendations 36 to 46 dealt specifically with the teaching of science and technology in primary and secondary schools. In preparation for this debate I re-read the relevant sections of the committee's report. I was somewhat chastened reading them after having read the Minister's second reading speech because, as he says properly in that speech, the people involved in secondary and tertiary education tend to overlook primary education. Although the committee made passing comments about primary education, they were only that, and not enough attention was given to that area. However, the committee commented, and comments were made to us, that in some areas of science and the environment there was an almost appalling ignorance among teachers about the matters students should be taught. In many cases teachers are not skilled or prepared in those areas to impart knowledge to the students.

Of necessity, the preparation of the curriculums will have an influence on the selection criteria for people who go to universities to train as teachers in primary and secondary schools. In a sense a circle exists in which people who are the products of the education system end up being the teachers and weaknesses can perpetuate themselves. I do not wish to repeat the error to which I alluded when I commenced this speech by simply making the statement from a comfortable position of being well out of school that if only things were different in schools, better outcomes might be achieved. That is an easy statement to make, but it is not always able to be achieved. Nonetheless, the committee's deliberations indicate the need for a practical knowledge of science and technology to be ascertained from industry and other users of science and technology. I am pleased the constitution of the Curriculum Council will ensure representation from that area and that the curriculums will be devised to ensure those needs are met. It is important that students are able to prepare for university and avail themselves of opportunities in a manner that will prepare them for a work force that meets Australia's needs for its international competitiveness.

I find one other aspect of this Bill encouraging, although it may provide the legislation with some of the more interesting aspects of its operations; that is, the council is to be a comprehensive body providing curriculums for not only the state system, but the several private systems that operate in this State. It is desirable that there be diversity in education and that people are able to send their children to certain schools of their choice. It is desirable also to have an umbrella body that devises curriculums and provides a framework within which students in those schools can be taught. As the Bill indicates, and as the Minister's second reading speech elaborates, the legislation provides outcomes and it will be the responsibility of the schools to devise means by which those outcomes will be achieved.

One of the more interesting aspects of the legislation is the question of values. The Minister's second reading speech notes that those values are not defined. I can understand why. I would not want to be the parliamentary draftsman who had the job of defining values. A library of books could be used to try to define values and the questions that were raised would still not be answered. Nevertheless, it is important to try to do so. Different school systems have different values. In the health area, for example, Catholic schools would want to adopt different values from those that would be taken in state schools.

I have close connections with the Muslim community in Perth, which operates a couple of schools. In several aspects of life that will arise in the curriculums the values that community will want to impart to its students will be different from those that are sought to be imparted in the state schools. It is something of a euphemism in the Bill that if a school is unable to comply with a curriculum in a certain respect, it is able to do so. That is the way the Bill seeks

to provide an exemption for schools that choose not to impart values of a particular type. Let us be frank: In health education in state schools lessons will be given about the use of condoms. That would not be permitted in a catholic school because of the beliefs of those people, the values they hold, and the milieu in which they want their students educated. The euphemism used in the Bill is that they may be unable to do so. It is not that they cannot do it, but that they choose not to. Different terminology could be used in the Bill but, of itself, that is relatively unimportant. Obviously, it is intended that within the framework to be established by this Bill there will be provision for diversity. That is as it should be, so that people will have the opportunity to send their children to schools which impart the values of which they approve but, nonetheless, there will be a curriculum which in various areas imparts knowledge and learning in a manner consistent with what is generally agreed to be most desirable in the various fields. It is a reflection of the way in which this has been devised that the chairman of the interim council is Director of Catholic Education, rather than someone from the state school system. She is from the largest minority system and has made a significant contribution to education in Western Australia.

I understand from conversations I have had with a number of people involved that the activities of the interim council so far have been productive and welcome, and reflect credit on the people involved. This is a very desirable measure. It is most desirable that there be an overall framework and device for curriculums. It is not necessary, therefore, for several systems to reinvent the wheel, and in 99 per cent of the matters to be taught commonality can be accepted between the various systems. There is the possibility nonetheless of diversity as to values or outcomes in some cases, and in many cases for approaches or means of achieving them. Also there will be accountability and people will be answerable for the way in which curriculums are devised and what is taught in our schools. Very few matters are more important than that. I commend the Government on bringing the Bill to the House.

**MR BARNETT** (Cottesloe - Minister for Education) [8.52 pm]: I thank members opposite and those on this side of the House for their support for the Bill. It is very important that legislation such as this has clear and obvious bipartisan support. It will be heartening to those who have worked on the interim Curriculum Council and those who will take over responsibility on the council itself and the staff to have such strong indications of support from both sides of the House. I will refer briefly to some of the comments made, most of which were supportive.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition, the member for Belmont, indicated the Opposition's support for the Bill, outlined its key features as being comprehensive from kindergarten to year 12, and discussed the issues of balance between a uniform framework and flexibility of the system at a school level, the focus on outputs and the collaborative approach. They are all strengths of the approach taken. He questioned whether the Curriculum Council could achieve its objectives with its allocation in the Budget. Members of the council have made representations to me about the funding. An amount of \$6m will be sufficient to get it going, but it is likely that its budget will need to be increased fairly quickly as it starts to grow. Initially it cannot achieve all the curriculum areas and it will take some time to build up. I will monitor that. The taxpayer deserves to get good value for money.

Criticism was made of the representation of the State School Teachers Union. The legislation requires that the Minister consult with that union and other representatives from the non-government sector. There are a number of reasons for that. First, the Government wants the size of the Curriculum Council to be as small as possible, and if representation were given to every parent, union or other body that would destroy it. It is also important that the membership of the council be educationally committed and competent in the areas to be discussed by the council. In that sense I want to protect the council from representation which could be seen as representing the industrial point of view in the case of the union or the parent lobby point of view in the case of parent and citizens' associations. Nevertheless, I expect the teachers union to put forward competent people and I expect to endorse its recommendations. For the future another consideration is that it cannot be guaranteed that the State School Teachers Union will always be the sole representative of teachers. There is some element of split through administrative associations and primary principals' associations, but nevertheless that is the reality. I do not disagree that the SSTU is the pre-eminent and largest body at the moment, but there are potential changes.

The question was raised about the power to charge fees. That is similar to the existing arrangement for the Secondary Education Authority. It relates to the purchase of additional copies of documentation for students, for example, who lose their tertiary entrance examination results slip and require additional copies. Nothing extraordinary is expected in that regard. All material prepared for the Curriculum Council by consultants will be the property of the council, as will all intellectual property. That is already a condition of all the contracts for the employment of consultants who develop curriculums.

Issues related to the years 8 to 10 of high school and the transitions from years 7 to 8, and 10 to 11 are problem points in the education system. Many of the solutions are structural rather than solely curriculum based, although curriculum is important. There are moves towards establishing middle schools and the like. Local area planning is a structural change and will be for the betterment of education.

Mr Ripper: It may well have curriculum implications.

Mr BARNETT: Yes, it may. Those changes need to proceed in concert. Changes in administration, the structure of education and schooling, and the curriculum all need to work together. Professional development, again, is part of the raising of standards in education and delivery of the curriculum. Primarily it is the responsibility of the systems, whether the Education Department, catholic or independent systems. There will be consciousness of the need for professional development within the work of the Curriculum Council. Focus on future needs and teacher exchange are also important, and I endorse them. The values in civics were raised by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and several other speakers. I will deal with that later.

The question was also raised about the placing of so-called extracurricular activities within the curriculum. Every time there is a problem in society, the simple solution is to deal with it by education within schools. It is a safe solution and it will not be criticised. However, there is no doubt that the school curriculum can be crowded by all sorts of well-meaning causes. Members may have different priorities, but it seems to me there are a few things of an extracurricular nature that should be in schools; for example, drugs education, road safety and general personal safety. Other examples might be life skills, particularly for those who are not academically inclined, general preparedness for life, and perhaps skills about employment and applications for work. I would be inclined to limit them to a list of that size. There may be better suggestions, but it is my intention to curtail the range of additional subjects taught in schools. I am pleased there is broad bipartisan support for keeping to a list of key matters that are important to young people and society, without overloading the curriculum with every good idea that comes along. There are many good ideas but they cannot all be accommodated.

The member for Roleystone obviously supported the legislation, and I must give credit to him in particular because as shadow spokesman for Education prior to the 1993 election he oversaw the development of policy. That is where the genesis of the commitment from this side of politics to a Curriculum Council can be found. Equally, I give credit to Hon Norman Moore, the previous Minister for Education, who started the process and had the good wisdom to appoint Therese Temby to head it. The member for Thornlie raised the question of the representation of the State School Teachers Union and professional development, on which I have commented.

The member raised the question of the circumstances under which a school might be exempt from a particular framework. That exemption could be due to a particular value system within the school, be it religious or cultural, or more likely because a school is small and under-resourced and incapable of delivering the curriculum in all its aspects. In such case, it may not be realistic and shedding aspects may be required. Bells and whistles may not be provided in the curriculum across the system, as is currently the case in some smaller schools and regional schools as one cannot cover everything with a couple of teachers handling several years. It is not a matter of compromising education, but the realisation that one must take the heart of the curriculum rather than every aspect.

Ms McHale: My question was about parameters.

Mr BARNETT: It will not be an arbitrary thing. Normally that power lies with me, but it will be done only on advice. If the member ever becomes a Minister - as I am sure she will one day - she will realise that two-thirds of the papers a Minister signs are already decided for that Minister. Values and the like attracted quite a lot of discussion, and I was pleased about the support of members opposite in that regard. I, and other members on both sides, support placing emphasis on values and civics in our school system. Differences arise in the education system regarding values according to cultural and religious beliefs. As the member for Cockburn pointed out, it is difficult to define values.

Mr Bridge: How do you square up the values in the legislation with the composition of the council? The membership does not cover that great span of values which our society must address.

Mr BARNETT: Although the Curriculum Council will work on values, it is not the only way in which different segments of the community can have input into education. It is not exclusive. For example, some work of the council on the broad categories of values includes developing the pursuit of knowledge and a commitment to the achievement of potential, which includes a number of further categories, including self-acceptance and respect of oneself. It refers to ethical behaviour; openness to learning; initiative enterprise; recognising the uniqueness and dignity of others; a respect and concern for others; compassion and care; equality; respect for individual differences; resolving conflict; and family support. In the area of social and civic responsibility, emphasis is given to participation in citizenship, community, diversity, authority, reconciliation, social justice, responsibility and freedom. A series of environment-related values include cultural heritage, conservation of the environment, recognising the diversity of the species and the like.

Within that broad framework, a lot can be done. I seek leave to table a copy of the "Interim Curriculum Council Update" of November 1996. Members may wish to look at the values issues outlined.

[See paper No 374.]



Mr BARNETT: If any members would like a copy, I can arrange supply.

Values is an important area, and, although discussed widely, it is a harder area with which to come to grips than civics. Nevertheless, civics is very much underdone in Australia. I find it very frustrating that Australians, adults included, do not know a lot of their country's geography, history and characteristics and what it is to be an Australian. They do not understand the Constitution, the Commonwealth, the States, the judicial system and the parliamentary process. We compare very poorly to the Americans in that regard.

An experience I will never forget was when I was in Boston at the time of the two-hundredth anniversary of the signing of that country's Constitution - it was not even its declaration.

Ms McHale: You were in Paris last week.

Mr BARNETT: I get around; it is an arduous task!

Mr Ripper: That is because you take all those decisions on advice.

Mr BARNETT: I emphasise that this was before I was in politics. When I was in Boston, a few documentaries appeared on television leading up to this event; I was conscious of it, but it was not at the front of my mind. At 2.00 pm on the day in question the church bells rang and people stopped in their cars, got out and shook hands and hugged one another to celebrate Boston being the place where the Constitution was signed. The awareness of that community of that important event was staggering. I can think of no event, apart from the Melbourne Cup 10 years ago, with which Australians would have a similar sense of identity.

Mr Thomas: Was that not the declaration?

Mr BARNETT: The more formal celebration was later. The lawyers of Boston celebrated that event.

Mr Carpenter: Australians will be shaking hands and hugging in the street when we celebrate the republic in years to come.

Mr BARNETT: I might be one of them.

The member for Bassendean asked how flexibility will be achieved in the system and at the school level. That must simply evolve. I am most pleased about the commitment towards achieving this aim and the principles involved. The member will find that it will work.

Much is being done, and still needs to be done, in computer literacy. The member for Pilbara raised the question of education in remote areas. A consciousness is evident of that aspect in the Curriculum Council, and with the issues facing education of Aboriginal children - a point to which I will return. The member for Willagee continued on that line, and made a case for expertise in the area of Aboriginal education to appear on the council. I hope that that goal is achieved in the range of people and skills on the council. I indicate to the member that the Aboriginal Education Council advises government on issues of Aboriginal education.

I regard the state of Aboriginal education as the number one priority which all members of Parliament should adopt in the education area. It is the glaring failure within our education system, despite enormous expenditure, effort and commitment by many people.

Mr Bridge: Could I hold you to your view that Aborigines will be on the committee in one form or another?

Mr BARNETT: No, I am not necessarily saying that, but I will be conscious of that aspect. I cannot say whether an Aborigine or somebody involved in Aboriginal education will be on the council, but I am conscious of that need. An Aboriginal person is not to be appointed as such, but I am conscious of the importance of that area.

Mr Bridge: What would cause you to consider the importance of a specific appointment?

Mr BARNETT: The member need not convince me of the importance of that matter, but I am hesitant to add new categories of membership to the council. I will give some consideration to that suggestion.

Mr Bridge: I asked in the context of what you just said about one of the highest priorities of education within this context being Aboriginal education.

Mr BARNETT: I will undertake to give some consideration to that matter. Hon Barbara Scott has raised the issue of representation from early childhood education too, which I have taken into account. I will take the member's suggestion into account. I am loath to see the council grow. Pressure has been applied by parents' groups, unions and individual professional associations for representation, but I take the member's point, which I support in principle.

The member for Willagee also made a couple of suggestions about Aboriginal studies programs within schools. The Government had that proposal as part of its election policy at the last election.

Mr Carpenter: Will it be compulsory?

Mr BARNETT: I am not sure about compulsion. It will be available for all schools, but I will tell the member more about the level of compulsion tomorrow as some work is being done on that matter at the moment. In principle, I agree that all students in Western Australia should undertake Aboriginal studies with a level of compulsion. Furthermore, I expect that a future requirement in the recruitment of teachers will be for them to have undertaken Aboriginal studies in teacher education, as well as the unrelated study of teaching students with disabilities. This should be in all education training. One of the problems is that many young teachers when graduating are posted to rural schools, and for many of them it is their first encounter with Aboriginal people, particularly Aboriginal children.

