

Chairman; Mr John Day; Mr Norm Marlborough; Mr Grant Woodhams; Mr Shane Hill; Dr Elizabeth Constable;  
Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr Mick Murray; Dr Judy Edwards; Mr J. McGrath; Mr Peter Watson; Mr  
Trevor Sprigg

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**Division 19: Education and Training, \$3 263 176 000 -**

Mrs D.J. Guise, Chairman.

Mr N.R. Marlborough, Minister Assisting the Minister for Education and Training.

Mr P. Albert, Director General.

Ms S. A. O'Neill, Acting Deputy Director General, Schools.

Ms C. Cook, Acting Executive Director, Curriculum Standards.

Mr K.A. O'Keefe, Executive Director, Teaching and Learning South.

Mr K. Newton, Executive Director, Teaching and Learning North.

Ms S. Mulvey, Executive Director, Planning and Resources.

Mr P.J. McCaffrey, Chief Finance Officer.

Mr A.A. Huts, Executive Director, Human Resources.

Mr B.A. Doyle, Chief Information Officer.

Mr M. J. Parr, Acting Director, Facilities and Services.

**The CHAIRMAN:** A quorum is present. This estimates committee will be reported by Hansard staff. The daily proof *Hansard* will be published at 9.00 am tomorrow.

The estimates committee's consideration of the estimates will be restricted to discussion of those items for which a vote of money is proposed in the consolidated fund. This is the prime focus of the committee. While there is scope for members to examine many matters, questions need to be clearly related to a page number, item, program, or amount within the volumes. For example, members are free to pursue performance indicators that are included in the budget statements while there remains a clear link between the questions and the estimates.

It is the intention of the Chairman to ensure that as many questions as possible are asked and answered and that both questions and answers are short and to the point.

The minister may agree to provide supplementary information to the committee, rather than asking that the question be put on notice for the next sitting week. For the purpose of following up the provision of this information, I ask the minister to clearly indicate to the committee which supplementary information he agrees to provide and I will then allocate a reference number. If supplementary information is to be provided, I seek the minister's cooperation in ensuring that it is delivered to the Committee Clerk by 9 June 2006, so that members may read it before the report and third reading stages. If the supplementary information cannot be provided within that time, written advice is required of the day by which the information will be made available. Details in relation to supplementary information have been provided to both members and advisers and accordingly I ask the minister to cooperate with those requirements.

I caution members that if a minister asks that a matter be put on notice, it is up to the member to lodge the question on notice with the Clerk's office. Only supplementary information that the minister agrees to provide will be sought by 9 June 2006.

I remind members that they will need to seek the call from me. The member for Darling Range has the first question.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** I refer to service 2, "Secondary Education", at page 349 of the *Budget Statements*. I refer to a small part of a letter that I received from a teacher in the government school system. The teacher works in a government high school in country Western Australia and is a head of department. He did not want me to give his name because of the edict from the department that any teacher who is known to be speaking out on the issue of outcomes-based education will have action taken against him and suffer consequences. That was apparently an edict issued by the director general a few weeks ago or so. The teacher is known to me and the Premier. I understand that he was previously known to the current Minister for Education and Training. Amongst other things, he wrote that on 13 April he attended day two of the new courses of study for history. He said the experience was disappointing, if not sad. He was left more concerned than ever about the future of students and the system. He said that the materials presented revealed a multilayered bureaucratic approach to the teaching of children that is almost incomprehensible to teachers, let alone children and their parents. He said that what was offered up as the future of history could well be its death knell. He said that he feared for geography and economics as well. I will not say too much more but I will refer to a couple of other comments. He said that the problem that the Department of Education and Training has created for itself is that the measures of success

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revolve around students attaining and moving through the levels until they reach the point of exit at the conclusion of year 12. This places levelling at the centre of the process of teaching, regardless of whether the student is in year 1 or year 12. The process is highly subjective, unwieldy and bureaucratic. After almost seven to 10 years of operation in primary and lower secondary schools, depending on where a person is, there is still very little consensus about levels and so on.

That obviously raises the issue of the outcomes-based approach to education. I am well aware of a lot of the theory and that the whole process started when the previous government was in office. It is not a matter of being critical of all the theory or necessarily the whole process. There is clearly a huge amount of concern in the teaching profession at the moment about the way in which it is being implemented, the assessment processes, the lack of clear content in syllabuses, and many other aspects. What effective action is the government taking to address these major concerns? Is any serious consideration being given to deferring implementation of the new courses that have not so far been implemented until everybody is more ready for them to be implemented effectively?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** I will handle each part of the question as best I can. No directive has been given by the department through the director general to stop people from having a view on OBE or education matters.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** It is okay for teachers to speak out publicly and express their views?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** Yes. It has been said that the department does not expect people, when expressing their views, to use that forum to individually attack those who are involved in the system of producing an outcome for the education department. They can have a general view, but they are not expected to use that platform. We have read outrageous statements on the Internet by some people. Some have been racist and attacked individuals. We do not expect that. I am sure that when the member was the minister he would not have expected that either.

[9.10 am]

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** I think the minister needs to look at why that situation has developed.

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** We could speculate. That leads into the member's question. Are we delaying? No, we are not. What are we doing to rectify the problems so that we are not forced into delaying the implementation of certain subject matters? We are putting a lot of resources into that area. As we meet, there are ongoing processes with the teachers involved. I will run through some of the statistics that we have entered into so far, and I will then hand over to Mr Albert for further details. Some 6 000 teachers have been involved in the process of delivering OBE. Those teachers who have been through a process of education on OBE have already completed five days of a program, with two more days to go. In the main, most of the member's concerns would be overcome through that process. I remind members that there is still eight months to go.

Let us look at the history of OBE. It was introduced by the member for Darling Range's colleague the member for Cottesloe very early in his term as education minister. He originally intended that OBE for years 11 and 12 would be introduced and implemented in a 12-month period. His documentation surrounding his involvement suggests that he intended to start it by the beginning of 2002, and implement it in 2003.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** That may have been the intention 10 years ago but the Labor Party has been in government for five and a half years. Things can be modified if problems occur along the way.

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** It was not 10 years ago. The member for Cottesloe was working on it for a number of years. He had the ability to change it. He intended to implement it over a 12-month period.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** That might have been the intention but there is always the ability to make modifications along the way. If we were still in government, these issues would have been more effectively addressed.

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** I am surprised that the member for Cottesloe is not here this morning. If the member for Darling Range had asked him, he would have told the member that that is what he was doing as he was working through the program. It is a large program we need to be aware of concerns that are raised and whether the specific programs for individual outcomes are appropriate, and we need to be in a position to change them to suit. I will hand over to the Director General of Education, Paul Albert, for further detail.

**Mr P. Albert:** In relation to the claim that I have gagged teachers from speaking out, that is not true. I have said that I will not tolerate any teacher who publicly vilifies or verbally abuses another simply because that person is expressing a different view. Secondly, I have said that I will not tolerate a situation in which a presenter at a training session is continuously heckled or verbally abused. There is plenty of scope in the sessions to ask questions and make statements. A comprehensive evaluation is undertaken at the end of the session. Some teachers have even taken a vote afterwards on the information conveyed.

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**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** What action will be taken against teachers who contravene that ruling?

**Mr P. Albert:** It is a breach of our code of conduct. There is specific reference in our code of conduct to bullying, harassing or verbally abusing people simply because they happen to express a different view. All teachers have signed the code of conduct.

In relation to the actual implementation of the changes in post-compulsory education, it has been a long time line, as the minister has indicated. The time line has been adjusted. It was first adjusted in 2000. The implementation was originally planned for 2003. The then minister decided that it should be deferred. That was in response to issues that had been raised by teachers and others at that time. It was then delayed by a year. As a consequence of further concerns that were expressed by teachers about the development process - as the clauses started to be developed, issues started to emerge - the Curriculum Council of Western Australia made a decision that it would phase in the courses over three years; in other words, not do them all in one year.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** Why was that the case?

**Mr P. Albert:** For a variety of reasons, relating to the structure of the course, the content, assessment, professional development and support materials for teachers. In 2004-05 maths and languages were deferred from phase two to phase three based on issues raised about their readiness. In 2005 the minister established the Robson committee, which took a detailed analysis of the readiness of OBE and the issues raised by people and made a series of recommendations, which the government accepted. My understanding is that they have been implemented by the Curriculum Council. That is not to say that teachers are not raising issues now as they are seeing the detail or as they are looking at examples and seeing how the assessment works. Now that the Curriculum Council has made some major changes to assessment, the majority of issues are associated with content and whether a particular section of a course should be mandatory. There are also some issues related to weighting. I am advised by members of our team who are intimately involved in the process that those issues can be addressed between now and the end of the year.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** Does the minister have concerns about the current general lack of confidence in the implementation of the system by many teachers in government, independent and Catholic schools?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** My concerns are based on the evidence that may support those concerns. Education is a large arena of views. Most of the evidence that has come forward in terms of the positioning of OBEs at the moment is not supported by fact. It is as simple as that. The Director General has indicated - we are very confident of this - that processes are in place that will fix the concerns raised by people prior to the start of the OBEs going into years 11 and 12 next year. We still have eight months to go. We are confident that we have in place the day-to-day processes of negotiating, listening and participating to overcome the problems. To the degree that we are worried about concerns raised, it seems generally driven by one area of the media.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** I have just read a letter addressed to me from a teacher with 20 years' experience.

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** There are a lot of teachers who support OBE as well. I deal with teachers with 20 years' experience. Most of my family consists of teachers with 20 years' experience, working in both the private and the government system. All I am saying is that we are confident that we have in place the processes to overcome those concerns. We are confident that by the end of this year we will have in place a program that will see OBE roll into years 11 and 12 and the key players - the teachers, the parents and the students - can be confident of that process as well.

[9.20 am]

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** What about, for example, the sample examination papers that were promised but have not been ready on time? I understand that it can be hard to get things completed by deadlines in all cases, but the basis of the problem is that schools clearly need to plan for these sorts of major changes. They cannot do it at the end of the school year in November or December. The minister is saying that all of this may be ready by the end of the year. However, it is completely unrealistic as far as effective education is concerned for it to be implemented in the following month or two.

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** We are confident that it will be implemented in an effective manner.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** There is no detail in that answer. The minister might get the director general to comment, I do not know, but I will let somebody else ask some questions.

**Mr G. WOODHAMS:** I refer to page 344. The fifth dot point under "Major Initiatives 2006-07" commences with the words, "Establish 86 new Teacher Development Centres". I am sure the minister can find it and read the rest. Perhaps by way of supplementary information, will the minister list the locations of the proposed 86

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new teacher development centres? If the minister undertakes to do that, that would be excellent. Can he also tell me what training will be provided to the personnel who will staff those centres?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** I am sure we will be able to provide the detailed information the member requires as a supplementary item.

*[Supplementary Information No A41.]*

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** That will answer that part of the member's questions, and I will assist with answering the remainder of his questions. Part of the department's strategy for support of teachers in the implementation of courses of studies in years 11 and 12 are teacher development centres. TDC coordinators have been created for each course implemented in 2006. It is proposed that new TDC coordinator positions be created for each course. Teacher development centre coordinator appointments are for two years: 0.4 full-time equivalents in the first year of implementation of the course and 0.2 FTEs in the following year.

**Mr G. WOODHAMS:** Will those appointments be from existing staff at those locations?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** No. There is additional funding of \$14.4 million over the four-year period. Therefore, teacher development centre coordinators will remain in their current schools, working closely with a network of approximately 12 schools, to support the implementation of a course of study. The network will be a combination of local and/or country schools. Coordinators who have faced two courses of study due for implementation in 2007 will be appointed in term 2 of 2006. In 2005 the senior schooling academic standards and support directorate expanded to support all 88 secondary schools with a tertiary entrance examination and a semester weighted average vocational education and training program, including 44 secondary schools in 2004. All teachers teaching a course of study participate in five days of professional development in the year prior to the course being implemented. So this is an ongoing program that will put those extra people in place as support to ensure that new courses can be implemented appropriately.

**Mr S.R. HILL:** I refer to the first dot point under "Significant Issues and Trends" on page 341 about the rise in community expectations of education. What is the government doing to improve attendance standards in schools?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** The minister is making an announcement about truancy at 9.15 am and obviously this is created to link into that. Go and read the media statement.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Member!

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** The link between student learning and school attendance is well known. However, improving attendance can be a complex issue, particularly in remote communities. The government is very concerned about the poor rates of attendance for some students, and an attendance strategy is being developed to raise standards in this area. As part of the government's attendance strategy, an attendance audit will be conducted with all public schools, and attendance improvement targets will be set for the 2007 school year. There will also be a strong focus on parent and career awareness to ensure they understand their responsibilities and obligations under the School Education Act 1999. A resource package for schools to improve attendance has been developed and is currently being distributed to all schools in Western Australia, both public and private. This resource is designed to support schools in developing a whole-of-school approach to attendance. It provides particular ideas and strategies drawn from effective practice across the state. Every local district education office will have an officer with attendance responsibilities to support schools to improve attendance, especially with cases of chronic non-attendance. These officers will also support independent and Catholic school students with attendance problems. So we recognise that the problem of non-attendance applies across the whole education sector. The cross-sectoral student tracking system will be further improved to support the needs of transient and mobile students, especially Aboriginal students. This system assists in the location of transient students who have gone missing from schools. This system has been responsible for the location of more than 1 000 students in the past 12 months, taking the current number of students whose whereabouts are unknown to 340. So, if the member sees any of them, will he let us know?

**Mr S.R. HILL:** I will report them!

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** Okay. Poor school attendance is often symptomatic of other issues, but when all the support provided to parents is rejected, prosecution of parents, or students in some cases, will occur. The government is prepared to take strong action on cases of chronic non-attendance if it will improve the situation. Therefore the member can take some satisfaction from the fact that there is a clear understanding of needs, particularly in some regional areas in which there is chronic non-attendance. The process is to work with families, work with schools and work with youngsters to overcome those problems, rather than use the heavy

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hand of the law. The heavy hand of the law can be used if and when necessary but first we will use all those other methods.

**Mr S.R. HILL:** When will this program be rolled out and actually start?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** It is being announced by the minister today - I understand about now. Audits will be finished by term 3, so the program is effectively presently under way, with those audits coming in so that work can begin immediately.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** It is all in the media statement.

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** Does the member for Darling Range have it? If he has, can he give it to me?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** It is the media event for today.

**The CHAIRMAN:** We do not need the member's comments, unless he has a question. The last time I looked I could see that the member for Darling Range does not have the call; the member for Churchlands does.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** I want to ask a question about service 1 and service 2, relating to primary and secondary education.

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** Does the member have a page number for the budget item?

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** The pages are 348 and 349. This is a major slice of this budget. This was a significant issue in 2002-03. I am referring to the change in school-entry age and the issue of whether primary school year 7 or secondary school is the best place to make the change. It is interesting that this was a major issue in 2002-03 and no longer appears to be a major issue, but no decision has been made about it. It is almost nine years since this decision, which would have a major impact on the budget, was first announced in 1997. I therefore want to know why a decision has not yet been made, with only two and a half years to go to crunch time. What issue is the minister considering, what progress has been made, and when can we expect a definitive decision about this very major and significant issue?

[9.30 am]

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** I thank the member for the question. I will shortly hand over to Mr Albert for a detailed response on behalf of the department. The department is currently reviewing all issues associated with the possible relocation of year 7s to secondary schooling.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** The department has been doing that for at least five years. I want to know why it has not made a decision yet.

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** I will go through this process, and then Mr Albert will -

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** Do not faint, minister.

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** I will try not to. I thank the member for her consideration.

The issues being considered include the impact on school staffing, the capacity of the current infrastructure and land acquisitions to accommodate additional year groups, and the impact on student learning and wellbeing in the secondary environment. As there are significant differences of opinion about the desirability of moving year 7s to secondary schooling, there will be extensive community consultation to explore local issues and any local planning under way. Irrespective of the location of year 7 students, the department will continue to provide a range of schooling models - for example, primary schools, secondary schools, middle schools, district high schools and senior colleges, and possibly K-12 schools. All those models are being looked at. At this stage, I will hand over to Paul Albert, the director general, who has had a long history of involvement in and responsibility for driving this initiative.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** He and I have had a long history in estimates committee hearings.

**Mr P. Albert:** The issue of whether year 7s should be in a secondary environment or a primary environment, and whether the department should adjust its policy to take account of the fact that the half cohort that is currently moving through will reach year 7 by 2009, has been subject to a range of studies in the department. The preliminary assessment for capital works that has been made is substantial, and we have asked our facilities section to provide a much more definitive answer to that question.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** What is substantial? What is the ballpark figure?

