

INDEPENDENT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

754. Hon HELEN BULLOCK to the minister representing the Minister for Education:

I refer to the minister's announcement about the creation of independent public schools.

- (1) Will independent public schools, as a group, be permitted to exclude students at a higher rate than the remainder of the public education system?
- (2) Will local students have an unchallenged right to enrol in their local public school, even if it has an independent status?
- (3) If independent public schools in WA opt out of the proposed national curriculum, will that put Western Australia in breach of its Council of Australian Governments obligation?

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN replied:

In the absence of the minister representing the Minister for Education on urgent parliamentary business, I am pleased to thank the honourable member for some notice of the question and to provide this answer.

- (1) Independent public schools are only able to exclude students for reasons currently permitted under the School Education Act. There is no reason to expect that the rate of suspension would be any higher for independent public schools than for the remainder of the public school system.
- (2) The creation of independent public schools does not change the right of students to enrol in their local public school.
- (3) Independent public schools will be required to comply with the requirements of all national agreements, including those of the curriculum.