

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES AND
FINANCIAL OPERATIONS**

2015–16 ANNUAL REPORT HEARINGS

**TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE
TAKEN AT PERTH
WEDNESDAY, 2 NOVEMBER 2016**

**SESSION FOUR
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

Members

**Hon Rick Mazza (Chair)
Hon Peter Katsambanis (Deputy Chair)
Hon Alanna Clohesy
Hon Helen Morton
Hon Sally Talbot**

Hearing commenced at 1.31 pm

Hon PETER COLLIER
Minister for Education, examined:

Ms SHARYN O'NEILL
Director General, examined:

Ms JENNIFER McGRATH
Deputy Director General, Finance and Administration, examined:

Mr LINDSAY HALE
Executive Director, Statewide Services, examined:

Mr JAY PECKITT
Chief Finance Officer, examined:

Mr JOHN FISCHER
Executive Director, Infrastructure, examined:

Mr CLIFF GILLAM
Executive Director, Workforce, examined:

Mr STEPHEN BAXTER
Executive Director, Statewide Planning and Delivery, examined:

Mr ALAN DODSON
Director, Evaluation and Accountability, examined:

The CHAIR: On behalf of the Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations, I welcome you to today's hearing. Can the witnesses confirm that they have read, understood and signed a document headed "Information for Witnesses"?

The Witnesses: Yes.

The CHAIR: Thank you. For the four gentlemen on this side, you have two microphones, so if you have to answer a question, make sure that you lean right in because we have had a few problems with people not being able to hear.

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 and departments have an important role and duty in assisting the Parliament to review agency outcomes and the committee values your assistance with this.

We will start off with Hon Sue Ellery.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Thank you very much, Chair. Good afternoon, everybody. I want to start by asking for some further information on your FTE numbers. They are on page 8 of the document. I do not know if this is an issue, but we have had it before and we have had it, Chair, in some of the

earlier sessions, but sometimes there is a difference in the page numbers. I am referring to the document that was tabled, not any other version. On page 8, it lists the full-time equivalent staff in a table. For “2015–16 actual”, it is 36 404. Could someone give me a breakdown of the categories? Normally when you give me a breakdown, you talk about support staff. I would also like the number of education assistant FTEs—the most recent figure that you have.

Hon PETER COLLIER: FTEs for EAs?

Hon SUE ELLERY: For education assistants, yes, please.

Hon PETER COLLIER: In October, the headcount is 3 140.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Do you have the FTEs?

Hon PETER COLLIER: It is about 2 000 more than when we started. As of the twentieth, there are 2 426.03.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Two thousand—I do not think that figure is right.

Hon PETER COLLIER: No; that is not right. It is by award.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Can I —

Hon PETER COLLIER: No, no, wait up; we will get it.

Hon SUE ELLERY: I have a PQ dated 15 September that says 6 998. Does that sound about right?

Hon PETER COLLIER: Yes; a bit more than that, actually. When was that?

Hon SUE ELLERY: It was 15 September this year.

Ms O’Neill: For the financial year 2015–16?

Hon PETER COLLIER: No; the current.

Ms O’Neill: You want something more current.

Hon SUE ELLERY: What is the current FTE number?

Hon PETER COLLIER: We have got it, because I got it to answer a media inquiry the other day.

Ms O’Neill: Sorry, minister. What we were quoting was education assistants mainstream. Education assistants mainstream is 2 426, but then we have education support assistants—those who work with students with disabilities—which is 4 858. So we need to combine those two, which we will do for you right now.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Any maths teachers?

Ms O’Neill: It is 2 426 and 4 858.

Ms McGrath: So 7 284.

Hon PETER COLLIER: Yes; it is .83 and .03.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Right; thank you.

Ms O’Neill: Sorry about that.

Hon SUE ELLERY: That is okay; thank you for that. The number of students in the annual report is 296 377, so thank you for that. When I went back and looked at figures in 2013, the number of students then was 276-odd thousand. The number of education assistants then was some 7 402. Based on these numbers now, the student numbers are 296 000, so it is about an extra 20 000 students, but my calculations put the number of education assistants as down by about 400 comparing this annual report to the 2012–13 annual report. In my calculations, that means there is about one EA for every 40 students when there used to be one EA for about every 36 or 37 students. Do those figures sound about right?

Hon PETER COLLIER: No. According to my figures that I have, we actually have 202 more than that period. What figures are you referring to?

Hon SUE ELLERY: The 7 402 is based on a PQ back in 2014, and that told me back then —

Ms O'Neill: Sorry; could we clarify FTE or headcount?

Hon SUE ELLERY: I am talking FTE. That figure back then was 7 402.87 for 2013.

Ms O'Neill: And the source of that data?

Hon SUE ELLERY: It is a PQ from 7 May 2014. I am trying to see if there is a number but it does not look like there is one. It is tabled paper 1441. Anyway, if you are able to give me any numbers that show that there is not a reduction by around about 400, I would appreciate those numbers.

Hon PETER COLLIER: Yes; I am sure we will be able to do that.

Hon SUE ELLERY: You might need to take that on notice or you might need to do —

Ms O'Neill: Let us have a go first. Sorry, Sue, could you clarify the figure you gave us?

Hon SUE ELLERY: The two figures I have, based on the parliamentary question that I asked this year on 15 September, is the number of education assistants—that is across all categories—was 6 998 FTE. That was question on notice 4 403. The earlier figure does not have a question number on it, but it says “See tabled paper 1 441”. The question was asked by me on 7 May 2014 and a relevant, hefty table was provided. The FTE at 28 March 2013 was 7 402.87.

[1.40 pm]

Hon PETER COLLIER: That does not correlate with the figures that I have got, Sue, so we will take that on notice.

[*Supplementary Information No D1.*]

Hon PETER COLLIER: As I said, certainly the figures that we have got show there has been an increase, so we will get that information for you.

Hon SUE ELLERY: I wanted to ask a question that I am hoping is not too complicated.

Ms O'Neill: Sorry; can I just go back for one moment? The data that we have in front of us that we will be referring to—we will certainly do it on notice, minister—for October 2016 was the pay, so that is more specific again. The year-to-date average was 7 452; back in 2013, it would compare with 7 221. So our figures show certainly increases, not decreases. All of our data would say that, but we are happy to go away and get the source of your information and make those comparisons. We are just going a bit blindly without those in front of us.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Sure. What I am trying to compare it with as well is the number of students, because there are about 20 000 more students as well. So that is what I am looking at as well.

I am hoping this next bit is not so complicated; I will try it anyway. There is a section in the annual report—I do not know that the page number will help you particularly—about students at risk. It is referring to students at educational risk, but I wanted to ask a question more generally about students at risk of being enticed by, or groomed by, some people in our community who are interested in causing disruption in our community or some people in our community who might be looking at what happened in the eastern states, for example, with some students getting involved in terrorism-related activities. I am interested in what the department is doing to help schools deal with that issue.

Hon PETER COLLIER: We have got a fair bit on that.

Ms O'Neill: If I can just start by saying that on the eastern seaboard, there have been some schools that have encountered more specific cases of that than we have. Comparatively, we have someone sitting on a national group in relation to what is called nationally countering violent extremism.