**Mr P. Albert:** The preliminary estimate was in excess of \$140 million. The second issue is whether students in year 7 are better off in a secondary environment or a primary environment. The preliminary scan of our

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performance data - that is, literacy and numeracy data, and our achievement standards data - suggests that there is no difference in performance regardless of whether students are in a secondary environment or a primary environment. The key is the quality of teaching. We are in the process of undertaking a far more detailed analysis of that scan, because there is divided opinion on that issue, certainly among some of our schools and elsewhere in Australia. The issue that has been raised by a number of people is the age of year 7s. The claim that children in year 7 will be six months older is true, and the question being asked is whether a primary environment is appropriate for those children. The counter-question that has been asked is whether we want children to be in a secondary environment when they are six months younger. Issues in regional areas are problematic, and a variety of views have been expressed. As a consequence of representations that have been made to the minister by non-government authorities, the minister has requested the department to prepare a major report on the impact of any such change in policy on government schools. We are in the process of that and we will submit the report to the minister at the beginning of August.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** Will that report be made public?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** I ask Mr Albert to respond.

**Mr P. Albert:** I understand that, at this point, the minister is keen for the report to go out for public consultation, but I need to stress that the report will deal with any impact of such a change on government schools; it does not include non-government schools.

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** I will add some further information. While this process is under way, things are happening, and I highlight a couple of them. In my electorate, Comet Bay college in the Secret Harbour estate is being built to accommodate year 7 students. If the community believes that the education process is best served by heading in that direction - there is massive community involvement in that college - it plays a big role in guiding the department. That is what has happened at Secret Harbour.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** To follow up on that, does the minister see a situation arising in which some high schools will have year 7 and some will not, and some primary schools will finish at year 6? There will be a hotchpotch, or what government ministers often call flexibility and choice. What does the minister see as the end result of all this?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** Choice is driving it presently. That is the model that exists today in district and middle schools. Choice is a key element in the model and how we drive it. I will bring the member up to date with how some of the schools are advancing. Comet Bay college in Secret Harbour in my electorate is being designed with full community involvement to include year 7. Ellenbrook has agreed to the same sorts of outcomes. Discussions are also being held with the communities in Atwell and Dalyellup about the same sorts of outcomes. It is an ongoing process, and we will know well before the end of this year whether -

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** Does the minister think this is an excuse for not making a decision?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** No. As indicated by Mr Albert, the cost of \$140 million -

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** Yes, but we can build freeways for \$1.6 billion. Why is that more important than getting it right in schools?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** We do not drive education on the basis of building freeways. If we did, we would have a lot more freeways. The idea is to look not at a model that exists within "Silver City" or within a minister's head, but at whether these models provide benefits in educational outcomes for the community. If it is deemed that they do, we head in that direction. Those schools clearly indicate where some communities want to go. Some communities may not have that view. Mr Albert wants to make a further point.

**Mr P. Albert:** In relation to educational benefits, as I have indicated, our preliminary scan of student performance data suggests that it makes no difference whether year 7 students are in a high school environment or a primary school environment.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** Was it not the case that when the school starting age was changed in 1997, the intention throughout the sector was always that when that group of children who had not been born at that stage reached year 7, they would move into secondary schooling?

**Mr P. Albert:** I cannot comment on that intention. What is emerging, certainly in communities, is the desire to have choice. The government school system does not have, for example, K-12 structures, and views are being expressed in particular localities that they would like a public K-12 school. Other communities are expressing a preference for smaller primary schools. Some communities are expressing a preference for year 7. The crunch has come with the capital costs of making such a policy decision. The issue that the department is now trying to deal with is what are the educational -

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**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** My point is that that was nearly 10 years ago. There was no secret. It was always the intention that when that group of children reached that stage, they would move into secondary school and probably into a middle school format. As members have said, it is happening in independent schools right now. They are effectively ahead of the department, which worries me.

[9.40 am]

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** It is in progress.

**Mr M.P. WHITELY:** I refer to page 344 and the “Major Initiatives 2006-07”. The ninth dot point on page 345 refers to the 100 schools project. Will the minister advise us of the progress of the project?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** The government is presently committed to providing access to current information technology resources within schools, quality teaching, professional learning and support, and the effective use of information and communications technology through the 100 schools project. It was commenced in 2003. The schools in the program were selected using the socioeconomic index as a major criterion. The project focuses on professional learning, skill-based support for the effective use of information, and communication technology in teaching, learning and curriculum. The services are supported by the replacement of information and communications technology where required, including increasing the computer-to-student ratio across the various phases of schooling. The program has been designed to run from 2003 to 2006 in four phases, with participating schools receiving an upgraded ICT infrastructure, a professional learning program and a school-based support for ICT integration. Currently, 82 schools are engaged in the project. The remaining schools will be deployed by term 3 of 2006. As part of the initiative, the government will increase the computer-to-student ratios in participating schools from the previous ratios established some years ago. Participating primary schools will have one computer for every eight students in years 1 to 3 and one computer for every five students in years 4 to 7. Middle school students in years 8 to 10 will have the lowest computer-student ratio of all at one computer for every three students. Students in years 11 and 12 will have a student computer ratio of one in four. As part of the program, continued ongoing support and maintenance of some hardware will be provided to all participating schools. Professional learning activities are being very well received. The school-based support currently provided to schools is proving to be extremely successful in building the capacity for the whole school change. It is a fantastic program. Obviously one presumes that, after the implementation of the 100 schools project, it will be ongoing and will be seen to be an appropriate model for the rest of the education system.

**Mr G. WOODHAMS:** The seventh dot point on page 345 states that from 2007 all students in years 1 to 10 will participate in two hours of physical activity each week, which must form part of the students’ learning program. Will additional full-time equivalent staff be allocated to both primary and secondary schools in the form of specialised physical education teachers to implement this initiative?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** I hope the answer is yes.

**Mr G. WOODHAMS:** So do I.

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** In my day at school it was a major part of the education program.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** You show the benefits of it!

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** I have fallen off the post since, as a number of us have. The state government announced in February that it would be mandatory for all primary school students to do two hours of physical activity every week from 2007. The idea is that we will train the teachers. The department has developed a physical activity strategy to support teachers to offer quality physical activity programs that focus on developing the skills of the work force through a range of resources and professional learning opportunities.

**Mr G. WOODHAMS:** Are these current teachers?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** Yes.

**Mr G. WOODHAMS:** They could be science teachers or home economics teachers, could they, for argument’s sake?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** They could be.

**Mr G. WOODHAMS:** In other words, we are expecting them to take up another teaching load at school during the day.

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** Some teachers may want to, but teachers will not be expected to. My understanding is that nobody will be forced into the program.

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**Mr G. WOODHAMS:** The department is seeking volunteers who would like this training. Is that the essence of it?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** I will ask Chris Cook to go into more detail. The program is designed to provide students with the skills required to confidently participate in physical activity and to ensure that school environments are conducive to the promotion of physical activity. The department is in a strong position to support the requirements of two hours of physical activity a week in public schools and has committed \$210 000 per annum to both its own physical activity strategy and the operations of the Premier's Physical Activity Taskforce until mid-2008. May I say, before handing over to Chris Cook, that obviously the issues of physical education and general health and wellbeing of youngsters are increasingly important in the community's mind. We need to have our youngsters learning the proper processes that will set them up for the rest of their life, so that we have better health outcomes. Hopefully, this program will be seen to be effective. At a personal level, I hope that as student teachers come through the system and take a lead role in driving those outcomes, we will see more and more professional teachers in physical education programs, because I believe that those sorts of professional types have the educational background that we need in place to really seriously tackle this problem.

**Ms C. Cook:** It is quite clear that in secondary school there will be phys ed teachers, heads of learning area and phys ed specialists, who will be able to deliver the required amount of time. Asking science teachers and maths teachers to deliver that requirement will not be necessary. However, in primary school, all the way from K to 7, although there are peripatetic physical specialists who have traditionally been available across a range of schools, ordinary teachers will be asked to take up the responsibility of ensuring that all students have access to those two hours. The program is upskilling that work force in the primary division to enable them to provide meaningful, engaging activities that, as the minister is indicating, will encourage our children to participate in physical activity. They will get the two hours in school time and there will be other activities that children will be encouraged to participate in out of school time. It is an ongoing upskilling of the work force over the next period of time.

**Mr G. WOODHAMS:** I appreciate the minister's adviser's information, but would it not be desirable, particularly from a primary school point of view, to have specialised and dedicated physical education instructors and teachers located in all primary schools in Western Australia? Would that not be a far better outcome than upskilling - a horrible word - those who may have already spent X number of years in the system working towards other well-intended outcomes in the classroom, and asking them, as I would interpret it, to take on a physical education role as well?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** I was brought up in an education system in which people stayed in the same class with one teacher throughout the day.

**Mr G. WOODHAMS:** I think we probably all were, with respect.

[9.50 am]

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** That teacher taught us English, maths and physics. That same teacher took us for physical education lessons. That is the sort of school I was brought up in. I am sure, from looking at the ages of members opposite, that many of them were brought up in the same system. We can always find better programs in the education system that we would like to fund. Governments are often faced with overwhelming evidence, driven by community demand, which indicates that they need to focus on specific educational needs. The issue of physical education and the wellbeing of children is now being driven in that direction. At some time in the future, the community focus will be on appropriate outcomes that may require the sort of model to which the member referred. It is a matter of prioritising within the education budget to achieve the best outcomes. I have a 15-year-old at high school and I share a view that the best way in which our youngsters can gain health benefits is in the school environment. I am sure that now and in the future, governments will pay more attention to how best we deliver that service.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** What is the current allocation, in time, for physical education in primary schools? If it is less than two hours, which I imagine it is, from what learning areas will that time be taken? If we are adding time to physical education, we must be taking it from something else.

**Mr A.A. Huts:** Currently, there is no designated specific time allocation for physical education. It is incorporated as part of the teaching program, and teachers incorporate a range of activities that may be across various learning areas. For example, a science activity may include some physical activity. It is very difficult to quantify specific time allocation for each of the eight learning areas. My experience is that all children should have some physical activity during the school day.



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**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** If the department is timetabling two hours a week for physical education, where will that time come from?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** I thought the question had been answered.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** It has not; it was a woolly answer.

**Mr A.A. Huts:** I suspect that at a local school level the decision will be made to incorporate that amount of time into the learning program. A variety of activities can occur in, for example, the science and social studies areas, in which physical activities can be incorporated. Most schools conduct physical education programs, which include school sport.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** Will the minister provide information on the school drug project for both primary and secondary education? How many full-time employees are involved and what is the total funding for that project in the 2005-06 and 2006-07 financial years? The answer can be provided by way of supplementary information, if necessary.

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** With the sort of detail the member is requiring, I am happy to provide the answer by way of supplementary information.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** Is it possible for the minister to provide that information for the 2005-06, 2006-07 and 2007-08 financial years?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** Yes.

[*Supplementary Information No A42.*]

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** My question relates to the twelfth dot point on page 344. Will the minister provide an update of the work of the Skills Formation Taskforce?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** The change to apprenticeship training that is currently occurring in Western Australia is the most significant change in this area in this state's history. In many ways Western Australia is leading the rest of the nation in skills requirements. Let us look at what we are attempting to do in this area. It is generally recognised that, basically, for the past 30 years we have not trained people to achieve the apprenticeship and skill levels that this state requires now. A program has been established to attack the problem in a number of ways. The federal government is addressing the problem by skills migration. Approximately 110 000 skilled migrants are coming into Australia annually. The Prime Minister recently wrote to the state government indicating that he would like that number increased by December this year to 170 000. After further consideration by the Prime Minister, he has changed his view and the number of skilled migrants will be kept at 100 000 until, at least, 30 June next year, when the situation will be further reviewed. Within that context, the state has been looking at how to make apprenticeships sexier for young people so that they will want to take up an apprenticeship, and at how to meet the required number of skilled workers, which is being driven predominantly by the resource sector.

A number of initiatives have been put in place, one of which is the Skills Formation Taskforce. It has had two key roles to play. One is to look at the structure of apprenticeships and consider ways of reducing the outcomes in terms of time served for apprenticeships. It has done that very successfully. Chairing the Skills Formation Taskforce has been Dale Alcock, from the construction industry; with Kate Lamont, the hospitality industry; Steve Murdoch from Austal Ships Pty Ltd, the metals area; Bruce Lake, the resource sector; and Rod Slater, who was the chairman of the RAC WA, the automotive area. All of them were selected on the basis that they employed apprentices and were running businesses. It was clear from the outset that we wanted on that task force people who were responsible for paying for training, rather than have the peak bodies represent them. They have delivered magnificent outcomes for the state. I will give one example. In less than four months Dale Alcock was able to deliver, with the assistance of his industry, and the trade union movement - the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union - for the first time in the state's history a two-year apprenticeship in the construction industry. No other person in Australia has been able to achieve that. We were able to register that with the State Industrial Commission some six weeks ago and it is now setting the benchmark by which the rest of Australia is measuring itself. All the other areas of training have been reduced from four to three or three-and-a-half years.

Many people do not understand, and this is worth bearing in mind, that the federal government has legislated so that by December this year there will be no more time-served apprenticeships. They will all be on the basis of accreditation. If 30 units are attached to a bricklayer's apprenticeship and the apprentice is capable of undertaking those units in two or two-and-a-half years, that is when he will become a tradesperson. An automotive apprentice has a four-year apprenticeship that comprises 30 units. If those units can be undertaken

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through smarter training outcomes in two-and-a-half or three years, the apprentice will come through that process in that time.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** It could have been done years ago, apart from union opposition.

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** That is rubbish! I was on the skills task force. Who brought apprenticeships down from five to four years? It was not the companies; it was the unions.

[10.00 am]

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** That sort of rhetoric has very much been a problem in moving things forward. I actually thought the problem had waited for me to come along to move it forward!

**Dr G.G. JACOBS:** Not many other people think that!

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** I know, but that was my thought! I thought this has just been waiting for me to come along and move it forward! The truth of the matter is, if members would go and talk to Dale Alcock rather than me -

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** I do, often.

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** I know the member does; he tells me that.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** He does not.

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** He does. He tells me. "I often run into Liz", he says.

**The CHAIRMAN:** This answer is going to finish any time soon, is it not, minister? I know it is the minister's favourite subject.

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** It is not my favourite subject, but it is worth telling because of those sorts of comments that really do not take us anywhere. Go and talk to the people who really drove this. Members should go and talk to Dale Alcock; he will tell them. When I go to public gatherings, I say, "If I had told you 12 months ago that in Western Australia Dale Alcock could sit at a table with Kevin Reynolds and in four meetings deliver a two-year outcome for apprenticeships, you would have told me I was mad; it would not happen." The facts are it did happen. Dale Alcock would be the first one to give credit to Kevin Reynolds. The government came under massive pressure from vested interests interstate at both the Australian Council of Trade Unions level and the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union level. Kevin Reynolds stood up against all that, saw what was in the best interests of the state, and was part of the service delivery to the construction industry of a two-year apprenticeship, which no other state has.

The Skills Formation Taskforce is ongoing. The six trade areas that we looked at initially, which were really suffering from shortages, have now been expanded. The skills taskforce will continue to grow as we look at each of the skill areas to overcome the problems of making apprenticeships far sexier for young people to join, and far easier for those industries that want to participate. Cost has always been a big factor. It is great that all of the key players have been able to sit down and overcome all those problems as well. We believe that we now have a model that is leading the nation in providing apprenticeships. That is evident in the numbers. We announced at the beginning of this four-year term that we would train some 30 000 people in apprenticeships and vocational education and training. We achieved that in nine months. It was not through any magic on our part. It was because industry demanded it. We now have to build beyond the 30 000 people who were trained in the first nine months and spread out to other industries. We have now set up industry working groups for printing, furnishing, hairdressing, horticulture and food and beverages. They will all soon be delivering similar outcomes to those I have described for the early initiatives that we have put in place.

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** In response to the earlier interjection from Dr Jacobs, I am certain that Mr Jack Marks would now be very happy. This model was one of his visions. It got lost along the way, but I am glad it is now being implemented.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** The fourth dot point on page 342, under "Significant Issues and Trends", states -

The ageing population -

I think that should be the ageing teaching force, actually -

will impact on the staffing at schools and TAFE colleges with potential for shortages emerging . . .

I would like some more details about these shortages that are emerging; in particular, which subject areas in schools and TAFE colleges does the minister think will be affected, and when will the crunch come - or have we already reached the crunch?

