

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES AND FINANCIAL OPERATIONS

2018–19 ANNUAL REPORTS



**TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE
TAKEN AT PERTH
MONDAY, 2 DECEMBER 2019**

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Members

**Hon Alanna Clohesy (Chair)
Hon Tjorn Sibma (Deputy Chair)
Hon Diane Evers
Hon Aaron Stonehouse
Hon Colin Tincknell**

Hearing commenced at 3.03 pm

Hon SUE ELLERY

Minister for Education and Training, examined:

Ms LISA RODGERS

Director General, examined:

Mr STEPHEN BAXTER

Deputy Director General, Schools, examined:

Mr JAY PECKITT

Acting Deputy Director General, Education Business Services, examined:

Mr JOHN FISCHER

Executive Director, Infrastructure, examined:

Mr DAMIEN STEWART

Executive Director, Workforce, examined:

Miss ALISON RAMM

Executive Director, Strategy, Policy and Governance, examined:

Mr MARTIN CLERY

Assistant Executive Director, Statewide Services, examined:

The CHAIR: On behalf of the Legislative Council's Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations, I welcome you to today's hearing. Today's hearing will be broadcast. Before we go live, I would like to remind all parties that if you have any private documents with you, keep them flat on the desk to avoid the cameras. Please begin the broadcast. Can the witnesses confirm that they have read, understood and signed a document titled "Information for Witnesses"?

The WITNESSES: Yes.

The CHAIR: Thanks, everyone. It is essential that all your testimony before the committee is complete and truthful to the best of your knowledge. This hearing is being recorded by Hansard and a transcript of your evidence will be provided to you. It is also being broadcast live on the Parliament's website. The hearing is being held in public, although there is discretion available to the committee to hear evidence in private. If for some reason you wish to make a confidential statement during today's proceedings, you should request that the evidence be taken in closed session before answering the question. Agencies have an important role and duty in assisting the Parliament to review agency outcomes and the committee values your assistance with this.

Minister, do you have a brief opening statement?

Hon SUE ELLERY: No, I do not.

The CHAIR: We will go straight into questions.

Hon COLIN TINCKNELL: Thanks for coming here on a beautiful, warm Perth day. My first question is regarding staffing levels. I have noticed that they decreased fairly significantly in the last report.

I refer to the last paragraph on page 12, which talks about the FTE count. The reason for my question is that the number of public school students has increased. Where do these decreases in staffing primarily come from?

Hon SUE ELLERY: Jay can start.

Mr PECKITT: In relation to the comparison to the 2018–19 budget, the budget is set based on an estimate at the time of setting the budget, which seeks to understand what the enrolment growth is at that point in time. While it does show as if it is a drop, it is really only comparing the actual result to what was estimated. So it has not exactly been a drop in staffing levels; it is really just a reduction compared to the original budget. As you would appreciate, schools have flexibility around how they use their funds. While schools receive funding for enrolment growth, they may choose to use some of it for staffing and some of it for non-salaries, so that really reflects the change in how schools have used their funds, rather than a drop.

Hon COLIN TINCKNELL: How does that compare to previous years?

Hon SUE ELLERY: I will give you some further information. In terms of staff by category, for example, if we go back to 2013–14, there were 20 836 teaching staff, and in 2018–19, there were 23 031. If you add up all of the staff—teaching staff; other support staff, which would include education assistants and the like; cleaners and gardeners; admin and clerical—back in 2013–14, there were 35 219 across all of those categories, and in 2018–19, there were 39 205, so it has increased. As Mr Peckitt pointed out, it is hugely driven by enrolments. While it is true to say that enrolments in public schools continue to increase, the rate of increase has slightly slowed—I guess that is accurate. The member might be aware of the student-centred funding model, which was introduced by the previous government but which we support. That is a cost-and-demand measure, if you like. It has within it a formula that takes enrolment numbers into account. Enrolment numbers are taken on two census dates—at the beginning of week 2 in term 1 and in August. There are two kind of point-in-time snapshots of enrolment numbers, and that is what generates the resources per school, including staffing numbers.

Hon COLIN TINCKNELL: Can I get some idea—it does not have to be exact—of the total number of teaching assistants? I believe there has been a big increase.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Education assistants.

Hon COLIN TINCKNELL: You call them education assistants. I am happy to take it on notice if it is too much trouble.

The CHAIR: Just give them a bit of time, member; they will get it sorted.

Hon SUE ELLERY: The FTE for education assistants in 2017–18 was 7 955, and in 2018–19, it was 8 132.

Hon COLIN TINCKNELL: Okay; it is only a mild increase. Thank you, minister. I go to my second question. It is noted in the first paragraph on page 24 about behavioural standards. How many alternative learning settings are there currently in place statewide?

Hon SUE ELLERY: We are doing a pilot now and there are three. The way that they work is that they are not alternate schools in the sense that students do not go there and stay forever—they go there until an assessment is made about what is the best future for that student. Is it to enrol in another school? Is it to take a different pathway, say training or TAFE? Is it to enrol in a care school, for example, which are those schools for students who really struggle with mainstream schooling?

[3.10 pm]

There are three. There is one in the south west, one in north metro and one in south metro. We will, I guess, see how they are going because, ultimately, we would want more to take account of the needs across the state. But they are, essentially, places where literally an assessment is done of the student's whole needs and wraparound services are provided for that student.

Hon COLIN TINCKNELL: How many of those in total during the year?

Hon SUE ELLERY: The number of students who have completed the alternate learning settings program is 34. Like I said, at any one time there might be 10 here, eight there and six there. And that 10, if you were to go back in six months' time, might be a different 10 because a decision has been made in conjunction with the family et cetera about where the best place for that student is to go.

Hon COLIN TINCKNELL: Do you feel, minister, that it is meeting the need?

Hon SUE ELLERY: Yes, it is. I think we are going to need more. Even that is a bit hard to tell. We will need more because we will need more coverage across the whole state. I am hopeful that the numbers being excluded might settle because the policy we introduced to tackle violence was a pretty significant shift from what had been in place previously. I suspect, if you like, the first round of those exclusions were students who, perhaps, really should have been excluded a long time ago and were not. I expect we will probably settle into a pattern of a regular number of exclusions per year, but we have only just started. We are in term 4 of the first year of this program.

Hon COLIN TINCKNELL: Yes; it is a pilot program, is it not?

Hon SUE ELLERY: Yes.

Hon COLIN TINCKNELL: You are still deciding whether this should run in future years depending on how we go?

Hon SUE ELLERY: I think it will. It is whether we make any changes to it that will be different—the things we learn from how it is run so far that we need do differently. I certainly think we will probably need to have more in other geographical locations across WA.

Hon COLIN TINCKNELL: How many students have been reintegrated back into the system? Are there any figures on that?