Compared to other states, we have not yet had the kinds of incidents that they have had. So far, that is not something that has been reported to us, but we have been involved nationally in work to get at least some comparable discussions around approaches that are being taken. Obviously, as is suggested, there is that elevated concern around the potential for radicalisation. It is something that COAG is looking at, and they agreed to a series of initiatives that are called countering violent extremism. As I said, we have got a member on that. We have got people on a policy group. What we have done is looked at our policies that already support schools, because essentially it is all about maximising student safety and wellbeing. So we have had a look at our duty of care, our child protection, our emergency and critical management and our student behaviour policies. We have had 14 key personnel trained in the Australian-developed and evidence-based program called Radar: Countering Violent Extremism. It is an intervention tool, and that is to assist states and systems to look at assessment and analysis of the need for intervention with particular individuals. We are in the throes of finalising an action plan. We have had to kind of work alongside other states in relation to that. It would be our intent to work through our current support systems that we have for student services and regions for supporting schools and we intend to train further people in that particular tool. We are working alongside police and we have already developed with police an interim consultation and identification or referral process for school-age youth. As we are working with police on that, obviously it is a very sensitive area because there is the potential to escalate fairly quickly if there is a student at risk. I think it is fair to say that it is very high on our radar. We have some training in place. We are taking the advice of police and, more importantly probably, the AFP, which is what COAG have been talking about. While we have an interim solution for referral in place, we intend to have more people trained early next year.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Are you engaged with community groups in addition to government agencies?

Ms O'Neill: My understanding is that some of that work is being done through, I think, DPC or police. I do not believe that we have had direct consultation with community groups outside of a couple of instances where police had some concerns and we worked directly with police. We really work in large part under their direction, because some of the referrals go to police rather than directly to us. But what we want with staff—it is kind of a keen balance to achieve—is that they are skilled in understanding the warning signals alongside the normal warning signals for kids at risk. We do not rush out into the community and start raising concerns at this stage. I think it is fair to say that we have quite a bit of professional learning to undertake in this regard; it is not straightforward for anyone.

Hon SUE ELLERY: I will move on, if I can, to capital works. The reference in the report is page 58, but I want to start by asking about something that is not in there, which is the western suburbs. I am in receipt of a significant number of emails from people who live in the area around Doubleview Primary School who are concerned about a range of things as a result of the announcement that the international school will move to that site. They are particularly concerned about numbers of students who might now be in that area, the age of students who might be in that area and impacts on community amenity around open space. I have not responded to all those emails yet. I am waiting for you to tell me something today that assists me to respond to those people who are very concerned.

Hon PETER COLLIER: There was consultation with the P&C and the board et cetera through the local member, through Liza Harvey, and through the department. The school itself is actually very pleased with the fact that they are going to get a brand-new school. Personally, I have had probably half a dozen or a handful of letters since that period of time concerned over, as the honourable member has mentioned, the loss of open space. Of course, they still will have as large an oval as pretty much most schools have. First of all, they will still retain access to that oval. They will also have a gymnasium. They will also have other facilities that they have not had in the past. On the issue with regard to the high school, the international school, as we all know, is a boutique school.

It is catering for a very select group of people—not necessarily; it is open to everyone, but it tends to deal with students whose parents work overseas. It is not uncommon for a school environment to have a K–12. That is very, very common in fact, and they work very productively.

As far as ISWA is concerned, they are going to get pretty much a completely revamped school. It is really good for them. It is really good for the primary school. Yes, of course, there are some logical concerns from the local community with regard to the fact that they are going to have what was previously another oval removed from them.

[1.50 pm]

Having said that, it is DOE land; they still will have access to the DOE oval and the DOE facilities, as they have at the moment, and I will be meeting with a group from the community with the local member, Liza Harvey, in a couple of weeks, I think. We have arranged a meeting with that group of people. I do not know whether anyone would like to add anything to that. John, have you got anything else to add there, mate?

Mr Fischer: Not much more. I mean, we did do some intensive studies in terms of the impacts on the surrounding community in terms of traffic and those sorts of things. It showed there was adequate capacity in the local network to support the expected or projected number of students on that site. The works have been planned. There have been other comments about trees and those types of things raised, particularly the tuart trees. The plan that has been done basically retains all the tuart trees, but there are a few other trees of a more immature nature, not tuarts, which will be removed. The location of the school and the facilities have taken into account the existing trees and those types of things. The minister mentioned that in addition to the oval space there will be a shared gymnasium that both the primary school and ISWA will use, and again that will be available to the community to use. There will be additional netball courts, or those hard courts, as well. Yes, there is a change to the environment, but, overall, I think most of the impacts have been managed.

Hon SUE ELLERY: In the announcement that you made about the City Beach site and Doubleview, there was \$15.4 million for Doubleview Primary School. Can you spell out for me what that buys?

Hon PETER COLLIER: Yes, that is a brand-new primary school.

Hon SUE ELLERY: The \$18.8 million for Carine, what does that buy?

Hon PETER COLLIER: Carine is now going to be a GATE STEM school; of course, that will mean that there will be an increase of around 400 students in Carine. As a result, the boundaries will be enforced from north of Scarborough Beach Road, so it will need an upgrade in terms of facilities, particularly classroom facilities.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Is it buying three classroom blocks? What does that \$18.8 million actually achieve?

Hon PETER COLLIER: I will ask Mr Fischer to give the total number.

Mr Fischer: There is additional capacity for about 350 students and there is upgrade to the science and some specialist areas.

Hon SUE ELLERY: If I am able to get a breakdown of how that is allocated, bearing in mind it is an allocation and you have got to go through your normal process, but what you are thinking that \$18.8 million is going to be spent on, that would be of some assistance. I do not know whether we need to put that on notice.

Hon PETER COLLIER: With Carine, Carine is a very good school, but unfortunately what happened as a result of Scarborough closing was that a decision was made that they would not have the constraints in regards to boundaries, so you have got hundreds of students who live north of

Scarborough Beach Road who are now not going to Carine; they are going to Churchlands, and that has compounded the problem of the position in Churchlands. We have been very accommodating with this. Number one, we are going to enhance Carine to ensure Carine is seen—it is already a good school, but enhance it as an academic specialist school. All of those students who are currently within the catchment area and are going to Churchlands will continue to do so, but then from 2022 they will have to go to—the current crop of primary school students will still have the option of going to either Carine or going to Churchlands, but as of next year that cohort, if they are in north of Scarborough Beach Road, will go to Carine.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Okay. That announcement included \$60 million for the City Beach site, \$18.8 million for Carine and \$15.4 million for Doubleview. That money is not in the budget, is it, so where is that money coming from?