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**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** For the details, I will hand over to Mr Alby Huts. However, I will first say two things about my short involvement with the TAFE sector. Firstly, I do not think that there is a true appreciation within the political arena in this state of the great job the TAFE system does. I do not think we recognise or even begin to understand the sorts of contracts we are presently winning, and delivering service to, in the world marketplace. We are delivering services through the TAFE system for training outcomes in the Middle East. We have a \$70 million contract with Qatar to train all its oil and gas people. We have won training contracts in Singapore and China - all over Asia - and we are selling education services and outcomes. In today's market, a lecturer at Karratha TAFE who is teaching someone to be a level three plant operator at Woodside Petroleum is earning between \$65 000 and \$70 000 a year at peak. Woodside is saying if those people are smart enough to teach its production workers how to run the plant, they should come and run it themselves, and it will give them \$150 000. Therefore, as in many other professional areas, we are losing teachers within the demographic because the resource sector is willing to pay quadruple for the skills they possess. I am staggered by the amount -

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** How many people would have left TAFE to take up those sorts of positions just in the past year?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** I will have to get back to the member with the detail, but I can tell her that it is a large number. I just want to touch on one of the results of that. As part of the budget, we are about to build a resource training centre at Henderson. That will cost over \$20 million. It will be the best resource training centre in the southern hemisphere. Already, as a result of the efforts of the working party that I chair for the government, it has attracted interest from resources people all over the southern hemisphere who want to train at that centre at Henderson. It will be run predominantly by a private sector board. However, more importantly, we will need to bring people back in from the private sector to perform that training. They will need to be part of the teaching program. We simply cannot hang onto those skills in today's market with the sort of remuneration that we are currently offering, because in the real world, those people are able to work for the industry in which they are teaching at quadruple the figure we are able to pay them under the Public Sector Management Act. The partnership with industry that we are now entering into at Henderson acknowledges that we need a teaching program that will get the experts back from the industry and into the classroom to be part of the teaching process. I now ask Mr Huts to answer the member's question about the details of staff ageing and demographics.

**Mr A.A. Huts:** The ageing workforce is a concern not just for education but, I suspect, across the whole public sector. As part of the strategies for attracting teachers, we have a very active recruitment process.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** I did not ask about attracting teachers. I actually asked about the shortages, and in which areas shortages are expected.

**Mr A.A. Huts:** I thank the member. The shortages that we currently perceive are in design and technology, LOTE Indonesian, mathematics, and science.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** What are the shortages at the moment, and what shortages are expected to emerge?

**Mr A.A. Huts:** The shortages vary. For example, in design and technology, my understanding from the latest figures I have - that is probably some weeks ago now - is that we are probably four positions short.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** LOTE Indonesian?

**Mr A.A. Huts:** I do not have that information.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** Maths?

**Mr A.A. Huts:** I do not have that information

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** Science?

**Mr A.A. Huts:** I do not have that information.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** It is important, if there are shortages, that the minister have a handle on the number of people who are training to teach in those areas. How many people are currently training to teach maths in programs such as a Diploma of Education and so on?

**Mr A.A. Huts:** That information is held with the universities -

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** It used to be held with the department.

**Mr A.A. Huts:** Sorry?

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** It used to be held with the department.

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**The CHAIRMAN:** The member needs to seek the call, not have a discussion across the chamber.

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** It is fairly obvious that we do not have the sort of forensic detail the member requires.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** How can the minister plan if he does not know how many people are training when there is a shortage?

[10.10 am]

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** I have listened to the member for Churchlands ask questions on education over the years, and they are very forensic. I do not know what she does with all the information.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** A lot.

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** Most of the details will have to be provided as supplementary information.

**Mr P. Albert:** We produce a teacher demand-supply document each year that contains that type of detail.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** The minister does have the information that I am asking questions about. Could the minister provide as supplementary information the most recent report?

**The CHAIRMAN:** The minister will detail exactly what supplementary information he will supply.

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** We will provide all that information to the member by way of supplementary information, including the annual report.

[*Supplementary Information No A43.*]

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** I will ask Mr Albert to comment on the ongoing enterprise bargaining agreement negotiations.

**Mr P. Albert:** We are just about in the process of finalising an agreement. The department's approach to the new agreement has been to make the teaching profession more attractive, because that is what must be done to attract teachers into the profession. As members are aware, in the last agreement we established a senior teacher classification. We are building on that in this agreement. We are looking also at increasing the range of incentives available for people who teach in rural and remote areas because attracting teachers to rural and remote areas continues to be an issue for the department.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** I refer to page 343. The fifth dot point under "Major Achievements 2005-06" outlines the annual payments of up to \$400 given to parents of TAFE students and \$200 given to parents of years 11 and 12 students who attend public and private schools. How much has been paid for this school year to both the government and non-government school sector and the TAFE sector? Did parents receive those payments before the beginning of the school year, or did they receive them after the school year had commenced? What is the department doing to ensure that that money is used for educational purposes?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** I will hand that over to Peter McCaffrey, who has the details that the member requires.

**Mr P.J. McCaffrey:** The process for the payments is ongoing. We send out applications through the school system to each parent when children are enrolled at the beginning of the school year.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** Are the applications sent out after the start of the school year?

**Mr P.J. McCaffrey:** They are sent after the start of the school year. The reason for that is to make sure that when an application is made, the school validates that the child is attending, and to ensure that the child will continue to attend the school. Once that validation is done, it is forwarded to us and we double-check to make sure that no other payments are being made by a school from which the student might have shifted. The cheques are generally sent out within two or three weeks of the receipt of the validation form.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** How far into the school year does that occur?

**Mr P.J. McCaffrey:** Currently about 90 per cent of the payments for the state school system have been paid. It is slightly less for the private school system. Again, we rely on those returns and on the applications being sent to us after they have been validated. They tend to be done on a whole-school basis.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** It is now a couple of weeks into the second term and 90 per cent of the payments have been made.

**Mr P.J. McCaffrey:** About 90 per cent have been processed. About 5 000 applications have been received and are currently going through the system. They will be going out shortly.

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**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** I also asked about the cost of the scheme and what was being done to monitor whether the payments are being used for educational purposes.

**Mr P.J. McCaffrey:** The cheques are sent to the parents. As the member is aware, we do not have the ability to check what each parent is doing with the payment. We have always expected that it would be used to benefit a child's education. I do not know of any way that we could check what each family does with the payment.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** The reality is that school fees and charges are continuing to decline.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The member for Darling Range does not have the call.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** The other question I asked was about the cost of the program so far.

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** The total cost for 2005-06 so far has been \$13.441 million; the total cost in 2004-05 was \$13.569 million; and the estimated cost for 2006-07 is \$13.665 million. We would hope, as I am sure the member for Cottesloe would also, that the parents would spend the money on the purpose for which it was given; that is, to assist with the cost of books etc.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** The point is that they would already have paid the school fees and purchased books and uniforms.

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** Yes. The payment is to offset that. Who knows how it is used once the parents receive it?

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** The minister has just told me that \$13 million of taxpayers' money, which is approximately the cost of three primary schools, is being given to parents in this state and that the department has no way of evaluating the merit of that expenditure or of how it is being used. We are giving away \$13 million without any follow-up or accountability at all. Is that correct?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** I would not say that it is being given away. These things are always driven by need. It was clear to the government that some parents who were coming forward through the appropriate associations required assistance to help with their children's education. Rightly or wrongly, this was deemed to be an appropriate process to assist them. It is hard to quantify how, and on what, money paid through a number of federal tax initiatives is spent once the money is handed over. It is not necessarily part of the evaluation process. I will ask Mr Albert to explain what the evaluation process is.

**Mr P. Albert:** We have put into place a process of evaluation for the whole of the school leaving age strategy. That includes evaluating the effectiveness of all the elements. At this stage, we do not have any specific monitoring processes in place to monitor what parents do with the money. That will be addressed as part of the evaluation of the school leaving age strategy.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** Could we be provided with supplementary information on the collection rates of school fees, charges and contributions in government primary and secondary schools for the current financial year and the previous two financial years?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** I will ask Mr McCaffrey, as the chief financial officer, to indicate the process by which the records are presently kept.

[10.20 am]

**Mr P.J. McCaffrey:** Schools are required to record all their collections either as a voluntary payment or a contribution charge. That is handled at the school level. The schools also have access to a number of schemes that enable them to offset the school fees and charges. To answer the member's question about the collection rates on each school, we do not have that information stored centrally. We receive a monthly report that shows the amount the schools receive and each category against which it is recorded. However, it does not come forward in a sense that I could say to the member that they have collected 60, 70 or 75 per cent, because that varies on a school-by-school basis. It is also very difficult to know, because a lot of the schools are now offering a support mechanism to parents so that they can pay off their school fees during the year. We would not expect that the collection figure that we get by June is necessarily the total amount that a school will collect from the payment of school fees and charges throughout the year. I just do not see how I can provide a percentage without going to every school. It is a point-in-time figure that the member would get.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** Can we have by way of supplementary information the collection amount for each school for, say, the past three years?

**Mr P.J. McCaffrey:** On a school-by-school basis? Is that what the member is requesting?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** Yes.

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**Mr P.J. McCaffrey:** That would be a large amount of information, which I can get together for the member if he wishes.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Does the minister agree to provide that by way of supplementary information?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** There is a lot of information. We can agree to give an indicative figure for the total amount collected across the state.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** No, it must be on a school-by-school basis. The department has the information on computer. Just print it out.

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** We will look at it.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** I have a further supplementary question on this topic. Given what seems to me to be a fairly open-ended program of \$13 million, will the government give consideration to converting that into a voucher or credit system - for example, a credit for the school uniform shop or against school fees, book purchases or whatever else - so that we, as taxpayers and parliamentarians, will at least know that \$13 million is going to education? I suggest that virtually none of it goes to education.

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** The member highlights the sorts of issues that will be examined in the review of the program. In the years in which the member for Cottesloe was the Minister for Education, I know that he was inundated with all sorts of requests to assist schools and parents. This is simply a method that we presently believe is the best way to assist parents with school costs. It may well be that the review process will show that it should be dealt with in another manner. I am sure all those matters will be on the table and under review.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I was not clear whether the minister actually agreed to provide -

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** At this stage I am not agreeing to it.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** I wonder why.

**Mr M.P. WHITELY:** The tenth dot point under "Major Initiatives 2006-07" on page 345 refers to the learning with ICT project. Can the minister advise what the purpose of this project is and how many schools are involved?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** The information and communication technology project is one of the many examples of how the government is committed to providing access to current information technology resources within the schools and quality teacher professional learning and support in the effective use of information and communication technologies. The learning with ICT project is essentially an extension of the existing 100 schools project, which commenced in 2003. The learning with ICT project commenced in 2005, and will progressively support the information technology resource and professional learning needs of 105 schools statewide. That is a further 105 schools above the 100 already involved in the ICT project.

The objectives of the project are to enhance student engagement, outcomes and learning opportunities; raise teacher competencies in the use of ICT; and provide cost-effective, reliable and supportable standards of technology in schools. In addition, a school-based and selected curriculum ICT coordinator participates in a professional learning program facilitated by the central curriculum support team to help prepare the coordinator to support all staff in the school to incorporate the use of ICT into teaching and learning programs. The second stage involves the provision of full-time equivalent and ongoing curriculum ICT support for the school-based curriculum ICT coordinator and central support for the infrastructure resourcing.

The program will cost approximately \$29.5 million over four years, of which more than \$10 million will be spent on teachers and their skills in making the best use of technology in the classroom. Twenty million dollars of this will be spent on upgrading computer resources and extra teacher training in 56 schools in regional areas - that is, the Pilbara, the mid-west, the south west and the great southern - and the remainder in 49 schools in the metropolitan region. The 2006-07 allocation of \$6.446 million comprises \$635 000 for the mid-west region; \$517 000 for the Albany region; \$1.481 million for Bunbury; \$952 000 for Busselton, in the south west region; and \$2.861 million for the Pilbara region.

As part of the LWICT initiative, the government will increase the computer-to-student ratios in participating schools from the previous ratios established some years ago. In participating primary schools, there will be one computer for every eight students in years 1 to 3, and one computer for every five students in years 4 to 7. In middle school - that is, years 8 to 10 - students will have the lowest computer ratio of all: one computer for every three students. Students in years 11 and 12 will have a student computer ratio of one in four.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** I have two questions relating to capital works. The first, as the minister might expect, relates to the Wiluna Remote Community School. In the past 24 hours, the Governor-General has drawn attention to

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the state of the conditions at that school. What action had been taken by the government before today - because we assume, now that the issue has been highlighted, that the government will do something to relieve the negative media coverage - to address the concerns that apparently had been raised by the Shire of Wiluna about conditions at the Wiluna Remote Community School?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** I will ask Mr Albert to go into the details of what has happened before today. However, I will make clear what will happen from now on. The minister clearly indicated publicly this morning her concerns about a school that is located next to an open sewerage system. As I understand it, three ponds presently collect grey water. There is already evidence, apparently, of increased disease outcomes in the town, such as Ross River virus. I am not sure whether they are as a result of the open lake system. I do not think anybody is at this stage. However, it is clear that it is not appropriate, as indicated in this morning's media, for the school to be located in the position that it is. The minister has made it clear that she will send senior officers of the department - I am not sure whether Mr Albert himself or Mr Parr will go there in the next two weeks - and officers from her own office to the school to look into the method by which this issue can be progressed. I believe that the intention will clearly be to have the school relocated and to ascertain whether, in its relocation, we will be required to build a new school. Mr Albert may have more details about the cost. However, depending on the method by which we relocate the school, the cost could be variable, but it will be substantial, because, clearly, the bottom line is that the school needs to be relocated, and that is the indication that the minister gave this morning.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** Apparently the Shire of Wiluna was told as recently as two weeks ago that nothing was on the horizon for the Wiluna Remote Community School for the next five years. Things suddenly changed overnight. I did ask what action had been taken before today about the shire's concerns.

[10.30 am]

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** I obviously heard the same news item as the member for Darling Range did as I drove in this morning in which the minister said that the department had been in touch with the Kalgoorlie office in the past two weeks and it had been informed. Funding is not in the forward estimates. However, I do not think that in itself indicates that it is not being planned for or considered.

**Mr P. Albert:** The issues in relation to the school and other facilities in Wiluna were raised in a report last year. As a result, the Minister for Local Government and Regional Development, through the Director General of Local Government and Regional Development, convened a steering committee. That steering committee has been working on a number of proposals for Wiluna, one of which includes the relocation of the school. The costs given at the time for relocating the school were quite different from the costs the community is now providing for relocating the school. We understand that a whole-of-government approach will be taken to this issue, which is why the capital funds required for removal of the school are not in our forward estimates.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** What do you expect the cost to be?

**Mr P. Albert:** It is variable. The initial costing came to \$3.4 million. The latest costing seems to have extended to above \$10 million.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** Information has been provided about the school maintenance program. Two years ago, following the opposition's drawing attention to the backlog of maintenance in government schools, the government finally allocated \$65 million for that program. Can we have information on which schools have been upgraded or had maintenance needs attended to in 2004-05 and 2005-06, and what is proposed for 2006-07; how much has been spent on or allocated to each school; and a brief description of the works undertaken for each school? We will take that by supplementary information.

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** The member for Darling Range is in the right hands today because the world's best adviser is available to us on this matter; namely, Mr Mal Parr with whom I have had the pleasure of dealing in the past 20 years and I am sure he will be right across all the detail.

**Mr M. J. Parr:** This question relates to the \$65 million four-year Fixing our Schools program. People will be aware that two years of that program have been completed. It will be possible to provide the financial information on the expenditure on individual schools in each of the years 2004-05 and 2005-06. Central office is working with district offices to assess priorities to determine which schools will be allocated funds in 2006-07 and, of course, for 2007-08.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** When will that be determined for 2006-07?

**Mr M. J. Parr:** I anticipate it will be by June this year.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** June is in about a week.

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**Mr M. J. Parr:** It will be the end of June I think. The financial information pertaining to this program will be available. It would be a massive task to provide details of how it is spent. It would involve reporting details on the painting of particular classrooms, the replacement of carpet in other classrooms and replacement of gutters etc.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** I am not asking for that amount of detail, just a brief description. If that is too difficult can we be provided with as much of the financial information as is available by way of supplementary information?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** We will provide as supplementary information the amount of money to be spent on a school-by-school basis up to this time.

*[Supplementary Information No A44.]*

*Meeting suspended from 10.34 to 10.48 am*

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** The eighth dot point on page 345 under “Major Initiatives 2006-07” reads -

Establish new football academies in Bunbury and Kununurra, along with a second facility in the metropolitan area.

Can the minister provide a rundown on that initiative? Are any future academies being considered in the great southern or south west regions?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** In many ways this is something that we dream about in terms of service delivery and education outcomes. This program is able to deliver in retention rates, giving young people an interest in not only sporting outcomes but also education outcomes. A lot of credit needs to go to Gerard Neesham, whom we all know. I am delighted to have known him personally for about 30 years. My wife is part of the Shea clan, and the Sheas, the Millers, the Neeshams and the Regans all lived next door to each other in Palmyra. They have grown up together and have known each other for many years. I have known Gerard since he was knee high.

