

MOSMAN PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL

Grievance

DR D.J. HONEY (Cottesloe) [9.33 am]: My grievance is to the minister representing the Minister for Education and Training. I thank the minister very much for taking my grievance. My grievance is about substandard housing for students at the co-located Mosman Park Primary School and the Mosman Park School for Deaf Children, which is located in Victoria Street, Mosman Park. Both these local state schools are highly valued and have undergone significant change over the past decade. I make it very clear in this grievance that I hold the staff at both schools in absolutely the highest regard. I am very impressed by their achievements and the resilience that they have shown given the conditions that they have to teach in.

The original schools date from when the school was opened in 1906. The most recent buildings that have been added are the undercover area, which was installed 20 years ago, and a newer library and early education building, which were part of the 2010 commonwealth Building the Education Revolution program. The co-located schools are housed on an extremely compact site of only about 1.57 hectares. That is contrary to the Department of Education's recommendation that schools should be located on at least a four-hectare site if they do not have an adjoining government oval. There is an oval adjacent to the site, but the school has only part access to it because another school in the area has the majority of access to that park. I think primarily because of the esteem in which the staff and particularly the heads of both schools are held, there has been a massive increase in enrolment at the school in the last 10 years, which has gone from about 200 to 400 students. The deaf school caters for 22 profoundly deaf students. These students have no hearing at all and, in fact, need one-on-one teaching staff who primarily teach them Auslan and interpret lessons. These students participate in other school lessons where they are able to. Student accommodation is well and truly above full capacity despite the installation of six demountables on the site. In fact, the local council is so concerned about congestion on the site that it has asked that the school not install any more.

Classes are being run with student numbers greater than the department's recommended number and there is just not enough space. I might say that because this school is located in the southern part of Mosman Park, it has a very high number of disadvantaged students and an unusually high number of Aboriginal students. Some six per cent of students are Aboriginal. A number of those students are also profoundly deaf so there is a compounded disadvantage for those students. The primary school is congested. It has not been able to participate in the excellent new program to introduce science labs simply because the school does not have enough space. The staff of the school for deaf children are very frustrated that they cannot offer the full range of programs that they would like to because they do not have sufficient space for profoundly deaf students.

The administration areas are like something out of a police movie set in the Bronx in the 1960s. It is enormously congested. Staff have to carry out meetings with parents in the staff room while other staff members are present. It is really highly congested. Staff toilets are in extremely short supply. There is only one female and one disabled toilet available for 61 female staff members. That is well below the minimum standard of four toilets for a staff grouping of that number. I might say that I have had a chance to speak with the minister and she has indicated that some work may be going ahead to deal with the toilet issue. Staff parking is extremely limited. Only 19 bays are available for a staff that is considerably greater than that number. Also, visitor parking bays are very inadequate.

When I visited the school in July I observed one particular example. There was a new student to the school, a darling little six-year-old, profoundly deaf boy. He had no idea what was going on around him. He obviously had profound issues and he was the sort of kid you would just want to cuddle up and protect from the world. This little boy was having to do his lesson with his teacher on the verandah in the middle of winter simply because there was no other space for the teacher to have one-on-one time with the child. It was upsetting to see. Again, I admire the resilience of the staff to cope with that environment. It was clear that both the student and teacher were distressed and it was difficult for the child to receive proper tuition in that area.

There is space in the area. There are a number of council ovals and facilities in the area, but I might also say, importantly, that the Western Knights Soccer Club is located there. I am keen to reinforce that any solution to the issues at the school should take into account the Western Knights Soccer Club. It has over 200 junior players and 300 senior players and the only nearby soccer fields are located in Nedlands or Fremantle. It is a very important facility that caters for a wide range of local residents and residents from other parts of Perth, and we hope that it will not be impacted by this.

I am really aware this issue is not of the government's making. In fact, members would be aware that the previous Premier was the member for this area. I can say that the 17 other schools in my electorate are outstanding, but that for some reason this school has fallen between the cracks. I am very grateful that Minister Ellery set aside time so I could discuss this issue with her. I understand that the acting director general of the Department of Education visited the school either yesterday or the day before to talk to the principal, maybe because the issue had been

raised. However, much more work needs to be done on this issue in the short and long term. I will continue to work with Minister Ellery and the local council.

One of the reasons for raising this issue is that I am certain Minister Ellery will come to the Minister for Tourism with some solutions. I am asking that the minister, the Treasurer, the Premier and their colleagues in the cabinet give this matter very serious consideration. I do not think any of them would accept the standards at this school and I am definitely asking for their support.

