

ASYLUM SEEKERS — SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

819. Hon SALLY TALBOT to the Minister for Education:

I refer to recent calls to let asylum seeker children go to public schools in WA.

- (1) Is the minister aware that staff at Leonora District High School count last year's attendance of teenage asylum seekers as one of the best things that ever happened to the school?
- (2) How many asylum seeker children are currently attending school in WA?
- (3) How many asylum seeker children are not attending school in WA?
- (4) What provision is the government making for the education of these children?

Hon PETER COLLIER replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of this question.

- (1) I note the comment by the honourable member that some staff at Leonora District High School consider the enrolments of teenage asylum seekers to be a highlight at the school, and I do not dispute that.
- (2) None.
- (3) The state government does not have information on the number of children of asylum seekers not attending public schools in Western Australia.
- (4) The state government will make every effort to accommodate these children and their special educational needs where practical, but would expect the commonwealth government to meet the costs. Changes at the federal level have caused delays in finalising arrangements between the state government and the Department of Immigration and Border Protection on an appropriate funding arrangement. The state government remains supportive of children of asylum seekers participating in schooling, and will continue to progress the arrangements when the Department of Immigration and Border Protection is in a position to recommence discussions.