This program has grown all over the state. For information on the degree to which it has grown, I will hand over to other advisers, but I will run through some of the statistics for this program. The government has committed \$4.7 million over four years to set up six additional football academies to engage teenage Aboriginal boys in education and training. The academies give these young people the skills to assist them in making successful transitions to further learning and employment opportunities. Academies work in partnership with local secondary schools and are operated by the Clontarf Football Academy, which is led by former Fremantle Dockers coach, Gerard Neesham. A sum of \$800 000 was allocated in 2005-06, and \$1.1 million will be allocated for 2006-07 to accommodate an expansion of the program to include Bunbury and Kununurra and a second facility in the metropolitan area, at a location yet to be determined. These programs currently operate in Kalgoorlie, Geraldton, Albany, Broome and at Yule Brook College. This is such an innovative program that the federal government has announced its intention to expand it into other states.

This is a dream come true, and I am not sure that even Gerard Neesham would have thought it would grow to this level. Obviously, he is a man of vision and commitment. He saw that the love of sport could be married to getting an education outcome. More importantly, this program gives young men in particular the belief that, given the opportunity, they can succeed. I have believed for many years that people are not born different, but they become different as they go through life because of different opportunities. These young men are given an opportunity that was not before them in the past. It allows them to grow as individuals and become not only potentially good sports people but also, as a result of the education network around that program, future leaders of their communities.

I recall Gerard Neesham's record as a coach, and I remember the member for Collie-Wellington's great attributes as a football coach - he is a legend in the south west, in fact. I am not sure whether Gerard Neesham measures up to his qualifications, standards or achievements as a coach!

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** It depends which of Gerard's eras is used as a yardstick. The Fremantle time was not too good.

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** Did the member coach teams in Collie?

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** Yes - Collie, Mines Rovers and Carey Park.

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** Did he coach them all to premierships?

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** No - I have played in premierships. We won two and lost one.

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** The member for Collie-Wellington has a great interest in and love of football. More importantly, prior to becoming a member of Parliament his coaching and football feats had become



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legendary in the south west. He has always understood that team sports such as football create friendships for life and provide opportunities that do not naturally come people's way. This program is part of a pathway to success. I am delighted that the federal government has indicated a willingness to expand the program beyond the boundaries of Western Australia. Once again, the Western Australian Department of Education and Training is leading the way.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** The Minister Assisting the Minister for Education and Training made some interesting comments. Will he outline the evidence that suggests that students are also experiencing success off the football field in employment and further education? How does the department evaluate the program? Another thing that struck me when the minister was talking is that the government is spending \$4.7 million on programs for boys; are there any plans to spend \$4.7 million on programs for Aboriginal girls, in particular, and what sport does the minister have in mind for girls?

**The CHAIRMAN:** I ask the minister to provide concise answers.

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** Absolutely; that is why I will defer to Mr Kevin O'Keefe. He is the executive director of Teaching and Learning South and is very much involved in the program.

**Mr K.A. O'Keefe:** Every successful program creates some problems. The community has certainly raised the issue of programs for girls. There are a number of exemplars of successful programs. Balga Senior High School has a successful netball program for girls that came about as a result of people wanting a program for girls. The reason that the program started with boys is that there was much concern about boys' disengagement and poor outcomes generally, particularly among Aboriginal students. There is a good program at Balga Senior High School. In response to the concern of rolling out football programs, we have been working with Ricky Grace and we are trialling programs at Clontarf Aboriginal College and Yule Brook College to determine what benefits we can achieve with netball and basketball programs for girls.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** How many girls are involved at this stage?

**Mr K.A. O'Keefe:** I do not have those numbers.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** My other question was: what evidence is there that a student's involvement in these programs has an influence on his or her learning outcomes and employment and further education opportunities? Is the program evaluated? Does the department keep a constant check on it?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** Yes, we do evaluate it.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** Tell us the results.

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** I will hand back to Mr O'Keefe for that. The member for Churchlands will appreciate that the program is still in its infancy. However, in terms of an evaluation, the member must consider why the federal government wants to use this program.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** I am happy with all of that. I am not being critical. I want to know the results - share them with us!

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** I am not saying that the member is being critical. I am saying that the evidence already exists because an evaluation of this program at the federal level has resulted in the federal government wanting to extend it around Australia. I defer to Mr Albert.

**Mr P. Albert:** This program is a partnership with the federal government. There is an evaluation process. The results are anecdotal at this stage; however, we can look at what has happened at Geraldton, Kalgoorlie and Clontarf college. In terms of the totality of the program, which now involves an additional six academies, it is only just starting. There will be an evaluation.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** What systematic evaluation is being carried out on this program?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** I thought Mr Albert had touched on that. In terms of our partnership with the federal government, the whole program has only just commenced. The evaluation of that program, as part of the partnership with the federal government, is under way. This time next year the member for Churchlands will be able to ask the same question and we will be able to look at the students who are going through the program. The member for Churchlands ought to start her evaluation by considering the simple fact that prior to joining the program, many of these young men were not attending school. That is the truth of the matter.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** I am not arguing with any of that.

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** The issue is where we start and finish the evaluation. This program ought to be evaluated from its conception to the end product. The conception part is the part students spend in schools.

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Many of the young men were not engaging in the school system at all. To the degree that it requires further evaluation, that is part of the partnership agreement with the federal government. The government always wants to make sure that its dollars are well looked after. It therefore wants programs to be evaluated.

[11.00 am]

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** What evaluation was done before the partnership with the federal government was entered into?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** I do not know the details but it was enough to excite the federal government to want to be a partner.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** Can we please have the details?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** Yes.

**Mr P. Albert:** There was no formal evaluation with Kalgoorlie, Geraldton and Clontarf. However, data on attendance and progress was supplied.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** That is evaluation in itself.

**Mr P. Albert:** Yes, but it was only preliminary. We are building in formal evaluation as part of the process with the new six academies.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** Will that be reported annually so that we can see the progress? We would all like it to succeed.

**Mr P. Albert:** Yes. Very definitely.

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** Mr Albert wants to make some comment on the girls program.

**Mr P. Albert:** As Mr O’Keefe indicated, it has been more difficult to find suitable programs for girls. However, we have a program in Balga. There is also a program in Thornlie through Ricky Grace and a vocational education program. The more important program for girls has been the year 10 traineeship program whereby students are able to commence a work readiness program in year 10.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** In how many schools is that happening?

**Mr P. Albert:** We have 420 year 10 trainees in place. A very good example is in Geraldton. The principal of the school said that the girls who stayed on from year 10 to year 11 and participated in the certificate II program would, in the past, never have stayed on. That was a consequence of the year 10 traineeship. We have had a full evaluation of that program.

**Dr J.M. EDWARDS:** My question relates to the ninth dot point under “Major Achievements 2005-06” at page 342. It refers to a three-year trial of single-gender classes in five secondary schools that has commenced this year. What progress is there to date? Is there any feel about how the trial is going? Does it involve only year 8 or are other years involved? Has the thinking that underpins this trial changed over time? I remember that when I was at school it was believed that girls did better in single-gender classes. What sort of outcomes are expected and what will be achieved?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** I thank the member for the question. I will ask Ms O’Neill, who is the assistant deputy director general of schools, to answer. She has been very involved in the program.

**Ms S. A. O’Neill:** There is a wide body of research about gender differences in schools. In many respects, it is a bet either way about whether single-gender classes are beneficial to students. A lot of that is predicated on the fact that all children are not the same; therefore, not all girls are the same and not all boys learn in the same way. The trial we have in five schools - Yule Brook College, Rockingham Senior High School, Hampton Senior High School, Mirrabooka Senior High School and Eastern Hills - is looking at various things. It does not necessarily involve just year 8 students. The trial is particularly trying to address the type of conditions for success. If schools were to introduce single-gender classes as part of their programs, what types of conditions for learning, organisation, resourcing and support would be required? Rather than having a pilot scheme that states that such and such is the right way to go for all boys and all girls, it is designed to examine the kind of learning that we need and to have a close look at whether it might be an alternative for some schools. It looks at the sorts of things we might want to put in place. A rigorous evaluation has commenced from the outset of the program; it is action research based. All the teachers and administrators in the five schools are involved in a strong professional learning program and its evaluation. The evaluation will look at common elements. Because the schools do quite different things, we will also look at the uniqueness of those programs and what we can learn from them. For example, Hampton Senior High School is looking particularly at girls involved in information

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and communications technology. There are groupings around that. Yule Brook College has students from year 8 to year 10 in single-gender classes for English, mathematics, society and environment. The five schools are looking at different elements of the program. It is an exciting program. Some other schools are interested in being involved but, at this stage, the program is limited to the five schools.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** I refer to the ninth dot point at page 343 of the *Budget Statements*. It refers to 25 full-time specialist literacy teachers and others in 40 selected schools in which years 8 and 9 students are performing below expected achievement levels. My question is in a number of parts. I would like a list of the schools at which the teachers have been placed. That could be provided as supplementary information. How were the schools selected? How has this initiative been evaluated? Can the minister provide details of the results of the evaluation for 2005? Has the program been extended to 2006? It has been written up as a major achievement for last year.

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** We can provide the member with details of the selection of the schools.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** Is that as supplementary information?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** Yes, it will be supplementary detail on the names of the 40 schools that are involved.

*[Supplementary Information No A45.]*

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** The schools were selected on the basis of the standards of literacy and numeracy in year 7. I will provide more details. Obviously, poorly developed literacy and numeracy skills have been identified among some students. Year 7 was the benchmark by which it was measured. Few secondary teachers have the specialist teacher training to address the particular learning needs of adolescent students who have not developed basic literacy and numeracy skills in primary school. Funding is committed for the four-year period 2006-09. The government in 2005 identified 40 high schools on the basis of numeracy and literacy levels in year 7 for students who were entering year 8 and who required extra support with numeracy and literacy. Since the commencement of the 2006 school year, the government has deployed 25 full-time specialist literacy teachers and 15 part-time specialist numeracy teachers into the schools.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** Did it start only this academic year?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** Yes. As such, there is a total of 31 full-time equivalents. Specialist teachers are applying the highly acclaimed professional learning strategies of the government's successful Getting it Right model. The Getting it Right strategy in secondary schools is based on the model of professional learning used in primary schools. The strategy targets schools with high numbers of low-achieving students and places a full-time specialist literacy teacher or a part-time specialist numeracy teacher in those schools. Twenty-five full-time literacy and 15 part-time numeracy specialists commenced work with year 7 students in term one. Western Australian literacy and numeracy assessment data has been used to identify students whose performance is of concern. Specialist teachers work with their colleagues to plan programs for improvement and to assist schools to monitor the performance of the students. Specialist teachers receive ongoing training.

[11.10 am]

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** How many students are involved?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** We will have to supply that information.

**Mr P. Albert:** It commenced in year 8.

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** We will supply the names of the schools and the number of students who are involved.

*[Supplementary Information No A46.]*

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** What form will the evaluation take? Will those results be reported?

**Mr P. Albert:** Our approach is to build in an evaluation process at the beginning of the program. That program, as well as the program for primary schools, is evaluated on an ongoing basis, with interim reports provided to the department at specific points.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** Are parents aware that their children are involved in this program and do they get regular reports on progress?

**Mr P. Albert:** That is left to the school. In the schools that I have visited, the parents are aware that their children are in the program and they receive regular reports. One particular school that I can think of is Kwinana

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Senior High School. Its students are aware of their level of achievement and what they need to do to progress in a secondary environment. They regularly report to their parents on how well they are doing.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** Is it possible that parents may not know that their children are in this program and therefore do not get information about their children's progress if it is left up to the school?

**Mr P. Albert:** The parents will know. I was trying to say that I cannot confirm that but I can say with some confidence that some schools ensure that their students do know of their progress because the nature of the program involves the student being an integral part of it.

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** Before leaving that question, Chris Cook may wish to have some further input.

**Ms C. Cook:** This is about building capacity of teachers in secondary schools and ensuring that those teachers have the full repertoire of strategies for literacy and numeracy. As Paul Albert mentioned, there will be a full evaluation, both formative and summative, of the program, as it is for primary education. Teachers will provide a formal written report to parents twice a year on how students are progressing in literacy and numeracy. There will be a further report in year 9 covering a whole population test for students so that parents can see how students are achieving against statewide benchmarks. At various points parents will find out whether students' progress has improved as a result of this program. The findings will also be in the annual report that each school provides to the community. Parents will be very aware from that report that this is a major element in the school's program to build capacity of its staff.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** I refer to page 352. The second paragraph relates to the payment of \$5 million to the former International School of Perth, which was located at the old City Beach High School site, which is in my electorate. It used to be in the electorate of the member for Churchlands. Has that \$5 million been paid to the former International School? I presume the residential buildings are to be used as boarder accommodation for Perth Modern School. In particular, what is proposed for the remainder of the City Beach High School site? There is significant pressure on numbers, particularly in Shenton College in my electorate, and also in neighbouring schools.

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** That is a good question. I asked the same question yesterday.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** Tell us the answer.

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** I will hand over to the experts. Suffice to say, the \$5 million is part of the present leasing arrangements that have been entered into between the department and the International School. The member for Cottesloe is always well informed about what its present use is predominantly for, which is accommodation for Perth Modern School. Accommodation for Perth Modern is presently being looked at. I understand that City Beach is not intended as a long-term accommodation solution. I am advised that the land value that the school sits on -

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** It cannot be sold.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** We went through that debate about five years ago. It does not belong to the Department of Education and Training.

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** I do not know to whom it belongs. It is not being looked at for long-term use as a school and/or accommodation.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** How long is this interim arrangement, which is acceptable to everyone, anticipated to go for?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** I will ask Malcolm Parr, who can give us the details of the length of its proposed use for accommodation purposes and possibly its future beyond that.

**Mr M. J. Parr:** The \$5 million has not been paid yet. The International School advised the education department in early December last year that it wished to terminate the lease 12 months hence. The lease is expected to terminate on 8 December 2006. The budget provision of \$5 million will enable the department to exit that ground lease and to remunerate the International School on the depreciated market value of its capital investment for residential units. That payment is expected to be made later this year.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** The buildings that the school built have presumably always notionally been the property of the department. Did the school build and lease them back from itself?

**Mr M. J. Parr:** Yes. When the International School was established, two leases were put in place. One lease was for a portion of the City Beach High School classrooms and other infrastructure for use by the International School, which was paid on a monthly basis. The second lease pertained to some vacant land, so it was a ground

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lease. The International School of Perth proceeded and developed its residential units on that leased land. The terms of the conditions of that ground lease were that if the lease was terminated at a future date, the International School of Perth would recoup the depreciated market value of its investment. That is the reason for the provision of \$5 million in the budget.

The residential units at City Beach will be used until the residential facilities at the Perth Modern School site are established. My view is that they will be required at City Beach for that purpose for 12 or 18 months; in other words, until 2007 and a portion of 2008.

**Mr G. WOODHAMS:** Minister, how many residential places will be available from next year onwards?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** One hundred.

**Mr G. WOODHAMS:** Is there a guarantee for regional students?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** Yes, that is what it is for.

**Mr G. WOODHAMS:** Purely regional students?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** It is for 100 regional students to be accommodated from next year.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** So there will be 100 students in the residential facility next year? I thought it was 30.

**Ms S. A. O'Neill:** The City Beach site will be used as an interim facility next year. There will not be 100 students in there straightaway. That is the intent when it reaches full capacity. In the first instance the selection is years 8, 10 and 11, so it is more likely that there will be around 35 students in the first year.

[11.20 am]

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** I refer to the City Beach Senior High School buildings. It is my information that there are major population and demographic changes in the western suburbs.

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** People are moving back, are they?

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** There is a lot of infill, which is the government's policy. I could name at least eight or nine sites where there will be major developments. I am sure that Mr Albert and others are aware that Churchlands Senior High School is heading towards a population of 1 900 students and does not have the facilities to cater for those students; it is a major issue. I want the minister's comment on the need in the western suburbs for more high school facilities very soon; in fact, they are needed now. Has any thought been given to using City Beach Senior High School for that purpose? Shenton College is full to capacity, if not over capacity. Churchlands is bulging at the seams and getting bigger by the minute, and with Perth Modern School becoming a selective high school, there is more pressure on it. I want to know what the minister intends to do about housing high school students in the western suburbs.

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** The answer to whether City Beach Senior High School is being considered because of pressures on existing high schools in the vicinity is no, it is not. Those pressures presently appertain to secondary schools right across the system -

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** No, western suburbs was the question, minister.

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** No, it is not. That is the answer.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** That is the question I asked.

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** Yes. The answer is no, it is not; that is, City Beach is not being -

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** There is no pressure in the western suburbs?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** No, I am sorry; I am not suggesting that there is no pressure. There is a review of the pressure on the secondary school system. To the degree that schools in the western suburbs are part of that pressure, there is a review. I will ask Mr Albert to go into the details of the review.

**Mr P. Albert:** We have a review under way with the aim of being able to provide some advice for the forthcoming budget. We are aware of the pressures that the member has alluded to, particularly at Churchlands Senior High School. A range of options have been suggested and are being worked through in the department, and then we will -

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** Could the minister give us some idea of the range of options?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** When it is appropriate, we will, yes.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** It is appropriate now.

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**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** It is appropriate now. This is a budget estimates committee. I am asking the question.

