

OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION - PREMIER'S INVOLVEMENT

**320. Mr P.D. OMODEI to the Premier:**

I refer to the numerous assertions of both the Minister for Education and Training and the Premier that they would not be changing their implementation plan for outcomes-based education.

- (1) Does the Premier concede that because of his obstinate support for the Minister for Education and the Premier's OBE plan in the past, his recent concession on the need for change has damaged his own credibility and leadership?
- (2) Why has it taken the Premier until now to realise there is a problem with his OBE plan, and will he concede that the belated changes he is now negotiating have the potential to confuse teachers even further?
- (3) Will the Premier take this opportunity to pledge to Western Australia's teachers that he will leave the door open for the implementation of OBE to be delayed if they are still not ready following these changes; and, if not, why not?

**Mr A.J. CARPENTER replied:**

I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. Before I respond, I welcome the students of West Morley Primary School to the Parliament. Also, I am sure I am speaking for everybody in the Parliament in congratulating the Socceroos.

Members: Hear, hear!

**Mr A.J. CARPENTER:** What a great night it was! It was one of the greatest moments in Australia's sporting history, I think. What a genius "Golden" Guus Hiddink is! Next stop, Fremantle Dockers. I think he is definitely the next coach. If we can appoint Ric Charlesworth, we can appoint Guus Hiddink, no problem about that. I will round that off by saying I stayed awake until the 70-minute mark, so I am one of the world's great losers. I could not believe it when I woke up this morning and realised what I had missed. Anyway, it was brilliant, a great achievement; let us hope they can keep going.

- (1)-(3) In relation to the issue raised by the Leader of the Opposition, as far as I recall I have always said that whenever genuine concerns were raised by teachers we would endeavour to address them, and we have. That is the fact of the matter. Whenever genuine concerns were raised by the teachers we sought to address them, and I think we are doing that successfully. We had a very good meeting a couple of weeks ago with the subject association heads and drew out from each of the subject associations, representing the teachers of all those subjects, what the concerns were that could be addressed. The Minister for Education and I were obviously working together there. A series of meetings went on. The Minister for Education, the Curriculum Council, the Department of Education and Training and all the stakeholders worked together to try to address the issues, which really were around certainty of content and context, comparability between schools and students, and the assessment process and the workload associated with that.

My belief is that after the very constructive meeting we held in my office on Sunday morning, chaired by the education minister, we have very good support for the modifications that have been made to the introduction of outcomes-based education in years 11 and 12. I am hopeful, although obviously nothing is guaranteed, that the State School Teachers' Union council will accept those changes at its meeting on the weekend and this matter can then proceed with all concerned being satisfied that the implementation is manageable. That is my position.

In relation to the other issues raised by the Leader of the Opposition, it has been a difficult process. It may have damaged my credibility. Lots of things that I do and say may damage my credibility. I am not the person who is able to judge that. The Leader of the Opposition can make those judgments, and, ultimately I suppose, my colleagues and the wider community make the judgment. My view of it - and I am very objective, as members would appreciate - is that it will be seen that the government had a significant reform agenda, which has been going on for some time now, and we were keen to make sure that agenda went ahead. Momentum was building. We recognise that genuine concerns were raised about the process and the reform itself and, as we said we would, we have sought to address those concerns.

Perhaps members of the Liberal Party believe that governments lose credibility for going ahead with the planned programs they present to the community and for making adjustments along the way to accommodate the community's concerns, but I do not. If governments do lose credibility for that, I will feel the brunt of it in time. We now are in a good position. I had a lot of constructive support from

members of the Parliament on both sides. I cannot name everybody in the Parliament who gave their support, but those members know who they are; I am very grateful to them. However, I can name the members on the government's side. I had great support from the members for Wanneroo, Bassendean and the member for Central Kimberley-Pilbara. Members can see that I am excited by the whole thing; I have lost all context. I thank those three members of Parliament for the individual input they have provided, and I thank also those members on the other side of the house who may or may not wish to be recognised.

This reform is being implemented in the best interests of young Western Australians. The prime focus must be the interests of the students, so that they will be in a position to take advantage of the wonderful potential the Western Australian economy can offer them. I am grateful that we now have the support of the broader education community. I have a meeting to attend on the weekend, but I hope to get a good resolution from it.