Mr Carpenter: Arising from your comment that you support in principle the idea that every student should have a component of Aboriginal studies in the school curriculum, what is the stumbling block for its introduction?

Mr BARNETT: The work has been done. I will be making some announcements about that tomorrow.

Mr Carpenter: It will not be compulsory.

Mr BARNETT: I will announce it tomorrow. Among other important initiatives in the Aboriginal area are the employment of Aboriginal teachers and career paths for Aboriginal assistants so that they may progress upwards.

The member for Cockburn mentioned issues, including the importance of schooling in the early years. I appreciate his comment that it is comprehensive across the education system. I agree that Therese Temby has done an outstanding job, as have the public servants who have worked in the development stage and the interim council. Hopefully we will see it into full operation.

In conclusion, it is true that there probably cannot be anything more important than what is taught in our schools. The development of a relevant, modern curriculum framework, which is outcome based and comprehensive for the years of schooling and the different systems but which at the same time allows the syllabus flexibility at individual school level, will work well. The big question is, will it work? I am quite confident it will work. The fact that it has support here and broad support in the whole gamut of the education sector of parents, teachers and union representatives is very encouraging. It will work because people are committed to making it do so. For that reason I have confidence in the Bill. I thank members of the House for their support.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### *Committee*

The Deputy Chairman of Committees (Mr Ainsworth) in the Chair; Mr Barnett (Minister for Education) in charge of the Bill.

**Clause 1 put and passed.**

**Clause 2: Commencement -**

Mr RIPPER: This is the proclamations clause. For how long has the interim Curriculum Council been operating? When is it intended to proclaim the legislation and bring the official Curriculum Council into existence?

Mr BARNETT: The interim Curriculum Council has been operating since March 1996. If this Bill goes through in good speed, the intention is that we will proclaim it and that the full Curriculum Council will come into operation on 1 July this year.

Mr RIPPER: Am I to understand that the Secondary Education Authority and the interim Curriculum Council have been operating as two separate bodies since March last year?

Mr BARNETT: That is the case. The Secondary Education Authority has continued with its task of overseeing the TEE. However, there has been a lot of cooperation. The staff from the Secondary Education Authority will transfer over to the Curriculum Council once it is established.

**Clause put and passed.**

**Clause 3: Interpretation -**

Mr RIPPER: This clause contains a list of definitions of terms used in the Bill. One of the key terms is "curriculum framework". Much depends on what that term means. It is important because the curriculum framework will be mandatory for most schools except in those limited circumstances where the Minister approves an exemption. Some discussion occurred during the second reading debate about the need for a balance between uniform and mandatory requirements and local flexibility. The exact balance point depends to a large extent on the distinction between curriculum framework and curriculum. However, this list of definitions contains no definition of curriculum framework. There is no way in which one can distinguish for the purposes of the legislation between curriculum framework and curriculum. Will the Minister explain why that definition is missing from the Bill and perhaps attempt to give a definition of curriculum framework or an explanation of the distinction between curriculum framework and curriculum? The balance between a uniform authoritarian approach and a permissive, anything goes approach depends on the exact definition.

Mr BARNETT: The question is largely answered on page 4 in clause 4(b), which sets out the objects of the Bill and, in effect, defines curriculum framework. The definition cannot be too precise. At the end of the day, as the framework is prepared, documented and sent out, it will define itself; but a broad definition is contained in clause 4(b).

Mr RIPPER: That is a cunning answer from the Minister. The definition is that the curriculum framework, taking into account the needs of students, sets out the knowledge, understanding, skills, values and attitudes that students are expected to acquire. That still leaves me in the dark about how prescriptive or how extensive it will be. It may be a minimal document consisting of a few high level principles or an extremely prescriptive document setting out that students must know that Perth Airport is in the electorate of Belmont, which is represented by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Mr BARNETT: It will be somewhere between those two points. It will be a broad statement but it will cover the areas in which students are expected to achieve and reach outcomes. The desire, which will be reflected by the members of the Curriculum Council, will be to allow each system to have flexibility and for schools to develop their syllabuses. We were talking about Aboriginal education. Any material in that regard would need to be varied to reflect a particular Aboriginal community. There are all sorts of other examples. The important thing is that there is a commitment at all levels to maintain as much flexibility as possible for the systems and schools without compromising a consistent educational framework.

Mr RIPPER: How does the structure of this Bill relate to moves for devolution in the government school system? It seems the Bill is set up so that the Curriculum Council will relate to government schools through the Education Department hierarchy rather than to government schools as devolved, self-determining institutions. Does the Minister see any likely change to this relationship between government schools and the Curriculum Council? I see some tension between moves for devolution and the way the Curriculum Council will relate to government schools under the Bill.

Mr BARNETT: I am not a rampant advocate of devolution. However, I think there can be more decision making, and more authority, responsibility and variety at a school level. The chief executive officer would remain the governing body and, under any devolution scenario, certain high levels of responsibility will remain with the department and therefore in the person of the chief executive. The sorts of things that will be devolved - I think there is an appetite for devolution - do not strike at the core of running schools and the conditions of employment or the ownership and management of assets, and the selection of curriculum. It will be interesting to see how much the syllabus will vary from one system to another - say from the Catholic system to the department - and how much variety of syllabus will be in the department at a school level. Again, that is something that will be devolved. I do not think devolution will compromise the position of the chief executive as the governing and responsible person for schools.

Mr RIPPER: The definition of "school" includes a preschool centre. Some people are concerned that in the expansion of preschool education the curriculum in those preschool years may become overly prescriptive and we could end up with a de facto first year of primary schooling rather than activities which are consistent with the tradition of kindergarten and preschool activities where the focus is on encouraging the development of children at their own pace and providing them with the necessary activities for them to develop without having a prescriptive curriculum which children are expected to achieve. Does the Minister see the Curriculum Council's curriculum framework and its focus on outputs as making preschool education more rigid, or does he see preschool education as being largely untouched by the curriculum framework?

Mr BARNETT: I do not see preschool education or kindergarten being overly prescriptive. However, given the emphasis that this Government has given to the early childhood education area - I foreshadow that the Government will accept a move in the upper House to have a preschool or early childhood specialist on the Curriculum Council - there will be an input. One of the strengths of the Curriculum Council is that it addresses kindergarten through to

year 12, but recognises that kindergarten is largely structured play and social activity progressing through preprimary into the start of more formalised learning and preparation of basic literacy and numeracy skills and the like. All the evidence in the early childhood area is that when children are deluged with curriculum, that is the start of learning the basic skills and competencies. Again it is a matter of getting the balance right. I do not think the member will find any overly prescriptive move in that area. That is the area in which there can be a lot of variety and different approaches.

Ms McHALE: Is the Education Act inclusive of non-government schools or does it apply only to government schools?

Mr Barnett: No, the Education Act covers all schools.

Ms McHALE: So the fact that the Government is now trying to develop something for non-government schools is inclusive in the definition of "schools"?

Mr Barnett: Yes. The Education Act is about to be reviewed. However, it will still cover all schools.

Mr Ripper: Will that come to the Parliament this year?

Mr Barnett: Yes, this session.

### **Clause put and passed.**

#### **Clause 4: Objects -**

Mr RIPPER: What do these curriculum framework documents look like? I do not know whether the document tabled is a curriculum framework document. Will a curriculum framework for one of the learning areas be as thick as a telephone book or something much smaller? Again, this bears on the question of how prescriptive these mandatory frameworks will be. The more detailed and voluminous they are and the more onerous they will be for schools, the more difficult will be the reporting requirements and the less flexibility there will be at a local level. How many pages will be occupied by curriculum framework for a particular area?

Mr BARNETT: I have in front of me drafts for mathematics and English - two key areas. They are not voluminous. They indicate things that are mandatory and outcomes that are meant to be achieved and how they might be achieved. The member can have a look at them. They are drafts but they indicate the style.

Ms McHALE: Clause 4(b) refers to the curriculum framework out of which the curriculum will develop, presumably at a school level. At this stage I am not able to explain to stakeholders or my electorate how it will iterate through the system. What is the relationship between the council and the teachers and the schools when implementing that framework? It probably goes to the freedom to interpret the framework or alternatively the limitations. What is the connection between curriculum framework and curriculum and the role of the teacher in interpreting that degree of freedom?

Mr BARNETT: This is a very important issue. I emphasise that this new curriculum framework comes into operation in schools at the beginning the 1999. The curriculum frameworks of which the Opposition has examples will go through a consultation process. The first step will be to reach agreement on the outcomes and their acceptance. Then the syllabus and the material will be developed and delivered through the system. There will be an extensive process of public information about the Curriculum Council through schools. That has started with some of the interim publications. The process has been well planned. With the commitment of all education sectors I think it will go smoothly. I understand there is an awareness now of the new body and its role. However, we will take every step possible to make sure it is communicated throughout the schools to parent groups and the like on each subject area.

Mr RIPPER: The second reading speech, the media statement and the newspaper articles placed considerable emphasis on values education as a result of the development of the Curriculum Council. How will this Bill enhance values education in our schools? I think the Minister has been seduced by the requirements of the media and has chosen to make a politically interesting and attractive point, regardless of the content of the Bill, because I do not think this Bill will have a dramatic impact on values education. It should be recognised that teachers have long been interested in values education and that it is a key part of English, social studies and health education. What difference will this Bill make, and how will it have the effect which the Minister's claimed in his press statement?

Mr BARNETT: The commitment to values in education is not just skin deep. An audit process will be put in place to ensure that the values and broad principles of ethical and honest behaviour are reinforced and repeated throughout the curriculum. However, the curriculum will not do it of itself. It will depend upon the education of teachers and the management of schools - all of those things that reinforce it. I accept what some people in education say: If a

school is run on the basis of individuals assuming responsibility for themselves and is ethical, those values will be instilled in children naturally. Curriculum alone will not do it, but it is an important part.

Ms McHALE: That links to what I said about values being subjective and dependent upon one's belief system and world view. To put it bluntly, Pauline Hanson's values are not my values, and my values are probably not the values of person X. Whose values will be agreed on - those of the Minister for Planning, those of the Minister for Heritage, or those of the Minister for Youth Affairs? How will the Minister set the parameters for curriculum development for values education?

Mr BARNETT: The document that I laid on the Table earlier this evening indicates how values education will be addressed. We cannot be too specific about values. However, it is possible to find a set of values which has broad agreement within the community. That may reflect the Christian and cultural background of Australia, and that may be different from the set of values that may emerge in an Islamic nation, but this is Australia and this is what we have. I do not think there will be much disagreement about the basic values of respecting others, of tolerance and of honesty. I realise that if we kept going, we would start to get into areas where there was division in the community about values. I do not think we will get hung up on that. I think there will be sufficient agreement.

Mr RIPPER: Does the Minister have any criticism of the way in which values are dealt with in schools currently? Does the Minister think that the government and non-government school systems are not teaching values in the way they should and that is the reason that his public comments about this Bill have focused on values?

Mr BARNETT: That is getting into a broader debate. It could be argued that today's generation has a set of values that is different from or less than that of previous generations. I do not know whether that is true. Parental care may not always be what it should be, and that does tend to fall back onto the education system. My observation of schools over the past few years is that most schools are conscious of values and ethical behaviour, although there is no doubt that some schools do that better and more effectively. This Bill will emphasise values within the curriculum. I do not underestimate civics; I tend to put the two together. Schools will be required to deliver. I stress that that goes beyond the curriculum and to the management of schools, teacher education, the policy of the department, and the like.

I find it strange - I do not purport to be an overly religious person, so I am not coming from that dimension - that, for example, the parent body of a school in the member for Roleystone's electorate wanted the Lord's Prayer to be said at assembly. The policy of the Education Department was that it could not say the Lord's Prayer because the education system is non-sectarian and that would disadvantage children who were not from Christian backgrounds. I agree that if there was substantial objection to the Lord's Prayer, it would not have been appropriate to accede to that request. However, in this case, I overruled the Education Department policy because the school community wanted the Lord's Prayer to be said at assembly, and if one or two parents did not want their children to say the Lord's Prayer, those children could be accommodated to make sure they did not feel embarrassed or isolated. It is not pushing religion down people's throats to allow a school to say the Lord's Prayer. It is reflecting the cultural and religious heritage of Australia and what that school wants to do. In two years, that is the only school that has come to me with that request, but I did grant it the right to do that, and it should be able to do that. An Islamic school would not say the Lord's Prayer.

Mr RIPPER: While we are discussing values, I place on record my support for the Minister's comments about civics. We do not do sufficient to prepare our children to be citizens of a democracy. As politicians, we all encounter plenty of examples of people who have been through our education system but have an inadequate understanding of their rights and obligations as citizens of a democracy. I support the Minister's remarks and hope that schools will be emboldened to tackle some of these questions. In the past, schools feared dealing with political issues as if politics somehow lacked respectability and was not suitable for discussion by minors. It was like the old rule of social etiquette that one did not discuss sex, religion or politics at a social gathering.

Mr Barnett: It invariably makes for a boring social gathering!

Mr RIPPER: That is right. That role is more honoured in the breach than in the observance today. Perhaps that view still exists in our schools, to the extent that people are frightened of controversy and of exposing children to political analysis or the fact that different political views exist in the community. That is to the ultimate detriment of our democracy. I hope there will be an advance in civics as a result of the work of the Curriculum Council.

**Clause put and passed.**

**Clause 5: Curriculum Council established -**

Mr RIPPER: It is interesting to note that a Curriculum Council has been operating on an interim basis for more than a year. Under what authority has that council been operating? It is disturbing that we are discussing this Bill when a body has been in existence for over a year.

One of the roles of the Curriculum Council is to provide an assessment for certification of student achievement. I am concerned by comments I have heard in schools that only four TEE subjects are required for tertiary entrance purposes. Teachers at government schools have said, first, that that narrows the education that students are undertaking in years 11 and 12 and, secondly, that non-government schools have adopted the minimum four subjects option with some degree of alacrity, and that perhaps this places government school students at a disadvantage because if one is intentionally studying four TEE subjects one may be able to get a higher score, rather than if one were required to extend oneself and study six subjects. Can the Minister comment on this development? Does he see himself directing the Curriculum Council on this issue?

Mr BARNETT: The Curriculum Council will be created as a statutory authority. The interim Curriculum Council has been a temporary department and an administrative arrangement, as a form of advice to the Minister. That departmental structure will lapse.

