

BALGA WORKS PROGRAM

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

- (1) When did the Balga Works program or any of its previous incarnations first receive any form of financial assistance from the state government?
- (2) Which department or agency did the funding come from, how much was it and what was it for?
- (3) What other financial assistance has the Balga Works program or any of its previous incarnations received from the state government, and what amounts and departments or agencies were involved?
- (4) Which, if any, of the funding was approved at ministerial or cabinet level?
- (5) Who signed the memorandum of understanding between Balga Senior High School and Hurson Pty Ltd in relation to the Balga Works program?
- (6) Will the Premier table the memorandum of understanding; and, if not, why not?

Mr A.J. CARPENTER replied:

- (1)-(6) I thank the Leader of the Opposition for some notice of this question. Yesterday I asked that the questions be put on notice. There are many questions, even within each question. I also asked that the Leader of the Opposition direct those questions to the relevant ministers. The questions asked are very detailed. An analysis of the questions concludes that it requires significant research.

Mr T.R. Sprigg: Cover-up!

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

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: The Leader of the Opposition will appreciate that a definitive answer to those questions requires significant research. I will provide the information that I am aware of. With respect to the education and training component of the Balga Works program, I am advised that a memorandum of understanding was signed between the former principal of Balga Senior High School, Mr Merv Hammond, and the director of Manufacturing Industry Training Services Pty Ltd - MITS - Mr Michael Carton on 14 February 2005. The Department of Education and Training became aware of the presence of the MOU in November 2005. The Department of Education and Training immediately advised the Corruption and Crime Commission of the MOU in November 2005. In December 2005, the CCC advised the department that there was no impropriety and took no action. In June 2006 the minister's office was made aware of outstanding salary payments to staff working in the Balga Works program. I am advised that the minister's office arranged a number of meetings at which Mr Carton indicated that outstanding salaries would be paid from federal funds. These federal funds apparently were not forthcoming. I am advised that sufficient funds were made available from the Department of Education and Training to meet the salary and contingency commitments for the in-school Balga Works program until it ceased operation in its original form in October 2006. The Balga Works issue has been referred back to the Corruption and Crime Commission and police for further examination into the conduct of the people involved. We expect everyone involved in this issue to fully cooperate with that examination.

I am advised that the Department for Community Development currently pays the Balga Senior High School Parents and Citizens Association for accommodation for nine young people in the Balga Works program. Today the acting executive director made a decision to withdraw all young people from the program as soon as possible. In addition, it was decided that no other children would be placed there. I ask that the Leader of the Opposition request that the Minister for Education and Training table the memorandum of understanding. With regard to the other issues, I ask that the Leader of the Opposition request the information from the relevant ministers.