

SOUTH-WEST EDUCATION CENTRE

281. Mr OMODEI to the Minister for Education:

I refer the minister to the July 2001 report "Investing in Government Schools" which recommends that "the possible consolidation of some country services, for example, in Bunbury and Warren-Blackwood, into one south-west education centre." Given the dire economic situation that already exists in Manjimup due to this Government's city-centric forest policy, will the minister categorically rule out the closure of the Warren-Blackwood district office, which employs 17 full-time workers?

Mr CARPENTER replied:

I thank the member for his question, and for his continuing interest in education in his electorate; it is something for which he should be congratulated. In fact, this afternoon I have organised, as the member requested, to speak to the President of the Parents and Citizens Association at Pemberton District High School.

There are numerous recommendations in that report and I embrace the totality of it. It does not necessarily mean that specific instances such as the one that the member fears will come about. We need to have a rational and sensible approach to the delivery of education in Western Australia. Under my direction as the minister, this Government will do everything possible to ensure that students, wherever they are in Western Australia, are given equitable access to high standards of education, and that includes in the member for Warren-Blackwood's electorate. I have not directly addressed the specific instance that the member has raised. However, I will not take any action that will diminish the educational opportunities of children in the member's electorate.