Hon PETER COLLIER: That will be in the midyear review. I understand where you are coming from with that one, and you did what you should do, and that was put pressure on and that was quite legitimate, and we had a lot of pressure from around the traps, but, quite frankly, it took an enormous amount of time and effort to get to a point where we could get some solace across the board—that is, from ISWA, from Doubleview, from Carine and everyone involved, and we worked relentlessly. That pretty much consumes so much time from the department and myself and my office and DOE itself, trying to get to a point where we could get ISWA across the line. As you know, negotiations broke down at one stage, because I was not prepared, as minister, to enter into a negotiated settlement with ISWA that was going to leave a legacy that was counterproductive. You know, we have had some bad decisions that had been made in the past in the western suburbs, and I just was not prepared to do that. So we had to get to a point whereby we could accommodate ISWA, but at the same time it was not going to leave this massive financial legacy for the state. I was delighted when we finally did get across that line. Mr Fischer, the director general and the whole team, Alison, everyone has worked very, very hard on this. It did take longer than we would have liked; I would love to have given a solution 12 months ago, but we simply could not do it. As I said, as minister, it would have been totally irresponsible of me to sign up with ISWA in an agreement that, quite frankly, as I said, would have been a legacy for anyone who comes after me. Where we have landed I think is terrific—ISWA is happy; Doubleview is happy. Yes, I take on board the point you made with regard to local community, but the Doubleview board are very, very happy, the P&C are happy, the school itself is happy and the people of the western suburbs are now happy because they are going to get a brand-new state-of-the-art school that will cater for students in the foreseeable future.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Thank you. Do you see the City Beach site as being the solution to the pressures that are in the inner-city suburbs as well? I am particularly interested in what options are now being explored around the suburbs to the east of City Beach and in the inner-CBD areas where you have got higher density—more younger families being prepared to raise their kids living in apartment-style accommodation.

Hon PETER COLLIER: Well, it has certainly taken the immediate pressure off, so whoever wins next year, that is one pressure point that we will not have in the immediate future. You would be aware that part of the solution was also the expansion of Mt Lawley, but that does not take into account the point that you have raised—that is, inner city—and more and more people are choosing inner-city living. You have got now the Burswood Peninsula, East Perth and the city itself. I am very receptive to the notion of an inner-city school and ultimately a government down the track is—the department is already looking at potential for an inner-city school. An inner-city school is something that we will have to consider, but at the moment it is not an immediate issue.

Hon SUE ELLERY: I am getting people pitching to me, and they are telling me that they are pitching to the department about potential inner-city sites, so I suspect we are talking to the same people. I do think it is a bit beyond the department just vaguely having a notion that at some point

we are going to have to look at something in the inner city, and we had a conversation last year about possible sites that might be considered. I wonder where you are at with what are the options on the table now that you see.

Hon PETER COLLIER: There is nothing formal. You are quite correct: I think probably the same people that have been talking to you have been talking to me. I have had a few who have spoken to me with regard to this notion, and someone—I cannot remember where it was now. It was informal; it was not at a formal meeting that someone spoke to me about this notion. It might have been at a Liberal Party thing; I cannot remember. Someone spoke to me about some property that they might have had. There have been other issues. One of the ones that was considered—and probably not so much anymore—was the old girls' school there in East Perth, where the police were. I went and had a look at that. We thought of that as an option when ISWA broke down. That would come at an enormous cost. Anyway, something like that is a prospect. I do not know if there is anything else that is formal that the director general might like to comment on, but the discussions I have had at this stage I would have to rank as informal.

Ms O'Neill: I would not describe the work as perhaps as random as you were sort of suggesting there, but we know that in the next five years some of our primary schools in particular will come under pressure, but there are a range of strategies that we can do, and we do do, in the interim, and one of those things is going back and working with schools such that they stay with their local intake area.

[2.00 pm]

Historically, when a school's numbers have been down, they are allowed, by virtue of the act, to take kids from outside of the intake area if they have the space. So, we are just working with those schools to make sure they understand their intake area and they only take kids from inside that intake area. That is important for us, particularly where they have other programs like intensive English centres and things like that, but scoping with those schools—how many kids they have, what is their local intake area, do they have any other programs that bring students from outside the local intake area? We did have a commitment, or we already have, for four early childhood classrooms and four general classrooms at Highgate. So we are dealing with some of those pressure points. But the building of a new school is one of a range of strategies, and there is a bunch of others that we need to make sure that we do along the way as well. We know that in the next five years there are primary schools, around particularly the CBD area, that we are going to have to deal with. None of them—we are dealing with Highgate—are more immediate than that. Perhaps, John, you can clarify that?

Mr Fischer: As the DG mentioned, there are sort of two strategies. One is increasing the capacity of some of our existing schools, and so we have Highgate, Wembley and West Leederville, and there is a third one.

Hon PETER COLLIER: Mount Hawthorn.

Mr Fischer: We are looking at Mount Hawthorn, and we have a plan for about five other schools where we do expansions. We are also actively looking at sites in the metro area and around the CBD that we could consider for a primary school. I think it is a bit premature to name those sites today, for the same reason that we do not want to create a distraction from any negotiations we have about those sites. We have also been talking to the City of Perth about how we could plan for a new high school that would complement some of their planning for the city. So that is sort of getting to that. Again, it is early stages, but it would lead to the department being able to make some recommendation to government about where we could progress on these sites. The time frame, I think, is critical. The primary schools will be the first demand, and a time frame of around about 2022 would be the earliest, I think, we would need a primary school. Within that five-year period after that, we would be looking at a high school site, and that sort of fits the time frame we would

need to identify and acquire a site, and for government to consider that, obviously, through their normal process.

The CHAIR: If you have finished on that subject, I might move on. Just before I do, just moving on from the CBD school you were talking about, is the residential infill program they have in some of the inner city suburbs impacting on schools or is it the demographic—the young families who are moving into that infill?

Hon PETER COLLIER: Yes, in no uncertain terms.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: I will start by asking you about the non-attendance issue. I can give two page references, page 28 and page 171. Page 171 is probably the more detailed one; that is appendix 3. I wonder whether you collect this data by region, as well by the category of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal?

Hon PETER COLLIER: Yes.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: I am guessing nobody will have those numbers to hand.

Hon PETER COLLIER: Which region?

Hon SALLY TALBOT: I am particularly interested in the breakdown of the Aboriginal categories in both those tables—that is, A16 and A17. If there a regional breakdown you could give to me? How do you classify your regions? I am obviously thinking of the Kimberley and Pilbara.

Ms O'Neill: We have a Kimberley and a Pilbara.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: And then around the rest of the state, how do you do that?

Ms O'Neill: We have the Midwest, and Perth region broken into two.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: By whatever regions and subregions you do it.

Ms O'Neill: By our own regions?

Hon SALLY TALBOT: Yes, as far down as you can break it, if you can, please.

Hon PETER COLLIER: Well done. We have it.

Ms O'Neill: In our north metropolitan region, and you are asking Aboriginal attendance rates?

Hon SALLY TALBOT: Yes, and I am asking in those categories that are specified in appendix 3. So, do you want to start with the overall figures of pre-primary?

Ms O'Neill: For the overall figures, I will see whether we have the breakdown. Yes, we do. For north metropolitan, the Aboriginal attendance rate is 81.5 per cent; in the regular category, 46.5 per cent; in the indicated category, 23.1; in the moderate category, 16.6; and in the severe category, 13.8. For south metropolitan —

Hon SALLY TALBOT: Excuse me, but are you going to go through every region in the state?

Ms O'Neill: I thought that is what you asked.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: It is, but I am wondering whether it might be more efficient to table the document. I am just conscious of taking up other members' time.

Ms O'Neill: Yes, we can table that.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: That goes through the four categories in the subgroup in A17?

Ms O'Neill: What we will do is provide A17 in the form of regions. Is that what you are after?

Hon SALLY TALBOT: Yes, that is it.

