

MURESK INSTITUTE OF AGRICULTURE — COWAN REPORT

**503. Mr M.P. MURRAY to the Minister for Education:**

Thank you for the call, Mr Speaker. It seems that the absence last week has caused a bit of a queue.

I refer to the Cowan report on Muresk Institute of Agriculture college and ask —

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Thank you, members to my right!

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** I refer to the Cowan report on Muresk college.

- (1) When did the minister or her office first receive the report and has the minister read the report?
- (2) What are the key recommendations of the report?
- (3) Will the minister be taking the report to cabinet; and, if so, when and for what purpose?
- (4) When will the minister release this report to the public?

**Dr E. CONSTABLE replied:**

- (1)–(4) Some time ago I asked a former member of Parliament, Hon Hendy Cowan, to look into a number of issues related to Muresk college. Curtin University, which has the management order over the property, has determined that as from the end of next year it will not have students at that campus, making it really important for us to look into the needs of agricultural education generally and the future of Muresk specifically, which is a very, very important institution in Western Australia and in agricultural education.

I received the report in July—I think it was July; I do not have the exact date—and reported its receipt to cabinet. That excellent and succinct report looked at all aspects of agricultural education, including the wonderful work that is done in our agricultural colleges at school level and also in research and teaching in agriculture. This is an industry in which we have to work very hard to make sure that we are training enough competent people to work at all levels in agriculture. It is a workforce in which we must be very careful to make sure that we have well-qualified and well-trained people. This report has given us a very good view of where we need to go in the future of agricultural education. We are working through the recommendations of that report and looking at the future of Muresk. I expect an announcement about the future of Muresk to be made very shortly.