

OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION

188. Mr P.D. OMODEI to the Premier:

In light of the extreme concerns of teachers, the State School Teachers' Union, the Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia, academics and parents, will the Premier make the hard political decision and instruct the Minister for Education and Training to delay the implementation of outcomes-based education until endemic problems within the scheme are resolved?

Mr A.J. CARPENTER replied:

I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. The answer is: no, I will not. This is a very important reform that has been a long time in gestation. It follows on from reforms introduced in the first place by the previous government. I am not sure whether the reforms were instituted originally under Hon Norman Moore as Minister for Education, but certainly when the member for Cottesloe was the minister, the reforms were either introduced or continued to be implemented and developed, as they have been, by the Curriculum Council. The Curriculum Council is not some strange and bizarre organisation that arrived from Mars, unbeknownst to us all. It was actually a creation from the time of the member for Cottesloe, and replaced the Secondary Education Authority, in part. It constitutes the greatest aggregation of the education community we have available to us. It draws upon the expertise of hundreds, if not thousands, of educators - teachers, academics and people who write and mark exam papers.

Mr P.D. Omodei: Are you listening to teachers and parents?

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: I was the education minister for four years, so I have a fair idea of what is going on. It is only a year and a half since I relinquished that role, so I have a bit of an idea. There was always resistance to change, and there always will be. There was resistance to the curriculum changes introduced into the earlier years of primary schooling. It is not unusual.

I took some interest in the report published in *The West Australian* yesterday about the survey revealing the overwhelming - I think that is how it was described - rejection by the people who responded to the survey by the teachers' group opposed to outcomes-based education, called People Lobbying Against Teaching Outcomes, or PLATO. If ever there was a misnomer, there it is - PLATO! What the report did not say was that although there were 700 respondents to the survey, 6 000 teachers are undergoing training for the program. Of that 6 000, 700 responded, 90 per cent of whom were opposed to the introduction, or at least the speed of the introduction, of outcomes-based education.

We must have some clarity in this debate. I do not know whether other members of Parliament agree with me, but one of the shortcomings we have with debate on any issue that is not very simple is that it is often deliberately presented in a most distorted fashion by *The West Australian*. It is quite sad that this happens.

Mr P.D. Omodei: You're really out of touch on this, aren't you, Premier?

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: We might want to talk about who is out of touch on other issues as we go along today.

Outcomes-based education is being introduced because it delivers better educational results. It is a more relevant educational model for the times that we live in. Much of the commentary that we hear from people outside of the education community comes from people who have had no involvement in education for 40 or 50 years. They have not been in a classroom for 40 or 50 years. The world has changed. Both sides of politics recognise that and have responded. The government will proceed with the implementation of outcomes-based education because it is in the interests of young Western Australian people. That is why we will do it.