

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION — STAFF — MENTAL STRESS CLAIMS

**1081. Hon JACQUI BOYDELL to the Minister for Education and Training:**

I refer to an article in the *Kalgoorlie Miner* that indicates a 40 per cent spike in mental stress claims from public servants under this government, and the Department of Education's plan to train principals to undertake psychological assessments.

- (1) What has caused the spike in mental stress claims?
- (2) Does the minister concede that her government's plan to axe 3 000 public servants is putting pressure on public servants, driving up mental stress claims?
- (3) What funding resources has the minister allocated to ensure that the education department's initiative will not add stress to the staff carrying out the assessments?

**Hon SUE ELLERY replied:**

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

- (1)–(2) I am unable to comment on the figures referred to, being for the whole of government. However, I can inform the member that there has been no spike in mental stress claims at the Department of Education. In fact, there has been a general decline since 2008–09, and claims have remained fairly stable since 2015–16. Put in the context of a workforce of an approximately 47 000 headcount, the number of claims is relatively low. The number of mental stress claims are reported in the department's annual reports from 2008–09 to 2017–18.

The rest of the answer to (1)–(2) is in tabular form, so I seek leave to have that bit incorporated into *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The following material was incorporated —

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Year	Number of mental stress claims
2017–18	114
2016–17	118
2015–16	117
2014–15	103
2013–14	111
2012–13	128
2011–12	135
2010–11	136
2009–10	126
2008–09	134

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- (3) No additional resources were required in the development of the training package referred to in the article, which was introduced in September 2018. The package is easily accessible and straightforward, being a 30-minute online package created to assist staff to carry out assessments required when there is an identified psychological hazard in the workplace. All staff with management responsibilities who may be required to undertake psychological investigations or carry out risk assessments are required by WorkSafe to undertake this training. This includes principals, deputy principals, managers of corporate services and heads of learning areas.