MR P. PAPALIA (Warnbro — Minister for Tourism) [9.39 am]: I thank the member for Cottesloe for his grievance and for his ongoing support of schools in his electorate. He is obviously a passionate advocate for not just this school, but all the schools that he represents. I am responding today on behalf of the Minister for Education and Training. In pursuing this response, I will stick pretty rigidly to the briefing I have been given to make sure that the member gets the information directly from the minister.

I understand that the member met with the minister this week to discuss the accommodation issues at Mosman Park Primary School and Mosman Park School for Deaf Children and early notice of this grievance is appreciated by the minister. She visited the school in February this year for a tour of the facilities and a discussion with the principals, parents and citizens association and school board representatives. The previous member for Cottesloe raised accommodation issues at Mosman Park school with Minister Ellery before he left Parliament. Of course, as the member observed, he had the capacity to address this himself but chose not to.

The member said that Mosman Park Primary School is located on a 1.57-hectare site; the briefing note I have says that it is 1.8 hectares. Nevertheless, it is not a big space. The school is co-located with Mosman Park School for Deaf Children. In semester 1 of 2018, Mosman Park Primary School had an enrolment of 410 students, with capacity for 425 students. Mosman Park School for Deaf Children had 19 students as at 31 January 2018. It has three allocated classrooms. The school for deaf children relocated from Cottesloe to the Mosman Park Primary School site because the facility in which it was housed at Cottesloe was not fit for purpose and was in poor condition. There was willingness and room at Mosman Park Primary School at the time to enable the move, which met the expectations of families and staff who wanted children to learn in a mainstream school environment. Research shows that the academic, social and emotional behaviour of deaf and hard-of-hearing children improves significantly in a regular classroom and begins to follow the patterns of development of hearing children.

Mosman Park Primary School is reaching its accommodation capacity. Based on current projections and enrolment practices, the school is expected to exceed its current accommodation capacity by 2019. The placement of an additional transportable classroom on site will assist in the short term to manage enrolments. The department has met with the principals of the two schools to discuss medium and longer-term options for managing enrolment growth. The primary school does not have a local intake area. The gazettal of a local intake area is a critical planning element when enrolments grow to ensure that there is an equitable distribution of students across neighbouring schools. The introduction of a local intake area for Mosman Park Primary School is being investigated. The department has been working with the Town of Mosman Park to jointly plan for optimum use of the precinct around Mosman Park Primary School and to explore opportunities for the school to expand. This work is continuing, as the member indicated.

There are over 800 schools in Western Australia, from the brand-new to those over 100 years old. Funding for maintenance and upgrades is limited and the department prioritises funding based on a school's need. The department identifies a school's need for maintenance and upgrades through the building condition assessment report. The BCA report provides a strategic overview of building maintenance needs. A BCA was recently undertaken on the Mosman Park Primary School site. Overall, the condition of the permanent buildings was rated as fair and the visible defects that were identified across the site were estimated to cost around \$200 000 to repair. A significant proportion of the defects related to plaster glass ceilings. These will be remediated as part of the 2018–19 plaster glass remediation program. In 2017–18, \$138 136 was spent on fixing breakdowns and routine maintenance. So far this year in 2018–19, \$24 263 has been spent on maintenance.

The school community has raised concerns about the condition of the administration area, and student and staff toilets, and the lack of staff, parent and Kiss 'n' Ride parking. An audit of the administration area, staff and student toilets, and car parking has been undertaken by the department. An amount of \$270 000 for a toilet upgrade was allocated to the school under the 2017–18 toilet refreshment program. The student's toilets have been refurbished and additional female staff toilets are being constructed, according to the minister's brief, which will hopefully address the very dire problem that the member indicated. Funding to upgrade the administration area will be considered as future capital works programs are formed. A traffic management study for the site has been undertaken by an independent consultant. The report has outlined measures to ease traffic congestion, including the construction of additional parking, staggering start and finish times, encouraging staff to use other nearby public parking and the formalisation of a Kiss 'n' Ride facility on Victoria Street. These options will be discussed with the school principals.

This government has committed \$1.2 billion over four years for new schools and to improve older schools. With over 800 schools, there is great demand and need must be balanced with other competing priorities across government and the amount of resources available. It is noted that the age of the school is not the measure of the quality of the school. This is better seen in the dedication of teachers, the involvement of the community and the performance of the students.

I thank the member for his grievance and hope that the information will provide some reassurance to the communities of these two schools. I also commend the member for Cottesloe for his engagement with the Minister for Education and Training. As he has witnessed, she is a very good minister. She responds to requests regardless of whom they come from and her priority is always the best outcomes for students and families across the state. I think the member would have garnered some reassurance that she is engaged on this matter and she will do her best to respond and support schools as best she can.