DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION — SWIMMING LESSONS

98.   Hon COLIN de GRUSSA to the Minister for Education and Training:

I refer to swimming lessons facilitated by the Department of Education across Western Australia.

(1)   What criteria are currently used to assess whether swimming lessons should be reduced or cancelled, and have those criteria changed since 2017?

(2)   Since 2017, where have swimming lessons been reduced or cancelled, either by altered criteria or the unavailability of swim instructors?

(3)   In the event that swim instructors are required to travel, what form of travel allowance are they eligible to claim?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

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

(1)   The criteria used are enrolments and instructor availability. The criteria have been the same since about the early 1990s.

(2)   Historically, a small number of scheduled programs—approximately 15 each year—have not proceeded because there were no available instructors. Due to the casual employment status of swimming staff, many instructors accept appointments, but later withdraw from them at short notice due to securing other, ongoing employment.

The Department of Education is unable to provide the specific detail in the time available. I undertake to provide this to the honourable member on 10 March 2020.

(3)   Swimming instructors are employed on short-term contracts as casual employees through the Teachers (Public Sector Primary and Secondary Education) Award 1993. This award does not make provision for the payment of travel allowances for casual employees. Due to the challenges presented for service delivery, in some regional and remote locations, the department established an above-award remuneration package for swimming staff in 2019. This supported the deployment of instructors from the metropolitan area to remote and/or regional areas where there were insufficient instructors.