As to the four TEE subjects being used as a basis for university entry, I agree with the member for Belmont. It is a retrograde step. It is unfortunate that universities, via a change to their university entry requirements, are having an effect on secondary education. It is inappropriate and, in the longer term - and this is my view, perhaps not shared in education - it is time for the universities to take fuller responsibility for their standards and assessment. It is unacceptable that we have drop-out rates of up to 50 per cent in the first year of university. It is a huge waste of resources, and responsibility for that rests with the universities. They must manage enrolment procedures better and take more responsibility - a little like Notre Dame University. I agree with the member, but I doubt that it can be done by direction. However, I will pursue it with the universities.

**Clause put and passed.**

**Clause 6: Members of Council -**

Mr RIPPER: I move -

Page 5, line 14 - To delete "11" and substitute -

13

Page 6, lines 17 to 28 - To delete the lines and substitute -

- (g) one is to be nominated by the State School Teachers Union of Western Australia;
- (h) one is to be nominated by the Independent Schools Salaried Officers Association;
- (i) one is to be nominated by the Western Australian Council of State School Organisations (Inc); and
- (j) one is to be nominated by the Parents and Friends Federation of Western Australia (Inc).

I am concerned about the way the Curriculum Council is structured. The Bill proposes that the Minister shall nominate three members, two are to be nominated by the chief executive officer of the Education Department, one by the Catholic Education Commission, one by the Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia, one by the chief executive of TAFE, one by one or other of the universities, and then we come to two of the most important groups in the education system - teachers and parents. Neither teachers nor parents will be able to nominate a representative. In each case, the Minister has an obligation to consult with the organisations representing teachers and parents. The Minister does not have to consult only with those organisations, neither does the Minister need to act in accordance with the submissions put to him during consultation. Therefore, the Minister might consult with the SSTU, receive recommendations regarding who might represent the teachers, consult with the Independent Schools Salaried Officers' Association, receive further recommendations, and then appoint someone not on either list.

The same argument applies to the lack of representation from the WA Council of State School Organisations and the Parents and Friends' Federation of WA. We are not talking about insubstantial organisations. We are talking about major organisations in the education sector. These organisations have an explicit role to represent their members. They have elaborate representational and consultative structures. I fear that one reason the SSTU, in particular, does not have the right to nominate a member on the Curriculum Council is the Government's hostile attitude to the union movement. The Government has some difficulty in accepting the legitimacy of the role which unions play. The SSTU is a union, and I do not want to cast any doubt on its right to be included by virtue of its being a union.

However, it is a professional association of teachers and has a long history of playing a role in professional matters. For both those reasons, that organisation should be represented explicitly on the Curriculum Council.

Mr BARNETT: This matter arose during the second reading debate. The desire is to keep the numbers on the council within reason. It is proposed there be a 12 member council including a chairperson. Also we must ensure we do not simply have a council which is representative of all sorts of organisations. Rather, the emphasis is on the quality of people. As I said earlier, there is room for one representative of teachers through the union, and a representative of parents. I expect that from the unions and parent bodies I will be provided with three or four names of people who I am sure will be credible people. I will accept that. It is not my intention to disfranchise either the union or parent interests. I have already indicated at the suggestion of Hon Barbara Scott that I am prepared to accept a specialist representative of early childhood education.

The member for Kimberley raised the issue of Aboriginal representation. We could go on and on. If someone of skill in Aboriginal affairs is not nominated through the various organisations, as Minister, I have the right to appoint both the chairperson and three other members. That may provide a vehicle by which to do that. I have insisted that a practising classroom teacher represent each of the learning area reference groups. That was put to me strongly by teachers when I visited schools several months ago.

I can understand why the member feels strongly about the matter and has moved the amendments. That is why the teachers union also has that view. However, I regret to inform the member that I will not accept his amendments.

Ms McHALE: The Minister cannot blame me for trying, even though he laid his cards on the table in indicating his opposition to the amendments. I respect his difficulty in meeting the needs of the various interest groups such as Aboriginal and migrant girls and boys.

If teachers union representatives were appointed they could represent those interest groups. Although our amendments might make the council unwieldy by increasing its size by two, it would not have a deleterious effect. Representation by the teachers union could bridge those differences. It would go a long way to dealing with the discomfort with the membership felt by the Opposition, the teachers union and the Western Australian Council of State School Organisations. We are not arguing for only the teachers union, but also the parent body.

It is difficult to reconcile that the independent schools, through the Association of Independent Schools, can have two berths on the council, but a parent body will not have any automatic right. If the Minister cannot see his way to accepting these amendments an alternative would be to amend paragraphs (g) and (h) by removing the words "in the opinion of the Minister" and allowing those two bodies a right to nominate.

Mr BARNETT: The same pressures were applied by universities. They are upset because their membership will be reduced from two on the Secondary Education Authority to one representative between them. It is a matter of balancing all the competing interests. The unions are represented on other forums within education. As important as it is, this is just the curriculum framework.

Mr RIPPER: The member for Thornlie has presented a further valuable alternative to the Minister if he cannot accept my amendments. What could apply in paragraphs (g) and (h) is what applies in paragraph (f). In other words the Minister may determine at any time which of those organisations will be allowed to make a nomination and appointment rather than his consulting with them and making an appointment as he sees fit. It is preferable to expand the council by two so that each of those organisations can be represented. They are major organisations. It is remarkable that of all the groups that are on the council the only two that cannot nominate are teachers and parents. Surely teachers and parents should have a higher priority for representation on the council than they are being given.

A particular argument for including the State School Teachers Union is that it represents the largest block of teachers in the State. Teachers' cooperation and input will be critical to the success of the Curriculum Council. Implementation of curriculum changes, particularly extensive professional development, will require the cooperation of teachers. Much is to be gained by incorporating teachers, particularly union representatives, in the processes of the Curriculum Council. The capacity of the teachers' representative will be enhanced if that person is directly accountable to, and can use the consultative processes available inside, the union.

If a teacher is nominated he can bring to the work of the organisation his personal experiences and perspectives. If the State School Teachers Union were able to nominate a representative there would be available not only the personal perspective of the teacher, but also the distillation of their views, the outcome of their representational processes and the resources of an organisation representing 15 000 teachers. That organisation would have a greater stake in the work of the Curriculum Council. That is important because the cooperation of that organisation and its members will be important in producing effective outcomes.

Ms McHALE: I do not want to play the conspiracy theory because I credit this Minister with a great deal of integrity. However, there is a thread in all the legislation with which we have been dealing lately, industrial relations legislation being the most classic, of attempts to disfranchise the unions from having a legitimate role in major social issues. The teachers union is not only an industrial union but also a professional body. It is as though we are somehow forgetting that its role is to promote the quality and the professional side of education. It has as much legitimacy to participate on a body such as this as some of the other groups. We seem to have missed that point time and again in not only this debate but also the Metropolitan (Perth) Passenger Transport Trust Amendment Bill that the Minister missed last week as well as the Labour Relations Legislation Amendment Bill. That point must be made in relation to the professional expertise that the teachers union can contribute.

Once again the power is vested in the Minister. I find it a bit of a conundrum that the Bill will put him in the position where he must make a decision "in his opinion". For instance he may receive a nomination from WACSO and from the Parents and Friends Federation of WA and he must make the ultimate decision, which will be difficult.

The Minister said earlier that representatives must be credible educationally but not industrially. How then will the Minister make ultimate decisions about who to put on and who to put off? The Minister could make decisions based on favouritism or ideological preference. Greater prescription will afford the Minister greater protection so that he or she does not have to make invidious choices. Amending this clause one way or the other will provide direct nomination.

Mr BARNETT: I remind members of the history of this matter. The initial decision was that only a representative of teachers was to be appointed to the council. However, a number of different teaching and professional organisations all wanted representation, including science and mathematics teachers. They put up arguments that they better represented teachers on curriculum matters than the union. Also, a range of different parent bodies wanted representation. To deal with that response and the response of the State Schools Teachers Union of Western Australia and the Independent Schools Salaried Officers Association, which is similar to the argument of the Opposition, the decision was made to name them as the pre-eminent representatives of teachers. Similarly, the Western Australian Council of State School Organisations and the Parents and Friends Federation of Western Australia were included as the pre-eminent parent bodies. Other parent groups and professional teaching organisations lobbied a great deal for representation.

It is true that the responsible Minister must make a decision, but that decision must be made in consultation with those respective organisations. That will be achievable. There will be some convention about chairing it. There will also be an understanding that representatives from all parent and teaching bodies can report back at any time and share information.

Mr RIPPER: I would like to declare an interest. Both the member for Thornlie and I used to work for the State School Teachers Union. That perhaps influences the attitude we take in this matter.

The teachers union does have the right to professional pre-eminence over the other organisations the Minister has referred to, because it is the largest and most representative organisation of teachers in this State.

Mr Barnett: Were you a membership officer?

Mr RIPPER: Yes, I was. I was good at recruiting members. One of my few failures, however, which I still find galling, is my failure to recruit the now Speaker. He was most resistant to my well-developed patter which encouraged almost everyone else to join.

Mr Barnett: Perhaps it says something about his high intellect.

Mr RIPPER: He has a stubborn streak, which I am sure he will not mind my mentioning.

The teachers union has a right to be considered professionally pre-eminent to other organisations. It is like the distinction between the AMA as the representative of doctors generally -

Mr Prince: I would not use that example.

Mr RIPPER: To take another example, perhaps, it is like the distinction between the Law Society and Labor Lawyers. In many professional fields there are different organisations, but there is usually one that is the pre-eminent, generic representative organisation. It is the State School Teachers Union in the teaching profession. Its education committee has been a strong professional body for a long time. I know the Government is subtly and not so subtly encouraging associations of administrators to develop independent identities from the State School Teachers Union, even to the extent of providing those organisations with financial assistance. However, I do not believe the Government will be successful in its divide and rule campaign. The teachers union will continue to represent the



overwhelming majority of teachers and administrators in the state school system in both professional and industrial matters.

The teachers union has a legitimate claim to nominate a representative to the council, particularly when one considers some of the other organisations that are entitled to nominate representatives. The teachers union is no less legitimate or substantial in the education sector than those other organisations which have been given the right to nominate for the Curriculum Council.

Amendments put and a division taken with the following result -

Ayes (16)

Ms Anwyl	Mr Kobelke	Mr Riebeling
Mr Brown	Ms MacTiernan	Mr Ripper
Mr Carpenter	Mr Marlborough	Mr Thomas
Dr Constable	Mr McGowan	Ms Warnock
Mr Graham	Ms McHale	Mr Cunningham ( <i>Teller</i> )
Mr Grill		

Noes (29)

Mr Baker	Mrs Holmes	Mr Pental
Mr Barnett	Mr House	Mr Prince
Mr Barron-Sullivan	Mr Kierath	Mr Shave
Mr Board	Mr MacLean	Mr Sweetman
Mr Bradshaw	Mr Marshall	Mr Tubby
Mr Court	Mr Masters	Dr Turnbull
Mr Cowan	Mr McNee	Mrs van de Klashorst
Mr Day	Mr Omodei	Mr Wiese
Mrs Edwardes	Mr Osborne	Mr Bloffwitch ( <i>Teller</i> )
Mrs Hodson-Thomas	Mrs Parker	

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Pairs

Mr McGinty	Dr Hames
Dr Gallop	Mr Ainsworth
Mrs Roberts	Mr Nicholls

**Amendments thus negated.**

**Clause put and passed.**

**Clause 7 put and passed.**

**Clause 8: Remuneration of members -**

Mr RIPPER: What level of remuneration has been determined?

Mr BARNETT: The level of remuneration has not yet been determined, but I would take the advice of the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal on that matter. It will be consistent with similar bodies.

**Clause put and passed.**

**Clause 9: Curriculum framework -**

Mr RIPPER: This is the first clause in that part of the Bill dealing with the functions and powers of the Curriculum Council. As a Minister I had experience with conflicts between a small policy making agency and a large service delivery agency. This Government resolved those conflicts by amalgamating the Bureau of Disability Services and the Authority for the Intellectually Handicapped, creating the Disability Services Commission. Having had experience of that degree of conflict, I understand why the Government made that decision. I see some potential for conflict between the Education Department of Western Australia, a large service delivery agency with significant resources available to it, and the Curriculum Council, which will be a small policy making agency, with very few staff and a budget which is minuscule compared with that of the Education Department. I would like the Minister to comment on this issue.

The Education Department will, at least for some considerable time, have a significant role in the development of curriculum. It has the responsibility for educating three-quarters of the children in this State. It has the billion dollar budget and it has the specialists in curriculum. Under this Bill it is subject to direction by the Curriculum Council,

yet the council has only a \$6m budget and a very small number of staff to deal with curriculum matters. How is the Curriculum Council to effectively direct the Education Department of Western Australia? The analogy of the tail wagging the dog comes to mind, but the difference between the two organisations is even greater than that.

Mr BARNETT: There can be a problem with agencies of different size and of too many agencies. When I took over the Education portfolio last year the agencies within the schools part of that portfolio were the Secondary Education Authority, the Education Department, the Office of Non-Government Education, the Country Hostels Authority, the Higher Education Council and the Policy and Research Secretariat. Altogether there were six bodies and I thought that was too many. There will now be three - the Education Department of Western Australia, the Department of Education Services, which was established last year, and the Curriculum Council. The Curriculum Council will develop and implement the curriculum, the Education Department will deliver that curriculum in the state school system and a system delivery and the Department of Education Services will pick up various functions in the university sector and deal with non-government schools and the grants to them as well as special policy initiatives; for example, cross-sector programs such as the Esperance and Kalgoorlie Colleges. It is a good framework. It is the right structure. Functionally it is correct and in a managerial sense it is correct. I do not think the Curriculum Council will have the problem envisaged by the member. Initially the Education Department was hesitant, if not bordering on resistant, to the formation of a Curriculum Council. It certainly will take authority away from the department. Over the evolution of the idea and through the Temby committee there is now widespread support that this is the correct way to go. I am confident there is a commitment from the Education Department to make it succeed. I am conscious of the problem. It is one of the roles of a Minister. A Minister does not have many things to do, but the Minister should make sure the agencies perform their statutory obligations. It is up to me to make sure that happens and I am confident it will happen.

Mr RIPPER: Will the Minister not be subject to two potential streams of advice on curriculum matters? The large service delivery agency might tell him one thing about curriculum framework and the council might give him conflicting advice.