Hon SUE ELLERY: Yes. Thirty-four have completed the program. As to where they go, I can tell you that planning is underway for a supported transition to school for eight of those students. Supported transition to school has commenced for six. One is in custody. Three have been transitioned to SEN, which is the school for special education needs, where kids may have, for example, an intellectual disability or need some assistance. They have engagement centres and three have gone there. One has relocated interstate. One has transitioned to a care school. One has transitioned to an Aboriginal supported organisation. Thirteen have completed transition back to school, most probably not the school they came from, but that might be the case, and 10 of those with alternate learning transition support.

Hon COLIN TINCKNELL: Thank you, minister. My next question is on page 24 at paragraph 2, regarding students presenting with autism and the requirement for additional education support and the places to cope with that demand. My first question is: what is the long-term projection for the need for special education in schools? That is a hard question, I know.

Hon SUE ELLERY: That is a big question.

The CHAIR: I might take this opportunity, while the minister is collecting her thoughts about that, to remind members that the focus of this is about the annual report current reporting period.

I notice the honourable member might have stuck a few questions in the last lot that were questions about the future.

Hon COLIN TINCKNELL: A little bit of future stuff, yes.

The CHAIR: The minister graciously engaged with that. Just a little reminder, that is all.

Hon COLIN TINCKNELL: Thank you.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Thank you. I am inundated with information for the committee! I might just make some comments about, I guess, the broad statement. I think you can assume, because diagnosis is getting more and more accurate and sharper, and there is less stigma about parents being too anxious about getting a diagnosis for fear of social exclusion or whatever, you are likely to see more students with disabilities. I think that is what we have seen with autism in particular. There was a time—unfortunately it still exists, to some extent—when an accurate diagnosis was not necessarily possible, the medical profession was not as well educated as it is now about what to look for, we knew less about the value and importance of early intervention, and people were also fearful of the stigma. I think that is why we have seen a significant increase, for example, in autism. I will give you some numbers. I can really only do 2017, 2018 and 2019. Students who have been funded through the individual disability allocation is one of the mechanisms by which schools receive additional funds: in 2017, there 5 363; in 2018, 6 126; and in 2019, 7 067. There is a range of programs in place to assist, particularly students on the autism spectrum. I could talk for a very long time about that but there is a range of mechanisms in place. There is the autism specialist area, which is part of the Schools of Special Educational Needs—disability. It has consulting teachers with specialist skills who go out and provide support to schools. There are specialist learning programs for students with ASD; that is for students who are at significant risk of disengagement and underachievement or who exhibit very complex and challenging behaviours. Those programs provide skilled teachers and individualised planning and support, based on evidence-based teaching approaches. In 2019, programs commenced at North Mandurah Primary School, Alkimos Primary School, Cooloongup Primary School, Ashdale Secondary College, Ocean Reef Senior High School, Fremantle College and Eaton College. There are programs at Gosnells Primary School, Samson Primary School, Heathridge Primary School, Marangaroo Primary and Cooina Primary School, and Southern River College, and more programs are to be rolled out in 2020. Then there is the early intensive intervention program, autism, which is in eight education support centres: Canning Vale, Creaney, Meadow Springs, Mount Hawthorn, Spencer Park, which is Albany, Beldon, Merriwa and South Bunbury. They provide intensive intervention for kindy and pre-primary students because we know, all the evidence shows, that early intervention can really make a difference to how successful children with autism can be. I could go on and on and on, but —

Hon COLIN TINCKNELL: I had two or three questions on that and you have answered all of them. Spencer Park is a nice little spot in Albany too, by the way. There are a couple of south west members here.

Question 4 is more to do with additional funding, so I will just ask it straight. What are the circumstances in which public schools are required additional funding? In addition, where does this funding come from and what are the rules around obtaining additional funding?

Hon SUE ELLERY: Under the student-centred funding model, a formula is used to determine the pool of funds that is made available to the school. If you like, the best way to describe it is that there are a series of buckets that a school can get money from based on the cohort of students: are they a rural or regional school; how many children do they have with disability; how many children do they have from an Indigenous background; what is the size of the school? There are a range of buckets of money that are based on enrolment numbers and the particular characteristics of the school.

Then, in addition to that, is, if you like, a kind of catch-all, which is part of the student-centred funding model, which is a targeted initiative—so from time to time a range of schools will be asked to participate in a trial of NAPLAN online or a trial of a particular program, and they will get additional funding to assist them with that. As I said, the kind of numbers and the characteristics of enrolments are a snapshot taken in the two census snapshots that are done. For example, in the area of disability funding, there is individualised disability allocation, I think it is called. As at June 2019, the total spend was \$328 754 427 on that area across public schools alone.

[3.20 pm]

The CHAIR: We might hold on to your last one, member, to see whether we can get another round in before we come back. Hon Diane Evers.

Hon DIANE EVERS: My question is with regard to long service leave. I know you said there was a substantial increase of about eight per cent, whereas employee expenses only increased less than one per cent.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Can you tell me what page you are looking at, honourable member?

Hon DIANE EVERS: Page 124. My question with regard to long service leave is that it seems to be increasing at least from one year to the next. What is the department doing to manage that increase?

The CHAIR: Can you just repeat the question slowly?

Hon DIANE EVERS: There was a significant increase in long service leave liabilities. I am just interested to know what the department is doing about that?

Hon SUE ELLERY: How are we managing it?

Hon DIANE EVERS: Yes—or if there is a reason for it.

Mr STEWART: The increases effectively are reflecting 55 000 people who are in the stages of accruing long service leave. The department has been active for quite some time in reducing its overall leave liability, in the space of both annual leave and long service leave. Long service leave is our largest liability because it is accrued by our teaching workforce, whereas annual leave is not—they have vacation leave and periods of breaks when students are not at school—so long service leave will always be a larger liability for us. The department has maintained quite steadfastly a requirement for people who accrue long service leave to be clearing it within two years. There are exceptional circumstances that arise from time to time, where latitude is exercised by principals for up to 12 months and then myself beyond 12 months in certain circumstances. One of those that is most evident is when we have employees who are partners or married who have accruals that happen slightly staggered but seek to have a holiday together and require an additional six months or a period of time within which to clear it. But overall, the department's overall liabilities in both the annual and long service leave spaces are below the caps that Treasury set for us, so it is an actively managed liability.

Hon SUE ELLERY: If I can add to that. Long service leave liability has fallen from \$243 million in June 2014 to \$109 million in June this year. As Damien was saying, there is a system-generated leave clearance advice that is automatically emailed to employees and their managers where leave exceeds the allowable carry-over limits, and then annual audits identify those who require individual follow-up where the accrual is considered to be excessive.

Hon DIANE EVERS: The numbers you quoted I think might just be—I cannot find it immediately—the current leave liability, whereas I was looking at both the current and long service leave liability.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Okay; I just gave you the spot long service leave liability at June 2019. That is the figure I just referred to.

Hon DIANE EVERS: I notice also on page 124 that it is commented that Pricewaterhouse has come up with a different system for measuring long service leave. I was interested to know whether that had some impact on the total amount?