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** I know, and I am giving the member the answer.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** No, the minister is not.

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** Yes, I am.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** Faint! This is the time to faint!

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** Point of order, Madam Chair. I want some explanation of that. This is an estimates committee. We appreciate that the department has not yet made its decision, but the whole purpose of an estimates committee is for members of Parliament, on behalf of the public, to explore issues and find out what is going on; that is entirely appropriate. It is not acceptable for the minister to say that he is not going to answer that question. We understand that a decision has not been made, but I think the public and this Parliament are entitled to know what options are being canvassed. This is estimates -

**The CHAIRMAN:** I do not believe there is a point of order in this instance. The minister was asked about the review undertaken and that is the answer he has given, which is his right. Perhaps the member can put any further question on notice.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** Can I ask a follow-up question? When does the minister anticipate that his investigation of this issue will be completed so that there will be some more certainty for the parents, students and schools in the western suburbs that are involved?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** I will hand over to Mr Albert for further detail. However, again, if we listen carefully to Mr Albert's answer, we will find the answer to that question really lies in the earlier answer; that is, the process that is under way at the moment will impact on next year's budget. So by definition the review needs to be finished well before December so that the budgetary process can be under way. I will ask Mr Albert whether he can give us a precise calendar date for when it may be finished.

**Mr P. Albert:** We actually need to finish it no later than October to make sure it is part of the budget process. The issue is not so much options; it is more that some schools have strong demand for enrolment and are experiencing enrolment pressures and some schools north of the river are experiencing actually quite weak and declining enrolments. The question is how we deal with both those emerging planning scenarios and what the best options are for coping with the variability in demographics.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** I will ask the minister a question at the beginning of November.

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** Okay.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** I refer to the table under "Outcomes and Key Effectiveness Indicators" on page 347 and the essential skills that we all hope students will acquire in the school education system - namely reading, writing and numeracy. The expected outcome for 2005-06 in some cases is down to the low 80 per cent range for students in years 3, 5, 7 and 9 achieving the national benchmarks. For example, to use some of the lower figures, only 84 per cent are expected to achieve the benchmark for writing in year 3 and 84.4 per cent in year 5. Only 80.7 per cent are expected to reach the benchmark for numeracy in year 7 and only 85 per cent in year 9 for writing. It is a concern in itself that between 15 and 20 per cent of students are not achieving adequate benchmarks, which I understand are not all that high. However, a second concern is that the system is actually going backwards compared with 2004-05. Some of the figures for 2004-05 are higher than those for 2005-06. Why is the proportion of students who can adequately read, write, comprehend, communicate and have an understanding of mathematical concepts going backwards?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** I am not sure what the question is.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** I just asked it at the end.

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** Which is?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** Can the minister explain why his own figures on the proportion of students who meet the national benchmarks for reading, writing and numeracy skills are going backwards?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** I will get Mr Albert to run through the detail. I will ask Mr Albert to try to clear up the variables that show some slight variations, which I am sure he will be able to explain clearly.

**Mr P. Albert:** Every year there are statistical variations in the testing that is undertaken, but the long-term trend is actual improvement. However, an issue has emerged; that is, the percentage of students not achieving the benchmark is relatively static, which is why the minister has announced a review with the aim of targeting the

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difficulties that those students are experiencing in achieving what are regarded as fairly minimal standards for literacy and numeracy. The second factor the member needs to be aware of is that there has been an increase in the number of indigenous students participating in the testing through the efforts of a number of schools in remote areas in particular. When the member reads those statistics, he will realise that an issue of concern is the number of indigenous students who are not achieving years 3, 5 and 7 benchmarks. We have also engaged Professor Bill Loudon, through Edith Cowan University in partnership with the University of Western Australia, to embark on a longitudinal study aimed at working out which strategies work, particularly in the early years, to get those students up to and past the benchmark. As the study is now in its second year, that information is being fed into the literacy and numeracy review, which is under way.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** When was that review announced and who is undertaking it?

**Mr P. Albert:** It was announced earlier this year.

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** March 2006.

**Mr P. Albert:** It will provide a preliminary report in August this year, followed by a period of consultation. Obviously we are very keen for primary school principals, and teachers in particular, to be involved, and we are also very keen for the community to engage in the issues associated with literacy and numeracy to ensure that all children make the benchmark.

[11.30 am]

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** Who is undertaking the review? Mr Albert referred to consultation, but I think most people would not be aware of it.

**Mr P. Albert:** Professor Bill Loudon is undertaking the review. There is also a committee; I can get the names of the members, if the member would like. The department has put in substantial resources to support the review. We have also ensured that the resources we have allocated are seen as part of the review as distinct from part of the department's operations, because we would like the review to take an independent view of the information it is currently dealing with.

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** I will ask Ms Cook to give the member the names of the committee members.

**Ms C. Cook:** On the committee, as members of the task force supporting Professor Bill Loudon, are Kim Scott, a Miles Franklin novelist; Konrad de Kerloy, a noted lawyer; Anne Russell Brown, Telstra Woman of the Year; and Steve Zubrick, who is noted for his work in researching Aboriginal health. They are supported by the task force secretariat. They are regarded as being external to the department's work. They will be providing information about research on literacy and numeracy, both nationally and internationally. They will also be examining and exploring the department's programs for literacy and numeracy. They are the major terms of reference for that group. As Paul said, there will be public consultation. The findings and recommendations from that task force will be taken on board. The task force will be visiting communities throughout the state, asking for further feedback. We can provide the member with a web site address at which the public can put in submissions about any of the recommendations that are made for term three.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** Of course the federal government has had a review of literacy standards and programs in the past 18 months or so. Has the information from that inquiry been useful or instructive?

**Ms C. Cook:** That inquiry into the teaching of literacy, which was published in December 2005 and looked particularly at the full repertoire of teaching strategies to improve students' reading, has been very beneficial. The task force will be scrutinising that report and using it in working parties with various experts and community members to see how those strategies can be included in future programs. Many of those strategies are used in the department's programs. We have mentioned the Getting It Right primary and secondary programs. Those programs incorporate the explicit teaching practices that are mentioned in many of the recommendations of the Rowe report. As well, all our district directors are working with principals to ensure there is a whole-school approach to literacy and numeracy so that every teacher in the school, and all school planning and assessment, is articulating with that report. It is working as a very strong platform to inform our district directors and our programs, and obviously the task force will be giving it very close scrutiny.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** There is certainly cause for concern at the moment when we appear to be clearly going backwards in some areas, despite a lot of rhetoric from the previous Minister for Education and Training, now the Premier, about what this government is doing.

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** That is a comment rather than a question. I think Paul Albert answered the question about the variables. They are minuscule variables that will occur from year to year as a result of the

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issues that Mr Albert described. Clearly, the long-term trend shows that literacy and numeracy are going in a different direction. However, to the degree that literacy and numeracy are a concern, the member has had a comprehensive answer about how we are tackling that and how we intend to make sure we turn that around.

**Dr J.M. EDWARDS:** At page 352, under “Miscellaneous/Other School Facilities”, reference is made to an amount of \$25 million that has been allocated to the purchase and upgrade of the former Australian Institute for University Studies facility at Joondalup. Can I please have some background on the purchase and progress to date? What is anticipated will take place on that site?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** I thank the member for the question. I think it is appropriate that Mr Parr give the details, as he is handling this matter on a day-to-day basis.

**Mr M. J. Parr:** The former Australian Institute for University Studies at Joondalup is an outstanding set of facilities, very centrally located in the City of Joondalup, and well located to transportation links. The overseas interests that presently own the facilities have expressed an interest in disposing of them, and it is the department’s intention to commence discussions and negotiations for their purchase. We expect that to take place in the latter part of this year. Some consideration has been given to the intended use of that facility. There is a range of options. One option that may well eventuate is the establishment of senior college facilities to cater for years 11 and 12, particularly in light of the outstanding success of Mindarie Senior College in attracting students in years 11 and 12.

**Dr J.M. EDWARDS:** That answers my question.

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** My question relates to page 342, the third dot point under “Significant Issues and Trends”, which refers to capital works and maintenance for schools. This has been touched on in several other areas, but will the minister please advise what works will be carried out in 2006-07?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** Prior to the last election we made a commitment to spend \$1 billion on new schools, and upgrading existing schools. The Department of Education and Training’s planned capital works expenditure in 2006-07 is \$312 million. That relates primarily to the provision of adequate infrastructure for public schools and training throughout the state. That is the most significant dollar figure for expenditure on infrastructure in any financial year in the education department’s history. Construction will continue on seven new primary schools at Hopetoun, Bertram, Canning Vale, East Butler, Darradup, Tapping and Two Rocks. The total cost of the seven new primary schools, which will all be open in 2007, is \$53.5 million. The second stage of the new Settlers Hill school at Baldivis will be completed at a cost of \$6.1 million. Funding has also been provided to continue the replacement of the Kim Beazley School at Beeliar Primary School, and the phased replacement of the Mt Barker Primary School on the secondary site. The 2006-07 budget also provides funding to commence the construction of five new primary schools at Coolamon, Hocking, South Halls Head, Southern River and Waikiki at a total cost of \$44 million. These schools are scheduled for completion for the 2008 school year.

In relation to new secondary schools, the construction of a \$35 million replacement of Kwinana Senior High School will continue, with completion expected in mid-2008. Construction of the \$25 million Comet Bay college at Secret Harbour will be completed in January 2007. The 2006-07 budget also provides funding to continue construction of four new secondary schools: Ellenbrook to open in 2007, Vasse to open in 2008, Dalyellup to open in 2008, and Atwell to open in 2008; and the new Manea senior college on the Edith Cowan University site in Bunbury, which will open in 2008. These five secondary schools will be completed at a total cost of \$127 million. Funding of \$10.5 million has also been provided to commence construction of the new Landsdale high school and the replacement of the Fitzroy Crossing District High School, which is scheduled to open in 2009.

There are some additional stages for high schools. Funding of \$13.7 million has been provided in 2006-07 to complete the additional stages at Mindarie Senior College, Canning Vale College and Kinross College to cater for increasing enrolments. Work will continue on the \$27 million redevelopment of Karratha Senior High School to provide a senior campus, and the Pilbara College of TAFE, and work on the \$15 million major redevelopment of the Geraldton Senior College and John Willcock College will continue. However, there are more major additions and improvements. It just keeps going on. The \$16.9 million transformation of Perth Modern School into a school of academic excellence will continue. Funding of \$29.4 million in 2006-07 will provide for the continuation of major additions and improvements at Newton Moore, Pinjarra, Rossmoyne, Willetton, Narrogin and Hedland Senior High Schools and at Bullsbrook, Kalbarri, Exmouth and Kununurra District High Schools. The redevelopment of the Mt Lawley Senior High School and construction of a new learning area at Bicton Primary School will be completed at a cost of \$1 million and \$1.9 million respectively.

[11.40 am]



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**The CHAIRMAN:** How much more?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** There is not much more. There are other school facilities. An amount of \$25 million has been allocated to purchase and upgrade the former Australian Institute for University Studies facility at Joondalup, which we have just spoken about. An amount of \$8.1 million has been committed to purchase and develop land for the construction of new schools. The \$4.8 million commitment to purchase additional transportable classrooms will support the government's plan to increase the school leaving age and cater for increasing enrolments at schools. The government's \$2 million commitment to the plan for healthy kids will be completed, with the allocation of a further \$1 million in 2006-07 for playground equipment. The 2006-07 budget provides a \$7.5 million commitment for the provision of administration upgrades, covered assembly areas, libraries, resource centres and toilet upgrades at various schools. An amount of \$2 million has been allocated to provide early childhood education facilities and improvements for rural integration classes in schools. An amount of \$2 million has been allocated to upgrade power supply, compliance, security and sewer connections in schools, and \$450 000 has been committed to improve traffic management and parking around schools.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Good question, member for Collie-Wellington! Can the member for Greenough beat that one?

**Mr G. WOODHAMS:** I am pretty disappointed that I have to follow up on that question! I draw the minister's attention to page 352 of the budget papers. I hope that his numeracy skills are up to the grade of his literacy skills. The fourth paragraph on page 352 states that \$4.8 million has been committed to purchase additional transportable classrooms. Is it intended that the additional classrooms be located on or within existing school sites or off-site?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** I will ask the world's leading expert on this matter to respond - a man I go to on every occasion when I see demountables mushrooming throughout my electorate - Mal Parr!

**Mr M. J. Parr:** The budget provides for the purchase of new transportable classrooms, which would typically be located on existing school sites to cater for fluctuating enrolments.

**Mr G. WOODHAMS:** Was "typically" the word that Mr Parr used?

**Mr M. J. Parr:** Yes.

**Mr G. WOODHAMS:** Does that suggest that some transportable classrooms will not be located on existing school sites?

**Mr M. J. Parr:** From time to time that has happened. An example is the Ashdale Gardens primary school site in Landsdale. Several years ago, prior to the establishment of the school, several purpose-built transportable preprimary units were placed on the school site to provide relief, particularly for early childhood classes in K and P. They are examples, but they are not typical.

**Mr G. WOODHAMS:** I presume that some of these transportables will be located on secondary school sites. Will there be an agreement that these additional transportable classrooms can be accessed and shared by vocational training providers?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** I do not think that is the intention, although we are continually looking at a seamless transition of education opportunities between the different providers of education outcomes. I am not aware that this budget allocation will accommodate groups such as registered training organisations. We are entering into programs whereby schools will be open for community use beyond the normal 9.00 am to 4.00 pm opening hours. There are models of that in use. Kwinana Senior High School, for example, will have within it community facilities. The community library is found within Warnbro Community High School, which means that that part of the school is open outside school hours. These days, school facilities are being provided to meet community needs. Those facilities are increasingly being provided not so much in primary schools, but certainly in secondary schools. I imagine that in regional areas, facilities would need to be provided in a broader area than simply on secondary school sites, depending on the community mix and whether the community needs the facilities that could be provided. Generally, governments realise that one of the best ways to look after schools is to have eyes and ears living around them and being within them outside school hours. Major infrastructure is sitting idle for most of the day in most weeks. Today, smart planners, education ministers and governments are looking at ways in which the infrastructure for new schools can be used by other users.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** How many transportable classrooms will that \$4.8 million commitment buy, and is it intended to purchase any specialist transportables for science, home economics or early childhood education, for instance? Does the demand for transportables outstrip the supply, and what is the waiting list for a transportable?

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**The CHAIRMAN:** I heard about three questions, member.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** Yes, but it was a good question.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Good try!

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** Again, I will ask the encyclopaedia on these matters, Mr Mal Parr, to give details. Basically, each demountable costs about \$80 000.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** Does that amount include its being installed on-site?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** I will get Mr Parr to give the details on how many demountables that money will provide, and maybe some idea of what that figure is based on in terms of actual need and a little history of how they are moved around.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** Not too much history!

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** Not too much history, okay. I am expecting a very short answer from Mr Parr!

[11.50 am]

**Mr M. J. Parr:** The indicative purchase cost is approaching \$70 000.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** Is that installed on site?

**Mr M. J. Parr:** No, that is the purchase price. Then, when it is relocated to a school, the transportation is an additional cost, which then takes it towards \$80 000, as the minister suggested. Rural locations obviously cost more. That is for general transportable classrooms. If the member is referring to early-childhood classrooms, which are purpose built, with toilet facilities contained within, obviously there is then a need to connect to sewer or septic, so there are additional establishment costs. Therefore, the cost can run to \$110 000 or \$120 000, again depending on the extent of transportation. A portion of that \$4.8 million is to cater for the increase in the school-leaving age to 16 this year, and also the planned increase in the school-leaving age to 17 in 2008.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** How many will be purchased?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** Between 40 and 50, I think. It is a fluctuating market price at the moment. I will do the maths; the member can ask the question.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** My question relates to the sixth dot point on page 342, under "Major Achievements 2005-06", which refers to the Aboriginal literacy strategy. It is clear from the WALNA results going back to 2001 that in almost every category in every year level, the results are trending down; so the results are getting worse, not better. How much money is being spent on the Aboriginal literacy strategy and why is it failing?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** I think it is a simplistic approach to say that because the numbers are going down, it is failing. The truth of the matter is that far more kids are participating.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** It is failing, minister.

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** Far more kids are participating.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** So the minister is counting it as a success, when the WALNA results for Aboriginal children have dropped!

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** No.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** What is the minister counting it as, then?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** Well, "success" is that more children are involved. By the very nature of their involvement in the process, we would hope to see significant trends that will lead to improvements in the outcomes. The Aboriginal literacy strategy is a three-year program. It commenced in 2005. Therefore, it recognises, if we like, the point made by the member that it was at a low ebb and needed immediate attention. The program targets remote community schools. The fact is that far more youngsters are participating than -

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** The figures I have are for the Kimberley district - I have them in front of me. I have a chart of all the Kimberley results since 2001. They have been going down since 2001.