Mr BARNETT: That could arise. It has not arisen at this stage. Much of the work is under way. The Education Department has very effective means of making its views known through the Curriculum Council. The Director General of the Education Department is a strong person and she is able to express the view of the department very effectively. She has a good relationship with the head of the Catholic Education Commission. It works well. It is not to say there may be conflicts in the future, but I can honestly say that if they have arisen they have been resolved and certainly have not been drawn to my attention.

Mr RIPPER: Will the Curriculum Council commission consultants to develop curriculum materials and will that bring them into conflict with the Education Department that potentially will have its staff producing curriculum materials?

Mr BARNETT: The Curriculum Council will be commissioning consultants, as indeed the Education Department already does. It could be the case that the council could commission the Education Department, Catholic Education Commission, an independent school, a university or a private provider to develop some part of the curriculum. It will give a high level of accountability and produce results. In the second reading debate I said for work done on behalf of the council the contracts require that all intellectual property, copyright or ownership rights remain with the council.

Mr RIPPER: Will one of the outcomes specified in the curriculum framework be an understanding of the mechanisms by which evolution operates? Will that be a mandatory outcome foisted on those schools that would prefer to teach creation science rather than the theory of evolution as it applies in biology? In other words, will the council's mandatory curriculum framework specify that evolution is taught in schools rather than creationism?

Mr BARNETT: That issue is already dealt with in schools. It does not create an additional problem. Obviously a distinction can be made between what is taught in biology classes and what is taught in ethics and values. I do not see a problem with that. Where schools rely on a creationist theory, that is respected. Over the years skilful ways have been devised to address what in a biological sense must be taught, can be taught in those subjects. The church has grappled with that issue and I do not think we will be caught up on it.

I am not a creationist, if that is what the member is asking.

Mr RIPPER: I would be horrified if the Minister were a creationist. He seems an unlikely candidate for that particular theology. Will it be necessary for the Minister to give an exemption from the curriculum framework to certain fundamentalist Christian schools? Those schools would want to teach what they call creation science as more than just an aspect of religious education.

Mr BARNETT: Yes, I would, in principle. Obviously the Curriculum Council would be conscious of that issue in a non-government sector. In principle, I grant that exemption and I am sure the Curriculum Council would advise me that way. I do not think such an exemption would compromise the curriculum within these schools.

Ms McHALE: I refer to subclause (2). It comes back to the points I made earlier about the availability of the curriculum framework. The legislation says that the council is to ensure that curriculum framework is made available to the public in any manner the council thinks fit. I seek some clarification about the phrase "in any manner the council thinks fit". That is a very broad statement. I am sure it is not intended to be dismissive, but it has a ring about it that the council could think fit to write it on the back of a postage stamp, although I am sure it will not do that. It could put a notice in the "Western Teacher", and I am sure it will not do that because it does not have a teachers union representative on the council. I ask the Minister to give some insight into the methods by which he wants to make the curriculum framework available to the public; that is, essentially the parents.

Mr BARNETT: The distribution of the framework to all schools will be done through the department, or the Catholic Education Commission, or the Office of Non-government Education for other schools. It is intended that copies of the framework will be available in libraries. If people want personal copies, they will be made available at a nominal charge. We desire that the framework be made available through parents' organisations and the like.

Ms McHALE: Will it be made available to the Western Australian Council of State School Organisations and other stakeholders?

Mr Barnett: Yes, all principal organisations.

Ms McHALE: Does that mean all parents can get it free of charge?

Mr Barnett: Probably not individual P & Cs. Arrangements will be made with WACSSO about how that is done. It will be available in all schools.

Ms McHALE: Can the Minister give some insight into how often he sees the curriculum framework being updated?

Mr BARNETT: For clarification, during the consultation process it is intended to send out the material to all P & Cs. I do not think we can undertake an obligation always to keep every P & C around the State fully updated, but during consultation on the framework that will happen.

Ms McHALE: That raises another question: How often does the Minister see the curriculum framework being updated? I ask that question because subclause (2)(a) talks about the most recent curriculum framework and paragraph (b) talks about that curriculum framework. I am not sure exactly what is meant and how often it will be updated.

Mr BARNETT: It will be a continuing framework. We are working on some areas of the curriculum now. Some areas are not as advanced. It will be a continual updating of mathematics, English, etc. In one year it may work on mathematics, then it will move on to English and will go around the cycle continually. It will be a seamless process. I hope a curriculum will not be put in place and left to rust for 20 years, but that the process will always be moving.

Mr RIPPER: Paragraph (f) of this clause provides for the council to develop professional development plans necessary to support implementation of the curriculum framework. It is often the case in education that the more things change, the more they stay the same; that is, adequate attention is not paid to the professional development necessary to implement changes to our education system. The most important thing in education is the interaction between the teacher and the student. If the teachers are not adequately prepared and motivated, all the documentation, all the aspirations, all the pronouncements from senior levels will come to nought.

Professional development is the key to this Curriculum Council arrangement having any practical effect on what goes on in schools. I notice the council has the responsibility to develop professional development plans; however, nothing is said in the Bill about resources. The council might say that to implement this framework, this professional development plan will be required, but it will be up to the school sectors to come up with the resources and make the detailed administrative arrangements for that development to occur. If the Government does not provide the resources - I suggest to both the government and non-government school sectors - the Curriculum Council's work will remain pie in the sky. The Curriculum Council could become just one more body that harasses schools with new plans, new documents and new demands for reporting and accountability, but which does not ease the burden on teachers and assist them to implement what is required in a practical sense.

One of the greatest stressors on teachers is the reporting, accountability and administrative load under which they are placed. I am concerned that the Curriculum Council could become one more example of those burdens, one more example of well intentioned, but wasted, effort towards educational improvement because resources are not provided for the preparation and development of teachers that is required to achieve any change.

Mr BARNETT: I agree that the importance of development is essential. As I mentioned before, it is a feature of the enterprise bargaining agreement. It is supported throughout the systems; that is, the Education Department and the government sector. The Government made a commitment during the last election campaign, which it intends to fulfil - that is the case with all our commitments - to establish a centre for professional excellence of teachers. Much of the ownership of what is done and how it operates will be with the teachers. Consistent with raising the status and the professionalism of teachers is giving teachers more autonomy and more responsibility over their professional development. I recognise that costs money and time, but we are prepared to continue down that path and we should be doing that.

Mr Ripper: I hope I heard the Minister make a commitment to increase the resources available for professional development. Is he giving a commitment to make the resources available for the professional development of teachers?

Mr BARNETT: The first commitment was part of the enterprise bargaining agreement - I referred to it previously - which comes up for renegotiation in July. I hope it will provide an assessment of how professional development has gone over the preceding two years. I hope we will negotiate an increase in professional development.

Mr Ripper: That uses the resources of the teachers, but what about the Government?

Mr BARNETT: It is using the resources of the teachers and the department. I just indicated that the department will establish a school of professional excellence. We are making available these facilities at the school of isolated and distance education so that teachers in remote areas can be part of the development program. I would like a huge bucket of money to throw at it, but I cannot say that I can do that. We are increasing the importance of this area. There is no doubt that within all sectors of the Education Department a growing appreciation of and commitment to professional development is shared by teachers, I am pleased to say.

Mr RIPPER: My point is this: The investment in the work of the Curriculum Council will effectively be wasted unless it is backed up by professional development resources. There have been plenty of examples of fine curriculum development, wonderful programs which in the end have come to nought because the work has not been put into encouraging and equipping teachers to implement those programs. Teachers have continued to do what they have always done.

Mr Barnett: The Curriculum Council is geared to a rationalisation of professional development programs. To some extent they can be scattered fairly widely. This will ensure it is more focused on what is needed in schools and in education.

Mr RIPPER: The resources that are available for professional development must be used in a coordinated and efficient manner. All teachers could come up with an example of a useless or marginal professional development program in which they have been involved from time to time. Sometimes these things seem to be ad hoc and not determined by any clear understanding of the educational priorities that should apply.

The Minister made some claims about the Curriculum Council and what it is expected to achieve. As we are talking about professional development, this may be the time to ask these questions: By what stage can we expect to see practical change in schools as a result of the work of the Curriculum Council? When will it make a difference? What sort of difference does the Minister expect it will make? Will it be a moral influence on what goes on in schools, one that will have some effect at the margins, but will not substantially change what teachers do in the classrooms?

Mr BARNETT: The introduction of a new curriculum framework begins in 1999. In reality we will see the influence in schools throughout next year, simply because of the large number of people who are participating in it. As draft documentation gets sent, people will naturally start to adjust the syllabus and their teaching to reflect the curriculum they know is about to commence. It will start from 1999 and will take a few years to be implemented fully. The big watershed will be at the beginning of the 1999 school year.

Ms McHALE: I am delighted that the Minister will fulfil his election commitments. That means that \$2.4m will be made available for shading over sandpits.

Mr Barnett: That is right.

Ms McHALE: I am delighted. One of the schools in my electorate was given a commitment prior to the election about funding and again lost it after the election.

Mr Barnett: Which school?

Ms McHALE: Maddington Primary School. I would appreciate it if the Minister looked into that matter.

I have worked logically through the structure back from the curriculum framework. Reference is made to an assurance that the curriculum goals will be made clear to students. Who is setting the goals? Is it school based or something that emanates from the council?

Mr BARNETT: Those goals are set by the Curriculum Council but only after very extensive and expensive public consultation processes. Everyone will contribute and they will be agreed goals. We are well advanced in that area already.

Mr RIPPER: One of the problems we have had in the past with changes in the education system is that teachers have often been enthusiastic about new developments and voluntarily given up their spare time to work on them and their implementation. Then they have found that the work has come to nought because it has been overturned by another wave of change. People become exhausted and cynical if there is not consistency and steady development. How does the Minister see the Curriculum Council working? Are we looking at something in the framework that will have some durability so that teachers can make an investment in the implementation process without feeling that yet another new fashion or wave of innovation will be foisted on them?

Mr BARNETT: It is certainly a long term commitment and it is the right structure. I do not favour rapid or unforeseen change; it invariably fails. This has been discussed for a long time. We have been through the process of an interim council and are now formally setting up the council. It does not come into operation until 1999, so it should not be seen in any sense as a short term fashion. Generally, evolutionary change in schools is the way to go, but everyone should know where we are going. As this process unfolds it will be very clear where the curriculum is going.

**Clause put and passed.**

**Clause 10: Implementation of curriculum framework -**

Mr RIPPER: This clause deals in part with reporting requirements in relation to the implementation of the curriculum framework. Naturally there is some concern about the workload imposed on schools in meeting those requirements. One of the problems in our education system is the distractions from the core business imposed on schools and teachers as a result of administrative and bureaucratic requirements. Devolution was supposed to ease some of those intrusions but reports from schools and teachers suggest that it has increased their non-education workload. Can the Minister give some assurances about the workload that will be imposed on schools by these reporting requirements?

Mr BARNETT: Clause (2) provides that the reporting requirements will be agreed after consultation and negotiation. I imagine that those requirements will be at the system level. The Education Department will be required to report on how it is working in the schools. I am conscious of what the member has said, but the requirements will not be onerous. The reporting format, procedures and frequency will be agreed with the systems and schools and it will be manageable.

Ms McHALE: The Minister earlier commented about exemptions from the framework and referred to very small schools. I know clause 10 provides that home schooling must report in accordance with the framework but, given that by nature and definition it is very small, will home schooling be a category for exemption?

Mr BARNETT: Not in its own right. Some concerns have been voiced about home schooling and the quality of education provided. I know there are many cases where it is done perfectly well, but there are others where it has failed, and we are particularly conscious of that. An exemption for home schooling would be for the reasons given elsewhere, such as religion. However, in principle, home schooling would not be grounds for exemption.

**Clause put and passed.**

**Clause 11: Exemption from curriculum framework -**

Mr RIPPER: This clause allows the Minister to exempt schools from the otherwise mandatory curriculum framework. How will the approval be given - will it be on an ad hoc basis or will there be some policy framework giving guidance?

Mr BARNETT: It will not be on an ad hoc basis; it will be on the advice of the Curriculum Council. It is the intention that the council will develop policy in that area.

Mr Ripper: Will that be publicly available?

Mr BARNETT: The policy will go out for public consultation. Ultimately the Minister has an element of discretion; however, that is not something that I see will be generally or often exercised. Occasionally circumstances arise where discretion is required.

Mr Ripper: Is it envisaged there will be many exemptions?

Mr BARNETT: There will not be many at all. I will resist exemptions.

**Clause put and passed.**

**Clause 12: Post-compulsory schooling -**

Mr RIPPER: Is there any difference between the way this Curriculum Council will work in the post-compulsory schooling area and the way in which the Secondary Education Authority currently operates? If the Minister can indicate there is little or no difference, that will obviate the need for much debate.

Mr BARNETT: There will be one change. The clause is a direct lift from the Secondary Education Authority Act. The change is in paragraph (b) where the term "course of study" is used in preference to "syllabus of subjects". That is simply to give a broader definition.

**Clause put and passed.**

**Clause 13 put and passed.**

**Clause 14: Information and register -**

Mr RIPPER: Subclause 1(c) states in part that the council provide such statistics, information and records to any education provider on achievement of students of that education provider as the council thinks fit. A recent problem has been the publication of the information obtained under freedom of information legislation of alleged achievements of schools in the tertiary entrance examination. Publication of that information has been damaging to some schools that have been placed at the bottom of the so-called league table.

I was alerted to one particular injustice when I attended a meeting of the Kewdale Senior High School P & C Association. Kewdale was placed fairly low by *The West Australian* on the list of schools. The tragedy for Kewdale was twofold. Firstly, only a small sample of students sat for four or more TEE subjects, which is the criterion used by the newspaper in developing the league table. With such a small sample of students factors which affect one or more individuals can have a marked impact on the so-called achievement of the school. In this case three of the 26 students had serious problems in their families and had only sat the TEE because of the excellent pastoral care provided by that school. These students' results were not good, but they would not have sat the examination had it not been for the work done by the school. It was an unfair reflection on the work done by those teachers and the care provided by that school. Secondly, the school has a program which is not orientated only to students seeking university entrance. It has an excellent relationship with local industry. It was one of the innovators in developing links between local businesses and schools, and it has a very good record in preparing those students who do not seek tertiary entrance for entry into the work force. That school was very poorly treated by the publication of that so-called league table.