Ms O'Neill: This is not quite in the same form as what you are asking, so we will provide it.

[Supplementary Information No D2.]

Hon SALLY TALBOT: I would like to drill down a little more into the severe attendance risk, so the 21.1 per cent of Aboriginal children who fall into that category. How do you break them down further than the below 60 per cent? Can you break them down, for example, by age and by region and by exactly what attendance rate?

Ms O'Neill: We know each individual person, obviously, so it breaks down to that, but that is individual data we would not provide.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: No, I understand that.

Ms O'Neill: I think we might have attendance by year levels.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: Year levels, and regions, perhaps?

Mr Dodson: In terms of the tables we are talking about, as Sharyn indicated we have data at the individual student level. But as to the general reporting of those, at the regional level we would have it by year group from pre-primary through to year 12. We also have some data in relation to whether the absences are authorised or unauthorised. The splits are usually by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, primary, secondary—all those things can be produced.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: When you say authorised or unauthorised, that obviously implies that somebody could represent a severe attendance risk and yet be an authorised absence?

Mr Dodson: Correct. A person who is very sick, for example, or undergoing chemotherapy et cetera could be —

Hon SALLY TALBOT: I see. So that category would include those students?

Mr Dodson: Absolutely, yes.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: Okay. Can you provide on notice that breakdown that you have just outlined? Can you further add, then, how many are authorised and non-authorised?

Mr Dodson: Yes.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: Can you just confirm for me what geographical details that is going to include? Is that the same regions that —

Mr Dodson: The same regions as we had—the two metros, and the country regions.

[Supplementary Information No D3.]

Hon SALLY TALBOT: Will it also include a further breakdown of the under 60 per cent? Can you give us an idea about what figures are in that category? Presumably, you have some children who are under 50 per cent?

Mr Dodson: Our standard reporting category is currently at 60 per cent, but we are able to cut it down to a lower category if that is what is required.

[2.10 pm]

Hon SALLY TALBOT: Without giving us any individual data, could you give us an idea of how many children? What I am interested in is how many children are missing completely?

Ms O'Neill: That is a different list.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: Let me pursue that in a minute. Let us go back to the ones who are not missing completely. Are there some children who would be attending less than 10 per cent?

Mr Dodson: A very small number.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: Could you give us the breakdown maybe in those deciles?

Mr Dodson: Yes.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: That is all part of the same question. Is that okay?

Mr Dodson: Yes. If we need to obviously put a couple together because there are only one or two students, we may do that.

[Supplementary Information No D3.]

Hon SALLY TALBOT: Yes, okay. My next question —

Ms O'Neill: Sorry, Chair, can we clarify that to make sure we are giving exactly what is required? I think Alan has said that we would give a breakdown, by region, of Aboriginality, year group and authorised–unauthorised attendance—to give you what you ask for—and then this subcategory, under 60 per cent by decile.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: Yes.

Let me move on to the missing children. These are children who are —

Hon PETER COLLIER: Whereabouts are unknown.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: Yes. They are registered to go to school but you never see them.

Mr Hale: No; they are not the same thing. Students whose whereabouts are unknown are students who are no longer attached to a school —

Hon PETER COLLIER: In the system—that is right. They may have moved interstate; anyway I will —

Ms O'Neill: When a school can no longer contact or locate a student, they are placed on a list called “Students whose whereabouts are unknown”. It is government–non-government; it is not just for the department’s schools. That is after enormous efforts are put into place to try to track those students down. Sometimes we cannot—mostly we cannot contact families. For a student who is persistently absent but we can talk to their parents or a caregiver, they would not be on the list. It is people who we cannot make contact with anyone who can tell us where they are. That enables us to comply with section 21 of the School Education Act, which is by reporting students who are consistently missing from school. It fluctuates daily. We find them. Sometimes they pop up at another school; sometimes they will pop up in another state. We have communication agreements with other states. The list changes all the time.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: I think you provided those figures fairly recently.

Hon PETER COLLIER: Yes.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: I do not recall that they were broken down by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal.

Ms O'Neill: I do not think we report—I am not saying we could not—for public schools. We would not know, obviously, for private schools.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: Can I ask you to take that on notice and see whether you can break them down by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal and again geographical?

Ms O'Neill: Because this would require us to most likely go to individual schools and seek that information, I am not sure we would hold it centrally. I will need to give consideration to the time that we get to answer that question.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: You have definitely got the data but you are not sure whether it is broken down into Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal—is that what you are saying?

Mr Hale: I am fairly confident that we would be able to break down the data for those students whose last school of attendance was a public school, but I am not sure that we have that information for non-government or —

Ms O'Neill: We will not have it for non-government. We will attempt to get that; I am just saying it might take a little more work than if it is just 10 days.

The CHAIR: If you cannot make it in 10 days, obviously you will have to seek an extension.

Ms O'Neill: You are after the percentage of the number that is Aboriginal?

Hon SALLY TALBOT: Yes. You will be able to indicate that by —

Ms O'Neill: For public schools.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: For public schools by region.

Ms O'Neill: By region—yes, because we know what schools they come from.

[Supplementary Information No D4.]

Hon SALLY TALBOT: If I take you to page 59, there is a line item referring to the Denmark College of Agriculture. Could you first of all talk us through that line item where it says that the variation in costs increased by 100 per cent from \$700 000 to \$1.4 million. Can you talk us through what that is about? It is on the middle of page 59.

Mr Fischer: The item relates to the replacement of a dairy in the Denmark ag college. The previous one was condemned. They thought they would like to provide it with a robotic dairy. The initial estimate was \$700 000 and we sought funding from government for that. When the work was properly scoped and let to tender, the estimated cost was \$1.4 million. The school talked to the shire about releasing some land that the Shire of Denmark wanted for an industrial site which was adjacent to the college. Those funds were used to pay for the additional scope of works.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: So the department sold the land to the shire?

Mr Fischer: Yes.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: For about \$700 000.

Mr Fischer: About \$600 000, I think. There was some money put in by the agricultural trust to assist in that project.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: Would it be possible for you to provide the exact details of that—how much the land was sold for and what parcel of land was involved?

Mr Fischer: I can do that

[Supplementary Information No D5.]

Hon SALLY TALBOT: I will address my questions to the minister and the director general, but it might be best to go back here. If anybody has a mental picture of the ag college in their head, does anybody know where that land was in terms of the rectangle that is the college? I am guessing it was on the —

Ms O'Neill: John or Stephen might know.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: I am guessing it was on the north eastern side.

Mr Fischer: Correct. I am a little bit hazy, so I would prefer to give you a written response. It was an area that the shire had identified for future industrial development, which I am sure is the north eastern area.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: If you can provide details of that, that would be great.

Mr Fischer: I will give you a sketch or something for the exact location of the area of the land.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: Are you aware, minister, of a further request—I do not know how to phrase this—or a possible request for more land from the shire for the access road?

Hon PETER COLLIER: No, I am not.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: One of the options for the road that goes right across the top of the college, which will link up Mount Barker Road with the new light industrial estate, involves resuming more land from the ag school.

Hon PETER COLLIER: I am not aware of it.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: No official approach has been made?

Hon PETER COLLIER: Not that I am aware of. Not unless it has been to my office.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: Can you take that on notice and have a look? If you can find it, what were the details of that? Was the road access part of this land acquisition that helped to fund the dairy?

