

DISABILITY SERVICES — TRAINING

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

I refer to the impending skills shortage in the disability sector based on the transition to the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

- (1) Will the minister waive TAFE fees for disability service courses to ensure skills shortages can be filled?
- (2) Will the minister incentivise regional training to ensure regional people have the opportunity to fill vacancies in their communities?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

I thank the member for this question. This is a really good question. I am glad she gave me the opportunity to talk to the house about what we have been doing.

- (1)–(2) Two pieces of work have been undertaken. First, the Minister for Disability Services and I hosted a round table with representatives of the disability sector, including disability service providers, people with disabilities and the training sector, to identify and see whether we could map out a plan to tackle what is a looming issue. We will certainly need more skilled people. Work is continuing between our respective agencies and the relevant stakeholders arising out of that round table. That was probably two months ago. In addition, the State Training Board led a piece of work specifically on identifying mapping out skill requirements in the personal care service, disability service, aged care and I think health as well. I am waiting for that report; I expect to get it by the end of June. I am assuming that that piece of work will give me some recommendations about how to go forward.

I cannot give a commitment—the member would appreciate this—with respect to lifting TAFE fees. I cannot give her a commitment with respect to what particular incentive arrangements might be put in place to take account of workforce needs for people with disability in regional areas. There is not a shadow of a doubt that if it will be difficult in metropolitan Perth to meet the workforce needs, it will be even more difficult in regional Western Australia. That is at front of mind for both those pieces of work in how we go forward. I am sure that both my colleague the Minister for Disability Services and I will have more to say about this in the future.