I hope there might be some way of avoiding this problem in future either by preventing the release of the information, which is not normally a course of action I would favour, or by providing more comprehensive information which will enable a fairer judgment of the performance of schools. It is a fairly important matter to Kewdale. The school's enrolment is small and it is vulnerable to rationalisation or closure. If parents in the area judge from *The West Australian* article that the school is not successful, it may contribute to a downward spiral in the school's enrolment, and the eventual closure of the school, because these things feed on themselves. *The West Australian*'s actions have been most destructive for that school and I hope we can prevent that sort of damage in the future.

Mr BARNETT: The purpose of this clause is provide information to schools on the performance of students. That is separate from the publication of so-called league tables. I share the member's concerns. They are highly misleading, and by definition are a relative table. If a school does not change its performance, and another school improves, by definition the first school seems to have deteriorated and that is the wrong conclusion to draw. That is an issue that should be looked at and treated in a better way and the member's latter comments are close to the mark. If information is released publicly, it should be in a better form than in the past. That is an issue of the Secondary Education Authority and this Bill does not change the status quo.

Ms McHALE: Clause 10(2) provides for the issuing of a certificate of student achievement on payment of a prescribed fee. Clause 33 provides that the Governor may make regulations in relation to fees and charges. Is it the intention to charge students for a copy of a certificate of student achievement?

Mr BARNETT: It is intended to charge only for replacement copies.

**Clause put and passed.**

**Clause 15: Powers -**

Mr RIPPER: This clause provides powers for the Curriculum Council to enter into contracts or arrangements with any person to provide products, consultancy or other services and for the commercial exploitation of intellectual property and design rights. It allows the Curriculum Council to contract out curriculum development work. A lot of the curriculum development work is now done within the Education Department, and although I acknowledge that the Education Department would contract out some of that work a danger exists that with the de facto mandate for curriculum development shifting from the Education Department to the Curriculum Council, more and more of the curriculum development work will be contracted out and we will lose some of the expertise on curriculum development in the public sector. With the loss of that expertise will come deleterious effects on the operation of the government school system and perhaps some long term deterioration in the public sector's ability to make wise choices when it is contracting out.

Another issue that concerns me is that as a result of the ability of the Curriculum Council to contract out and charge fees for services, we may see the development of a user pays system for curriculum materials. That could be disadvantageous to less well resourced schools.

Mr BARNETT: That is not the intention of the legislation. This provision relating to powers is essentially the same as exists under the Secondary Education Authority Act. The only change is to modernise the clause by including intellectual property rights and design rights.

**Clause put and passed.****Clause 16: Performance of functions -**

Mr RIPPER: This clause contains the odd phrasing to which my colleague the member for Cockburn referred -

In performing its functions the Council is to have regard to the capacity, financial and otherwise, of education providers to respond to decisions of the Council and to the impact of the decisions on education providers.

Despite that phrasing it is nevertheless a sensible clause because it will give an assurance to education systems and schools in the non-government sector that their ethos will not be overridden by the council exercising its power to impose a mandatory curriculum framework.

The reference to financial capacity is interesting. It means the Curriculum Council should not make decisions in ignorance of the necessity to provide resources to implement them. However, it makes me wonder about the ability of the council to make a decision and to have it stick. It is dependent on the Government coming up with resources for professional development and other measures required to implement the curriculum. The Government may need to provide resources to the non-government sector because that sector does not have a lot of loose cash floating around to enable it to implement any decisions made by the Curriculum Council. If change is to be made to the education system, the Government must come up with the resources for both the government and non-government sectors.

One of the motivating forces for the non-government sector to support the Curriculum Council is that it does not have curriculum development resources of its own. To a certain extent it has been dependent on the work done and the lead provided by the Education Department. It has not had the influence it felt it might have deserved on that curriculum development. It has simply had to follow, and accept the initiatives of, the Education Department. This is yet another clause that illustrates how important the key question of resources is.

Mr BARNETT: I note the member's comments.

**Clause put and passed.****Clause 17 put and passed.****Clause 18: Minister may give directions -**

Mr RIPPER: This is the Burt Commission on Accountability clause that gives the Minister the power to give directions in writing to the council. The Minister made a number of statements about the way he sees this process working and the way he see the curriculum framework being implemented. However, he shied away from suggestions that he might give directions in writing to the Curriculum Council to undertake any course of action. I draw the conclusion that the Minister will probably offer informal guidance to the council by way of the speeches he makes in Parliament, the discussions he has with the chairperson and chief executive officer, the press releases he issues and the appointments he makes. The Opposition has had this debate with the Minister before about Western Power and whether he issued a direction without having issued it in writing and having it recorded in the annual report as

provided for in the legislation. How does the Minister intend to operate with the Curriculum Council? Will he simply use the force of his persuasive abilities and the nature of his position, or will he issue directions that are there for everyone to read?

Mr BARNETT: The first thing I will do is respect the independence and professionalism of the council. In practical terms it would be reasonable that I might have a view that not enough emphasis was being given to civics, for example, and I would make that clear to the chief executive and the council. I expect that I would meet with the council reasonably frequently and give my views. That has been the nature of the interim council. A ministerial instruction or directive is rare - and should be rare. It would arise if there were a fundamental disagreement and the Government of the day felt so strongly that it had to put that in writing. It could arise if a financial transaction or property assets went wrong. The Government may make a decision that the council would not normally make. I cannot see it arising in the core area of the curriculum development work.

**Clause put and passed.**

**Clauses 19 to 24 put and passed.**

**Clause 25: Borrowing from Treasury -**

Mr RIPPER: This clause provides for the Curriculum Council to borrow from Treasury; clause 26 provides for the council with the prior written approval of the Treasurer to borrow from other people; clause 27 provides for the Treasurer to give a guarantee for the repayment of moneys borrowed by the council; and clause 28 also deals with that Treasurer's guarantee. We might be dealing with Curriculum Council Inc. It seems a surprising set of powers to give to the Curriculum Council. Why would the Curriculum Council need to borrow from anyone outside government? Why is provision made in this legislation for the Treasurer to give a guarantee for the Curriculum Council? Will the Curriculum Council be a semi-commercial authority trading in curriculum products and borrowing to invest in its production and making a return? These seem to be somewhat unusual clauses to include in a Bill such as this. I know they are the standard clauses that are included in a Bill relating to an authority that will borrow money; however, I have difficulty understanding why on earth they are in this Bill.

Mr BARNETT: They are included because they are standard clauses put in all statutory corporation Bills. Any borrowing by the Curriculum Council will require the approval of the Treasurer and, therefore, in effect, the Minister. I do not envisage any circumstance under which the Curriculum Council would borrow. The only situation that might arise is if for some reason it found it was in a tight budgetary position and Treasury decided to lend it the money rather than make an allocation to cover it.

**Clause put and passed.**

**Clauses 26 to 31 put and passed.**

**Clause 32: Confidentiality -**

Mr RIPPER: I imagine this clause relates to matters such as tertiary entrance examination results and the performance of schools.

Mr Barnett: And exam papers in particular.

Mr RIPPER: I am pleased it relates to exam papers. I hope the Minister is able to enforce that obligation consistently. Other people outside the Curriculum Council have access to that sort of information, such as people in the admissions offices of the tertiary institutions service centre. I once worked in such an office and it was possible to plug into the results of the tertiary institutions service centre. Are those people subject to similar penalties? Is the information safeguarded not only in the Curriculum Council but also in other areas?

Mr BARNETT: My advice is that they are, under various public service and university Acts.

**Clause put and passed.**

**Clauses 33 to 36 put and passed.**

**Schedule 1 -**

Ms McHALE: Will the Minister confirm that the intent behind paragraph 5 of this schedule is standard government practice?

Mr BARNETT: I am advised it is a standard practice clause, allowing the chief executive officer to appoint someone to represent him.



Ms McHALE: Is the Minister aware that that is contrary to the advice given by the Minister for Heritage during debate on the Heritage of Western Australia Act dealing with the appointment of members to boards and committees?

Mr Barnett: Contrary advice or a different clause?

Ms McHALE: When I was arguing the lack of wisdom in repealing a clause relating to continuation of service of members of the Heritage Council whose term had expired, I was told it was government practice not to allow that continuation of service on government boards and committees.

Mr BARNETT: The CEO is a non-voting member of the council. I thought that was appropriate, and it is one of my contributions. It puts the CEO in a difficult position if there is a vote and he is forced to vote. It is not an appropriate role for a CEO and I would not expect votes to be taken. It is appropriate that the CEO be able to nominate someone to have the same powers and functions at the council meeting if he is on leave or is sick.

Mr RIPPER: I note that there are provisions for dealing with matters when the council cannot make a decision and is deadlocked. Is there a history of close votes or deadlocks on the Secondary Education Authority or the council?

Mr Barnett: I do not believe there is a history of voting on the council.

Mr RIPPER: Generally speaking are decisions made by consensus on these two bodies?

Mr Barnett: Yes.

**Schedule put and passed.**

**Schedules 2 and 3 put and passed.**

**Title put and passed.**

*Report*

Bill reported, without amendment, and the report adopted.

*Third Reading*

Bill read a third time, on motion by Mr Barnett (Minister for Education), and transmitted to the Council.

*House adjourned at 11.05 pm*

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**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE****GOVERNMENT PROPERTY - SALE**

52. Dr CONSTABLE to the Minister for Environment, Employment and Training:

- (1) In relation to all real estate (land and buildings) sold within the Minister's portfolios in the 1995-96 and 1996-97 financial years -
- (a) where was the real estate situated (giving the actual address of the land and building);
  - (b) for what amount was the real estate sold;
  - (c) when, if ever, was the most recent valuation of the real estate conducted; and
  - (d) what was the value of the real estate according to the valuation?
- (2) What real estate within the Minister's portfolios is currently for sale or in the process of being sold?

Mrs EDWARDES replied:

Western Australian Department of Training:

- (1) 1995/96 - Nil.
- 1996/97 - The department is currently finalising negotiations for 1.5 hectares as outlined below.
- (a) A portion of crown reserve 38189 located at Ennis Avenue, Rockingham adjoining Kolbe College.
  - (b) The settlement price of the land is \$480 000.
  - (c) The Valuer General's Office initiated a market valuation of the land in December 1996, as part of the settlement negotiations.
  - (d) \$480 000.
- (2) None. A property disposal program for the 1997/98 to 1999/2000 period is currently being developed.

Perth Zoo:

Not applicable.

Kings Park and Botanical Gardens:

Not applicable.

Office of Censorship:

Not applicable

Department of Environmental Protection:

Not applicable.

Conservation and Land Management:

Answer to (1), (a) to (d) is set out in the following table:

Property Location	Sale Price \$	Valuation \$	Date of Valuation
1995/96			
Lot 2	110,000	110,000	21.5.96
Lot 15	60,000	60,000	21.5.96
Location 2347	155,000	155,000	21.5.96
Lot 1341	130,000	130,000	21.5.96
Location 11061	160,000	160,000	21.5.96
Location 11062	170,000	170,000	21.5.96
Location 47	110,000	110,000	21.5.96
Pt Location 84	145,000	125,000	21.5.96
Location 4442	190,000	190,000	21.5.96
(All the above properties located in Blackwood Valley)			

1996/97

Pt Location 48	85,000	85,000	21.5.96
Pt Location 1331)			
Location 1765 )			
Lot 17 )			
Lot 2 )	534,500	565,000	21.5.96
Location 928	115,000	115,000	21.5.96
Pt Location 6145	70,000	70,000	21.5.96
Lot 3	800,000	800,000	23.12.96
(All the above properties located in Blackwood Valley)			
Lot 4 (Pemberton)	75,000	60,000	21.5.96
40 Adelaide St. (Busselton)	165,000	162,500	5.6.96

## ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AUTHORITY - POLICIES

307. Dr EDWARDS to the Minister for the Environment:

Will the Minister table the Environmental Protection Authority's positions on -

- (a) shallow and deep well injection disposal;
- (b) rangelands;
- (c) Pilbara development; and
- (d) Greenhouse?

Mrs EDWARDES replied:

- (a)-(d) In respect of parts (a), (b) and (c) of the question, the Environmental Protection Authority's position is still being developed. In respect to part (d), the EPA's position on greenhouse gas is as follows -

Greenhouse gas emissions from specific projects -

- (i) Calculate the greenhouse gas emissions associated with the proposal (using the generally accepted methods);
- (ii) indicate the measures adopted to limit greenhouse gas emissions from the project; and
- (iii) estimate the comparative greenhouse gas efficiency of the project (per unit of product and/or other agreed performance indicators) with the efficiency of other comparable projects producing a similar product to the requirements of the Environmental Protection Authority on advice from the Department of Environmental Protection. Consider entry (whether on a project specific basis, company wide arrangements or within an industrial grouping, as appropriate) into the Commonwealth Government's "Greenhouse Challenge" voluntary cooperative agreement program. The agreement would include, an inventory of emissions; opportunities for abating greenhouse gas emissions in the organisation; a greenhouse gas mitigation action plan; regular monitoring and reporting of performance; and independent performance verification.

## STATE SETTLEMENT PLAN - STRATEGIES

*Minister for the Environment*

377. Ms WARNOCK to the Minister for the Environment; Employment and Training:

- (1) What are the objectives of the Minister's departments' state settlement plan?
- (2) What -
  - (a) internal; and
  - (b) external,
 access strategies have been developed and implemented?
- (3) What -
  - (a) financial; and

- (b) human,  
resources have been allocated to implement the state settlement plan?
- (4) What consultation process has been undertaken by the Minister's department?
- (5) Who from the -
- (a) community;
  - (b) business sector; and
  - (c) academic sector,
- has been consulted?

Mrs EDWARDES replied:

Not applicable to this portfolio.

#### EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING - GOVERNMENT FUNDING

##### *Applications*

408. Mr BROWN to the Minister for Employment and Training:

- (1) Did the Minister issue a Media Release, on 13 February 1997, concerning Kalgoorlie company Positron Pty Ltd receiving more than \$16 000 of State Government funding to help boost the skills of its workers?
- (2) How many companies/training institutions applied for funding under the Western Australian Department of Training's enterprise specific training program for 1997?
- (3) What is the name of each applicant?
- (4) How much has been allocated to each successful applicant?
- (5) What criteria have been used to select successful applicants?

Mrs EDWARDES replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) 72.
- (3)-(4) See paper No 372.
- (5) Applicants were assessed against the selection criteria detailed below. Each criterion will be assessed according to the quality of information and evidence provided in the application.