Hon SUE ELLERY: Good question. I will ask Mr Peckitt to make some comments about that.

Mr PECKITT: The department uses PricewaterhouseCoopers each year to determine the accounting entry, if you like, for the long service leave calculation. It looks at a number of factors, including when we estimate people to retire, when they are likely to take their leave, and also the rate at which it should grow, so that has not really had a significant impact on the calculation. It would be more that we continue to have a growing workforce, and in the past we have obviously cleared a lot of outstanding leave so it becomes more difficult now to be able to reduce it year on year.

Hon DIANE EVERS: That makes sense. Can I just ask: is the approach that Pricewaterhouse are using something that they are using across the board across the country in schools or did they develop it just for WA?

Mr PECKITT: This is just used by the Department of Education. Other agencies may use them to undertake this calculation, but at the moment we contract them directly for that work. Other agencies may use other accounting firms as well for this calculation, given it is quite a complex piece of work.

Hon DIANE EVERS: I would imagine that they have tested it against actuals and they are happy with the outcome?

Mr PECKITT: Yes.

Hon DIANE EVERS: All right. One further question. There was advice that the department had underpaid casual cleaners, gardeners and home economic assistants and that back payments will be made. I am just interested to know when the department realised this and how they discovered that they had?

Hon SUE ELLERY: Sure. I will make some comments. It certainly goes beyond the reporting period of this annual report; it goes back to 1983. I am advised that a human resources employee discovered it in about October last year. I became aware of it about a month ago, I suppose. I do not know, I have never asked exactly what the human resource employee was doing to discover it.

The CHAIR: Except being diligent, obviously.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Yes, but you would have heard my public commentary that essentially in 1983, I think it was as a result of an EBA, the industrial instrument changed and they went from a 40-hour week to a 38-hour week, and in calculating the hourly rate for temporary and full-time employees, they began to accrue time—they would work extra time—which they would then take off as a regular rostered day off. Casual employees, of course, do not accrue any leave, so they should have been paid the extra 24 minutes per day or part thereof. That did not happen. The decision about how far back we would pay back pay was really determined by the fact that in 1998 the payroll system changed to an automated system—before that, it was a manual system—and being able to actually verify who was who and who was owed what before 1998 would be too difficult, so we made that decision.

Hon DIANE EVERS: Okay, then, two questions. Roughly how many people do you think are affected by this?

Hon SUE ELLERY: The number of people that will be back paid is 27 000. About 7 000 of those are current casual employees—the rest are people who have worked at the department at various times.

Hon DIANE EVERS: I assume this has been corrected for all future payments?

Hon SUE ELLERY: I certainly hope so!

Hon DIANE EVERS: Has there been any looking to see if there is anything else similar to this?

Hon SUE ELLERY: Yes, there has, and I have been assured that there is not.

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: I wonder if I can go back to page 12 in relation perhaps in part to what Hon Colin Tincknell was asking with regard to staffing. A couple of these may need to be taken on notice. I am keen to understand how many permanent staff required placement as at 30 June 2019?

Hon SUE ELLERY: I will see. I am going to see if I can drum up the file. Bear with me.

The CHAIR: Can you give us the page reference again?

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: That was page 12, the last paragraph.

[3.30 pm]

Hon SUE ELLERY: A head count of permanent staff requiring placement as at 30 June 2019—it is a total of 309. There is a breakdown, if you want, of classifications.

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: If you have got it there, or, otherwise, I am happy to take it on notice.

Hon SUE ELLERY: I have got it. Because the table includes people who were on leave and stuff like that, I think we will take it on notice and we will provide you with a headcount of permanent staff requiring placement, not being on leave, as at 30 June 2019.

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: Thank you.

[*Supplementary Information No A1.*]

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: I also noted the comment with regard to the extension of the voluntary targeted separation scheme. I am just keen to understand, as at 30 June, how many staff had, effectively, taken part in that scheme and what positions they had been filling. Again, that might need to be taken on notice.

Hon SUE ELLERY: We will see what we can do. By way of some explanation, you will recall that Education is treated slightly differently because we could get every teacher across Western Australia wanting to take voluntary severance and I would have to replace them the next day, so it is treated slightly differently.

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: Hence why I was pretty keen to understand the breakdown because I thought they were exempt.

Hon SUE ELLERY: As at 30 June 2018, 352 offers were extended and 273 were accepted. Then a further 89 offers were made by 31 December 2018 and 82 of those were accepted. A total of 355 as at 31 December 2018 out of 40 000.

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: So that was to December. Did it end in December or has it continued to 30 June 2019?

Hon SUE ELLERY: I might take that on notice so that I can give you the accurate information.

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: Okay; thank you.

[*Supplementary Information No A2.*]

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: My next question is actually—page 14. At the top of the page, it refers to realigning of the structure of the department. Is that, essentially, in and around the machinery-of-government changes that you are referring to there?

Hon SUE ELLERY: Yes.

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: Have there been any structural changes or changes to the core responsibilities within the early childhood education branch?

Hon SUE ELLERY: No, not that I am aware of.

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: Okay. Did they continue to provide support to community kindergartens; and, if not, who would be responsible for community kindergartens?

Hon SUE ELLERY: Let us find somebody who can provide that answer.

Ms RODGERS: There are two main directorates in the department that will provide support to community kindys. There is the government strategy and policy directorate—that is headed up by Alison Ramm, and Alison looks after the policy settings around that—and the early childhood team, which will look after any day-to-day operational considerations in regards to community kindy.

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: So if a community kindergarten has got a concern with respect to a particular aspect of their day-to-day management, or whatever it might be, they can get support from either Alison or the other branch?

Ms RODGERS: I have met with the Community Kindergartens Association and I have asked them to work directly with Alison Ramm.

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: Okay. Well, I will pass that on. I think, on occasion, there are some challenges with regard to getting some timely advice, so I will make sure that they know that it is Alison. That is great.

If I could now turn to page 44. Under “Finance and support”, it refers to the budget repair measures. I am just actually seeking some clarification with regard to the operation of the camp schools. Minister, my understanding from both this report as well as all other documentation that I have seen is that Fairbridge WA operates all camp schools, with the exception of Broome.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Correct.

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: However, in an answer to a question that I asked in Parliament to you in September, you indicated that Point Peron is managed by the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions and Dampier is managed by Rio Tinto’s Hamersley Iron, so I am quite genuinely a bit unclear with regard to that.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Sure, and I think that is actually not new. I think that goes to the landownership, and so that was the arrangement previously.

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: Just so that I am clear, Fairbridge still run and operate the camp school but the actual land that it sits on falls within the responsibility of Rio Tinto and the department?

Hon SUE ELLERY: Correct. Perhaps Mr Fischer can add.

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: Yes, that would help.

Mr FISCHER: So with Dampier, the land is part of the Rio Tinto lease agreement, and so we have a lease arrangement with them and then have a sublease arrangement with Fairbridge. So that is why it needs to be treated as a separate lease for Fairbridge for that particular site. Point Peron—the site comes under the management order of the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and

Attractions. They will have the lease with Fairbridge but it is on the same basis that they bid with the Department of Education, so Fairbridge manage the facilities.