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** I will ask Mr Albert to go into those details specific to the Kimberley. As I said, the member will find that much of that is because of the increase in involvement. I will run through the program. A daily literacy session consisting of a minimum of two hours of English language and literacy instruction for all students is the centrepiece of the strategy. It ensures consistency within programs and across all RTS schools. The strategy provides nine days of extra training for staff throughout the year. Therefore, it is recognised as requiring specialised outcomes. The department's Aboriginal literacy strategy is complemented by existing

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programs and projects. These including the Getting it Right literacy and numeracy strategy. An additional 200 FTE special teachers have been placed in primary schools, and an additional 31 FTEs in secondary schools, since the inception of the Getting it Right program. A significant proportion of these schools have a substantial population of Aboriginal students and are in receipt of specialist literacy and numeracy support through these programs. At this point I ask Mr Albert whether he wants to comment, particularly with regard to the Kimberley.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** Just as a clarification, this dot point refers to the 43 remote teaching service schools, and that is what my question is about - not anything else.

**Mr P. Albert:** I think the minister has indicated the Aboriginal literacy strategy, which is basically the prescribed two-hour a day strategy. It is a major effort to try to do something about getting more Aboriginal students to achieve the benchmark. The overall performance data for indigenous students has actually shown an improvement, although there will be variations by district. I do not have the Kimberley ones with me at the moment. The issue the member referred to is not just a question of deterioration in a particular area. The issue is that we are not making significant progress. That is a national issue. Currently, I am chairing a national committee that will report to ministers. I guess one of the key findings of that group is that, in terms of leadership at a school level, we are too dependent on the personalities to actually make a difference.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** Could we have more explanation of that, please?

**Mr P. Albert:** Often the literacy and numeracy performance in the school will be dependent on the strength of leadership and the quality of the teaching that actually takes place. We need to have a much more systemic way of ensuring that strength of leadership and quality of teaching continue, albeit that individuals will leave those schools from time to time. The second area that is of major concern is the early childhood area. The stats show very clearly that children who spend two years prior to entering year 1 do much better in literacy and numeracy, not only in year 3, but throughout their schooling.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** We have known that since the fifties and sixties from work done in the US. That is not new information!

**Mr P. Albert:** Exactly right.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** And 40 years later we are still quoting it, and we are still in the same bind!

**Mr P. Albert:** I am a firm believer in the two years before schooling. In WA, for example, although we make provision for that, it is not mandatory - it is compulsory from year 1.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** As a follow-up, are there any bilingual programs in these remote schools? There used to be quite a lot of bilingual programs in Australia. The results of bilingual early education have shown that children develop literacy skills faster and better. That result has been around for 40 years as well!

**Mr K.A. O'Keefe:** One of the specific elements of the Aboriginal literacy strategy is to take the best information that we have about effective literacy teaching, and bring that together with the knowledge that the students who come to school from remote communities by and large bring with them another Aboriginal language - or more than one. The particular element that we are working on is bringing together the fact that these students are already bringing a substantial knowledge of language to school, albeit their own language. We do not have a specific policy of bilingual education. However, in one of our schools in the Kimberley, some significant progress has been made because of the particular skills associated with people who work in the Kimberley and at the school. A fair amount of work is being done in the classroom, where a teacher will say something in standard Australian English, and it is interpreted by the Aboriginal worker in the classroom in the language of the students. Some really interesting work has been done on that. Basically, as part of the literacy program in trying to understand more effectively how we can build on the language skills that children bring to school, we are researching and trying to analyse what that is. However, by and large, for all of the teachers in the Aboriginal literacy strategy, a significant component of the work is understanding what we refer to as two-way learning; that is, we want to build on the knowledge about language that kids already bring. However, there is, at this stage, no systematic understanding that we will progress beyond that, other than trying to understand what is going on there.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** Perhaps that is something the minister can take on board.

[12 noon]

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** I agree.

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**The CHAIRMAN:** Before I give the next member the call, I remind members we have an hour remaining before lunch and two hours after lunch for the other divisions. Members might like to consider whether they wish to continue this division after lunch and take one of the other smaller divisions before lunch.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** I refer to page 350, service 3, "Vocational Education and Training Services". Although this does not directly relate to state government expenditure, I would be interested to know what progress has been made on the federal government's technical colleges, which I think is the term used, and how they will relate to the vocational programs in high schools and to the TAFE sector.

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** In September 2004 the Australian government announced a commitment to establish 24 Australian technical colleges at a cost of \$289 million over a four-year period to provide tuition for up to 7 200 students in years 11 and 12. The colleges are required to be linked with industry and to be run autonomously by a principal with the help of a board chaired by industry and members consisting of parents from the community. To date 18 colleges have been approved by the commonwealth, including one in Perth's south run by Stirling Skills Training Incorporated, which includes the Cities of Gosnells and Armadale as well as the Armadale Redevelopment Authority. The bid was also supported by peak industry bodies such as the Housing Industry Association, the Master Builders Association, the Royal Automobile Club, the Motor Industry Training Association and the Civil Contractors Federation. The department submitted an expression of interest for the establishment of an Australian technical college in the Pilbara. This bid was not approved by the commonwealth on the grounds that the following criteria had not been met: one, that the college must offer the options of an Australian workplace agreement to all staff; and two, that students commence a school-based new apprenticeship in the trades at the beginning of year 11. A new proposal for the establishment of a college in the Pilbara has been submitted by the department in partnership with the Chamber of Minerals and Energy and the Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association. This bid is supported by major resources companies in the Pilbara and has a strong focus on providing greater opportunities for indigenous people to be trained and employed in the resources sector. The Department of Education, Science and Training is assessing the proposal. DEST has indicated that it will not support the proposal unless the ATC offers an indenture in the first six months of year 11. The major issue was the strong opposition from major resources companies to year 11 students being indentured, on the grounds of safety and workplace readiness issues.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** Will the minister explain the indenture concept there?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** Unlike the state school-based apprentice plan, which has rocketed off, the federal government insists on two different criteria. The first is that a company offering training to apprentices must indenture them right up front. The state plan does not ask for that. Simply put, the resources sector has been brilliant at providing job opportunities for the school-based apprenticeship program, in which it is able to monitor and mentor apprentices over a 12-month period at no cost to industry, with apprentices coming out of schools two days a week. Some 74 positions were on offer from Pilbara Iron, BHP Billiton, Woodside Petroleum etc in the Pilbara. They are not happy with the federal regime, which says that they must take on and indenture apprentices up front. The resources industry has had numerous meetings with the federal government. It has now put in a submission. It is saying strongly that it would like the government to change its plan for the Pilbara because it is not appropriate. The resources industry says it is governed by a mining act that creates difficulties in letting youngsters under the age of 18 on to a mine site, and it is very concerned about safety issues etc. It has also said that it is concerned with the level of maturity of those young people when they are first employed. It wants the opportunity, which the state system offers, to suck it and see, as it were, before indenturing the apprentices. The federal model has those downsides, which it demands all over Australia. I am not criticising the federal government, but it strongly advised the resources industry in the Pilbara that it would not agree to that. The federal government wants apprentices to be indentured up front. Negotiations are ongoing. I will ask Mr Albert to go into the details of them. The resources industry in the Pilbara is saying that it wants something different. Overall, the Department of Education and Training is working closely with industry to accommodate its requirements, but despite all its rhetoric about the importance of having an industry-driven training system, the commonwealth is insisting on the implementation of a model that industry does not want. That applies particularly to the Pilbara. That is the difficulty we have. I will ask Mr Albert, who has been involved in some of the negotiations and discussions, to further elaborate on that point.

**Mr P. Albert:** A compromise has been put that the companies indenture apprentices after six months. Our understanding is that the companies have now taken the issue up with the Prime Minister, Minister Hardgrave and Minister Bishop. The resources companies still hold firmly to the view that students are too young to be indentured and to work on site during that period. They are prepared to make a commitment to the numbers that they will take on board, but they are not prepared to make a commitment to the names of the individuals that they will take on board until the students have completed year 11.

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**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** The resources companies are able to compare what the commonwealth is offering with what they have been working on during the last 12 months with the state. The resources companies take those youngsters on and monitor and mentor them for two or three days a week, depending on the program, over a 12-month period. At the end of that period the youngster sits national accreditation examinations for a first-year apprenticeship in whatever skill he has chosen. The resources companies are able to determine over that period whether youngsters are not only passing the subjects but also mature enough to be involved in a mine site operation; in other words, they are able to monitor and mentor, which is the key element the resources companies are really seeking to do. Our program has, of course, been able to offer that for 12 months at no cost to industry. We are not asking industry to pay the students. When I put the program together some three years ago and negotiated with the unions, I said to the union movement that the rewards for those youngsters are that at the end of the process, if they start an apprenticeship in the school system, they will be fully qualified by the time they are 18 or 19 years of age. If they are fully qualified, it is of benefit to the state. It is also of benefit to the students, because they go on to a full adult wage for whatever their trade qualification. The unions bought that. It seems that the federal government ran with a model that was predominantly running in Queensland. The Queensland model was saying that it wanted the apprentices to be paid regardless. When I looked at the past 30 years to see how we got into the position of not training enough people, I found that it was always a very simple problem, which was the cost to industry. During a boom time we can say to industry that it will pay for these apprentices while it has them from a school system, as it were, but I think that as soon as the economic environment starts to tighten again, training opportunities in industry will fall off again as a result of cost factors. I believe that the state model is better than the federal model. I had the opportunity of speaking with Minister Hardgrave on Monday a week ago in Melbourne. I put the virtues of the state model to him. The success rate of the pilot that we have run for 500 youngsters has meant a drop-out rate of well under 10 per cent, and out of that school-based system nearly all those youngsters have got jobs. We are saying to the federal government that we think that we have a better model. The major resources industries in the Pilbara like the state model, and they are trying to convince the federal government to run with it.

[12.10 pm]

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** How does the current submission for an Australian technical college in the Pilbara integrate with the proposed redevelopment of Karratha High School and TAFE?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** I am not sure that it will go into Karratha. The negotiations have been predominantly about Port Hedland, but it will certainly have an effect on Karratha. I ask Ms Siobhán Mulvey, who has been intimately involved in those details, to provide a further answer.

**Ms S. Mulvey:** The Australian technical College proposed for the Pilbara is actually located at Karratha. The program that we propose to offer to students will be a combination of the Western Australian Certificate of Education and training. As the minister indicated, under the commonwealth arrangements, students have to be indentured in the first six months of year 11. That is the issue that the resources sector is currently concerned about. However, there will be complete integration with the TAFE college and with the school, so it will be an integrated body that works with all the existing educational institutions.

**Mr J. McGRATH:** I refer to the third dot point on page 342. Mention is made about significant pressure on the need to upgrade and refurbish existing facilities. My electorate of South Perth obviously has a lot of very old schools that are in this situation. We have an interesting situation with Curtin Primary School. Last October the school received a commonwealth grant for \$46 000 to enclose its undercover assembly area. The school wanted to have this work done before winter. The school put in a request to the Department of Housing and Works in October. That work will not be completed until the July holidays - a wait of nine months. Is the department having problems with the skills shortage caused by the mining boom, and is it affecting the work programs that schools rely on? If so, is it possible for a small school like Curtin to have a job like that done by the private sector?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** My answer to the first two parts of the question is yes. There are increasing problems for the state in finding the tradespeople to do work on infrastructure. The resources sector, in addition to being a boon to the state, is also causing major problems by drawing highly skilled people away from the metropolitan area and to the Pilbara and goldfields, where they can earn three times as much money. That problem exists and it affects our program. Although a number of schools in my electorate are making use of the federal program, the major problem with the federal program is that it is not coordinated with any state program. The federal government is saying that there is a basket of money for schools to apply for, but there has not been any discussion between the federal government and any of the states to coordinate the basket the federal government is willing to hand over with a state-based program. This budget reflects the state's prioritisation. Rightly or wrongly, schools will say they have missed out. Today they have the option of going to the federal

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government to get more money, but once that comes in, it does not necessarily dovetail into any budgetary arrangements the state government has already made. I can understand parents feeling that they can access the federal money but not the state money. The problem is that there is no mechanism that I am aware of by which the two can work together.

**Mr J. McGRATH:** They do not want the state money. They just want the job done, so is there anything we can tell those schools?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** I ask Mr Parr, who looks after that department on a day-to-day basis, to provide a detailed reply.

**Mr M. J. Parr:** Provision of school infrastructure and maintenance of school buildings is certainly exposed to the currently overheated construction industry. It is true that the federal program, Investing in Our Schools, has brought an added workload to the construction industry. It is fair to say that the facilities managers who are contracted to the Department of Housing and Works initially struggled with the workload. They have now responded and recruited additional resources, so that they are able to project-manage these many hundreds of typically smaller projects in schools. We are confident that in coming months their response will be somewhat improved.

**Mr J. McGRATH:** Given the minister's background in small business and his entrepreneurial bent, would he see any reason that these smaller schools should not, in some circumstances, get a private contractor to do the work?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** I could give the member a litany of reasons they could not. However, in today's market, we ought to be working out ways by which they could. There are nevertheless obvious reasons they could not. When we spend taxpayers' dollars, particularly in schools with young children, we have to be absolutely aware of the quality of build. That is what we are after at the end of the day. It has to be something that has not been put together by somebody who has done a 16-week bricklaying course; the silver trowel approach. We cannot afford that. Unfortunately, in today's market the demand for properly qualified skilled tradesmen, with their ability to earn money away from the metropolitan area or even within the metropolitan area, is such that they are flat-out completing their own contracts. Quality is always a problem, but I suppose it could be argued that it is a problem at any time. It is further exacerbated by the shortage of skills. Rather than families being frustrated when their school receives taxpayers' money from the federal government but the work cannot be completed, there needs to be a way by which we can tick off on the builder being appropriately qualified and on standards being met, and find a way forward that accommodates, rather than frustrates, outcomes. I am sure that Mr Parr is working to that end. I think his answer indicated that the day-to-day operations and the workloads of his building construction engineers and inspectors are such that they are working on a way to try to accommodate this. If I were a parent at a school, I would obviously see the federal money as a major asset. However, it also causes problems because there is no coordination with the state system. We need to look at our programs and continue to try to get a dialogue with the federal government by which we can better plan for the funding and be part of a process of completion, rather than exacerbating the issue.

**Mr M.P. WHITELEY:** I refer to the third dot point from the bottom of page 343, under "Major Achievements 2005-06". This deals with the behaviour management and discipline strategy - sometimes unfortunately referred to as "BMAD". Has the strategy had any impact?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** I noticed it in the brackets; the BMAD strategy. The member is very quick to pick that up. We might have to change the name to something else.

**Mr G. WOODHAMS:** How about "be damned"?

[12.20 pm]

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** Be damned? The government has a track record of allocating significant funding to address this issue through its behaviour management and discipline strategy. I know that this is one of the member for Churchlands' favourite questions; she asks it regularly in Parliament. The number of students suspended has dropped drastically, from 8 692 in 2001 to 7 645 in 2005. There has been a declining trend in the average number of days' suspension, from 2.35 in 2001 to 2.26 in 2005. The student suspension rate has dropped from 3.44 in 2001 to 3.08 in 2004. The 2005 data is unavailable at this stage. Suspension data for 2005 shows that 66 per cent of students suspended were suspended only once, demonstrating that suspension is a sound sanction for most students.

The behaviour management and discipline strategy is a major initiative of this government to improve student behaviour in public schools and increase teacher confidence to better manage disruptive student behaviour. The

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government has allocated \$64.5 million over a four-year period to reduce class sizes from years 4 to 9, implement programs and strategies, provide teacher training in effective classroom management and instructional strategies and financial support for district education officers to assist schools with the most challenging students. Schools involved in the program have been provided with additional resources to reduce class sizes and address student behaviour issues. The issues that each school community faces are quite different. Therefore, schools have been required to review their current practices and processes related to managing student behaviour. Schools have analysed this information and have set and reported on behaviour improvement targets as part of this strategy. The results that these schools have achieved have been impressive. Ninety-two per cent of the schools allocated additional staffing through the strategy have reduced class sizes to an average of 24 students. Teachers are reporting that with fewer students in these classes they are able to spend more time with students who have the greatest need, which, in turn, is reducing behavioural problems. The additional staffing also gives schools the flexibility to establish additional classes targeting students with serious behaviour issues.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** How many students were expelled from government schools last year and for what reasons?

**Ms S. A. O'Neill:** There were 24 exclusions from government schools in 2005.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** Are those students excluded totally from the school they attend and then moved to another school?

**Ms S. A. O'Neill:** They are excluded from that particular school, and then we work with the student family to find a more appropriate setting, which is usually another school. We negotiate a placement for them in accordance with where they live and their particular learning needs.

**Mr G. WOODHAMS:** How many of those students who were excluded undertook home schooling as an alternative to being located in another school?