Essential Criteria: The following essential criteria must be met for an application to be successful -

The organisation is willing to contribute 50 per cent of the total delivery cost of the training program; the course(s) to be delivered are accredited by SSAB to deliver the course(s), or will be prior to commencement (except where a course is considered innovative); the training provider is registered with SSAB to deliver the course(s), or will be prior to commencement (except where a course is considered innovative); the employer will comply with access and participation principles when selecting employees for training (ie selection processes will be fair and equitable but may include the targeting of employees with special needs); the training is additional to training normally provided by the organisation; and the training represents value for money.

Rated Criteria: The following criteria will be rated on a nine point scale. Every criterion must be addressed -

Evidence that the proposed training will improve the performance of the company/business; evidence that demonstrates that there is an identified need for the training program; and evidence that the proposed training will provide skills that are generally applicable across the industry sector.

Other Criteria: To be considered for funding the essential and rated criteria must be addressed. In determining the final recommendations for funding the selection committee will also consider the factors listed below -

The extent to which the training addresses the identified priorities as outlined in the "Priority Areas for Enterprise Specific Tenders" document; encouragement of training for small to medium sized businesses; recognition of regional requirements; and the extent to which the course is innovative.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AUTHORITY - REPORT

##### *Tabling*

588. Dr EDWARDS to the Minister for the Environment:

I refer to the Environmental Protection Authority's call for more power and money in its annual report tabled last week and ask why the Government withheld the tabling of the report until after the State election?

Mrs EDWARDES replied:

A copy of the Environmental Protection Authority's annual report is required to be tabled in each House of Parliament within nine sitting days of that House after receipt of the Report by the Minister. This is a requirement of section 21 of the Environmental Protection Act 1986. I have met that requirement.

#### SMALL BUSINESS - INDUSTRY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

##### *Amendment*

603. Mr BROWN to the Minister for Commerce and Trade:

- (1) Is the Minister aware of an article that appeared in *The West Australian* on 6 March 1997 concerning comments made by the Chief Executive Officer of the Department of Commerce and Trade, Mr Bruce Sutherland?
- (2) Is the Minister aware the article reports the State Government as having amended its Industry Assistance Program to stop big companies soaking up tax payer funded grants intended for small business?
- (3) In terms of total funds made available, what percentage will be directed towards small business?
- (4) What is the Minister's definition of small business?
- (5) Does the Minister consider companies with less than -
  - (a) 10 employees;
  - (b) 20 employees;
  - (c) 100 employees,
 to be small businesses?

Mr COWAN replied:

- (1)-(2) Yes.
- (3) By definition total funds available from the Department of Commerce and Trade for assistance for subsidised small business programs will be allocated 100 per cent to small business. In the 1996-97 financial year, the Department of Commerce and Trade projected expenditure in this area is approximately \$3m.
- (4) The Department of Commerce and Trade uses the Australian Bureau of Statistics' definition of a small manufacturing business which is an enterprise of less than 100 people.
- (5) See (4).

#### GOVERNMENT VEHICLES - LEASING

##### *Cost*

612. Mr BROWN to the Minister for Primary Industry; Fisheries:

- (1) How many vehicles does each department and agency under the Minister's control lease?
- (2) What is the monthly amount each department and agency pays for leasing the vehicles?
- (3) What was the amount each department and agency paid for leasing the vehicles in February 1997?

Mr HOUSE replied:

Fisheries Department -

- (1) 70.
- (2) \$36 027.
- (3) \$36 027.

Agriculture Western Australia -

- (1) 619.
- (2) \$105 980.
- (3) \$105 980.

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND LAND MANAGEMENT - ANNUAL REPORT

*Statistics*

664. Dr EDWARDS to the Minister for the Environment:

- (1) In relation to the Department of Conservation and Land Management's 1995-96 annual report -
  - (a) of the 53 426 tonnes of firewood and the 86 017 tonnes of charcoal logs -
    - (i) how much was jarrah;
    - (ii) what were the amounts of other species;
  - (b) of the 478 440 tonnes of sawmill residue (July to December 1995), how much was -
    - (i) jarrah;
    - (ii) karri woodchips;
    - (iii) marri woodchips?
- (2) Of the 12 991 tonnes of industrial wood, how much was jarrah?
- (3) Of the 2 219 tonnes of "other" (poles, bridge timbers, burls, chopping logs, mining timber, pegging logs and fencing material), how much was jarrah?

Mrs EDWARDES replied:

- (1) (a) (i) 52 343 tonnes of firewood logs and 86 017 tonnes of charcoal logs.  
(ii) 1 083 tonnes of firewood logs, various species not recorded separately.
- (b) (i)-(iii) A breakup of these figures by species is not available.
- (2) None.
- (3) The 1995-96 Annual Report shows 12 219 tonnes of "other" (poles, bridge timbers, burls, chopping logs, mining timber, pegging logs and fencing). Of this amount, 11 594 tonnes was jarrah.

FREMANTLE BYPASS - AIR POLLUTION

*Impact on Environment*

741. Dr EDWARDS to the Minister for the Environment:

What consideration was given to air pollution issues when the Environmental Protection Authority determined the level of environmental impact assessment on the Fremantle eastern bypass?

Mrs EDWARDES replied:

I am advised that air pollution was considered at the time of setting the level of assessment at both the regional and local level. Local air quality is an issue for all major roads and it is expected that all residents near the road will not be subject to adverse air quality resulting from use of the road. To achieve this Main Roads Western Australia (the proponent for the bypass) will carry out modelling and monitoring of the local air quality. Regional air pollution issues are better managed by coordinated Government policies for the whole metropolitan area to improve regional transport efficiency, rather than through environmental assessment of a single road project. To address the issues identified in the Perth Photochemical smog study and the Perth haze study and develop management strategies, a

parliamentary select committee will be established and will convene in the next financial year. I also understand that the Environmental Protection Authority is providing independent advice on the air quality aspects of the metropolitan transport strategy.

#### PORT KENNEDY RESORTS DEVELOPMENT - REPORT

##### *Environmental Conditions*

742. Dr EDWARDS to the Minister for the Environment:

- (1) Has the Port Kennedy Resorts Development submitted a compliance update report to the Department of Environmental Protection on the environmental conditions for the years -
  - (i) 1995;
  - (ii) 1996?
- (2) If not, what action is the DEP taking against the development?

Mrs EDWARDES replied:

- (1) The development phase of the Port Kennedy Regional Recreation Centre commenced in 1995. Port Kennedy Resorts Pty Ltd was required to submit a compliance report in the second half of 1996, however, it requested a deferment of this report to resolve items related to implementation of one of the conditions. The report is expected to be submitted within the next month.
- (2) The Department of Environmental Protection does not consider that any action is necessary against the development at this time. As part of its routine compliance auditing program, the DEP will shortly be conducting a detailed on-site inspection of the project for compliance with conditions set under part IV of the Environmental Protection Act 1986. The DEP will also review the developer's compliance report when submitted.

#### WYNDHAM PORT - HEAVY METALS

##### *Monitoring*

746. Dr EDWARDS to the Minister for the Environment:

- (1) Will the Department of Environmental Protection be conducting an investigation into and around the Wyndham port site following monitoring of heavy metals which shows investigation levels of lead and zinc in some sediment samples?
- (2) If not, why not?
- (3) If so, when will this investigation commence?
- (4) Given that environmental lead exposure represents a cumulative threat to the intellectual development of children aged one to four years, will monitoring of blood lead levels in children in Wyndham be recommended?
- (5) If no monitoring program for blood lead levels in the children of Wyndham is to be recommended, why is this line of investigation into the cumulative effects of 12 years of lead and zinc export not being pursued?

Mrs EDWARDES replied:

- (1)-(2) The Department of Environmental Protection will be requiring the Department of Transport, as the licence holder for the port's ship loading facilities, to undertake an investigation into heavy metal contamination in soils and sediments around the Port of Wyndham.
- (3) The investigation will commence this year along with a program for any required remedial action.
- (4)-(5) This is a matter for the Health Department of Western Australia.

#### KEENE'S PIGGERY - LICENCE

##### *Conditions*

752. Dr EDWARDS to the Minister for the Environment:

- (1) Has a new licence been issued to Keene's Piggery following the expiration of licence No 4323?

- (2) If so, when was this issued and what new conditions does it contain?

Mrs EDWARDES replied:

- (1) Yes.  
(2) Monday 28 April 1997. [See paper No 373.]

LANDCORP - CONTAMINATED WASTES

*Stockpiling*

761. Dr EDWARDS to the Minister for the Environment:

- (1) What is the current status of the investigation into LandCorp's alleged stockpiling of contaminated wastes without the Environmental Protection Authority's approval?  
(2) Is legal action likely to occur on this matter?  
(3) If not, why not?

Mrs EDWARDES replied:

- (1)-(3) This matter is currently under investigation.

TOTALISATOR AGENCY BOARD - RACING DISTRIBUTION

770. Ms WARNOCK to the Minister representing the Minister for Racing and Gaming:

- (1) What is the Totalisator Agency Board budgeted distribution to racing in 1996-97?  
(2) Of that budgeted figure, how much should non-metropolitan racing receive under legislation?  
(3) How much is the Western Australian Turf Club providing to non-metropolitan racing over and above that amount due under legislation?

Mr COWAN replied:

The Minister for Racing and Gaming has provided the following reply -

- (1) \$24.59m as per the budget approved by the new Board of the TAB at its first meeting on 2 August 1996. As the budget was premised on the old board's strategies, the new board has since revised the budget to \$24.06m to align the distribution to the profitability of the TAB.  
(2) 28.09 per cent.  
(3) \$560 000.

TOTALISATOR AGENCY BOARD - FUNDING

*Reduction*

771. Ms WARNOCK to the Minister representing the Minister for Racing and Gaming:

- (1) What is the explanation for the Totalisator Agency Board reducing its funding allocation to the codes during this financial year?  
(2) Is the Minister satisfied that the decision to sell Radio 6PR on 1 December 1994 has been of benefit to the racing industry given the costs and delays in providing adequate radio coverage outside the metropolitan area?  
(3) What promotional plan is proposed for non-metropolitan racing in the absence of radio coverage of racing in some non-metropolitan areas?

Mr COWAN replied:

The Minister for Racing and Gaming has provided the following reply -

- (1) As sales growth levels are less than originally budgeted this reduced the funds available to the TAB for allocation to the codes in accordance with section 28 of the Totalisator Agency Board Betting Act.  
(2) Yes. Delays have been due to planning reviews carried out by the Australian Broadcasting Authority.



- (3) Racing coverage will be provided by Racing Radio and by arrangement with ABC Regional Radio until Racing Radio is able to take over transmission.

TOTALISATOR AGENCY BOARD - NEW

*Improvements in Turnover and Returns*

772. Ms WARNOCK to the Minister representing the Minister for Racing and Gaming:

Has the appointment of a new Totalisator Agency Board, a new logo and the advertising campaign resulted in substantial improvements in -

- (a) turnover sales to the end of March 1997;
- (b) returns to the industry to the end of March 1997;
- (c) turnover tax to the end of March 1997?

Mr COWAN replied:

The Minister for Racing and Gaming has provided the following reply -

- (a)-(c) The new Board, new corporate signage/image and the TAB's advertising/promotional campaigns, along with all the other strategies of the Board, have resulted in the TAB's positive results to the end of March 1997.

OFFICE OF MULTICULTURAL INTERESTS - REVIEW

*Cost*

782. Ms WARNOCK to the Minister for Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs:

- (1) When was the review of the Office of Multicultural Interests undertaken?
- (2) Will the Minister name the consultant who undertook the review of OMI?
- (3) Was the selection of a consultant subject to open tendering?
- (4) When was the tender advertised?
- (5) How much did the review cost?
- (6) Did the cost of the review come out of the OMI budget?

Mr BOARD replied:

- (1) The administrative review of the Office of Multicultural Interests was completed in September 1996.
- (2) The administrative review was prepared internally by the Department of Local Government.
- (3)-(6) Not applicable.

MIGRANTS - GOVERNMENT COMMITTEES AND BOARDS

*Membership*

783. Ms WARNOCK to the Minister for Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs:

- (1) Does the Government have a policy of encouraging people of migrant or "ethnic" background to join Government boards and committees?
- (2) If so, which Government boards and committees have members of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds?
- (3) How many boards and committees within the Minister's portfolio area have members from such backgrounds?

Mr BOARD replied:

- (1) Membership of government boards and committees is open to all members of the community regardless of background, and, where membership is not statutorily determined, it is based on individual interest and the expertise to make a contribution. The Ethnic Communities Council of WA provides representation for the ethnic community where appropriate for a particular committee.

(2) Given the number of government boards and committees, the research required to determine this information would be costly particularly where appointees were not appointed on the basis of their cultural or linguistic background nor asked to provide ethnicity data on appointment. I am not prepared to commit the resources for such broad ranging research.

(3) There are no ministerially appointed committees or boards in the Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs portfolio.

DISCRIMINATION AND RACISM - STATE COMMUNITY RELATIONS STRATEGY

*Implementation*

788. Ms WARNOCK to the Minister for Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs:

When will the Minister put into action the Government's promised State Community Relations Strategy to tackle racism and discrimination?

Mr BOARD replied:

The Community Relations Strategy Committee is currently in the process of completing the strategy.

ETHNIC COMMUNITIES - GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE

*Business Dealings*

789. Ms WARNOCK to the Minister for Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs:

Has the Minister produced a document to assist business in dealing with ethnic communities?

Mr BOARD replied:

The Government is keen to increase interaction between business and the ethnic communities and is considering a number of strategies to include the private sector in a range of consultative mechanisms and activities to achieve this.

POLICE - TRAINING IN CULTURAL DIVERSITY

790. Ms WARNOCK to the Minister for Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs:

(1) Has the Government started its "Train the Trainer" system based on its multicultural policy with the police service?

(2) If not, when will it begin?

Mr BOARD replied:

(1)-(2) The National Police Ethnic Advisory Bureau in conjunction with all Australian police jurisdictions is currently developing a national training standard for the delivery of cultural diversity training for police.

GOVERNMENT INSTRUMENTALITIES - GUIDELINES FOR CULTURAL DIVERSITY

*Introduction*

791. Ms WARNOCK to the Minister for Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs:

(1) Has the Government introduced its guidelines to assist government agencies in responding to a culturally diverse clientele?

(2) If not, when will they be introduced?

Mr BOARD replied:

(1)-(2) The Government, through the Office of Multicultural Interests, is developing a formal set of guidelines based on Western Australia's multicultural policy to assist public sector agencies in responding to their culturally diverse customers. It is intended that these guidelines will be formally introduced into the public sector later this year.

