

SCHOOLS — VIOLENCE

**197. Mr P.J. RUNDLE to the Minister for Education:**

I refer to the recent spate of violence in schools, and weapons being brought to school by students as young as year 2, along with the profound statement by a teacher that there is no shortage of teachers in WA, rather, there is a shortage of teachers who are willing to work in WA.

- (1) What is the minister doing to support those teachers who are under siege?
- (2) Is the minister's bureaucratic processes on exclusion making it too difficult to move-on violent and disruptive students?

**Dr A.D. BUTI replied:**

- (1)–(2) This is an incredibly important issue. Before I answer that, can I wish Kirsten all the best of luck. Thank you for all your service.

In regard to this issue of violence in schools, we have done more than any government in this area. The former Minister for Education and Training introduced policies in this area, and in the last year I enhanced those policies. We made it quite clear to all principals that we will have their backs if they want to exclude students for violent behaviour. We also said we have their backs if they want to seek a prohibition order for a parent entering a school premises if they are engaging in abusive behaviour towards teachers. Exclusion rates have actually gone up, so the process is not too bureaucratic; the process is appropriate. Ideally, we would not want to exclude any student from a WA school, but of course the safety of students and staff is very, very important.

As I said, in July last year, I revised the 10-point action plan that was put in place by the previous minister, called *Standing together against violence*. We made it quite clear, and we received overwhelming support from all the stakeholders who were very appreciative that the state government and Department of Education have made a stance on this. But as the member for Roe would realise, schools are a reflection of society and communities. The member cannot blame the school environment for someone bringing a knife onto the premises. It is a disturbing trend, but I can assure the member that the Minister for Education, the Cook Labor government and the Department of Education are supporting our principals and teachers to ensure that we have a safe work environment for staff and a proper learning environment for students.