

HEDLAND SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL — STUDENT AND TEACHER SAFETY

494. Hon JACQUI BOYDELL to the Minister for Education and Training:

I refer to comments the minister made on 11 July that she would instruct the Department of Education to take steps to prevent further violence at Hedland Senior High School.

- (1) Has the minister visited Hedland Senior High School since becoming Minister for Education and Training?
- (2) What steps has she instructed the Department of Education take to ensure the safety of students and teachers?
- (3) What information has the deputy director general of the Department of Education provided since returning from visiting the school in the first week of term?
- (4) What are the “range of other measures” put in place that the minister refers to?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

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

- (1) No.
- (2) Following a number of complaints about the unacceptable behaviour of a small group of students, I asked the Department of Education to identify the key issues, proactively intervene and support the school, and monitor the situation.
- (3) I have been advised of additional resources that have or will be provided to the school to address three areas. These are: improved communication and partnership; managing students with complex learning, social and behavioural needs; and managing change in a way that builds engagement and commitment, and sustains improvement.

The acting deputy director general of public schools will visit Hedland Senior High School in the week commencing Monday, 28 August 2017. So he was there in the first week of term and he is going back.

- (4) The range of measures include the following steps. There will be an additional full-time deputy principal with a student services background in schools that have a similar student profile. The school now has four level 4 deputy principals. Community relationship officers from South Hedland police will work directly with students. There will be one additional full-time equivalent level 3 program coordinator in the school’s internal behaviour centre working directly with students who need extra support. Four education assistant FTEs have been employed and placed in mainstream classes and two education assistants have been placed in the alternative programs. Two additional FTE education assistants have been employed in the lower school engagement program. Two FTE level 3 public service student support workers have been employed. One FTE level 3 media and marketing officer has been employed to improve communications with parents and the community. An additional FTE level 3 program coordinator—a school student services manager—has been employed. The school has purchased additional time for the school chaplain and a specialist mentor to work with students and parents in conflict. There will be additional support from PeopleSense Australia, which provides employee assistance programs to help staff to access counsellors not based in the community. There will also be additional support from the lead school psychologist, who is working with staff, and Hedland Senior High School’s psychologist to develop stronger processes for managing student behaviour. The department has provided additional funding for a full-time lead school psychologist to be appointed to Hedland Senior High School for 12 months. The appointment will be established as soon as a suitable staff member can be identified. The focus for the work of the lead school psychologist will be on Hedland Senior High School, with support available to other public schools in the town on an as-needs basis. There will also be training for senior staff in critical incident management. The principal of the School of Special Educational Needs: Behaviour and Engagement has visited Hedland Senior High School and continues to provide support and advice for students with complex behaviours.

I can advise the member that I am concerned about the level of violence, particularly against staff and also at the school generally. I have asked the department to manage this situation tightly and provide all resources that the school identifies it needs to deal with this issue. I am also being kept regularly updated on the state of play at Hedland Senior High School.