Hon PETER COLLIER: Yes, I shall take that on.

[Supplementary Information No D6.]

Hon SALLY TALBOT: There are several references to working with children. I have some general questions. Page 40 is about maintaining and monitoring staff records to comply with the act, and advice and support in relation to the legislation. Can you outline what responsibilities the department takes to ensure its compliance with the act in the case of a complaint being made about a teacher—it is not just teaching staff; it is auxiliary staff as well?

Hon PETER COLLIER: Are you asking what the process is?

Hon SALLY TALBOT: Yes.

Hon PETER COLLIER: The director general would probably be best to take us through that.

Ms O'Neill: Before employees actually start with us, if I can go back for the moment, we have a range of probity checks including criminal screening and working with children. We have criminal history screening, obviously, which mandates the criminal screening and clearance of all prospective employees and university practicum students. That has to be finalised before they can commence with us. That gives us surety that people with serious criminal convictions will not be employed or placed. There is no screen; no start with our department. We have national police history checks through the—it used to be the CrimTrac Agency—Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission. Then we have working with children, which is a separate requirement, so we have two requirements for criminal screening. In most circumstances both checks are required.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: What is the second working with children check?

Ms O'Neill: The first one is the national police history check and the second is the working with children. They are different. One goes deeper and one goes in a more broad fashion. We use both because we have vulnerable —

[2.20 pm]

Hon SALLY TALBOT: So the broader one would pick up other jurisdictions?

Ms O'Neill: Yes, that is the national one, and that is why we use that in particular. Working with children only considers convictions that are considered to be a barrier to child-related employment, whereas we look more broadly in relation to that. The national history check considers all criminal convictions in breadth, including offences like stealing, burglary, violence, drugs and fraud. On that basis, we may consider someone unsuitable for employment in any role, and spent convictions get taken into account. We have those processes in place and we have systems to monitor our compliance with working with children legislation and obviously take that very seriously. When complaints are made—it depends on the nature of the complaint and it depends on where it is made—anything of a child-related nature obviously gets reported through the appropriate channels and a working with children permit may be revoked if there is an issue there. For all others that are not child-related we have our normal complaints management and investigation processes that we use. Often we have to go through the Public Sector Commission for some of the complaints and

through the CCC, obviously, for other complaints. We have a broad and comprehensive approach to investigations and complaints in that regard. Some complaints are managed at the local level after consideration and analysis of the nature of the complaint. They all come to central for consideration, and then they might be referred at the local level, for example, if someone did not like the place of the school camp. That can be investigated locally. Anything of a misconduct nature will be investigated by our centralised team of investigators.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: Okay, so in the case of a non-child-related conviction—is that the right phrase?—if the conviction relates to something that is not to do with working with children, how is that decision made? Who makes it and how is it made?

Ms O'Neill: There is a screening committee. I do not have the criteria with me, but they will give consideration to the suitability of that person's employment, in terms of the reputation of the department. It is all contextual. For example, if a person has serious convictions for embezzlement or theft, we might not think they would be the best person to run the corporate services or the finances of a school.

Hon SUE ELLERY: You would hope so!

Ms O'Neill: It is contextual, it is case by case, and it is a risk consideration.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: Can you take on notice those criteria, if they are available for the committee to see? You can, of course, ask for them to be kept confidential but if the committee could see them, and could you also indicate who is on that group that makes the decisions?

Ms O'Neill: Do you mean by title?

Hon SALLY TALBOT: Yes, and the role they play.

Ms O'Neill: We might seek to consider whether that is information that we would not want to be made public, given that some people get pretty grumpy when they are declined employment, and we would not want to identify the individuals who are making that decision.

The CHAIR: You can include that in your response.

[Supplementary Information No D7.]

Hon SALLY TALBOT: Obviously, all that we have said so far relates to convictions. You said that spent convictions rate in the assessment process.

Ms O'Neill: They are given consideration, I think I was referring to. They are taken into account, depending on the offence, but it all comes back to the context.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: Is there a way of establishing in the records you keep whether somebody has been investigated for complaints in the past?

Ms O'Neill: I would need to get some advice about whether we take into consideration whether someone, for example, has been charged, because there is a difference, obviously, between charge and conviction. I would need to take advice on what role that plays. Obviously our own internal investigations are a matter of our employee records, so we would know if we had internal investigations. We would know if there were convictions. I do seem to recall, but I would just want to clarify whether the national history check gives us information about people who have been charged but not convicted. I would rather provide that information on notice.

[Supplementary Information No D8.]

Hon SALLY TALBOT: When you say that you can crosscheck against your own records, that is obviously only when somebody is applying for some internal position, where you have got a staff record and bookkeeping.

Ms O'Neill: Yes, that is right, or they have been a previous employee.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: So the question is whether your external references also —

Ms O'Neill: You need to take into consideration the Teacher Registration Board. That also has records of investigations and there is a certain level under their legislation of record sharing. We have our records and the TRB—the Teacher Registration Board—have their records, and obviously other sectors have their own information as well.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: Do you have an open interface between the two sets of records, or could somebody be holding information about an individual that was not known to you? Could the Teacher Registration Board be holding information that is not available to the Department of Education and vice versa?

Ms O'Neill: I do not believe so. Many years ago, when the TRB was being set up, there were some problems previously under the old WACOT, or potential problems about that information sharing that may be available when people are coming from another sector to us. But, as part of their registration as a teacher, there is information that people are compelled to provide, and so my understanding is that appropriate information under each respective piece of legislation is now shared.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: Do you want to take that on notice so that you can do the check and let the committee know? I can absolutely understand why the minister is nodding, because clearly the ideal situation would be where there was an open interface.

[Supplementary Information No D9.]

Hon SALLY TALBOT: You might want to make this part of the same question, but other agencies—if somebody, for example, has been registered by the Department of Communities as a childcare worker —

Ms O'Neill: We have MOUs on information sharing about children and clients of other agencies, but when people register for employment it would be made clear then, and we screen everyone that is coming in, but you must be referring to internal investigations in their departments.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: Yes.

Ms O'Neill: I do not believe people are compelled to provide that information to us.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: Do you want to check whether they are compelled to, or do you not think it is the case?

Hon PETER COLLIER: We will check on that.

Ms O'Neill: We can check, but we would need to take it on notice.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: We will include that in the previous question on notice.

Hon HELEN MORTON: I am asking a question about the financial statements. On page 77 of the annual report, under the section on liabilities, and then under the section on provisions, I did look at note 31(f), which was of interest. It states that, from 1 July 2014, the department ceased accruing employment on-costs, including workers' compensation insurance. It goes on further to say that there is no present obligation to pay these costs on annual leave or long service leave, and I can understand that. What I was not able to ascertain from that note is whether the department ceased accruing employment on-costs, including workers' compensation insurance, for all workers, or does that provision in the financial statements only relate to not being obliged to pay on-costs for annual leave and long service leave?

Mr Peckitt: It is all in relation to how the provision is calculated, so we sought some advice—I understand it was external advice—on how that provision should be calculated. It is, essentially, really, what on-costs for that provision should be included. The advice that we received was that those items should not be included going forward, which was the reason for the note in the financial statements.

