

HIGHGATE PRIMARY SCHOOL

193. Mr P.J. RUNDLE to the Minister for Education:

I refer to the rapid increase in the enrolment numbers at Highgate Primary School, which have increased from 567 to 930 over the past five years, and to the real issue of overcrowding impacting the school community. Given the \$13 billion in budget surpluses over the past three years of this government, and the previous identification of new school sites by the Department of Education, when and where will the government build a new school to alleviate the pressures on the staff and students at Highgate Primary?

Dr A.D. BUTI replied:

I believe the member paid a visit to Highgate Primary School during the week, and he would have seen what a fantastic school it is and how the principal —

Mr P.J. Rundle: Yes, and it's very overcrowded.

Dr A.D. BUTI: The principal spoke very highly of the local member and the government when I went for my visit, and I assume he did the same to the member. Did he say to the member what a great job the government is doing? Did he tell the member that?

Several members interjected.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Since 2017 the state government has invested \$1.8 million on various infrastructure upgrades at Highgate Primary School, with an additional \$50 000 for high-priority maintenance works, and another \$1 million for transportable accommodation to support the increasing enrolments at the school. We also secured 785 square metres of extra land, which I am sure the member would have seen, that has been used by the school since 2022. The Department of Education recently had a meeting with the City of Vincent to look at potential options for shared use of open space.

The Department of Education has been actively involved in monitoring the enrolment growth in that area, and plans are well advanced for preparation of a business case to address the enrolment pressures at Highgate Primary School. The local member for Perth has been a strong advocate in that space for a number of years. We are progressing the issue of an inner-city or CBD primary school, but it is an incredibly important decision to make. There are significant issues and challenges when we build a new school in the inner city, whether that be traffic management, contamination, suitable ground conditions et cetera. I can assure the member that we are well advanced in looking at building another school in the area, and, as I have just said, we have spent significant amounts of money and investment in Highgate Primary, as the member would know from his visit.

With regard to the issue of toilets, the member would know that there is a sufficient number of toilets at Highgate Primary. The issue is that an additional building has been put in and that has resulted in some toilets being used more than others. The department, the local member, the Minister for Planning and I, and the whole of government, are working very carefully and methodically and are looking at when we will be able to make an announcement about a possible new inner-city primary school.