

HALLS CREEK - NON-ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL

1. Mr P.D. OMODEI to the Premier:

As a supplementary question, are there breakfast programs and sports activities at Halls Creek?

Mr A.J. CARPENTER replied:

Certainly there are sports activities in the community. I went through that. I understand - I had a note on it yesterday - that there are breakfast programs at Halls Creek. I stand to be corrected.

Mr P.D. Omodei: Why are the kids still not going to school? What are you doing about it?

Several members interjected.

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: I am hesitant to give an absolutely definitive answer about the breakfast program at Halls Creek. My recollection is that there is a breakfast program and a lunch program at Halls Creek. I believe that is so. I can provide that information definitively before the end of the day. If they are not provided, perhaps that is another initiative we could look at. Even with the supply of that form of support, there will be students - too many of them; sometimes very high numbers of them - who do not attend for some periods; for some students, for very long periods. The Department of Education and Training works extremely hard at trying to make sure that all the students attend.

I will finish on this note: every initiative that a government puts in place will fail if it is not met with a reciprocal willingness by the community for it to work. There is a responsibility on members of the community - as individuals, families and groups - to step up to the plate and do their part. As long as that is not happening - and in some families it does not happen for all sorts of reasons -

Dr S.C. Thomas: That community is asking for help.

The SPEAKER: Order, member for Capel!

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: I ask the member for Capel to reflect on the question he asked of the Minister for Indigenous Affairs, because it does not do him justice. He did not think through that question. We do not live in South Africa, which dictates to people where they must live. We do not live in South Africa and we do not say to people that we are sorry, but we will not let them live in Halls Creek or Balgo. We do not live in that sort of community.

Mr T.R. Buswell: It's not about that, and you know it.

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: It is about that; I am sorry. If those sorts of policies were ever employed in Western Australia, and they probably were, they have long since lapsed. The member should think about the questions that he asks. I strongly suggest that he is a person of goodwill and good intent. He should educate himself.