

Chair; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Paul Papalia; Mrs Liza Harvey; [9.10 Am]; Mr Peter Rundle; Amber-Jade Sanderson; Ms Emily Hamilton

Division 10: Education, \$4 761 139 000 —

Mr R.S. Love, Chair.

Mr P. Papalia, Minister for Tourism representing the Minister for Education and Training.

Ms S. O'Neill, Director General.

Ms J. McGrath, Deputy Director General, Finance and Administration.

Mr J. Fischer, Executive Director, Infrastructure.

Mr S. Baxter, Executive Director, Statewide Planning and Delivery.

Mr D. Stewart, Executive Director, Workforce.

Mr J.T. Peckitt, Chief Finance Officer.

Mr L.R. Hale, Acting Deputy Director General, Schools.

Mr P. Titmanis, Executive Director, Innovation, Performance and Research.

Mr A. Blagaich, Acting Executive Director, School Curriculum and Standards Division.

[Witnesses introduced.]

The CHAIR: Good morning everybody. Welcome to this estimates committee, which is examining Education, division 10.

This estimates committee will be reported by Hansard. The daily proof *Hansard* will be available the following day.

It is the intention of the Chair to ensure that as many questions as possible are asked and answered and that both questions and answers are short and to the point. The estimates committee's consideration of the estimates will be restricted to discussion of those items for which a vote of money is proposed in the consolidated account. Questions must be clearly related to a page number, item, program or amount in the current division. Members should give these details in preface to their question. If a division or service is the responsibility of more than one minister, a minister shall only be examined in relation to their portfolio responsibilities.

The minister may agree to provide supplementary information to the committee rather than asking that the question be put on notice for the next sitting week. I ask the minister to clearly indicate what supplementary information he agrees to provide and I will then allocate a reference number.

If supplementary information is to be provided, I seek the minister's cooperation in ensuring that it is delivered to the principal clerk by Friday, 29 September 2017. I caution members that if a minister asks that a matter be put on notice, it is up to the member to lodge the question on notice through the online questions system.

Welcome to all the advisers. I give the call to the member for Churchlands.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: I refer to page 160 of budget paper No 2, volume 1, and to the line item "Local Projects Local Jobs". Can the minister detail every project funded under this line item? We are happy for the list to be tabled.

Mr P. PAPALIA: That is a very large number of projects across Education. I think I might ask the member to put that on notice.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Can we have it supplied as supplementary information, given that the department has indicated that it has the information?

Mr P. PAPALIA: No.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Can the minister explain why? This is an estimates hearing.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Because it is more than 150 items. I am comfortable that the department will provide it to the member if he puts a question on notice in the normal fashion.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Can the list specify the electorate each project is in?

Mr P. PAPALIA: When the member puts the question on notice, he can add that request to it.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: The minister will add that to it?

Mr P. PAPALIA: The member will. If he asks for it, I am sure that the minister and department will provide that response.

The CHAIR: To be clear, the minister has indicated that he will not provide supplementary information. If the member wants the information, he will have to put a question on notice. That is the minister's right to do that.

Mr P. PAPALIA: It is 150 items or more, member.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Just to be really clear with this, there is \$577 000 of expenditure listed for the last financial year to 30 June 2017. The minister has said that the department cannot pull out a list and provide it within two weeks for the estimates hearing.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am saying that it will take longer than the time allocated. I am happy for the member for Churchlands to put a question on notice. I am sure that the minister will respond in the normal fashion and that it will probably come to the member very shortly after that period.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Is the minister just choosing not to provide it?

Mr P. PAPALIA: It is a lot of work and I do not want to divert people to doing that in that time frame.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: For 2016–17 there was an estimated actual spend of \$577 000, but for 2017–18 that has gone up quite considerably to \$6 million. I would have thought that the government would know exactly what it is spending that \$6 million on, so it would not be too difficult for the minister to provide supplementary information about the significant increase from \$577 000 to \$6 million.

Mr P. PAPALIA: That is nice of the member to make that observation. I have asked the member to put the question on notice. I am sure that the minister will provide the answer to the question on notice.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Can the minister explain something to me? This is a new project and this is the first budget the government has delivered. How can there be an amount of \$577 000 in the previous year when the Parliament had not approved this budget?

Mr P. PAPALIA: The money to which the member refers was part of 24 grants paid to non-government organisations as part of the Local Projects, Local Jobs program.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Can the minister provide us with information on who those non-government organisations are?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I probably can, except that I cannot read it because it is too small. I will get the director general to read out the answer because it is in small print.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: The minister needs to get himself some goggles.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am in denial.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Join the club.