**Ms S. A. O'Neill:** I do not have the data on how many students went on to be home schooled. In general, these students do not go on to be home schooled. Often they have other specialist learning needs and that is best provided for in a school setting. I do not have a specific number but my recollection is that last year there was none. One or two students have received tuition from the Schools of Isolated and Distance Education as an interim measure with a view to a transition back into school.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** To what extent are drugs an issue in behavioural problems that schools are dealing with?

**Ms S. A. O'Neill:** Sometimes it is related. Some students who have behavioural issues have multiple disadvantages and other problems, and in some cases that relates to drugs. That is an issue that is not privy just to the school setting. It is a difficulty that they are dealing with outside school, but, from time to time, drugs is one of the factors in suspension and possibly exclusion. Therefore, they are related in some cases.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** In how many cases were drugs involved in the 7 000-plus suspensions last year? A rough percentage will do.

**Mr K.A. O'Keefe:** One of the dilemmas we have faced is that the information that is conveyed to us from the school is handwritten. It is very much an open-ended response to what has happened. It is very difficult for us to be able to disentangle whether it is a drug issue or something else is going on. We have just started a process of online recording of these incidents. It will give us much clearer data because people will be asked to report on what the critical incident is about. We will have a much clearer understanding from the information and we will be able to act on it and analyse it more strategically. That process is being rolled out now.

**The CHAIRMAN:** We are still on division 19, which is the major division. We have three other divisions to deal with.

**Mr G. WOODHAMS:** How many of those 7 000 suspensions can be attributed to bullying?

**Ms S. A. O'Neill:** In relation to suspensions and the way they are described, if there is a case of bullying in the school, that may lead to another incident, perhaps a physical problem. It depends on how the suspension notice is provided to us. I do not have a figure on the number of suspensions specifically related to bullying. It is often more complex than that. A number of events can lead to the actual suspension. I do not have specific data on bullying.

**Mr G. WOODHAMS:** The second dot point on page 343 of the *Budget Statements* under "Major Achievements For 2005-06" reads -

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Developed a parent engagement manual for school and district staff to show how Aboriginal parents can be involved in education decision making processes in schools and districts.

How many of these manuals were provided and to what schools?

**Mr K.A. O'Keefe:** One of the issues that is arising very clearly for us was identified in "The WA Aboriginal Child Health Survey" report as well as in the work the director general described. The national report indicates that Aboriginal parents are disconnected from the schools their children attend. A lot of these people had pretty ordinary experiences at school and they are reluctant to go to the school. There will be a major push by the department this year to ensure that there is better community engagement between the schools and their communities to improve outcomes. To facilitate and support that intent, we have developed a resource called Walk Right In, which is a program for parents to assist them to understand how schools operate and how they can participate in them. The program will be rolled out to all schools and it will be done through the Aboriginal education teams in the districts, as well as through the Aboriginal education officers who are in schools that have a significant Aboriginal population.

**Mr G. WOODHAMS:** I appreciate the information Mr O'Keefe has provided and I understand the intent. How will the program be successfully measured to show that indigenous parents are actually more involved in that school process? How will that be quantified?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** I am not sure whether there is a particular program other than that which we already have in place throughout each district; that is, the Aboriginal education advisory personnel working with the Aboriginal communities. I will hand over to Mr O'Keefe to give the detail of outcomes.

[12.30 pm]

**Mr K.A. O'Keefe:** I do not believe that we have at this stage clear ideas about how we measure the program. Certainly, the assumption is that there will be increased involvement by Aboriginal community members in school decision making. A year or so ago, there was a formal structure in schools for Aboriginal parents to engage with the school. It was the Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness Committee, which was funded through a commonwealth program. A current initiative called the parents school partnership initiative provides not a formal forum but a mechanism. Each of the partnerships requires a sign off by the school and a representative from the Aboriginal community.

I should add that there is a very clear focus in the work that is developing that perhaps part of what we must do is establish formal partnerships between the schools and Aboriginal communities. In a sense, that would be a shared responsibility agreement that identifies the outcomes we are chasing - for instance, improved outcomes - and what the Aboriginal community will do and what the school will do. A few of those already exist. Yule Brook College has a partnership with its school community. We are renegotiating with the Ngaanyatjarra Lands people a substantial partnership along the lines of a regional partnership agreement. As one way of measuring its effectiveness, we will determine to what extent a school has a formal partnership that enables an ongoing dialogue between the school and the Aboriginal community.

**Mr G. WOODHAMS:** The various Aboriginal communities are often divided among themselves and have different language and tribal groupings. Therefore, how will the minister be able to identify whether there is a cohesive and representative body in the community that can effectively provide students to one school?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** It is like any other community. The Department of Education and Training must work with what is before it. In the main, that usually means working with individual families and/or groups or organisations that represent those families. It is an ongoing process. I understand the member's question, but I do not believe that providing one model or forcing a particular body onto a community is the way to deal with it. When we are dealing with our children's education, it does not matter whether people are Aboriginal or not; it is very much a matter of the parents' concern for their children. Therefore, however complex the process might be, a process must be put in place, in its simplest form, that can deal directly with families. As Mr O'Keefe said earlier, the Walk Right In program recognises that there has not been a natural connection between the schools and the parents. Presently in the school system many parents are involved in primary school education, but their involvement drops off rapidly in high school. It does not matter whether people are Aboriginal or not. There is a massive disconnect. There are different ways of handling the problems facing children who are in the school system. The Walk Right In program is disseminated throughout each school in the state. It is a program whereby individual parents are encouraged to become part of the school system. It is very difficult to get parents involved on school committees at senior schools. When we were last in government and Carmen Lawrence was the education minister, she visited Kwinana Senior High School, and we called a public meeting to form a committee at that high school. That was the first parents and citizens association that had been formed at that



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high school in more than 30 years. My experience is that we must have a model that deals with individual parents regardless of their background. If we are not able to do that, we will have some difficulty.

**Mr G. WOODHAMS:** Can I get an undertaking that the minister will provide the original information that I sought with regard to the schools?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** Is that the documentation?

**Mr G. WOODHAMS:** Yes.

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** The answer I have indicates that each school in the state has the Walk Right In "You Can Make a Difference" manual.

**Mr G. WOODHAMS:** If they do, that is the answer I was after.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** I refer to service 2, "Secondary Education", on page 349. When driving in my car recently, I heard a discussion on the radio that physics, chemistry and biology are no longer taught at Gosnells Senior High School. Mr Albert was part of that discussion. It concerned me that a government high school is not teaching those subjects, because it cuts off opportunities for students. How can not teaching those subjects be justified, when there is a shortage of scientists and engineers in this country? How many other schools no longer teach these subjects? Why are we denying students opportunities by cutting off those subjects in schools?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** I will ask Mr Albert to provide the precise details. Obviously we want all the appropriate subjects that have been mentioned taught in schools. However, that is not the case currently, and it has not been the case for a long time. It depends on numbers. If only one child in a school is studying a certain level of maths, it is not provided for. It is the same with science. Last year only one student at Kwinana Senior High School was studying a certain level of maths, and he actually did that by correspondence. That has always been the nature of education. I will ask Mr Albert to comment on the precise details.

**Mr P. Albert:** Changing demographics are a major contributor to the subjects that schools offer.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** Can Mr Albert explain that to me? Is he saying that the changing demographics mean there are fewer bright kids; therefore the subjects are not taught? What does it mean?

**Mr P. Albert:** No. It means that in years 11 and 12 we are able to offer TEE subjects. There are 22 distinct TEE subjects, and 11 languages other than English. There is also the vocational education and training option, which is a very positive and viable option for many students. There are also the 400-odd wholly school-assessed subjects. Schools make their own decisions, through a planning process involving their communities, about what they will and will not offer. Schools also use a detailed counselling process to determine what students want to do in year 11. The schools then determine the extent to which they can cater for that. Students at a particular school who wish to pursue a subject that the school might not be able to teach can access the Schools of Isolated and Distance Education facilities. SIDE has a very good reputation of being able to provide subjects in schools that are unavailable through the usual school staffing. We are currently experimenting with flexible learning centres, which involve videoconferencing classrooms. That means that a very experienced teacher in calculus, for example, is able to teach four or five classes in another school that are taught by less experienced mathematics teachers. That program is under way in the Pilbara. A range of options are available to students in years 11 and 12. Only 30 per cent of students choose a pathway that will qualify them for entry into university. With the changing of the school leaving age, we must cater for the full cohort; that is why schools seek to offer a range of options. Some schools, such as Balga Senior High School, do not offer any TEE subjects. However, even though the school does not have any staff dedicated to teaching TEE subjects, it has tailor-made arrangements with other schools for students who wish to sit a TEE subject.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** How many senior high schools in this state do not teach physics and chemistry?

**Mr P. Albert:** I do not have that information on hand.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** Could that be provided?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** We are able to supply, by way of supplementary information, the details of the number of schools that are not teaching physics, chemistry or biology.

*[Supplementary Information No A47.]*

[12.40 pm]

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** I would also like an indication of the number of students who have studied physics, chemistry and calculus in government schools over the past five years. My guess is that the number is dropping. I want to know whether that is a trend.

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**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** We will supply details of the number of students involved in those areas of learning over the past five years.

*[Supplementary Information No A48.]*

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** Where do students from Gosnells Senior High School go for a science-based academic program if it is not available in the school?

**Mr P. Albert:** The school makes arrangements whether it be through the Schools of Isolated and Distance Education or an adjoining school. That model has worked reasonably well. As I said, we are very keen on the concept of a flexible learning centre, which will enable quite complex subjects to be taught in many more schools, despite the fact that teachers with that level of experience are not in those schools. That is being trialled in partnership with BHP in the Pilbara.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** It seems from Mr Albert's response as though some of the subjects that most of us consider to be core secondary subjects are almost becoming discretionary subjects. The curriculum seems to be turning on its head. I accept the example of Balga Senior High School, because a conscious decision was made to make it a vocational education school and that neighbouring schools would run academic programs. It seems from the answer just given to the member for Churchlands that what is being offered in Gosnells high school, for example, is pretty poor. It is almost as though he is saying that a child will be fitted into the program with some flexible arrangements or distance education in what I think most people would consider to be basic, core educational units.

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** I think the member for Cottesloe would be the first to agree that if a school does not have sufficient numbers for a particular learning outcome to be delivered, the process by which those youngsters are given the opportunity of getting that delivery in a particular education stream is no different from what was in place throughout his time as Minister for Education and before that.

**Mr P. Albert:** I might have misled members in a sense because the district director plays a major role in determining the arrangements that may be necessary. For example, issues have arisen in the Bunbury region concerning the availability of some subjects. Through the planning process at the Bunbury district level, when I think economics was a problem in one or two schools, that issue was able to be addressed. I agree with the member's comment that the core subjects must be available. My understanding is that although our schools do not offer the full suite of tertiary entrance examination courses, through the planning process, they certainly offer sufficient subjects to enable 90 per cent of students to obtain a place in a particular course. Calculus, for example, is not available in every school and it never has been.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** I refer to new primary schools on page 361. I noticed that a question was asked about this earlier. Reference is made in the budget papers to the phased replacement of Mt Barker Primary School on a secondary site. Is the minister aware that the current funding allocation is not enough for the first phase to start because of extra costs? The community is no longer having meetings on the new school site because there is insufficient funding. Will the minister advise whether additional funding will be provided?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** I understand matters may have moved on recently regarding initial funding for that secondary site. I understand that, initially, \$7 million was allocated to the program for Mt Barker. That has recently been increased by \$800 000 on the basis of an on-site meeting with the appropriate players. I understand, therefore, that the money has been provided to enable the program to start.

**Mr M. J. Parr:** As the minister described, in recent times the allocation has been increased by \$800 000. Now there is shared confidence that sufficient facilities will be able to be developed to facilitate the transfer of students in years 4 to 7 as the first stage of this planned relocation.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** With regard to new primary schools, are there any plans in the near future to address overcrowding and maintenance at the Yakamia Primary School?

**Mr M. J. Parr:** The department is well aware of the situation at Yakamia Primary School and the high level of enrolment. I suggest it will be considered when the department's forward estimates are recast in these coming months. Consideration will be given to that aspect.

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** I think the member for Albany just put it on the priority list.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** The main problem at the school is the large number of demountable buildings. It seems as though demountables are just whacked in, but that has an impact on facilities. The people in the demountable section have no covered walkways to the toilets, and that is a real issue.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** The member should come to my schools.

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**Mr P.B. WATSON:** The member for Churchlands' electorate does not have the weather conditions that Albany has.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** Come out to our coastal strip.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** I will look after my electorate and the member for Churchlands can look after hers. If a new school will not be built, can purpose-built classrooms be built? Some children have to walk a long way to the toilet facilities.

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** We have taken note of the member for Albany's question. It is obviously meant to advise us that the government needs to look at the whole process for that school. That will be part of any future budget consideration, which will take place about December this year.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** I have a list also.

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** I know. I thank the member for Albany for drawing that to our attention.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** I refer to service 1, "Primary Education", on page 348 of the *Budget Statements*, particularly the kindergarten and preprimary program. When the kindergarten program was introduced, it was not possible to establish all kindergartens on school sites from day one. I refer in particular to Floreat Primary School, where I understand a kindergarten program is not available on site or off site. Of the 700-odd primary schools in Western Australia, how many have a kindergarten program attached to the school on the school site, how many are off the school site and how many do not have a kindergarten program at all?

[12.50 pm]

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** We are able to supply, by way of supplementary information, advice to the member for Cottesloe on how many kindergartens in the school system are off site and the location of those off-site kindergartens.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** And how many do not have it at all.

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** And how many schools do not have any kindergarten facilities at all.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** And which schools they are.

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** Yes, and which schools they are.

[*Supplementary Information No A49.*]

**Mr J. McGRATH:** My question relates to service 1 on page 348, which deals with primary education. Reference is made to encouraging the physical development of students, which gives me a reason to ask this question. Does the department have a policy on the use of school ovals by junior sporting clubs? The reason I ask that question is that a junior cricket club in South Perth recently approached the Curtin Primary School about playing cricket on its school oval on weekends. The reply from the department was that it would not be allowed, even though the club offered to put in a pitch, at a cost of about \$8 000, and offered to pay the school some money for the use of the ground. The department said no, that could not happen, because there was a duty-of-care issue and also an issue regarding the future of the school. I ask this question because the same junior cricket club, which has 700 members, currently plays cricket on four school grounds at weekends.

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** Government school grounds?

**Mr J. McGRATH:** I think they are government school grounds.

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** I will ask Mr Parr to give us a detailed answer. However, I thank the member for bringing this to our attention, because I would have thought that the Department of Education and Training, like many other government departments, would always be keen to have money coming in from outside to assist with expanding facilities. There are numerous ways in which we are able to accommodate that now, and have been able to do so over the years. Whatever barriers may be in the way, we need to have a close look at that issue to see whether we cannot come up with a different answer. I do not need the details. I will ask Mr Parr to illuminate the issue, because he is the fount of all knowledge in these areas.

**Mr M. J. Parr:** Certainly the department has a policy of encouraging community use of school facilities, and that occurs widely across the state. In fact, in a good number of schools across the metropolitan and regional areas, there are formal arrangements between the department and the local government authority. There is also another set of arrangements, perhaps less formal, that are similar to the type the member described. It surprises me that this particular school took this attitude. Generally, at the informal level it is left to the school to

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negotiate with the junior sporting body. However, as the minister suggested, that is something that we will investigate.

**Mr J. McGRATH:** I was led to believe that the school was quite happy to have it, but the department said no because it was concerned about a duty-of-care issue. The cricket club said that the school would have a duty of care to provide a proper surface for the weekend, so that would mean maintaining the oval and things like that.

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** Those sorts of things are always in the mix in trying to reach an agreement on outcomes. I think we can say today with some confidence to the very diligent member for South Perth that, his having brought this matter to our attention, we will go back and review the matter to see whether we can overcome the impediments that may exist. On the basis of what Mr Parr has advised us, there usually seems to be an ability to accommodate those sorts of outcomes, so we will review the matter for the member. Hopefully, the oval will be ready for the upcoming cricket season.

**Mr G. WOODHAMS:** I refer to the fourth dot point on page 343 under “Major Achievements 2005-06”, which states -

As a result of raising of the school leaving age, new programs were trialled across all education districts in 2005 . . .

I would like to know which new programs were trialled. Perhaps the minister could provide that advice as supplementary information. The second line of that dot point states -

Where appropriate, successful programs have been continued in 2006.

Will the minister undertake to provide me with details of those successful programs?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** I am sure that that detail can be provided.

**Mr G. WOODHAMS:** It is quite simple. I am just seeking a list.

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** We will provide, by way of supplementary information, those programs that are being implemented or are in place to cater for students expected to go back into the school system as a result of the school leaving age being varied.

**Mr G. WOODHAMS:** It states in the budget papers that new programs were trialled last year, and it goes on to state in the second line -

Where appropriate, successful programs have been continued in 2006.

