

ASYLUM SEEKERS — CHILDREN'S EDUCATION

1272. Mr M.P. Murray to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

I refer to your correspondence dated 22 August 2013 regarding access to public education for asylum seeker children in Western Australia, and ask:

- (a) how is the establishment of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Department of Immigration and Citizenship for the provision of education services for asylum seeker children in community detention, progressing;
- (b) if there is no progression on the MOU, what is the cause of the delay;
- (c) can you nominate a possible date that you envisage asylum seeker children will be able to attend public schools in Western Australia; and
- (d) will the State policy align with the Federal policy on education provisions for asylum seeker children, and if so, how?

Mr J.H.D. Day replied:

- (a) Discussions on an appropriate funding arrangement are ongoing between the State Government and the Department of Immigration and Border Protection. The State Government will make every effort to accommodate these children and their special education needs where practicable, but we would expect the Commonwealth to meet the costs.
- (b) The Federal election and caretaker conventions have caused delays in finalising these arrangements. The State Government remains supportive of asylum seeker children participating in schooling, and will continue to progress the arrangements when the Department of Immigration and Border Protection is in a position to recommence discussions.
- (c) No. This depends on when the Department of Immigration and Border Protection is in a position to recommence discussions.
- (d) The policy positions of the State Government and the Commonwealth Government regarding education provision for asylum seeker children are aligned. The State Government has been working for some time to secure a funding agreement that meets the requirements of both the State and Commonwealth Governments for the education of these children in Western Australia's public schools.