Hon SUE ELLERY: In terms of delivery of camp school service—delivered by Fairbridge.

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: That is what I had understood it to be, but it was just a bit unclear from the answer, so I appreciate you clarifying that for me.

While we are on a budget repair measures, can I just get some clarity in and around the agricultural college trust fund? The previous answer is that I was given in a budget estimates hearing was that the savings amount that had been applied to the department's budget in 2018–19 was \$110 000, and then ongoing, post 2019–20 onwards, it would be \$220 000. That was a very clear answer that was given to me. Then I found some further questions in Parliament, and when I have actually asked for clarification on that, I have been informed that, in fact, the estimated balance and dividend take will depend every year. So I am just trying to get some clarification in terms of whether or not there is actually a cap, which you would assume from the answer that had been provided to me in budget estimates hearings.

Hon SUE ELLERY: So if you remember the announcement at the time, it was that there was a particular formula—someone will provide me with that formula in a minute —

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: It was 20 per cent.

Hon SUE ELLERY: — and that our estimation was that in any given year that formula would generate X number of dollars. Given that the formula is dependent on the other elements of the formula, because the revenue will vary from year to year, the actual amount may well vary. But the estimation was that, based on what it happened previously, we estimated it would be around that 220 figure.

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: Albeit that the answer that was provided to me from the estimates hearings—it did not say it was an estimate; it said that the savings amount applied to the department's budget and were reflected in the 2018–19 budget papers was \$110 000 in 2018–19 and \$220 000 from 2019–20 onwards. So it was very clear; it did not refer to an estimate. So I am just wanting to get some clarity.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Because the formula itself depends on the revenue, we had to put some figure into the budget. So we had to make an estimate of what we anticipated the figure would be. If you give me a number of that question at estimates, I will check. If I need to correct the record on that, I will do that, but nothing changed in the formula. But in order to put an estimated amount into the budget, that is the figure that was used. I do not know if Mr Peckitt can provide any additional information.

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: Perhaps before you answer, just to assist, I am keen to understand whether or not the department was looking at a range of options in terms of how the funds would be arrived at, whether in fact the department was looking at a cap of \$220 000 annually, or whether—and I appreciate that that was the initial budget repair measure—a cap was considered by the department.

[3.40 pm]

Hon SUE ELLERY: I am not sure anyone here can answer that without me having to go back and check the records at the time the decision was made, but it is the case that it is not possible to say the amount will be X in any given year, when the formula is directly related to the revenue that comes in in any one year, because that will change.

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: Perhaps if the minister wants to take it on notice, I am keen whether or not the department considered a range of options in relation to the trust and whether that included a cap, albeit what the minister said. I would like to understand whether or not that was ever communicated to anybody.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Sure, I will take that on notice.

[Supplementary Information No A3.]

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: Last one on that, can I just ask: that was obviously part of a budget repair measure; do you see that being an ongoing measure or are you anticipating that at some point you might remove that additional take?

Hon SUE ELLERY: What I have said to the stakeholders, and I meet regularly with them, is that these were very specific budget repair measures put in place to address a particular issue, and that I would anticipate that government would make a decision at some point that those budget repair measures no longer need to apply. I cannot give you a specific date as to what and when that might be.

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: Okay. Thank you. I will ask a general sort of question in relation to early years investment; that is probably the best place that I can ask it. What is the status of your Educare initiative?

Hon SUE ELLERY: That is the election commitment that had a couple of components to it. One was about better usage of school facilities for the community; the other was about facilitating on existing school sites, where it was possible, the provision of two things: before and after school care, if that was not provided, and long day care, if that was possible, and looking at what was possible when we were purchasing land for new school sites, on whether we could include in the footprint, if you like—the size of the land we are buying—whether we could put in their room for a long day care centre to be, not run by government, run by the sector, but to be co-located on the same piece of land. So, with respect to the second part of that, there have been a number of workshops, I suppose, between officers of this agency and Minister Saffioti's agency about how we better plan for the size of the footprint that we need to buy. Principals certainly have the message that if they are able to facilitate before and after-school care, that is what their community wants and that is what they should do. I will see if I can add anything more specific about the sites and extra land. Basically, the Department of Education and the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage are working together to change the planning framework so that new primary school sites are larger and can provide space for privately operated on-site childcare facilities. It would not be the case, honourable member, that in a brand-new suburb we might decide that every block of land we buy is going to have to be big enough to incorporate a long day care centre, because you will not need one at every school. But it is about, "Okay, how is the best way that we generate the formula, if you like, to ensure that we cover that off?"

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: Thank you for that update. I want some clarification on a question asked by Hon Colin Tincknell about disability funding. Can I confirm that the funding that is provided to a school is individualised funding?

Hon SUE ELLERY: I think it is two parts, actually.

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: I am keen to get some clarification in relation to that—as to whether or not the funding is allocated according to the individual student or students; and, if so, is that funding then required to be utilised to support that student or those students, or can it be distributed more generally within the school itself?

Hon SUE ELLERY: Very good question, honourable member, one that the minister herself might ask from time to time. There is the individual disability allocation, and we referred to that a little bit

earlier. So it is, “For your child, it’s 0.3 of an FTE et cetera, and that’s for your child.” In addition to that—someone will correct me if I am wrong—there is what is called an education adjustment, and someone will explain that in a minute. Schools then determine how they will use that money, whether they do it to top up the individual disability allocation of a particular student, or whether they use it for other elements. It has never been clear to me in the student-centred funding model how we effectively, if you like, account for precisely how that money is spent without impinging on the autonomy of the school to make a decision to spend its money the way it sees fit for its school community, because that was the driver of, for example, independent public schools et cetera. A decision was made that at a local level, that level of autonomy was required because those people, led by the principal, knew best what their local school community needed. How you allocate those funds and then measure precisely how it is allocated without impinging on their autonomy is, I think, frankly still a work in progress.

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: That was going to be my question to you, minister.

Hon SUE ELLERY: I do think it is a work in progress, because somehow we have to get that balance right. The whole reason for IPS and a one-line budget was principals saying, “You need to let us manage our funds; we know what is best for our local schools.” That was the whole driver of that. If you respect that, any measures you put in place—which are justifiable, because it is taxpayers’ money—around accountability for how that money is allocated, you have to balance the onus you put on them against the whole driver of this being local autonomy.

If I go back to the educational adjustment, this is one of those buckets I was referring to. It is part of the student-centred funding model and it is called the educational adjustment. It is the per-student allocation for students eligible for educational adjustment funding, with a weighting depending on the percentage of eligible students at the school. There is the percentage of eligible students at a school as a percentage from zero to five, and then increases from five to 100. This is techno-education speak that somebody else better explain! I will get Jay Peckitt to explain.