That suggests to me that some programs have been discontinued and some have been kept, and it might also be possible that others will be explored. All I seek is a list of those programs that were trialled last year and those that have been retained; that is, those that are described as being successful this year.

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** We can do that school by school. It is in the district plans. We will provide that by way of supplementary information.

*[Supplementary Information No A50.]*

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** My question relates to the sixth dot point on page 343, which refers to the selection of students for Perth Modern School. My question relates to the selection of students at Perth Modern School and at the academic talent program schools, of which I think there are eight or 10. I want to know, first of all, whether the same tests are used or whether it is a composite selection process, whereby a student might apply to, say, Shenton College and Perth Modern School, hoping to get into one of them. Perhaps we could start with that first.

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** Is there another part of the question?

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** Yes, there is, but it is better if we get the answer to that first.

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** Sharyn O’Neill is the resident expert on that. I will ask Sharyn to go into great detail. That will probably take us through to the lunch break at one o’clock.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** We will come back after lunch, minister, so do not faint.

**Ms S. A. O’Neill:** The test used for selective entry into Perth Modern School and the other gifted and talented education programs was devised by the Australian Centre for Educational Research, which is recognised nationally for its capacity to identify potentially gifted and talented students. The test covers a full range of competency areas, including non-verbal reasoning, and maths and English competencies, and it has the facility to

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be sensitive to cultural difference. It is well recognised as a test in this regard. The same test is used for Perth Modern School and the other gifted and talented education programs to which the member referred.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** My further question relates to the process of selection and offer of places. I have had a complaint that a parent whose child's name was down for both a school for academically talented children and Perth Modern School was offered only Perth Modern School. That parent would have preferred to have a choice between the two schools, but was forced to decide on one before knowing whether there was a possibility of a place in the other, the first offer having been made by Perth Modern School. I want to know whether that is the way in which places are offered for Perth Modern School, and whether that might be reviewed for next year to give people choice.

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** I thank the member for that question. I will ask Ms O'Neill to provide the answer.

**Ms S. A. O'Neill:** That is in fact the way that it occurred this year. One hundred and eighty-eight offers went out for 160 places for year 8 at Perth Modern School. This year the offers went out in advance of the other GATE programs. We have also had responses to indicate that some parents would like to have seen the full range so that they could indicate preferences. We have taken that feedback on board. Next year, they will be done simultaneously. Additionally, we have gone back to those parents and given them further time in which to consider some of the later offers. However, that process, on the basis of that feedback and the response that the member has mentioned, has been taken on board, and the process will be conducted simultaneously next year across all the GATE programs.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** There will be a lot of very happy people.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I will allow the member for Cottesloe to ask the first question after lunch.

*Meeting suspended from 1.00 to 2.00 pm*

**The CHAIRMAN:** A quorum is present. The question before the committee is that appropriation for division 19 be recommended. I will give the member for Churchlands the call since her colleagues are not here.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** I refer to the first dot point of page 343 of the *Budget Statements*, which relates to the "Follow the Dream" retention strategy for Aboriginal students. I understand that 650 students are involved in the program. How many of those students come from the 43 remote communities that we spoke about earlier?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** I do not know. However, there may be somebody here who does know. I will try my luck and ask Mr O'Keefe.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** Mr O'Keefe is frowning!

**Mr K.A. O'Keefe:** I did not hear what the member said.

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** The member for Churchlands asked how many students involved in the program come from remote communities. I am not sure whether we have that breakdown. However, if anybody can provide an answer, Mr O'Keefe can.

**Mr K.A. O'Keefe:** The program usually involves a critical mass of between 25 and 35 students, so necessarily they tend to be in larger regional areas such as Port Hedland, Albany and Bunbury. No students from a specific small remote community are involved in the program.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** If a student who lived in a remote community showed the sort of promise that would get him or her into the program, how would that student become involved? Does the department look out for such students to ensure that they have that opportunity?

**Mr K.A. O'Keefe:** It depends on the geographic location. Although the program is based at schools, it involves students attending enrichment centres. Neighbouring students are able to attend those enrichment centres. One such school that is in a remote community is Fitzroy Crossing District High School. Those enrichment centres can be attended by students from not only Fitzroy Crossing high school, but also neighbouring schools.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** How many Aboriginal students - whether or not they are involved in the program - completed year 12 in 2005? How many Aboriginal students are in year 12 this year?

**Mr K.A. O'Keefe:** Last year 50 students in year 12 completed the program. Of the students who were in the program last year, 10 per cent gained direct entry into university; 22 per cent gained entry into university through bridging courses; 26 per cent earned a TAFE certificate level III or IV; 16 per cent commenced an apprenticeship or a traineeship; and, 12 per cent became employed. The remaining 14 per cent are seeking

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employment. Some of those students are also parents. Eighty-six per cent of students have gone into meaningful training, employment or further education.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** Is there any indication that the number will be even greater this year? What do the figures look like for 2006?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** There was a 10 per cent increase in the number of Aboriginal students in the Aboriginal student cohort graduating from year 12 in 2006. There will be a 20 per cent increase in 2007 and a 35 per cent increase in 2008. Approximately 100 students will gain a tertiary entrance result enabling immediate tertiary entry in 2008.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** Is that overall or does the figure apply only to those in the "Follow the Dream" program?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** Yes. To further highlight the figures that Mr O'Keefe alluded to, in 2005, 51 year 12 students attended "Follow the Dream" learning centres. The breakdown goes something like this: five students gained direct entry to university; 11 students gained university entry through bridging courses; seven students gained employment; 13 students are attending TAFE; one student has gained a traineeship; four students gained mining traineeships; five students gained apprenticeships; one student is involved in parenthood; and four students are seeking employment.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** Does the department follow up those students once they have left school to provide support? A student who is the first in his or her family to attend university may well need support to make it through. We all wish them well and hope that there is support.

**Mr K.A. O'Keefe:** We do not have a formal transition plan in place, although one has been talked about. The students in the program - as well as their siblings and families - have access to Smith Family support. Following a student's departure from the program, the family remains involved through the Smith Family. However, there is no formal transition program from the "Follow the Dream" program into the next stage.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** If a student is tertiary bound, does the department liaise with the student's university to keep an eye on that student, or does it just hope that after all the effort it puts into those students at the school level, everything just works out?

**Mr K.A. O'Keefe:** I am not saying that that does not happen; I just do not know the answer. A key aspect of the program is that a coordinator works with every student individually. I could certainly get the information that describes the transition process. However, I do not have those details.

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** Presently, the program is a partnership between the Department of Education, Science and Training, the Graham (Polly) Farmer Foundation and Edith Cowan University. In terms of the universities involved, we are in partnership with Edith Cowan University. It is fairly obvious that the basis of that partnership is to provide students with ongoing educational support. Assisting students during their tertiary education will be worked up through that program. On behalf of the Minister for Education and Training, I recently met with a number of groups who raised with me the issue of Aboriginal students leaving the Kimberley or Kalgoorlie regions to attend private and government schools in the city. They wanted to talk to the government about the very issue raised by the member for Churchlands; that is, the ongoing process by which youngsters who move away from their families and communities are assisted through the school process. Two of the groups that I met with were represented by Aboriginals who had already been through that schooling process themselves. One of them told me that when he went through Christ Church Grammar School, he was the only the Aboriginal youngster at that school. He said that although he was delighted to go through that process, the process at Christ Church Grammar today is no different from the process that he went through 15 or 20 years ago. There was no process outside the classroom to help him assimilate into his new environment, and he found that very difficult. He went on to highlight the fact that there is a lack of backup community-based programs to help youngsters adjust to city life and a different culture. The Minister for Education and Training has been approached by groups who feel that this issue is still a problem and that things could be done better. This partnership recognises that and is a step in the right direction.

[2.10 pm]

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** I refer to the third dot point on page 344, under "Major Initiatives 2006-07". I note that the education department, as the major provider of education, has an initiative this year to develop kindergarten to year 10 syllabus materials and support documentation, etc. Why is there not a similar initiative to develop syllabus materials for years 11 and 12 under the proposed 50 new courses of study?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** I understand that there is. I will ask Mr Albert to go into the details.

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**Mr P. Albert:** It became fairly apparent in kindergarten through to year 10 that, firstly, there is a need for standards - in other words, an identification of what students need to achieve each year; and, secondly, that many teachers need guidance on how to progress their students to achieve those standards. That is in relation to K-10. The structure of the years 11 and 12 courses pretty much amounts to a syllabus. The course structures identify very clearly the content of the course. Also, the course is laid out in such a way that it is in levels, or in a sequence - which is essentially what a syllabus is. A syllabus is what people need to learn before they are able to learn the next bit. That is identified clearly in those years 11 and 12 courses. With the minister's indulgence, I will ask Chris Cook to elaborate further.

**Ms C. Cook:** As Paul Albert has indicated, the essential content of the years 11 and 12 courses is explicit, just as it was in previous courses. It even alludes to recommended texts, which is similar to what was in previous courses as well, so that teachers have a clear understanding of what is expected to be taught and what is expected to be assessed. In that respect, it is tantamount to a syllabus.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** I accept that the framework is a strong guide. Part of the current controversy and stress in schools relates to teachers wanting to see a more defined syllabus in years 11 and 12. It seems to me - I think most people around the sector would share this view - that the syllabus needs to be more defined, at least in those initial stages. The syllabus is getting on to the Curriculum Council now, but sending out draft exams and the like seems to be doing things the wrong way around. It is a very strange way of approaching syllabus content. Schools and teachers are crying out for a more detailed syllabus structure than is currently in place. I would not have thought that would be all that difficult to do, and it would calm a lot of the tension. As an education provider, I think the department should be doing more of that, as a lot of the independent schools are doing.

**Mr P. Albert:** As a department, we are certainly working on template programs that teachers can pick up and run with. We have done that for English.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** Particularly in smaller schools, with smaller staff.

**Mr P. Albert:** That is the strategy that the department is utilising. We have teacher development centres, where an expert English teacher with a track record is freed up for 0.4 days a week. Their sole purpose is to ensure that the teachers who are struggling are given direct assistance, as well as to share a template program. If teachers want to experiment, that is fine, but we are making sure that all our teachers have a program. That means they do not need to do that much thinking. They will all be supplied with CD-ROM material and online learning materials, and they will be trained in how to use it through the teacher development centre network. Our English teachers are not having a lot of problems implementing the courses. Since the Curriculum Council has provided much more flexibility in the assessment process, we are confident that our teachers can implement English, for example, very easily. We intend to use the same process with every other course of study, which is why we have decided to bring forward the appointment of the 110 teacher development coordinators from the beginning of next term. The original plan was to appoint them in the fourth term, but we have brought that forward to the third term, to do just what the member has suggested.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** Given that answer, for the 17 courses of study proposed to be introduced next year, have teachers received that extra syllabus support material? If not, when will the state school system receive that material?

**Mr P. Albert:** I am aware that schools have received material from the Curriculum Council. With the minister's indulgence, I will pass the question to Chris Cook, who would know what has been received.

**Ms C. Cook:** Teachers have received information about course content and context through the Curriculum Council's professional development sessions. We mentioned this morning that on a further two days this year they will receive further information about assessment materials and the exam. They have already received a CD containing a sample exam. They can then provide further feedback, knowing that the exam for those 17 courses will not be due for two and half years. The moderators who are working with those teachers will be providing further materials to those teachers to engage them in the development of their own programs. As Paul Albert indicated, the coordinators of the teacher development centres work with about 12 schools. They will be providing teaching programs - quite micro - to support those teachers who are hesitant and perhaps finding this is unfamiliar for them.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** If I may interrupt, what level of detail are we talking about in the syllabus or pre-prepared materials for schools?

**Ms C. Cook:** For the teachers of 1A and 1B, which are the lower levels of the continuum of difficulty that the director general described, through the teacher development centres we have provided very, very micro

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examples - almost week by week, lesson by lesson - of the detail that teachers would need to deliver to students, including assessment items. General advice follows as well.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** I seek some supplementary information. Could the minister and the department provide an example of some of that material in a subject area that I am likely to comprehend, such as economics, maths or science - a common area, not an exotic area of study that would post-date my rudimentary education?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** We are happy to provide that information in three or four different areas.

*[Supplementary Information No A51.]*

**Mr J.N. HYDE:** I refer to the tenth dot point under “Major Achievements 2005-06” at page 342. I would like some information on how the department supports students with disabilities.

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** I am glad the member asked that question. I have a very detailed answer on it.

**Mr J.N. HYDE:** I would never have expected any less from the minister.

[2.20 pm]

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** The department has committed over \$40 million over the period 2004-08 for students with disabilities and learning difficulties. Additional targeted support for students with disabilities and learning difficulties will be allocated through the implementation of a professional learning program, known as BIC - Building Inclusive Classrooms. Up to 200 full-time equivalents will be allocated to schools as learning support coordinators over that period to support the establishment of local school-based learning support teams. Four principal consultants have been appointed to develop and implement a professional learning strategy designed to enhance the knowledge and skills of staff working with students with diverse learning needs.

New inclusive school facilities for students with high support needs are being built in the southern metropolitan area; for example, the new Kim Beazley School at the Atwell site. It is presently in Stevens Street and is to be relocated and a new centre built. A range of communications strategies including brochures and web sites are being developed to provide improved information to school communities about service and support for students with disabilities and learning difficulties. Improved technology support will be provided for students with disabilities and learning difficulties through the establishment of an assistive technology team at the Centre for Inclusive Schooling. Schoolteachers and students will have improved access to statewide specialist services for students with disabilities and learning difficulties through a realignment of the inclusive education teams from the Centre for Inclusive Schooling, the Vision Impairment Services and the Western Australian Institute for Deaf Education to the district services areas. Speech and language intervention, improved services for students with autism, and a focus on early intervention supports are being implemented. The allocation of target resources to students with disabilities is being implemented on the basis of educational need. The department’s new allocative mechanisms enable schools to have greater flexibility to meet the learning needs of students.

I hope that gives the member for Perth a detailed answer about the sorts of things we are doing for students with disabilities in the school system. I want to contrast the allocation of \$40 million over four years and all those initiatives I have just read out with the same period of time under the previous government. This is by far the largest increase in the history of the education system. Between 1997 and 2001, the previous government allocated \$3.4 million to this area. We have just announced the allocation of \$40 million over the next four years to the area of disabilities.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** Which government started inclusion in schools?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** Wherever credit deserves to be given we are more than happy to lay it at the feet of those responsible. I am equally sure the member is about to praise us for putting \$40 million into the system compared with the \$3.4 million put in by his party when it was in government. I am waiting for it!

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** Well done!

**Mr T.R. SPRIGG:** I refer to the second dot point under “Major Initiatives 2006-07” on page 344, which refers to enterprise bargaining. In general terms it is a renowned fact that the older age group of teachers tend to leave the public profession in fairly big numbers. I was advised at a recent meeting with union members that there is now an exodus of teachers in the younger divisions, the 35 to 40-year-olds, which was a bit surprising to me. Is that a trend that worries the department, and what initiatives are in place to fix it?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** I do not know whether the word “trend” is appropriate, but it is a reality in the sense that I mentioned earlier, when the member was not here. Like every other government department we are suffering from the downside, if you like, that the boom in the resource sector is creating. Teachers are a commodity much needed by industry. They have lots of skills that industry recognises. The sorts of financial



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rewards that are available to teachers with skills needed by industry are very lucrative and appealing. At this stage about 30 per cent of teachers in that age group leave within the first five years of employment, about 12 per cent of whom, after a period of time, come back into the system. That really reflects where they go. I am sure some go overseas: there are thousands of highly skilled teachers working in the United Kingdom, where they are much in demand and highly valued. Young people tend to do that; they get an education and the appropriate qualifications. People with Australian accreditation and the appropriate qualifications are needed all over the world. They are very highly regarded. On the other hand, in the resources sector, traditionally it has always been young people who have left metropolitan areas around Australia and travelled to the north to work.

**Mr T.R. SPRIGG:** Are you saying teachers become Haulpak drivers?

**Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH:** Exactly. The average age of a worker in the Pilbara today is about 25, unlike the metropolitan area where tradespeople are on average 49 years of age. That is the demographic the area attracts, and it attracts them from the education system. There are big rewards out there today and if someone has a teaching degree, they are in much demand away from the classroom. I will ask Mr Albert to comment on what is happening with the EBA.

**Mr P. Albert:** We did two things in the last EBA to address the sorts of issues the member has raised, and we are building on them. First, we have created a much bigger jump between the fifth and sixth years as a kind of incentive for those teachers who are contemplating leaving to try to encourage more of them to consider taking perhaps one year off and returning to the department. Second, we created the senior teacher category for the first time, which is an almost automatic top level position that is right up there with some of the top salaries in other states. Our intention is to build on that in this EBA to make it quite attractive for people to stay in teaching.

**The CHAIRMAN:** If members have no more questions, we will move on.

**The appropriation was recommended.**

[2.30 pm]