[2.30 pm]

Hon HELEN MORTON: I do not fully understand. Are you saying that the department now does not have to report accruing employment on-costs, or that you do not actually have to calculate it, even—you do not have to take it into account at all?

Mr Peckitt: We still, in our normal operating expenses, would have things such as workers' compensation, obviously, for our staff. This is more in relation to that longer-term provision for things such as annual leave, which do not require that to be added in, so essentially it does not change our normal operating expenses for things like workers' compensation. It is just a calculation methodology, if you like, for that item in the financial statements. It is really essentially a non-cash item. It does not affect any staff; it is just an accounting treatment for how this should be presented in the financial statements.

Hon SUE ELLERY: I wanted to ask, firstly: pages 30 and 31 of the document refer to your aims for providing the very best education for students in rural and regional settings. I wonder if you are able to give me a list, which you might need to take on notice, of which schools are delivering years 11 and 12 courses through SIDE. That might be the list for school year 2016.

Hon PETER COLLIER: That is only for regions, is it, because some of the metro —

Hon SUE ELLERY: Yes, I am interested in regions.

Hon PETER COLLIER: Okay.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Do you need to take that on notice?

Hon PETER COLLIER: Yes, we will, I think.

[Supplementary Information No D10.]

Hon SUE ELLERY: I have started attending secondary graduations—have not we all—and what is clear is that graduation rates are down. This is the first year where the failure to successfully complete OLNAs has resulted in WACE certificates not being granted, so it is a bit heartbreaking for some schools who have worked really, really hard to get to 100 per cent and been at 100 per cent graduation for a while. There are certainly some schools where I think they will still get there—and I am going to Willetton on Friday night and I expect that they will still get there, but I will be interested to see it—but for others it is a bit heartbreaking, and I wonder what you can tell us about graduation rates for this year. The reference, if you need it, is on page 70 in the document, but I wonder what you can tell us about graduation rates for 2016.

Hon PETER COLLIER: Yes. They are not finalised yet, but just with regard to the OLNAs, some of the preliminary information I have been provided with, and I might say it is preliminary at this stage, is very encouraging in terms of the fact that those students that were identified with, dare I say it, substandard literacy and numeracy rates in year 10, where they finished off at the end of year 12, it has been phenomenal. That was the whole point of the exercise. For far too long we have had students that have gone through year 11 and 12 come out at the end of 12 years' compulsory education without the capacity to read and write, with all due respect, and if we are preparing them for employment, we are not doing our job because these students, in a lot of instances, do not have the capacity to write a CV. So the OLNAs were there unambiguously to ensure that we raised standards for graduation, and I appreciate and I sympathise with those students that do not graduate as a result of the fact that they did not receive their OLNAs. But we do not have a graduation ceremony or graduation certificates so that a whole school can get 100 per cent. We do not have a graduation ceremony or certificate to make people feel good for a night. The whole point of the graduation is to ensure that students are best prepared for life beyond compulsory education. That is why we were the first state to introduce the OLNAs, which was a standard with regard to literacy and numeracy. I am very, very happy with the fact that, at last, we have some rigour in terms of graduation that will actually mean something. As I said, the improvement levels that have come about from those year 10s when they first took the OLNAs in year 10 through to the end of year 12 is very encouraging, because what they do—these are students that would normally get lost in the

system. They would spend the next two years in years 11 and 12 floundering around with substandard literacy and numeracy standards. Now they are given the opportunity to further enhance their literacy and numeracy skills and, ideally, to graduate, or they will get a certificate of attainment or, alternatively of course, they can still do the OLN A post-compulsory education and get that graduation. So, yes, I take on board the point that you have raised; it is a valid point. It might be a very great anguish to some students and their parents, but, quite frankly, what we are doing in terms of preparing them for life outside school is something that should have been done years ago. To have thousands of our students graduating from year 12 with substandard literacy and numeracy in the twenty-first century is unacceptable.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Thank you for that. I understand the purpose of OLN A. My question was about what information you have available and are able to give me about the impact on graduation rates and whether or not you are anticipating a reduction or have evidence of a reduction in 2016.

Hon PETER COLLIER: And as I said at the start, we do not have those figures yet because we do not have the figures for graduation, and that will not be the department; that will be SCASA.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Okay. I wanted to talk about educational outcomes for Indigenous students in particular. The annual report at page 29 refers to Closing the Gap, but that is just a hook; it is a reference point for the conversation. The annual report does provide some NAPLAN data but does not by Indigenous students. ACARA, of course, does publish it, so I look at that. If you look at—and I did it just as an exercise to see how we were travelling—year 7s, what is on the ACARA website now is the 2015 data. If you looked at year 7 Indigenous students, the percentage at or above the national minimum standard in WA in numeracy was about 18 per cent below for Indigenous kids, below non-Indigenous kids. In spelling it was about 24 per cent below; in reading it was about 22 per cent below. And the thing that struck me was that while over a, what is it, seven-year period in that, there has been an increase over that period of time, but it bounces up and down, so it is not a consistent linear trend up. I am interested in what is the plan to try to get that on a consistent line going up as opposed to bouncing up and down around the place.

Hon PETER COLLIER: Yes. That is a valid point, and it is something that is dear to my heart, and that is why we have been so proactive in terms of early intervention, in particular. One of the biggest issues that we have, as we found earlier in the discussion, earlier in the hearing, was attendance rates for Aboriginal students. There is no motivation for a lot of Aboriginal students, particularly in remote areas of the state, to attend school when they cannot read or write, and their parents are not empowered to be part of the child's education. As a result of that, rather than compel students to attend through attendance officers, which are used, I have to say, we have to motivate the students to be at school. So what we have done, over the last two years in particular, is, specifically with Aboriginal students, introduce the KindiLink program, which is for three-year-old Aboriginal students: early intervention, literacy, numeracy, speech therapy and parenting workshops, to try to get the parents involved as well as providing that positive seed for the child. In addition to that, the 21 child and parent centres, which are not exclusive to Aboriginal students but are in low socioeconomic areas and do capture a lot of Aboriginal students, are working extremely well indeed. What they deal with, of course, are all of those wraparound services—again, early intervention, literacy, numeracy, parenting workshops, speech therapy, dietary advice, et al. Those child and parent centres, I would like to have more of them; there are 21 at the moment. We had 16 and there were five from the feds; they were the child and family centres. The feds did their typical cut and run, so they established them and then said they were not going to fund them, so we took up the mantle and we funded them. There are now 21 state child and parent centres. I have no doubt whatsoever, when that early seed is sown in those Aboriginal children, that they will have a better chance in education than those who have come before them. There is absolutely no point pouring money into the exit level of a child's education; you have to look at the entrance level, and, in addition to that, you have to empower the parents, so that is what we have done from that perspective. In addition to that, as far as Aboriginal students are concerned, Aboriginal culture

in our education system is absolutely vital. The incorporation of Aboriginal culture within the curriculum and embedded within our school environment is essential, so we introduced the cultural standards framework six months ago. It is nation leading. For the first time now there is a line in the sand with regard to the embedding of cultural standards within our school environment. That, if anything, will add further motivation to Aboriginal students within our school structure.

[2.40 pm]

Early intervention is vital and, as I said, we have been very proactive. I wanted more, to be perfectly honest, but as you know we are in a constrained environment and I had to take one for the team.