Mr PECKITT: The allocation starts at \$965 per student and increases up to \$1 447.50; that is using 2019 rates, depending on the percentage of eligible students at the school. It uses a measure of NAPLAN, so the lower end of NAPLAN is the driver, I suppose, of how that funding is allocated to schools, in the absence of another measure that we can use to be able to determine what students should receive it. It is generally for students who are not captured in the individual disability allocation. They may not have a disability. It might not be a formal disability, or it might not be a diagnosed disability, and therefore funding is provided to the school to assist them with those students.

Hon SUE ELLERY: If I can just add to that, the honourable member will be well aware herself, I am sure, that there is a whole range of students who, for a variety of reasons, do not have a diagnosis, but they are clearly struggling in a mainstream classroom. The allocation of that money means that schools can make a decision that there is a bucket of money available for them to spend that is not like the IDAs, which are attached to a particular student, to enable them to deal with managing the classroom and maximising every child’s capacity to learn, including those who perhaps may need a little extra assistance but do not actually have a formal diagnosis.

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: I appreciate how you have just explained that to me. I am keen to understand the more generic funding. I hear what you are saying about the student-centred funding model, and I accept that, albeit that we are referring to a specific cohort, and disability is quite clear, I would have thought, in terms of accountability mechanisms being reflected back on that.

What can that additional funding be used for? I want to get an understanding of what that funding can be utilised for. Can it be utilised for additional staffing support to assist students? Can it be

utilised for professional development opportunities? What generally is the department's expectation of how that funding will be utilised?

[3.50 pm]

Hon SUE ELLERY: Most commonly, it is used for staffing, but it may also be used to provide additional resources. The school may make a decision that it wants to run a particular literacy program for kids who maybe do not have a diagnosis but are struggling.

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: Yes, like a mini lit course or something?

Hon SUE ELLERY: Yes, something like that—they could use it for that. Maybe somebody can add to how schools expend that kind of money?

Mr BAXTER: Certainly schools will try to keep those students included in the mainstream classroom, the mainstream settings, as much as possible, and in the mainstream programs. In doing that, they will recognise that if there are a number of children with learning difficulties—not diagnosed disability—within the classroom, that additional support to the regular classroom teacher may provide the opportunity for all those students to stay within the classroom, but with an additional set of hands within the classroom. There is obviously the opportunity to provide additional professional development right across the school, because these children are in all classrooms throughout the school, so how do you respond to their particular individual needs, given additional funding within the school. The complexity comes in, too, especially in mainstream schools, not ED support centres, in schools that have students with diagnosed disability, which if they get an IDEA 1 may be \$9 000 through to \$78 000 per student for an IDEA 7. So it is a bit of sharing the budget that is available across all students, but with particular focus, obviously, on those who attracted the funding in the first instance.

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: I am interested in that area, minister; you will appreciate that, so thank you for that information. I now want to ask about regard to science labs in your election commitment. Obviously, there is the funding with regard to the science labs themselves. Has any funding or professional development been provided to ensure that the staff and teachers who utilise those labs have, if I can put it bluntly, the basic safety guidelines and other matters that they need? I appreciate that a number of the staff who might utilise them are not necessary science-trained. I want to get an understanding of what requirements and support is provided to students.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Sure. There are several.

The CHAIR: Do you have a page number?

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: Yes, I do. It is page 37.

Hon SUE ELLERY: We have additional buckets of money, and I will get the director general to talk about those in a minute, around professional development. I am pretty sure one of the criteria—someone can correct me if I am wrong—about applying for the science labs in primary schools was they needed to have a specialist science teacher, so there is that. A range of programs are in place, though, because science lab in a primary school or not, we want to increase the professional development for teachers in STEM. We have a range of programs in place, and I will get the director general to talk about those.

Ms RODGERS: I will go through the range of programs. I do not have the information to hand with regard to how many teachers in those particular settings have undertaken which particular professional development program, but it will give you a sense of the programs that are on offer for teachers. During 2018–19, we contracted the University of Sydney to develop and deliver 16 Teachers Can Code professional learning modules, and they were delivered to 110 lead teachers.

These modules provide support to teachers to implement the WA curriculum across the whole of digital technologies. In 2018, those lead teachers provided 230 professional learning opportunities, which were attended by over 2 000 additional teachers using face-to-face and online delivery, and, of course, many of those teachers would have been in those particular settings. Schools could also contact the lead teachers directly and request support with regard to STEM. The seven digitech teacher development schools also provide professional support to teachers and schools in the implementation of digital technologies.

We have built a suite of resources to support the implementation of STEM, and they are available to all schools. We are also providing Scitech with over \$4 million to develop integrated STEM teaching and learning resources available online and face to face. There are 27 innovation partnerships schools that have used innovative methods to develop policy and practices across the board, and, of course, we are supporting and promoting those practices to all schools in WA. We have published career development and individual pathway planning resources to assist all schools with developing STEM career education programs. Funding has also been provided, of course, to support the state STEM strategy.

Other small pieces of work are also going on. There is a funding agreement with Gravity Discovery Centre that supports the provision of teacher learning resources and teacher professional learning, as well as incursion and excursion activities. The marine industry school pathways program is one of the pieces of works that we have underway to support students going into Defence's STEM initiative, with the aim of ensuring that more students go into STEM and, indeed, into Defence. I think that is probably about it. Have I missed anything? No. I am sorry, but I do not have to hand which teachers specifically have accessed which particular parts of the professional learning and development opportunities.

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: Are you able to provide a breakdown on that?

Hon SUE ELLERY: Why do we not take that on notice? If we are able to provide it, we will; if we cannot, we will not.

[Supplementary Information No A4.]

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: Thank you. In relation to STEM, at page 23, you discuss the Leap program. Again, I am happy for this to be taken on notice if you do not have it at hand. How many primary school teachers have completed the program to transition to secondary level STEM-related subjects in 2018–19, and how many lower secondary science teachers have completed the program that would enable them to transition to upper secondary level STEM?

Hon SUE ELLERY: Good question. We will see who can answer that.

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: I am sure we will get an excellent answer. You can take it on notice if you like.

Hon SUE ELLERY: We want the file to work; so, when someone says it is in the file, they want the file to work.

The CHAIR: What is the page reference, please?

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: It is page 23.

Hon SUE ELLERY: The Leap program serves as both an attraction and retention strategy, building the supply of teachers and retaining them in the workforce. From inception in 2013, the program has seen 1 246 teachers successfully complete training and gain qualifications to teach in a learning area of demand.

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: Thank you. I want to go back to the teachers in science labs and make it clear, and perhaps the answer that you might be able to provide me will do this. You mentioned that the school would be required to have a specialist science teacher. If we can have that absolutely confirmed, I would appreciate it. Is there a requirement that teachers undertake the training that you will be checking for me? If a school has a science lab, it may have a number of generalist teachers, albeit it may also have a specialist science teacher. I accept that generalist teachers may well have some understanding, but will they be required to have some form of at least basic training?