GOVERNMENT INSTRUMENTALITIES - TRAINING PACKAGES TO MEET MULTICULTURAL CUSTOMERS' NEEDS

792. Ms WARNOCK to the Minister for Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs:

(1) Has the Government developed training packages to ensure that every public sector agency has information that will assist it in dealing with needs of multicultural customers?

- (2) If not, when will they be developed?

Mr BOARD replied:

- (1)-(2) The Office of Multicultural Interests is keen to develop training packages as an adjunct to the guidelines which are aimed at assisting public sector agencies in responding to their culturally diverse customers. The Office proposes that these packages be developed in conjunction with the Public Sector Management Office.

#### EDUCATION - LANGUAGE LEARNING RESOURCES CENTRES

##### *Funding*

793. Ms WARNOCK to the Minister for Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs:

- (1) How many language learning resources centres has the Government funded throughout the State in concert with local government?
- (2) How many are planned?
- (3) What funding has been provided for this in 1996-97?

Mr BOARD replied:

- (1) 34.
- (2) The total number planned depends on grants committee assessments following receipt of applications for the 1996-97 and 1997-98 rounds of funding.
- (3) \$392 000.

#### MULTICULTURAL AND ETHNIC AFFAIRS - ETHNIC COMMUNITIES COUNCIL OF WA

##### *Consultation*

794. Ms WARNOCK to the Minister for Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs:

When will the Government conduct a review of community consulting mechanisms to ensure the Government is aware of community needs?

Mr BOARD replied:

The Government provides funds to the Ethnic Communities Council of WA to act as a consultative mechanism and to provide it with advice on issues of importance to the ethnic community. The agreement between the Government and the Ethnic Communities Council is being reviewed in order to streamline the consultation process.

#### COMMUNITY RELATIONS GRANTS PROGRAM - REVISION

##### *Effect*

795. Ms WARNOCK to the Minister for Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs:

- (1) Has the Government revised the Community Relations Grants program?
- (2) If not, when will it be done?
- (3) If yes, what is the effect of that revision?

Mr BOARD replied:

- (1)-(2) The Community Relations Grants program was reviewed in 1996 by the Community Relations Strategy Committee, a committee which includes representatives from the ethnic community, government agencies and non-government service providers.
- (3) Until 1996-97, the Community Relations Grants program had a grant limit of a maximum of \$2 000. In order to allow a greater degree of flexibility and to encourage more substantial outcomes, the revised grants program has removed the maximum grant limit. Grant amounts will vary according to the scope and merit of a project. Priority will be given to community initiatives which, in addition to enhancing community relations objectives, have 'follow-up' potential and flow-on benefits - that is, more than a 'one-off' effect;

attract support from other sources in the form of sponsorship or assistance in kind; and can demonstrate community support (schools, TAFEs, local government, private sector).

#### GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS - DEPARTMENT OF CONTRACT AND MANAGEMENT SERVICES

1012. Mr KOBELKE to the Minister for Works:

- (1) Which companies have category A status for the purpose of tendering for work let by the Department of Contract and Management Services and as from what date did this status apply?
- (2) Which companies have category B status for the purpose of tendering for work let by the Department of Contract and Management Services and as from what date did this status apply?
- (3) Which companies have category C status for the purpose of tendering for work let by the Department of Contract and Management Services and as from what date did this status apply?
- (4) Which companies have category D status for the purpose of tendering for work let by the Department of Contracts and Management Services and as from what date did this status apply?

Mr BOARD replied:

- (1) The following list details category A or conditional category A contractors and the date of their approval to this status -

Broad Construction Services Pty Ltd	19-Mar-97
Consolidated Constructions Pty Ltd	24-Jun-92
Cooper & Oxley Builders Pty Ltd	9-Sep-92
Devaugh Pty Ltd	24-Jun-92
Doric Constructions Pty Ltd	2-Aug-95
Entact Clough Pty Ltd	24-Jun-92
Fletcher Construction Australia	9-Sep-92
Geo A Esslemont & Son	9-Sep-92
Geraldton Building Co Pty Ltd	9-Dec-96
Homestyle Pty Ltd	29-Nov-94
James Hardie Building Systems Pty Ltd	13-Nov-96
Jaxon Construction Pty Ltd	24-Jun-94
John Holland Building and Interiors	18-Jun-91
John Holland Const'n & Engin'g Pty Ltd	12-Sep-92
Keywest Constructions Pty Ltd	9-Sep-92
Leighton Contractors Pty Ltd	24-Jun-92
Multiplex Constructions Pty Ltd	9-Sep-92
Reed Constructions Services Pty Ltd	6-Nov-96
Thiess Contractors Pty Ltd	24-Jun-92
Transfield Construction Pty Ltd	24-Jun-92

- (2) The following list details category B or conditional category B contractors and the date of their approval to this status -

De Francesch Builders	28-Apr-95
Magee Construction NW Pty Ltd	29-Sep-92
Perkins Bros Builders	25-Jun-92
Pindan Constructions	25-Jun-92
Universal Constructions Pty Ltd	29-Sep-92
Wylie & Skene Pty Ltd	25-Jun-92

- (3) The following list details category C or conditional category C contractors and the date of their approval to this status -

Barclay Mowlem Construction (WA) Ltd	9-Sep-92
Best Constructions Pty Ltd	12-Mar-97
Conclad Constructions (Australia) Pty Ltd	12-Sep-92
Decmil Australia	1-Jul-96
Durabuilt	8-Nov-91
Gearing & Hombergen Building & Plumbing	8-Nov-91
Gillard Builders (1977) Pty Ltd	2-Jul-96
Hawk Developments	13-Mar-96
J M & E D Moore	7-Apr-95
K R Stewart Pty Ltd	1-Sep-93
McAlister & McAlister Pty Ltd	30-Apr-92
Merit Projects	Prior to 1990
Multi Develop & Construct	24-Oct-96
PS Chester & Son	25-Jun-92

Palmerston Building Co	25-Jun-92
Prime Projects Construction Pty Ltd	20-Feb-96
Quality Builders Pty Ltd	25-Jun-92
Sizer Homes	22-Feb-96
Southdown Construction Co Pty Ltd	25-Jun-92
Spadaccini Bros	29-Sep-92
Summit Constructions	17-Jul-96
Thornton Building Co Pty Ltd	8-Nov-91
Wauters Enterprises	19-Feb-96

- (4) The following list details category D or conditional category D contractors and the date of their approval to this status -

Advantearing Civil Engineers	10-Jul-92
Alco Building Company Pty Ltd	12-Sep-92
Armace Pty Ltd	31-Jul-96
Aspect Constructions	12-Apr-95
Barry Collins Master Builders Pty Ltd	7-Apr-94
Brian & Trevor Smith Constructions	18-Sep-96
Buckingham Redevelopment Company	12-Sep-92
Callan Constructions	13-Mar-96
Centerline Constructions	24-Jun-92
Charnley-Brice Pty Ltd	10-Oct-96
City Build Pty Ltd	31-Jul-96
Colvin Developments Pty Ltd	4-Jul-96
Dalcon Constructions Pty Ltd	29-Apr-97
Dietrich Bros	8-Nov-91
Duwal Pty Ltd	14-Aug-96
Gascoyne Constructions	8-Nov-91
Goldawn Constructions WA	4-Sep-92
Greenway Homes	26-Nov-87
HIH Enterprises	20-Mar-96
Hamlin Hunter Homes	24-Jun-92
Howard Smith, Builder	29-Sep-92
John Gearing Builders	Prior to 1990
John Silver & Co	17-Nov-92
KBE Contracting Pty Ltd	8-Feb-96
KSC Construction Group	1-Feb-94
Kestral Homes	12-Sep-92
Lakis Constructions Pty Ltd	19-Sep-96
M & O Building Co	24-Jun-92
Mackaway Construction	20-Mar-96
Majstrovich Building Company	2-Sep-93
McGrath Transportable Homes	12-Sep-92
Metropolitan Building and Maintenance	30-Apr-96
Midcity Building and Maintenance	22-Feb-96
Murray River North	9-Jan-92
N & A Costa	Prior to 1990
Newby Constructions	24-Jun-92
P & F Kulker	1-Apr-93
PDC & C Wilson Pty Ltd	Prior to 1990
Pacific Building Co	18-Jun-91
Paul Karamfiles & Son	29-Sep-92
Perum Building and Construction Pty Ltd	30-Apr-96
Princi Constructions Pty Ltd	24-Jun-92
Ranieri & Corasaniti	2-Sep-93
Rapley Wilkinson Master Builders Pty Ltd	19-Feb-96
Rimini Homes	28-Mar-96
S Geha & Co Pty Ltd	23-Dec-96
Scaffidi Developments Pty Ltd	4-Nov-94
Site Project Management Pty Ltd	26-Mar-97
Squire Homes / Squire Constructions	4-Jul-96
Strategic Constructions Pty Ltd	17-Nov-93
T & R Homes WA	12-Sep-92
Tapper & Watkins Construction	17-Nov-94
Tectonics Construction Group Pty Ltd	2-Nov-92
W Fairweather & Son Pty Ltd	10-May-96
WS & KM Eades	7-Nov-96
Western Projects Pty Ltd	1-Jul-96
Yawony Building Company Pty Ltd	4-Apr-96

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

### LABOUR RELATIONS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL- AMENDMENTS

#### *Referral to Legislative Council Standing Committee on Legislation*

**249. Dr GALLOP to the Premier:**

Given that the Government has demonstrated through its own belated actions that the Labour Relations Legislation Amendment Bill 1997 is flawed, will the Premier now do the decent thing and refer the Bill to the upper House's Standing Committee on Legislation, where it can be properly considered instead of being amended on the run?

**Mr COURT replied:**

The Government made it quite clear that it was always prepared to listen to constructive proposals on this legislation.

Mr Marlborough: The 35 000 people marched -

Several members interjected.

Mr COURT: I thought it was 53 000! The Trades and Labor Council decided in January or February that it would not participate in negotiations on this legislation. Last Tuesday night at a meeting with the Australian Council of Trade Unions officials, Jennie George and Tim Palace, and the TLC representatives, they went through the legislation with us. They said that they believed that with some clauses we could meet the same goal with alternative drafting. We said, "If that is the case, would you give us those proposals?" They said that they had an executive meeting on Thursday and would give us the proposals on Friday. A decision was made and given to us at the weekend. We were told that the TLC will not be a party in negotiations on the legislation. The union movement cannot have it both ways; it cannot say that it wants to criticise the legislation and then not be prepared to be part of the negotiations. Similarly, the Labor Party cannot have it both ways; it cannot say that it wants to support the principle of secret ballots and not be prepared to support this legislation.

Mr Marlborough interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! Member for Peel

### LABOUR RELATIONS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL - AMENDMENTS

#### *International Labour Organisation Decision*

**250. Dr GALLOP to the Premier:**

Following the announcement of amendments to the Bill by the Minister for Labour Relations, will the Premier guarantee that the Government will abide by the International Labour Organisation's decision in relation to the Bill, as the Minister for Labour Relations has promised to do?

**Mr COURT replied:**

No, we will abide by the decisions made in this Parliament.

### INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS - INTIMIDATION

#### *Government Action to Prevent*

**251. Mr BAKER to the Minister for Labour Relations:**

Will the Minister inform the House as to the action the Government is taking on intimidation in the workplace?

**Mr KIERATH replied:**

The Government has and always will be opposed to any intimidation in the workplace. It does not matter from whom - whether an employer, other employees or unions - this Government will oppose it. We know that union members can go to the unions for help and employers can go to employers' bodies, and the industrial inspectorate of the Department of Productivity and Labour Relations is there for all people to access their rights in the workplace. We also know that legislation in this State prevents intimidation and standover tactics.

I have tried to show people that we on this side of the House stand for the rule of law. Members on the other side of the House do not stand for the rule of law. I thought members would be interested to know where the Leader of

the Opposition stands on this issue. Recently on talkback radio, a caller said, "I am not a union member, and I have not been allowed to work. I have been coerced and intimidated at work." He went on to say that both the employee and the employer had been blackmailed. Those allegations are very serious. Do members think the Leader of the Opposition's response was that he was opposed to intimidation in the workplace? I have a transcript of what the Leader of the Opposition said. His reply was, "It is a tough world out there." We have seen the Leader of the Opposition's true colours. He does not stand for the protection of workers in the workplace. He stands for protection of union members in the workplace. That is the difference. Luckily, the coalition Government will stand up for the rule of law and will protect all workers against intimidation regardless of from whom it comes and regardless of whether the workers are union members or non-union members.

HEALTH - DEPARTMENT

*Senior Staff, Illegal Transfer*

**252. Dr GALLOP to the Minister for Labour Relations:**

Given the Minister's renewed commitment to the rule of law as expressed in the Parliament today, and given the revelation in the Doig report that was delivered to Parliament last year that the Commissioner of Health had acted illegally in having two senior public servants transferred from the Health Department on the basis of the Public Sector Management Act, will the Minister now be happy to have his behaviour in that affair examined by an independent inquiry?

**Mr KIERATH replied:**

The Leader of the Opposition knows that the inquiry that examined those allegations was independent, and that I was exonerated. I know that the Leader of the Opposition has read the report. He is simply trying to mislead us and to twist it around. This matter has been the subject of debate in this House, and all the allegations of the Opposition have been found to be baseless.

HEALTH - DEPARTMENT

*Senior Staff, Illegal Transfer*

**253. Dr GALLOP to the Minister for Labour Relations:**

Is it not the case that the report conducted by Mr Doig under the Public Sector Management Act did not have the brief to examine the Minister's behaviour in that affair?

**Mr KIERATH replied:**

The Doig report made recommendations, and there was no criticism of me.

TRANSPORT - BUS

*Dayrider Concession Fares*

**254. Mr MARSHALL to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:**

The cancellation of the use of concession Dayrider tickets before 9.00 am has dramatically affected people in the Mandurah region.

Several members interjected.

Mr MARSHALL: Tony Blair may have won the British election, but no member opposite is a Tony Blair.

The SPEAKER: Order! The question, please.

Mr MARSHALL: As two or three buses before 7.00 am are not occupied fully, would it be possible for the Minister to compromise his position and allow concession fares before 7.00 am for people catching buses from Mandurah to Fremantle or Perth?

**Mr OMODEI replied:**

I thank the member for some notice of the question. The Minister for Transport has supplied the following response.

The position is being examined with a view to permitting holders of Dayrider tickets to travel on services prior to 7.00 am but requiring that Dayrider ticket holders not travel on services operating in the peak period between 7.00 and 9.00 am.

