

SCHOOLS — CLOSURE

273. Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE to the Minister for Education and Training:

I refer to the methodology used by the Department of Education to place a school on a watchlist, a precursor to recommending to the minister that a school should close.

- (1) What is the methodology used for determining whether a school should be placed on the watchlist?
- (2) Has the Department of Education made any recommendations to the minister for school closures; and, if so, what schools were recommended for closure?
- (3) Has the minister made a decision in relation to the future of Woodanilling Primary School; and, if so, what is that decision?
- (4) Can the minister please provide a list of schools that remain on the department's watchlist?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

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

- (1) The Department of Education does not have a watchlist. Following the student census at the beginning of each school year, the Department of Education identifies individual primary schools that meet the cabinet-endorsed criteria for closure. That criteria is unchanged from the former government: consistently low average enrolments for at least two years; no indication of growth in student numbers in the foreseeable future; for rural schools, students are within daily travel of another school; a nearby school has the capacity to enrol students from the closing school, with minimal or no capital works; and the school does not cater for special groups of students, such as those enrolled in an intensive English centre. There is no intention to change this in the future.
- (2) Every year the Minister for Education and Training is advised of the schools that meet the criteria. No primary schools have been approved for closure under the current government. In 2015, the following schools closed: Latham Primary School, Buntine Primary School, Tincurrin Primary School and Grass Patch Primary School. In 2016, Ballidu Primary School closed.
- (3) Woodanilling Primary School will continue to operate in its current form.
- (4) Not applicable.