Hon SUE ELLERY: We will see what numbers we can give you. My recollection of the eligibility criteria was that the school needed to demonstrate a well-considered STEM plan, and that would have included professional development and the like. We will check that for you.

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: If you would, please, because some queries have been put to me.

[Supplementary Information No A5.]

The CHAIR: We now go to Hon Alison Xamon.

Hon ALISON XAMON: I just point out that because I did come in a little late —

The CHAIR: You have about 20 minutes.

Hon ALISON XAMON: If I ask questions on something that has been covered, if that could be drawn to my attention, I would appreciate it.

The CHAIR: I can try, and I am sure the minister will, too.

Hon ALISON XAMON: Thank you. I refer to page 12 and the second dot point, Kimberley schools project. I note that re-profiling has resulted in \$6.8 million lower expenditure on this project. I am trying to reconcile that with page 31, which talks about an additional number of schools participating in the project, which has almost doubled from 10 to 19. Can I please have some explanation about what has happened with that funding?

[4.00 pm]

Hon SUE ELLERY: You certainly may. I will start, then maybe somebody can add to it. The project took a while to get off the ground. We had the bucket of money that was not being spent, so we were able to re-profile and have a greater number of schools. Essentially, that is the explanation. It is a fantastic program. If you get the opportunity to visit any of the schools involved in the Kimberley schools project, I would highly recommend it. If I can share one experience—they do explicit instruction. It is really fast paced. For Hansard's benefit, I just clicked my fingers. That is literally how they do it. I had a fantastic visit to two remote schools—Looma and, someone might remember what is the AISWA school just down the road about 70 kilometres from Looma?

Hon COLIN TINCKNELL: Noonkanbah?

Hon SUE ELLERY: Yes. I do not think that is what it is called, but it is that family. It is absolutely fantastic. We went into the classroom and I think it was maybe year 3 or year 4 and they were doing—it was Nyikina Mangala Community School and the Looma school. Looma is a public school and Nyikina Mangala is an independent school. At Looma they were doing fast-paced learning about language. It was fantastic to watch the teacher and to watch the intense way the kids learnt. One of the words was something like “ecstatic” and they had to put it in a sentence. One of the students, who I am confident will go far—her sentence was, “I’m ecstatic that the minister is visiting our classroom today”, which is not bad for a year 3 or year 4 student. It is a fabulous program. It is high intensity. It really demands commitment from the teachers.

Hon ALISON XAMON: What I want to know is whether it is anticipated that the funding is going to go back to previous levels. I am hearing you say it is a great program.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Funding has not been reduced. It was just slower to take off, so instead of spending the money there, because the schools were not ready and it was a slower to take off, we have been able to spread the money out and pick up a broader range of schools. There has been no cut to the funding.

Hon ALISON XAMON: Okay. Can I move on to another question? On page 174 under “Non-current assets classified as held for sale”, I just would like to know, please, which sites are included in those classified as held for sale. I specifically would like to know whether the City Beach senior high school site is one of those.

Hon SUE ELLERY: City Beach high school—there are no plans to sell it.

Hon ALISON XAMON: Great.

Hon SUE ELLERY: I do not know who—is it Jay or John who can perhaps explain what sits within the rest of that heading?

Hon ALISON XAMON: I am happy to take that on notice if it is easier.

Hon SUE ELLERY: We will take that on notice, Chair.

[Supplementary Information No A6.]

Hon ALISON XAMON: I move to the third paragraph on page 48 under the heading “Addressing concerning student behaviour”. It talks about the number of students who were suspended. Can I ask how many of those students, if you have that, were suspended for filming a fight? Not participating—well, they are participating, but —

Hon SUE ELLERY: I do not have access to the information here. We can take it on notice.

Hon ALISON XAMON: Is that level of detail being kept, though?

Hon SUE ELLERY: I do not know. At the end of 2018, department systems and associated instructions to schools were upgraded to include a new behaviour category entitled “e-breaches” in response to demand data on students adventures arising from breaches of the schools’ electronic media and devices policies. Suspension data for e-breaches will be available for the full year 2019. We will not have historical data, but we will have data for the full 2019.

Hon ALISON XAMON: I would imagine, though, that e-breaches would incorporate more than simply filming fights. It could also include inappropriate use of cameras, intimate images and a whole range of things like that. I am just confirming that could be a whole range of issues.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Most likely, yes.

Hon ALISON XAMON: So we are not likely to get a clear breakdown of the number of suspensions due to filming fights?

Hon SUE ELLERY: We will have a look, but I doubt it.

[Supplementary Information No A7.]

Hon ALISON XAMON: Thank you. Can I just ask, of the 14 243 students who were suspended, how many of them were suspended more than once?

Hon SUE ELLERY: In 2018, 53.7 per cent of students suspended—14 243 students were suspended, so just over half of that were suspended only once. There were 2 688 students with four or more suspensions.

Hon ALISON XAMON: Four or more suspensions just within the year of the annual report, essentially?

Hon SUE ELLERY: Yes, that is correct.

Hon ALISON XAMON: I refer to the last paragraph on page 50, intensive support for students with extreme, complex and challenging behaviours. I note that 59 less students were supported in 2018 in contrast to 2017. I am curious to know what the explanation is for the drop, particularly given on the department's focus on addressing violence in schools.

Hon SUE ELLERY: I will make a couple of comments and then maybe someone can explain the number because I do not have information about that. The policy around violence in schools began at the beginning of this school year. This annual report goes from financial year so it is capturing different periods of time. Prior to the announcement of the policy around action against violence in schools, it was the case then and is the case now, that students with disabilities could be suspended and even excluded. Nothing in the policy that we announced around action against violence in schools changed in regard to that cohort of students. They were able to be suspended and excluded before and they remain able to be suspended and excluded. I will see if I can get someone to explain the difference in the number that you pointed out. I will get Martin Clery to make some comments.

Mr CLERY: The decline is primarily a reflection of an increase in the complexity of cases and the time spent providing that intensive individual support.

Hon ALISON XAMON: Does that mean that there are a number of children that potentially should be referred but are not able to be referred simply because the children that are currently receiving assistance are so complex?

Mr CLERY: There are tiers of support that the service provides. There is the individual intensive tailored support, then there is also teachers that work with people in schools with smaller groups of students to support their particular needs as well. For each of those referrals an assessment of need is made and it is matched up to a level of support and intervention.

Hon ALISON XAMON: I just want to make sure I understand this. Is it that there is, effectively, a static amount of support that is available and, depending on how much individual children might require, it just may be that we are not going to be able to admit all the children that really require it? I just want to make sure that I am really understanding that.

[4.10 pm]

Hon SUE ELLERY: I will get Ms Rodgers to make some comments about that.

Ms RODGERS: In accordance to the classifications in regards to eligibility for disability funding, we have a series of classifications, and if students meet the needs in regards to those classifications, then they will indeed be funded.

