

GLENGARRY PRIMARY SCHOOL — ADMINISTRATION BLOCK — UPGRADE

Grievance

MR A. KRSTICEVIC (Carine) [9.16 am]: My grievance today is directed to the minister representing the Minister for Education and Training. I am extremely concerned that the Glengarry Primary School was not included in the government's list of Perth primary school upgrades for 2017–18. This school is in desperate need of an upgrade to its administration block.

This issue was first raised in 2011, and a feasibility study was done in term 3 of 2013 that recognised the need for action to address issues that the school was experiencing. There were a number of visits by architects and central office personnel, but no commitment has ever been made for funding. However, Glengarry is on file for consideration. As recently as 28 April 2017, I wrote to the Minister for Education and Training to request that Glengarry Primary School be considered for an urgent allocation of funds. On 28 May 2017, I received a response from the minister stating that the Department of Education acknowledges the requirement to upgrade the administration facilities at the school. The department considers the project to be medium to high priority for funding and, as such, I was told that Glengarry Primary School would receive every consideration, along with other priorities across the state, when the next capital works budget was completed. The minister also stated that an officer from the department would make contact with the principal early in the new financial year to advise on whether Glengarry Primary School had been successful in securing funding. This has not happened and I would like to ask: why not?

The principal had previously written to the Department of Education, expressing his hope that consideration would be successful for an administration upgrade in the forthcoming planning for the new financial year, as school numbers are currently over 400, with an administration area not capable of servicing the students, community or staff. As the school needs to revert to a two deputy principal model as of 2018, there is an urgent need to house the additional member of the administration team. The only option would be for the principal to move to a small meeting room and allow the two deputy principals to access his current office. Again, this is not a practical long-term solution. Glengarry Primary School's administration block is severely inadequate for dealing with its increased enrolment numbers. In addition, the school is facing additional pressure from an increase in the number of students with special needs. It has to accommodate this changing demographic, which requires related supports that also add to the existing deficiencies in the administration area. I am very concerned about the ability of Glengarry Primary School to continue to deliver the high standard of administrative excellence that it has always provided to its students and parents.

This school is badly in need of an upgrade to its administration block. The area was designed in an era, almost 40 years ago, when the requirements of schools were significantly less than those of today. When this issue was first raised with the Department of Education early in 2011, the school was struggling to cope with families who were enrolling just over 250 students. Since that time, Glengarry Primary School has expanded to over 400 students. As the minister can imagine, that has resulted in a significant increase in the number of staff required at the school and increased congestion in the administration area.

Specifically, the concerns relate to the following. The first is the reception area, which is completely dysfunctional and becomes crowded when more than one or two people are waiting. Given that it is the only access point to the administration area, staff must squeeze past waiting parents and community members are forced to wait outside in all weather conditions prior to consultation. The second issue is that the needs of the manager corporate services office have expanded. A short-term solution of converting a storeroom into an office was implemented. This has become totally inadequate given the poor design, the lack of space, the absence of an area for consultation, minimal airflow and concerns about privacy and confidentiality. The short-term solution was overcome with another short-term plan to move the manager corporate services into the principal's office.

The third issue is the interview room. The lack of planning and design of the entire area means that the only area for case conferences, meetings and confidential discussions is a converted sickbay. This area also doubles as a storeroom. It is also used by the school psychologist and nurse for confidential phone calls and meetings. Unfortunately, the school's public address system is also located in this area, which means that meetings can be interrupted during whole-school announcements.

The fourth issue is the sick bay area, which has been completely compromised. To ensure adequate supervision, students with a medical condition are placed on beanbags in a converted storeroom that was previously the office of the manager corporate services. This area also doubles as the office for the school chaplain and the school curriculum coordinators. The deputy principal's office was previously a small meeting room and is far too small for normal office space. This area does not permit members of staff or community members to converse comfortably.

The fifth issue is the principal's office. As a result of the dysfunctional reception area and inadequate space for the manager corporate services, the deputy principal's office has become the principal's office. This solution is a good temporary fix, given that the school has only one deputy principal. The increased size of the school dictates that an additional deputy principal is required; however, this cannot take place while the administration area remains in its present state.

The sixth issue is the design of the school officer area, which has resulted in constant concerns about confidentiality. The work space is totally inadequate and constantly requires the school officer to seek alternative areas for certain tasks and, as a result, she often leaves the reception area unattended.

The seventh issue is staff facilities. An increased enrolment and subsequent increase in staffing now stretches the school's ability to meet the basic needs of staff. The school has been informed by the facilities team that the ratio of parking bays is below requirements and that levels of other aspects, including toilets, do not match expected standards.

Although the school's administration upgrade is apparently ranked extremely high, the biggest concern is the funding approval delay and no immediate prospect for improvement. As the minister can see, Glengarry Primary School is in desperate need of an administration area upgrade. I am very supportive of the principal's request for an upgrade of this school. I urge the Minister for Education and Training to reconsider Glengarry Primary School's urgent needs and ensure that this school is granted the necessary funding immediately. I note in budget paper No 2 on page 169 under "Other School Facilities" a provision of \$5.6 million for administration upgrades and a range of other things at schools. I hope some of that money will be used on Glengarry Primary School because it is in urgent need. There is a great demand at that school and it would be appropriate for the Minister for Education and Training to change her mind and put some money towards that particular upgrade. I thank the house for its attention.