Hon SUE ELLERY: It was of your own making.

Hon PETER COLLIER: I beg your pardon?

Hon SUE ELLERY: It was of the government's own making.

Hon PETER COLLIER: Possibly. I was trying to think of something really funny to say. I am normally really good at one-liners, but I did not get around to it!

Hon SALLY TALBOT: Would you like to take it on notice?

Hon PETER COLLIER: Having said that, I would like to think that if we are successful in March next year, I can expand the role of the KindiLinks, not just the number but the role of the KindiLinks in terms of providing more services. I would like to think that if we are not successful whoever takes over will expand the role of those KindiLinks because I would hate to think that they would become a political tool and be just abandoned. In addition to that, we have instigated the reform unit within Aboriginal Affairs, which captures education as well. Hon Helen Morton was a key component of that at the establishment of that reform unit and that deals specifically with early intervention with Aboriginal students. I will be releasing the education framework of the reform unit very shortly. Again, we have been very proactive in terms of making sure that we start very early in the education of an Aboriginal child. I point out that in WA the mean scores for Aboriginal students have increased by more than 10 scale points between 2008 and 2015 in 12 out of the 16 assessments. There has been a significant improvement.

Hon SUE ELLERY: I agree that it has improved over time—there is no question about that—but it goes a little bit like that.

Hon PETER COLLIER: Sporadic.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Are you able to give us data for Indigenous students for the NAPLAN summary of data that you do provide in the annual report?

Mr Dodson: In the annual report there is a reference to a department report for public schools' NAPLAN data and there is a link in the report to that particular report.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Are you telling me to look at the website?

Mr Dodson: That report is available online. It is obviously quite substantial. The Aboriginal, non-Aboriginal data in terms of the times series is available in the report over 10, 12 or 20 pages and does provide both mean scores over time since 2008 and the percentage at or above the national minimum standard for those sorts of categories plus males, females et cetera.

Hon SUE ELLERY: For the purposes of today, if you have a hardcopy, are you able to table that unless it has got secret squirrel stuff?

Mr Dodson: There is a lot of writing on this!

Hon SUE ELLERY: Okay. I wonder if we can get a hard copy, because there is an issue with referring Parliament to look at websites because stuff on websites can change, in terms of a permanent bit of information provided to the committee.

[*Supplementary Information No D11.*]

Ms O'Neill: This report is not going to change. It is on the web. We will download, print it off and give it to you if that is what you want.

The CHAIR: Before we move onto another subject, Hon Helen Morton has a question on this particular matter.

Hon HELEN MORTON: Because of an interest in this area of work and my reference in where I have looked at it a bit more of this in detail was in Warburton and some of those places. Where the kids go to preschool as in kindy and they are learning preschool activities using their own language and their mothers are being helped to interpret it, the kids then go to school and my understanding is that they go to school from primary school onwards then in English, and yet this is not their language. They do not speak English at home and they have been going to preschool using a combination of English and other language. Are these schools where these kids are coming to like that able to access the additional resources of a non-English speaking school?

Ms O'Neill: We run preschools so when they are in the system, say if you are turning four—unless you are in a KindiLink and you are turning three—you are already in our school system and it is true to say that we utilise Australian standard English as the main. Well, we are teaching students Australian standard English and for some of those young children who come here, you are quite right, they come with another language. There is work done, depending on whether we have language speakers who will come into the school to help those students learn in what we call two ways. But our chief concern and most of the community people that we talk to say they want their children to learn English when they go to school, but there is in the early years for some students that work because they are learning it as a second language. A lot of our remote schools teach English and they are supported to do it—we have some services that assist them in this way—teaching Aboriginal students like you would be teaching other students English as second language, if you like, and they use those sorts of methodologies. Built into their funding base is additional funding for Aboriginality so some of those schools may choose to have local people for interpreters. They have AIEOs—Aboriginal and Islander education officers—who are not always from that language background, but very often, and they will provide some of that interpreting service if that is required. There is some support available, perhaps not in every place to the depth that we would want it to be.

Hon SUE ELLERY: I refer to the increase in GROH rent for Department of Education staff. The Department of Housing has published figures that say that the policy from their point of view will generate savings over three financial years of \$28 million. I wonder if you are able to provide me with information from the Department of Education's point of view what the level of difference will be over the three-year period. I am trying to figure out how much of that \$28 million is coming from the Department of Education staff.

Mr Peckitt: As part of the 2016–17 budget, there was an adjustment of \$14.9 million over four years, which reflected the change in the tenant rent setting framework, which was basically the point that you are making in terms of changing from the \$10 to \$30 per rate rise and also the 20 per cent discount to the Perth median rent. That was one adjustment that was made to the department's budget. It was a further adjustment made in terms of the actual cost of GROH, so that is obviously not passed on to the staff; that is simply the department pays less to GROH and therefore we need less. The number we had in the budget papers was the \$14.9 million over the four years but we work with GROH obviously through the budget process to adjust the numbers as required.

Hon SUE ELLERY: I am advised of a case recently it appears on face value that the department seems to be subsidising the rent of a GROH house at a huge cost. This is in—where is it?—I am told, a small mid west town. That is as good as I can get. A teacher pays \$582 per fortnight in that town's case. The Department of Education provides \$1 450 per fortnight to the Department of Housing, thus subsidising that property by approximately \$868 per fortnight. Apparently, I am told,

that other houses of a similar quality nearby are on the private rental market for around \$200 a fortnight. There appears to be a discrepancy and it appears that the department is paying way above what it should be. Now, I appreciate that I have not given the address of the house or anything like that, but that is what has been given to me. Are you aware of any special reason why something like that might occur?

Hon PETER COLLIER: A lot of that is speculative. I am not quite sure how to respond to that. Can you provide the details?

Hon SUE ELLERY: I have given what I have been sent.

[2.50 pm]

Hon PETER COLLIER: But we do not know the town.

Hon SUE ELLERY: I can try to find out from them. They probably do not want to identify themselves. I will see if I can find the town.

Ms O'Neill: Without the detail, it is hard for us to make —

Hon PETER COLLIER: We do not want to put anyone in manure; we just would not mind knowing what town it is from.

Hon SUE ELLERY: I will see if I can find out.

Ms O'Neill: We are happy for it to be de-identified but unless we know what we are talking about, then we cannot answer the question.

The CHAIR: We do not have that on notice at this point until you provide the detail.

Hon SUE ELLERY: No worries, thank you. I want to ask about child and parent centres, which have been referred to already. For some of them the contracts should be up for renewal, so which of those contracts are up for renewal and what is the time line? What is the process for either extending the contract or going out to tender again et cetera, and has any evaluation been undertaken of the centres that are coming to the end of that first contract life?

Hon PETER COLLIER: I will ask the director general to comment, but, yes, there are some that are up for renewal at the moment.

Ms O'Neill: If I start with the last part about the evaluation, we are undertaking an evaluation that was awarded to Shelby Consulting. It commenced this year and we will get the final draft report in the first half of next year—that is in relation to the evaluation that you talked about. In terms of the ongoing non-government or not-for-profit, I understand that we are going out for tender for those as we speak, or it might have already happened. I do not have the time line on that available for you.

Hon SUE ELLERY: So it is possible then that the provider will change at a particular —

Ms O'Neill: It is an open tender, as far as I understand it.