Hon SUE ELLERY: I do not think that is the question. I think the question was about this particular bit here, which talks about "intensive support for students with extreme, complex and challenging behaviours". It appears that there was 803 in 2018 and 862 in 2017. Rather than hold up the committee's time, we might take that on notice and see if we can get an explanation as to why the difference in numbers and what that means about how services are delivered.

Hon ALISON XAMON: Because I am also hoping it does not mean it is just because there has been an increasing number of children who have been expelled. I am trying to get an understanding of whether —

Hon SUE ELLERY: I doubt that that would be captured there, because the policy around the exclusions effectively began in February this year. This annual report is for the financial period June to June. So, you are comparing two different time periods.

Hon ALISON XAMON: I hear that, but as you can understand, there still has not been a clear answer about why there is a significant drop in the number of children. I am quite sure that the number of children requiring support has not reduced.

Hon SUE ELLERY: We will take that on notice, but I make the point that in order to get that level of service, it is the schools that request it. So, if schools are not requesting it because they have got support in some other way, that might be the explanation as well.

[Supplementary Information No A8.]

Hon ALISON XAMON: Thank you very much, Chair. I have moved to page 44; the second-last paragraph talks about “25 requests for additional funding from schools were approved”. How many requests were not approved? It is the second-last paragraph on page 44.

Hon SUE ELLERY: The school budget review committee is the mechanism whereby if schools think that their student-centred funding model allocation is not sufficient or there is some other particular set of circumstances, they can request additional funds. So, who can provide an answer to that? During this school year, 2019, the committee has not supported four applications. It has referred a further two to receive budget adjustments from other targeted initiatives and referred one to the student-centred working group for consideration.

Hon ALISON XAMON: Would it be possible to get a breakdown of those schools that were refused and referred?

Hon SUE ELLERY: I do not know that we would identify particular schools. I will take it on notice. If that is the general policy, I will do it. If not, then I will not.

Hon ALISON XAMON: As part of that, I would be curious to know, even just the general reasons for refusal. It may have been that their request was entirely unreasonable. I am just curious to know the grounds for refusal.

[Supplementary Information No A9.]

Hon ALISON XAMON: If I can just move to page 45, the fourth paragraph, which is about civil child sexual abuse claims, how many civil claims did the department respond to in this financial year?

Hon SUE ELLERY: Do we have that?

Ms RODGERS: Yes, we do.

Hon SUE ELLERY: It is with a great deal of confidence that we have that in the file. As at 30 June 2019, the department was notified of 41 civil claims for which 17 writs had been issued; 22 claims related to schools and 18 to former Country High School Hostels Authority hostels. So, the word “former” is used there because they came under the department. One school claim was settled prior to 30 June 2019.

Hon ALISON XAMON: So the others are still ongoing?

Hon SUE ELLERY: On foot.

Hon ALISON XAMON: Also on the same page and the second-last paragraph—universal access to early childhood education—I also note that is part of the budget line item on page 80. The issue of funding under the National Partnership on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education has been raised with me, and I understand that in Queensland and Victoria some of this funding supports

kindergarten programs and childcare services, but that is currently not the case here, where it is only supporting school-based programs. Can you please explain to me why WA is different?

Hon SUE ELLERY: Western Australia made a decision, some time ago now, that we would deliver our four-year-old programs in schools. There is one other jurisdiction in Australia that does that—Tasmania. Every other jurisdiction delivers their four-year-old program in childcare settings. So, this is actually overtly political, because, for some time now, states have been funded for this money under the national agreement one year at a time. Now, you can appreciate that is frustrating for the states, because we get down to the wire—and it does not matter which state government it has been; it has applied to both of us—and we do not know if that component of the federal funding is going to come to us. Historically, in Western Australia an 11-hours-per-week four-year-old program was delivered in school settings. When the federal government came on board with wanting to make a contribution, it set the level at 15 hours. So, Western Australia receives an additional four hours from the commonwealth. Other states were at different levels, like none—no four-year-old programs funded by the state. So the commonwealth variously funds different amounts.

For the commonwealth, as you might appreciate, they think that parents are double dipping, states are double dipping, for those states that deliver their four-year-old program in a childhood setting because the commonwealth also pays the childcare benefit. So, for a long time the commonwealth has been saying, “We’re only going to pay you one year at a time because we want to sort out this issue”, which has no impact in Western Australia because there is no double dipping because our four-year-old programs are delivered in school settings. But for every other jurisdiction, there is this ongoing issue between them and the commonwealth with the commonwealth saying, “Why are we paying”—it is not for me to put their argument, but effectively they are saying, “Why are we paying childcare benefit and a four-year-old universal access amount of money?” That is why the rest of us, Tasmania and Western Australia, have to go through this every 12 months—“Are we going to be renewed?”—because the commonwealth has this stalemate where the issue with the other jurisdictions has not been resolved.

Hon ALISON XAMON: So that is the explanation?

Hon SUE ELLERY: Correct.

Hon ALISON XAMON: I will report that back to the people who raised it with me.

The CHAIR: Honourable member, can we get you to wind up after this one so we can go back to others.

Hon ALISON XAMON: Can I please go to page 32 and the first paragraph—services for students with language disorders. Are students who have been assessed by teachers or school psychs as needing intensive language intervention able to access these programs or do they have to have received a formal diagnosis from a specialist? I ask that because, of course, a number of children are subject to significant delays in receiving a formal medical diagnosis. I am trying to get an idea just how early that intervention can occur.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Who can comment on that? Page 32 refers to our metropolitan language development centres providing intensive language intervention, and the question is —

Hon ALISON XAMON: As I know you appreciate, for a lot of those students, it can take quite a long time to get that formal diagnosis, so I want an idea just how early that referral can potentially occur? How early can that support occur? What is that process or does it require that formal diagnosis?

Hon SUE ELLERY: It does require a formal diagnosis, and it says that in the document. If nobody can provide an answer, we will take it on notice, rather than waste time trying to look for it. We will take that one on notice.

[*Supplementary Information No A10.*]

[4.20 pm]

Hon PIERRE YANG: Minister, I refer to page 42. During the 2017 election, I spent some time speaking to the people in Southern River, and time and again people raised with me—as they went through a strong population growth in that area—they talked about the large and growing student numbers in their schools. I understand this was not unique in that part of my electorate. I want to just ask what the government is doing to ensure that capacity is being provided for the growing numbers of students in my electorate in particular, but across the state in general.

Hon SUE ELLERY: I happen to share your electorate so I am intimately familiar with the growth pressure in and around the Southern River, Harrisdale and Piara Waters areas in particular. It certainly was the case in Southern River area, for example, there were no schools built during the life of the previous government. We have provided additional capacity and infrastructure at a number of existing schools; for example, at Canning Vale College and Southern River College in the areas that you referred to. We have also increased the number of new schools that are being built and we have committed to building more schools, so, in 2020, it will be four new primaries and three new secondaries and, in 2021, five new primary schools will be opening. I have also been working with the Minister for Planning, because the modelling, if you like, around planning for schools has not necessarily kept up with infill. It is one thing to have a model, there this terrible expression that is used—John Fischer will help me—“yield” per students per household.

