

PUBLIC SCHOOLS — *FACING THE FACTS:*  
*A REVIEW OF PUBLIC EDUCATION IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA*

**836. Mr P.J. RUNDLE to the Minister for Education:**

Given the government's \$17 billion in surpluses over the last three years, will the Minister for Education put his foot down with the Treasurer and give our schools and students a fair go, rather than seeing Metronet slice out the majority of state public funding?

**Dr A.D. BUTI replied:**

I am more than prepared to get in a car with the Treasurer and go out to her old homestead of the Armadale region because great works are being done in the Armadale region by this government, particularly in education. We are doing great things in education. We are spending at record levels. I repeat: I draw attention to the hypocrisy of the member for Roe who refers to a report commissioned by a union; he hates unions.

*Point of Order*

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** Madam Speaker.

**The SPEAKER:** Points of order are heard in silence. Thank you.

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** I want to point out to the minister that —

**The SPEAKER:** Sorry. You have got to make a point of order, not point something out.

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** The minister is fixated on this thing with unions. I was very comfortable at the release by Dr Lawrence the other night.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Order, please! Members, points of order have to be genuine points of order. There are plenty of things that people disagree about. I am not upholding that point of order. Points of order of that nature really should not be called.

*Questions without Notice Resumed*

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The member for Roe, who hates unions, would say that a High Court judge who may have once been a shop steward or a union official should be barred from a senior position if the government wanted to appoint that person to that position. He now wants to quote from a report commissioned by a union. As I said the other day, I do not hate unions. I respect unions. I believe teachers do it hard. It is a difficult job. That is why we support them. That is why while I have been Minister for Education, I instigated the red tape review to reduce workloads. We are working very, very hard. What is better, I am working with federal Labor Minister for Education, Jason Clare, who believes in public education, unlike the two or three conservative federal ministers who preceded him who hated public education. They were always trying to drain public education for ideological reasons. This is the thing about the conservatives: they position their decisions on education on ideological grounds. We do not. We position our decisions on ensuring that every child who attends a public school gets the best education possible. But with conservatives, it is always ideological; it is about trying to have a certain mindset and narrative of Australian history. In universities, for instance, they tried to kill the humanities, because the problem with students of humanities is that they might think and they might therefore be critical of conservative views. That is why Minister Tehan —

*Point of Order*

**Dr D.J. HONEY:** This answer has nothing whatsoever to do with the question asked by the member for Moore.

**The SPEAKER:** That is an opinion, not a point of order. Minister, can I ask you to draw your answer to a close, please.

*Questions without Notice Resumed*

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** Yes, Madam Speaker.

That is why Minister Tehan increased unilaterally, without any rationale, the cost of doing humanities degrees, which are actually the cheaper degree to administer at universities. He tried to increase the fees to reduce the number of people who might think because if they think, they will not vote conservative. Why would they? Conservatives do not stand for anything. They flip-flop from one party to another to suit their own personal interests. The member for North West Central provided no ideological rationale for why she moved from the Nationals WA to the Liberal Party. She did that for one reason: because she thought she would have a better political future if she did. That is the only reason. What a disgraceful decision to make. The Leader of the Opposition did not help the matter. A solution could have been found.

**The SPEAKER:** I am not taking another point of order on this, but, minister, I have asked you to draw your answer to a close, and you are significantly diverting from the question you were asked.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** I am about to wind up, Madam Speaker.

The Leader of the Opposition could have moved to the seat that will be vacated by the retirement of the member for Central Wheatbelt but decided he would not for other reasons, and that is why the member for North West Central has joined the Liberal Party—simple as that.

But when it comes to education, member for Roe, we are the champions. The Labor Party is the champion of public education, and we will continue to fund public education because we believe that every student who goes to a school should have the best opportunity.