NATIVE TITLE - PASTORAL LEASES

*National Party Policy*

**255. Dr GALLOP to the Deputy Premier:**

I refer to the Prime Minister's 10 point plan in response to the High Court's Wik ruling, and ask, in relation to the Western Australia National Party policy -

- (1) Is it still National Party policy to push for the full extinguishment of native title over pastoral leases?
- (2) If so, does that mean the Western Australian National Party will not accept the Prime Minister's 10 point plan?

**Mr COWAN replied:**

- (1)-(2) Extinguishment of native title on all leases has always been the preferred position of the National Party. It is ludicrous for anyone to make a decision to extinguish native title in towns and cities on any type of title that has been granted within those towns and cities and then to discriminate against regional Australia. The preferred position of the National Party is to extinguish native title on leases and to amend the Racial Discrimination Act to permit the introduction of a statutory right of access for Aboriginal people on pastoral lands, as Western Australia sought to do previously. The Prime Minister and Mr Fischer will work out the decision on the Wik matter. The Western Australian National Party is very much on Mr Fischer's side.

OCEAN REEF MARINA - DREDGING

**256. Mr BAKER to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:**

Will the Department of Transport agree to provide funds to assist in either the dredging of Ocean Reef marina or, alternatively, to further and appropriately extend the breakwater at the entrance to the marina to negate the need for ongoing dredging of the entrance?

**Mr OMODEI replied:**

The Minister for Transport has advised that dredging the entrance to the marina forms part of the department's 1997-98 dredging program with \$80 000 being allocated for this purpose. Extension of the breakwater with a view to reducing future dredging is being examined as a possible future capital works project.

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS - MINIMUM WAGE

*Pizza Delivery Drivers*

**257. Mr KOBELKE to the Premier:**

The Premier will be aware that the minimum wage for Western Australians is \$27.40 less than the minimum wage under the federal industrial relations system. Is the Premier also aware that under his Government's industrial relations system pizza delivery drivers can be paid as little as \$13 for three and a half hours' work? Is the Premier also aware that his industrial relations system allows employers to force these drivers to provide their own uniform and float at considerable cost? Does the Premier accept that a \$13 payment for three and a half hours' work is totally unacceptable, and does this appalling exploitation represent the future for young Western Australians under his Government's industrial relations system?

**Mr COURT replied:**

The minimum wage in this State has continued to rise since we came to government. The Opposition said there would be no minimum wage conditions; that is not the case.

Ms MacTiernan: We never said that.

Mr COURT: The Opposition certainly did. I do not have any details on the payment and conditions of pizza drivers. However, if the member for Nollamara is prepared to provide me with that example, I will follow it through.

Mr Kobelke: It was on radio this week. Given the Premier's monitoring of the media he will be well aware of what is going on in this town. Is this another example of the Premier's having no interest in the fate of young people?

Mr COURT: The media monitoring unit has been told that I want to hear only what the member for Nollamara has to say! If the member for Nollamara provides me with those details, I will follow through on that matter. Some years back deals were done in the fast food industry so that some of the fast food chains accepted lower pay and lesser



conditions on the condition that all their employees became union workers. It is interesting that the major chain that was a non-union operation paid considerably more and had better conditions than the union operations.

#### WORKERS' COMPENSATION - SYSTEM

##### *Other States*

**258. Mr McNEE to the Minister for Labour Relations:**

In the first term of this Government there was a highly publicised protest by some union leaders and the Australian Labor Party regarding changes to the workers' compensation system. Can the Minister inform the House of changes occurring in other States?

**Mr KIERATH replied:**

In 1993 this Government made significant and very necessary reforms in the workers' compensation arena. The Opposition had nothing but criticism for those actions. We increased the maximum statutory payments by 13 per cent, and provided new statutory payments for back, pelvic and neck injuries. The increases which limited common law rights were criticised loudly by the Opposition at the time. One could be forgiven for thinking that Labor Governments would be more generous than coalition Governments in the States. Therefore, one can imagine my surprise when I read recently that the New South Wales Labor Government had reduced its statutory payments guaranteed to workers by a massive 25 per cent. That was at a time when this State Government had increased its statutory payments by, on average, 13 per cent. That is the difference between them and us. This is another example of the gaping chasm between the rhetoric and the deeds of Labor Governments in this country.

#### LABOUR RELATIONS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

##### *Striking Workers - Penalties*

**259. Mr KOBELKE to the Minister for Labour Relations:**

This is another opportunity for the Minister to answer the question correctly.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr KOBELKE: I ask -

- (1) Did the Minister announce yesterday, as part of his amendments to the Labour Relations Legislation Amendment Bill, a change to the penalties which will apply to striking employees under proposed section 97B of the Bill?
- (2) Did the Minister claim that this would remove the penalties from striking workers?
- (3) Is it a fact that the illegality of workers' striking provided for in proposed section 97B will still render the workers liable for penalties under section 84A of the Industrial Relations Act?

**Mr KIERATH replied:**

- (1)-(3) We have removed the criminal provisions which would apply to striking union members. Some people in the labour movement have been prepared to come to us and talk sensibly. They have been prepared to make constructive suggestions, as distinct from the campaign run by the Australian Labor Party in this House, and by the Trades and Labor Council. The wiser heads on that side of politics approached the Government and said that they were prepared to make suggestions. The suggestion we have taken on board is the removal of the criminal provisions. However, people will still be subject to the penalties provided in the Act.

#### TRANSPORT - CONCESSIONAL FARES

##### *Occupation of Seats*

**260. Mr MARSHALL to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:**

Both an elderly constituent and a disabled constituent have complained that youngsters occupying bus seats, and travelling on concession rates, no longer give up their seats for elderly people who are standing. Is this accusation correct and is there any compulsion that youngsters should give up their seats for elderly people?

**Mr OMODEI replied:**

I thank the member for some notice of this question. The Minister for Transport has provided the following response.

Although the regulations of Westrail and MetroBus require a student to give up a seat if asked to do so, the preferred approach is to encourage through education younger people's respect for senior citizens and those with mobility difficulties and the yielding of seats as a matter of courtesy. In this way, potential confrontation and service disruption will be minimised.

#### TRANSPORT - CONCESSIONAL FARES

##### *Dayrider - Rorting*

**261. Mr CARPENTER to the Minister for Disability Services:**

I refer to the Minister's claim in this place that people had been rorting the MetroBus Dayrider pass system.

- (1) Was the Minister claiming that people with disabilities who are entitled to concessions have been rorting the system?
- (2) If not, to whom was the Minister referring as rorting the system?
- (3) How does the Minister believe they have been rorting the system?
- (4) What evidence does the Minister have for his assertions?

**Mr OMODEI replied:**

- (1)-(4) The comment by the member for Willagee arises from a matter of public interest that was discussed in this House last week. I note with interest that the member for Armadale has also seized on the opportunity to raise this matter. The Government has moved to close a loophole in concessional fares. The member for Armadale said I accused pensioners of rorting the system. Now I am accused of saying that people with disabilities may be rorting the system. It was not my intention to impugn pensioners or people with disabilities.

Mrs Roberts: That is what you said. I heard it.

Mr OMODEI: The member for Midland should listen to my answer. I did not say anything about pensioners or people with disabilities; I said some concessional card holders were abusing the system. Many hundreds of thousands of people use the public transport system and the concession component is open to abuse. That is the advice given to me by the Minister for Transport's officers. If members opposite are unsure of that situation, they should take up that matter with the Minister for Transport or the Department of Transport. I understand that no-one on the other side of the House has sought a briefing from the Minister for Transport's office on this matter. I understand this issue will be debated as a matter of public interest following question time. I am sure more light will be cast on the subject then.

#### TRANSPORT - CONCESSIONAL FARES

##### *Dayrider - Rorting*

**262. Mr CARPENTER to the Minister for Disability Services:**

As a supplementary question I ask: Who is rorting the system and how are they rorting it?

**Mr OMODEI replied:**

I just explained that the advice given to me is that the Government has moved to close some of the loopholes involving concession transport users. That system has been abused in the past.

Dr Gallop: You can't just say that.

Mr OMODEI: I just said it. I understand the concession category has been abused in the past and the Government is moving to close that loophole.

#### LOCAL GOVERNMENT - ELECTIONS

##### *Polling Statistics*

**263. Mr BLOFFWITCH to the Minister for Local Government:**

In the recent local government elections -

- (1) Was there an increase or decrease in the participation of electors compared with previous elections?

- (2) Was there any problem with the first past the post voting system?
- (3) How many councils used postal votes and what was the result of the participation of those councils?

**Mr OMODEI replied:**

- (1)-(3) There was a general increase in voter turnout in this election. There are a number of reasons for that. This is the first time elections have been run with the first past the post system and the use of ticks for voters to indicate their choice of candidate. However, the turnout in major cities such as Wanneroo and Stirling was 6.5 per cent and 9 per cent respectively, and for the City of Canning the figure was about 11 per cent. The turnout in some country towns and shires was still low. The City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder had a 16 per cent turnout, the Shire of Harvey 21 per cent, and the Shire of Dardanup about 17 per cent. Minor problems arose in the interpretation of the details of how to vote. Guidelines were sent out by the Department of Local Government prior to the elections and discussions took place in most municipalities. An important point is that there were good turnouts in areas where mayoral elections were held. A number of mayors were defeated, and many were returned.

The outstanding result of the election was the success of postal voting. Armadale, Bunbury, Cambridge, Melville, Perth, Victoria Park and Vincent used the postal voting system. There was a 60 per cent turnout in the Bunbury election, which is excellent. That vindicates my choice of postal voting for local government elections. The Government will analyse the outcome of the election over the next month or so and make any necessary amendments to ensure it runs smoothly in the future.

EAST PERTH REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY - CHAIRMAN

*Recommendation*

**264. Dr EDWARDS to the Minister for Planning:**

I again refer to the Minister's statement that he nominated Richard Lewis to be Chairman of the East Perth Redevelopment Authority after Mr Lewis was nominated by someone else.

Who recommended Mr Lewis to him?

**Mr KIERATH replied:**

I think this will be my fifth attempt to answer this question.

Ms MacTiernan: You are having difficulty answering it.

Mr KIERATH: Not at all. I am intrigued by members' fascination with the subject. I have previously indicated the various people who provided me with nominations. Some were self-nominations and others were nominated by individuals. Someone nominated Richard Lewis. I thought his recommendation was an extremely good idea. As no-one in the State could be more qualified, I took the recommendation forward to appointment.

AGRICULTURE - RURAL ADJUSTMENT AND FINANCE SCHEME

*Report - Recommendations*

**265. Mr McNEE to the Minister for Primary Industry:**

Has the Minister had an opportunity to examine the recently released report on the rural adjustment and finance scheme; if so, what are his views?

**Mr HOUSE replied:**

The federal Minister for Primary Industry, John Anderson, commissioned a review into the rural adjustment and finance scheme about 12 months ago. We were fortunate in having a Western Australian representative on that review team. That is probably because four years ago we revamped our rural adjustment scheme in Western Australia. It is now seen as a model for the rest of Australia to follow. However, because we are bound very much by the commonwealth guidelines, the deliberations of the Federal Government and the federal Minister are important.

That review, at which I have had a very brief look, was handed to John Anderson a couple of weeks ago and released about the middle of last week. It embodies the principles put in place in Western Australia; that is, the development of management by offering advice and direction to assist farmers in upgrading their management skills rather than giving them direct financial assistance.

Most people who have had some connection with rural Western Australia will agree that that is a move in the right direction. It is no longer appropriate to assist agriculture by injecting taxpayers' funds into that form of private enterprise. I am sure that most farmers will agree that they should develop a different method of doing business.

Mr Grill: It was not a view of your party five years ago.

Mr HOUSE: It is amazing what a difference the transition from opposition to government will do to one's thinking, as the member for Eyre will be well aware. Provided John Anderson accepts the recommendations of that committee, agriculture can look forward to the future with confidence.

#### GRACETOWN TRAGEDY - POLICE HELICOPTER

##### *Refusal to Deploy*

#### **266. Mrs ROBERTS to the Minister for Police:**

I refer to the coroner's findings concerning the deaths of nine people at Gracetown last year.

- (1) Why did Assistant Commissioner Bill Mott refuse a request to use the police helicopter to transport the police emergency identification team to Gracetown after the cliff collapse?
- (2) Was the helicopter being used at the time for a promotional purpose?
- (3) If the helicopter was available, was the decision not to use it responsible?
- (4) What duties and roles is the police helicopter expected to perform in an average week?

#### **Mr DAY replied:**

I thank the member for some notice of this question. The Police Service of Western Australia has provided me with the following advice.

- (1) The decision to transport the entire disaster victim identification team to the Gracetown disaster scene by road and not by police helicopter was arrived at after a number of factors were taken into consideration. These factors included: Firstly, the lateness of the hour; secondly, the time it would take to recall the helicopter pilot and crew; thirdly, the time it would take to prepare the helicopter for flight; and, fourthly, the fact that only part of the DVIT and equipment could be included because of space restrictions on the aircraft. The difference in time to move the entire DVIT by road instead of air was less than one hour.
- (2) No. I have explained that it always takes time to mobilise people and to get the helicopter up and running.
- (3) Yes, in view of all these circumstances and taking into account the factors I have mentioned.
- (4) Between 10 and 12 hours flight time a week is expended in the activities of standby for search and rescue, training and routine patrol.

I am aware that the coroner inquiring into this matter made the following recommendation in his findings last week -

That in the event of future disasters, the Police Service establish protocols to enable a response by the Disaster Victim Identification Team and where appropriate the pathologist to take place by the most expedient means.

I advise that the WA Police Service has now established appropriate protocols and procedures following last year's tragedy. These changes have been made to police standard operating procedures, and now require that if any delay is likely to occur, an advance group, including a forensic pathologist, is to be transported to the scene in the most expeditious manner possible.

#### INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS - DISPUTE

##### *Police Videotape*

#### **267. Mrs ROBERTS to the Minister for Police:**

The Minister will be aware that on Tuesday last week police officers videotaped demonstrators taking part in the anti-third wave protest outside Parliament House. I ask -

- (1) Given that the protest was peaceful and there were no arrests, has the footage now been destroyed?
- (2) Alternatively, do police intend to keep the footage and, if so, for what purpose?

**Mr DAY replied:**

- (1)-(2) I am not aware of whether the videotape has been destroyed. I understand it will be destroyed in due course, but I will seek information from the Police Service to ascertain whether it has been destroyed at this stage.
-