The CHAIR: Oh!

Hon SUE ELLERY: Yes. It sounds very Orwellian, but it is the number of students that are in a particular house. It is a different configuration in brand-new suburbs—greenfield suburbs—where there are large houses, from some of those greenfield sites where, in fact, there are, really, high-density small houses but still, perhaps, a high number of children, and then infill into some of our inner suburbs and older suburbs. It used to be the case in Western Australia that very few people raised their children in apartments; that is changing. So we are working with the Department of Planning around how we adjust our planning modelling to take account of the different kinds of “yield” per setting. That is a piece of work that we are working on as well so that we can kind of keep up. One of the pressures for us, as well, is that in some of those areas—it is certainly the case around parts of Piara Waters and Harrisdale, down there as well, around Gosnells—land was hard to get for a while. There are certainly some landowners who had held on to their land when all around them was being built up. All those things are being done to try to address that issue.

Hon COLIN TINCKNELL: My question is regarding foreign education strategy and page 46 paragraph 2. We talked about a plan to increase the number of fee-paying foreign students. My question is: how many fee-paying foreign students attended WA public schools during the last reporting period and how does that compare with previous years?

Hon SUE ELLERY: We have had international fee-paying students since the mid-1980s. Somebody might find the number for how many we had.

Hon COLIN TINCKNELL: More recent years, I am looking at.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Somebody might find the number while I keep talking. We did announce the plan in August of this year. I am sure that I have answered a parliamentary question; but, in any event, honourable member, I will take it on notice and we will get it for you.

[*Supplementary Information No A11.*]

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: This one is a little out of left field, but at page 37, in relation to staffing, I presume you will have to take this on notice. I am interested to get an understanding of how many qualified librarians we have in public, primary and secondary schools. I understand over a period of time we have seen a somewhat significant decline, and there is a separation between library assistants as opposed to teacher librarians. If I can get a breakdown of teacher librarians versus library assistants and the figures, please.

Hon SUE ELLERY: I do not have the figures here. I will take it on notice, but what we will do is try to provide you with information by qualification, like specific qualification, because I think that is an issue of some debate in the profession now. There is an argument from some that because the people employed in libraries do not have qualification X, they are, therefore, not qualified to provide the service that they are employed to provide, and we would probably take issue with that. We will take it on notice and will get you the information that we can.

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: I appreciate that. That is what I am keen to get a better understanding of as well. I suppose I am keen, though, to know that within—perhaps this is an added question—how many librarians, whether they are teacher librarians or library assistants, does every school have one; and, if not, why not?

Hon SUE ELLERY: I cannot answer that, so we will take that on notice as well.

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: And if not, why not at the end of that question.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Sure.

[Supplementary Information No A12.]

Hon COLIN TINCKNELL: Mine question is about gender imbalance, if you like, mainly at primary schools. How is it going, are we getting better, and what are we doing to encourage young males to take up the profession?

Hon SUE ELLERY: Thanks, honourable member. It is a good question, because it is important for girls and boys to have male mentors, and for many, particularly for many young boys, there is an absence of a strong male role model in the family home. It really is important. I am not sure who is able —

Hon COLIN TINCKNELL: It is like STEM teachers; it is a tough one. I am just wondering: is it getting better, and what are we doing to try to make it better?

Hon SUE ELLERY: Out of teachers, it is: females at 89.1 per cent and males, 10.9 per cent. That is in primary schools. It is slightly better in high schools, where it is 35.9 per cent males and 63.1 per cent females.

Hon COLIN TINCKNELL: I have got all those percentages, minister.

Hon SUE ELLERY: I am trying to provide you with the answer.

Hon COLIN TINCKNELL: Yes, sorry.

Hon SUE ELLERY: I do not have in front of me any sort of measurement over time to see whether it has got better or worse. I will take that on notice, if you like, and we will provide you with that.

[Supplementary Information No A13.]

Hon ALISON XAMON: I refer to page 14 and the monitoring compliance with working with children legislation. What I want to ask is: for this period were any teachers or other staff identified working with children who did not have a valid working with children check card?

Hon SUE ELLERY: In any given period where there are staff who are dismissed —

Hon ALISON XAMON: So the answer is yes?

Hon SUE ELLERY: — for inappropriate illegal behaviour, they will have their working with children check withdrawn and they will inevitably end up being dismissed by the department.

Hon ALISON XAMON: That is not what I asked. What I want to know is whether anyone was found to be working with children —

Hon SUE ELLERY: In 2018–19, a total of 18 notices; eight interim negative notices and 10 negative notices were issued to 12 employees. At the time that the notices were issued, all 12 were employees of the Department of Education; all 12 had their employment terminated by the department as soon as it was advised of a notice being issued.

[4.30 pm]

Hon ALISON XAMON: Were there any that were found not to have a valid card simply because it had expired?

Hon SUE ELLERY: I do not think we would that have information because it is a requirement of their employment. Biannual compliance reviews of all the department sites have begun, and that is underway.

The CHAIR: We will have a very quick last question. We have got to finish right now. Have you got it or not?

Hon ALISON XAMON: I will do. The fourth paragraph on page 52 refers to education services for young people in detention. Why do you only fund the equivalent of three full-time teachers given that Banksia Hill requires more than that to operate?

Hon SUE ELLERY: It is the current responsibility of the Department of Corrective Services to deliver that service. They have responsibility for the provision of education within their facilities. That is why.

Hon ALISON XAMON: I want to be really clear: the expectation, then, is that if additional funding is required, it is up to the Department of Corrective Services to top that up?

Hon SUE ELLERY: I am not sure if anybody here is able to explain the funding and support arrangements.

Hon ALISON XAMON: You have got someone behind you who can.

Hon SUE ELLERY: If they can, someone needs to tell me who that is. I think we will just take that on notice.

[*Supplementary Information No A14.*]

The CHAIR: I think that has drawn us to the end of these hearings. On behalf of the committee, I thank you for your attendance today. The committee will forward the transcript of evidence, which highlights your questions taken on notice, and any additional questions that members may have after Friday, 6 December 2019. Responses to these questions are due by Wednesday, 15 January 2020. If you are unable to meet this due date, please advise the committee in writing as soon as possible before the due date. The advice is to include specific reasons as to why the due date cannot be met. Santa's sleigh being delayed is not a specific reason!

Hon SUE ELLERY: What if the Legislative Council is still sitting?

The CHAIR: I would take that as a valid reason.

If members have any unasked questions, please submit these via the electronic lodgement system on the POWAnet site, which has been reopened specifically for this hearing, by 5.00 pm on Friday, 6 December 2019.

Thank you all for your attendance today, including the minister. This draws to a close the annual report hearings for the committee. I would like to thank in particular the staff who have worked tirelessly to make sure these hearings run smoothly, participating members and all members. Thank you very much.

Hearing concluded at 4.32 pm