MR P. PAPALIA (Warnbro — Minister for Tourism) [9.23 am]: I thank the member for Carine for his grievance and for his ongoing support of schools in his electorate. As the member said, I am responding today on behalf of the Minister for Education and Training.

In 2015, the principal of Glengarry Primary School requested that consideration be given to upgrade the school's administration area. I understand that the member for Carine referred to the issue first being raised in 2011. My advice is that the formal process commenced in 2015. A feasibility study was undertaken in December 2015 and three options were proposed: firstly, an alteration and addition to the existing building at a cost of \$1.15 million; secondly, a new administration building based on a similar primary school at a cost of \$1.35 million; and thirdly, a new administration building based on a standard pattern primary school built over the existing car park estimated to cost \$1.435 million.

In 2015–16, the Department of Education undertook administration upgrades at four primary schools and a further six upgrades were undertaken in 2016–17. The money for those upgrades came from the allocation to which the member referred in his last comment. An audit of facilities including administration areas at pre-1988 primary schools was undertaken during 2016 and this identified those facilities that were below the department's primary school brief benchmarks. Administration upgrade projects are prioritised based on the size of existing facilities compared with the standard primary school brief requirements and are expressed as a percentage. Schools with administration areas below 50 per cent of the brief are considered to be the highest priority of work to be funded. Glengarry Primary School was identified as being 45 per cent of the brief and it will be considered for funding in the department's 2017-18 works subprogram.

On 27 April 2017, the principal of Glengarry Primary School again requested consideration be given to upgrading the school's administration area because of increasing pressure to accommodate staff and the school community. The school was advised on 27 April 2017 that an upgrade is contingent on the budget and could not be considered before the September budget. The Minister for Education and Training informed me that she received correspondence from the member for Carine on this matter on 28 April and that she responded in May and advised that the project would be given every consideration in the context of statewide capital funding priorities. I note that the member said that the principal had been assured that he would be contacted by the Department of Education but that that has not occurred. I will pass that on to the minister and request that she deal with that and ensure that the principal is kept informed.

The administration upgrade program for 2017 is currently being formulated. The school has not been left out at the moment. Funding for the upgrade program is limited and the department is currently assessing schools identified as having the greatest need. Based on this assessment, a number of schools would be given a higher priority than Glengarry Primary School. The school's current enrolment is 405 students and that number is expected to increase to 413 in 2018 before decreasing to 389 in 2019, but it is still under consideration. As indicated, Glengarry Primary School is 45 per cent of the brief so it is in the mix.

The school's latest building condition assessment on 1 August 2013 identified \$30 279 worth of outstanding maintenance judged to be of medium to low priority. Since August 2013, the following has been spent maintaining the school building: \$276 511 on breakdown repairs and \$35 054 on routine maintenance. The following major works have been undertaken: \$88 300 to refurbish classrooms in 2015–16; \$6 450 on tree management; \$9 687 on inclusive learning; and \$25 810 on school-funded minor works. The school was inspected in 2016 for asbestos-containing materials and received a low-risk rating. Essentially, the message is that Glengarry Primary School is one of the schools being considered for the 2017-18 administration upgrade program. The school will be notified in the event that it is included in the program; and, if it is not, why not and where it is on the rating of necessity.

The only thing I will say in conclusion in response to the grievance is that I urge the member for Carine and all members of the Liberal Party to consider the implications of not only this particular case but those of the entire budget process in the forward estimates in the event of the removal of an additional \$800 million in revenue recovery measures that have been identified in the budget and upon which this budget is premised. Can the member for Carine imagine what would happen in the event that that \$800 million is extracted as a consequence of the actions of his colleagues in the former government, and how likely this sort of activity, which is essential and necessary—the member has rightly brought this issue to this place and made a case on behalf of his school—will be much more difficult to fund in the event that \$800 million is removed from the revenue stream in the forward estimates?

Mr A. Krsticevic: Do you also think, minister, that we should reconsider building new schools and some of the election promises —

Mr P. PAPALIA: I would say —

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr P. Papalia: I am happy to take that interjection.

The SPEAKER: I am not quite happy about the way the minister is making this into a political thing about budgets and everything like that. The question asked was whether funding is going to be given and the minister is straying from that a little bit.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Thank you, Mr Speaker; but the central component of the response I give, in the hope of funding the request, will be entirely premised on whether the allocation and the revenue streams identified in the budget are available. If they are not available, the likelihood of any of these requests being met is very low. That is an obvious fact. I urge the Liberal Party to consider its actions in the coming months. That has a fundamental impact on the budget and whether we can meet the request the member for Carine has made today on behalf of his school. It is absolutely central to the budget process and the Liberal Party should consider this when making its deliberations.