

TAFE LECTURERS — ENTERPRISE BARGAINING AGREEMENT

**787. Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH to the Minister for Commerce:**

Can the Minister for Finance provide an update to the house on the progress of the TAFE lecturers' enterprise bargaining agreement that expired three weeks ago?

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN replied:**

Mr President is quite right that this is within the province of the Minister for Commerce, and not the Minister for Finance. The TAFE lecturer negotiations are continuing. The labour relations division of the Department of Commerce has been working for quite some time with the relevant department and its minister in concert with Treasury, and negotiations have been continuing with the relevant staff associations. I make it a practice not to comment on ongoing negotiations because negotiations in these matters, by definition, evolve and change over time; that is why I do not discuss the detail of those negotiations. The negotiations are continuing and I await their conclusion.

**Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich:** You don't know?

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** I do know.

**Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich:** Well, then tell the house!

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** I have provided the appropriate response to the house. Again, I do not disclose the nature of negotiations because they may change from one meeting to the next, and to discuss those other than behind closed doors is often counterproductive. The processes are continuing.

**Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich:** You must know something! Just something! Mr President, he must know something!

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** Mr President, I was about to resume my seat, but if the honourable member wants to adopt this attitude, she can.

The fact is that as a standing item I receive an update on this particular matter, as well as others, every single week from the relevant senior officers. The member is quite wrong when she says I do not know what I am doing. The fact that I am not prepared to canvass it publicly in this forum is quite appropriate. I do not wish to put those negotiations at risk.