Hon SUE ELLERY: I appreciate that a formal evaluation is going on and the general feedback is that it is working well. Do you have a point of view about the inconsistency that happens when you swap between organisations and families have to establish relationships with new people et cetera?

Ms O'Neill: It is a possibility, as it is with any contract, that you have some change. But the centres have plans in place and outcomes that they are expected to achieve. There is a committee including local area principals, other agency people and community people. Part of the requirement of a CPC is to have such a governance arrangement, but that is not necessarily a bad thing. New contractors coming in can bring in new ideas. If there were to be new people—I am not suggesting one way or another that process is the process but it has the potential to bring with it new networks, new services, improvements, better outcomes and better efficiency. I do not think that that is necessarily going to be detrimental, but in terms of our monitoring that is something that we would want and intend to have in place so that there is no diminution for individuals or that anyone is disadvantaged

particularly as a result of that change. We are required to go to open tender. I think it is appropriate that we do to make sure that we get the best outcome for the money we are going to spend.

Hon SUE ELLERY: I just make the comment that in the human services area it is sometimes encouraged to take a more flexible approach because a lot of the successful service delivery is based on relationships. When vulnerable people have to tell their story again to a new set of people and establish new relationships you can get a drop in service delivery just as a result of that.

Ms O'Neill: In terms of any assessment of tenders, any new people would have to demonstrate how they will achieve those outcomes. If a provider has been very successful in doing so, you could imagine that they would be able to put a very strong case. In fact, they are in a good position to provide the evidence. At the end of the day, I certainly agree with the idea of the continuity and of the service to individual families who are amongst our most vulnerable. I think that is a really important point to make. But the onus will be on the assessments of those tenders that people have to bring something better to the table, I suppose, than the existing providers if they put their hand up. That is the process to be undertaken and the rigour of the process will be assured I am sure.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Are you able to tell us which contracts are up for renewal and the time line? Some of them might be staggered—I do not know.

Ms O'Neill: The first group that were announced were all put out to tender in the first round. That first group of CPCs, the 16 I think, will be put out to tender, but in terms of the actual dates —

Hon SUE ELLERY: Sorry to interrupt you. Can I ask you for a list?

Ms O'Neill: We would need to take that on notice.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Are you able to tell me in that same information if there is any staggering in the timetable?

Ms O'Neill: My understanding is that they are all done as a job lot, but we will just deal with it through the question.

[Supplementary Information No D12.]

Hon SUE ELLERY: Thank you very much. Are you able to tell me which of any centres offer regularly scheduled GP services?

Ms O'Neill: That is not a level of detail we would have with us today.

[Supplementary Information No D13.]

Hon SUE ELLERY: Thank you very much. I want to ask about —

The CHAIR: Just while you are gathering your thoughts there, member, we have been given a document. I just want to clarify if that is a document to be tabled or is it an answer to one of the questions that we asked? I just want to give it a status. It is the education region's summary —

Ms O'Neill: You asked us if we would table that now.

The CHAIR: So it is a tabled document.

Hon SUE ELLERY: In respect of the asset investment program, I have some questions about specific tools and sites. First, in respect of secondary schools at the new Lakeland, not the old Lakeland—it is very confusing—Hammond Park and Baldivis Secondary, are you able to give us the time line for what stage these projects are at; and then, in the same general region, the time line for the primary schools at Wandi and Wellard South West—I think it is called?

Mr Fischer: The new Lakeland high school at Mandurah opens in 2019. That is stage 1 and includes the facilities for the ed support—high needs. Hammond Park opens in 2020. You asked about south Baldivis I think —

Hon SUE ELLERY: Baldivis secondary, I think it is called.

Mr Fischer: South Baldivis is due in 2019.

Hon SUE ELLERY: The two primary schools I asked about were Wandi and one in Wellard.

Mr Fischer: Wandi and Wellard will open in 2018. We are planning to open an early childhood facility on the Wandi site in 2017.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Is the Wellard one separate? Is there something in Wellard?

Mr Fischer: Yes, it is a separate school site to open in 2018.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Is somebody able to give me some information about Carnarvon?

Hon PETER COLLIER: Yes, what would you like to know? They are getting a magnificent, new, state-of-the-art school—K through 12.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Where are we up to now?

Hon PETER COLLIER: Sorry, I do not mean to be flippant, but you are familiar with the situation. The current school is a dive and they need it to change, the secondary in particular. We have done the first stage, which is the primary stage, and the additional \$17 million was allocated in this year's budget for the commencement of the next stage. Ultimately it will be finished and they will all be on the one site with the trade training centre. I will get Mr Fischer to talk about the specifics but that is pretty much it.

Mr Fischer: The primary school is co-located on one site. Additional money has been allocated to complete the primary; that is, rebuilding some of the existing blocks and to build the admin for the new site. The trade training centre has also been located on the new site and planning is underway to document both the completion of the primary works and the relocation of the secondary. The architect has been appointed and the documentation is underway at the moment.

[3.00 pm]

Hon SUE ELLERY: Thank you. If I can ask about Southern River, where you were today, I saw a lovely photo of yourself with the local member in front of a sign that declared that that was to be the site of a new school.

Hon PETER COLLIER: I did not take that today, I do not think.

Hon SUE ELLERY: No, you did not. This was in Peter Abetz's newsletter about a month ago.

Hon PETER COLLIER: Okay. I was down that way today.

Hon SUE ELLERY: I know you were.

Hon PETER COLLIER: Two beautiful schools.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Indeed. I am asking about what decisions have been made about new school sites in those suburbs—Canning Vale, Southern River, Huntingdale and Gosnells. What decisions have been made? What plans are there? The developers have got views about where the schools should be, but they do not build the schools.

Mr Fischer: We have only announced new primary schools out to 2018. In terms of that Southern River area, there are a number of sites available in Southern River, which is known as precinct 2. That is probably the site where the photo was taken, I think, with the other member. That is obviously being considered. We are still waiting to get full possession and develop that site.

Hon SUE ELLERY: So who owns it right now—the developer?

Mr Fischer: The developer. We do not anticipate that we will own that site until September 2017. There are other sites in that area or precinct, but they are also waiting on developers' ability to develop. There is what is known as Southern River precinct 3. We have identified a primary school site there, but we do not own that. In the Canning Vale area, there is a future site at

West Huntingdale, but I do not think we own that either. Those are probably the three key sites in that area.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Who owns the West Huntingdale site?

Mr Fischer: I think that is the developer still.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Yes. All right. Thank you.

The CHAIR: Member, noting the time, we might have to call it in. On behalf of the committee, I thank you for your attendance today. The committee will forward the transcript of evidence, which highlights the questions taken on notice, together with any additional questions in writing, after Monday, 7 November 2016. Responses to these questions will be requested within 10 working days of receipt of the questions. Should you be unable to meet this due date, please advise the committee in writing as soon as possible beforehand. The advice is to include specific reasons as to why the due date cannot be met. If members have any unasked questions, I ask them to submit these to the committee clerk at the close of the hearing. Once again, I thank you for your attendance today. I remind members that the deadline for submitting additional questions is 12.00 pm—midday—on Monday, 7 November 2016, as stated in para 8.2 of the procedure policy. Thank you.

Hearing concluded at 3.03 pm
