

QUALITY SCHOOLS REFORM — BILATERAL AGREEMENT

1327. Hon DONNA FARAGHER to the Minister for Education and Training:

I refer to the minister's answer to question without notice 1304 asked yesterday regarding the bilateral agreement signed this week between WA and the commonwealth on quality schools reform.

- (1) Can the minister confirm that under the agreement, the commonwealth's funding contribution has increased from 15.37 per cent this year to 20 per cent in 2023, and the state's funding contribution has reduced from 84.43 per cent this year to 75 per cent in 2023?
- (2) Can the minister confirm that by 2022, the state's funding contribution will be at the minimum level of 75 per cent?
- (3) Can the minister confirm that by 2022, under the new arrangements, public schools will be funded to 95 per cent of the schooling resource standard?
- (4) If yes to (1), (2) or (3), why is the state reducing its funding contribution by nearly 10 per cent between 2018 and 2023 and not maintaining a funding contribution that is higher than the minimum, as has been the case in previous years?
- (5) As a result of the state's funding reduction, can the minister confirm whether schools will be better off in real terms over the life of the agreement?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

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

- (1)–(3) The bilateral agreement sets out the minimum funding contributions from both the commonwealth and state governments over the life of the agreement. The minimum funding contributions are expressed as a percentage of the schooling resource standard—75 per cent for the government sector and 25 per cent for the non-government sector. The full bilateral agreement, including funding contributions, is publicly available.
- (4) The agreement negotiated by the state reflects Western Australia receiving a fairer share of funding from the commonwealth that, by the end of the agreement, will no longer penalise the state for historically funding schools at a higher rate than any other state. The approach taken in Western Australia will also bring the state into alignment with the contribution provided by other states. A key factor in the state's funding share of the schooling resource standard declining over the life of the agreement relates to the schooling resource standard being indexed by the commonwealth at a higher rate—at least three per cent a year—compared with state-based cost growth of around one per cent.
- (5) Over the life of the agreement, public schools in Western Australia will receive funding increases. The agreement ensures that about \$200 million of additional funding flows into public education over the life of the agreement. The agreement positions WA to retain its status as the best-funded state education system.