The CHAIR: The minister could take a photo with his phone and then blow it up.

Ms S. O'Neill: The non-government organisations are: Dale Christian School, Helena College, John Wollaston Anglican Community School—there were some nature playgrounds—Swan Christian College, Beechboro Christian School, Riverlands Montessori School, Pioneer Village School, Swan Valley Anglican Community School, Tranby College, Treetops School, Comet CaRE School, Good Shepherd Catholic School, Lumen Christi College, Mary MacKillop Catholic Community Primary School, St John Paul II Catholic Primary School, Salvado Catholic College, Servite College, St Helena's Catholic Primary School, St Kieran Catholic Primary School, St Lawrence Primary School, St Michael's School, Xavier Catholic School, Banksia Grove Child and Parent Centre, and the Fathering Project.

Mr P. PAPALIA: If the member would like details on those particular grants, clearly there is a table there. If the member would like that to be provided as supplementary information, I am happy to do that.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: That would be terrific.

The CHAIR: Could the minister clearly outline what he is providing?

Mr P. PAPALIA: With respect to page 160, the election commitments table and the line item "Local Projects Local Jobs", we will provide a table providing details of the 24 grants to non-government organisations. We will provide the nature and location of the project, and the grant amount.

[*Supplementary Information No B14.*]

[9.10 am]

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Can the minister provide the outline of the funding process for these projects? Was there a grant application process? How was it advertised?

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B — Wednesday, 20 September 2017]

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Mr P. PAPALIA: These are election commitments. As I think the member would be aware, as was stated by Minister Murray yesterday, they were identified after consultation with the community and local governments and, in this case in all likelihood, parents and friends associations because those are non-government schools, or parent and citizens associations at state government schools. Once we won office, the projects were subject to due diligence, met government guidelines and were subject to a business case.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: It is obviously a new program. From which budget item was the \$577 000 for the 2016–17 budget year reallocated?

Mr P. PAPALIA: It has not been reallocated from an existing allocation. It is new money to the Department of Education.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Did the department receive funding of \$577 000 on top of last year's total budget allocation?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Yes.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I refer to page 160 of budget paper No 2 and the line item "Boarding Away From Home Allowance Funding Extension" under the heading "Other". The Minister for Education and Training has advised parents and the Isolated Children's Parents' Association that there will be a reduction in the boarding away from home allowance over the next four years from \$2 105 to \$1 477. Can the minister explain the rationale behind this?

Mr P. PAPALIA: As the member will be aware, in recent times the boarding away from home allowance has been augmented by an allocation from royalties for regions, which has been, effectively, phased out. As a consequence, \$1 477 will be the continuing allocation for the boarding away from home allowance.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I hear what the minister is saying, but considering that a cost shift of royalties for regions seems to be occurring, what is the logic behind this? Why is consolidated funding not being used to keep it at least at a similar level to what it is now?

Mr P. PAPALIA: The member may not be aware, but it was topped up on an annual basis. If the member looked at the previous government's forward estimates, he would see an allocation of one amount in the current year and no allocation from RforR in the subsequent years. I know that the previous Premier did not believe in the forward estimates, but if anyone had looked at them in past years, they would have seen no allocation from RforR. The allocation was not constant under the previous government; it was topped up on an annual basis. In the constrained circumstances that we inherited from the previous government, we have to address every single allocation of funding, be it RforR or any other part of state expenditure, with very detailed scrutiny to determine whether we can afford it. Some people in the member's party have determined that they will make it even more difficult by removing as much as \$800 million from this government's forward estimates, which will make any allocation of this nature extremely difficult.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: How many families receive this payment and can it be broken down by region?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am told that 1 800 families receive the payment and that we cannot give the member the breakdown of regions at the moment.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I am happy to receive that as supplementary information.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I do not think so. It is not an easy thing to achieve. It is paid to individuals, so it is private and a difficult thing to track down. If the member wants to put the question on notice, the department can see whether it can provide the information, but it will not be able to be done in nine days.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I would like to put it on notice so that we can have a breakdown.

Mr P. PAPALIA: That will be up to the member. He will have to submit an on-notice question.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I understand that a review of the boarding away from home allowance was undertaken by the Department of Education last year. What were the outcomes of that review and did it recommend this cut?

Mr P. PAPALIA: The department regularly appraises or assesses any allocations of that nature. As I understand it, there would have been a recommendation for indexation. The member has to understand that regardless of whatever the funding is for, it will be assessed under the current financial circumstances. Something which might have occurred in past years and been considered acceptable practice by the previous government, but which resulted in enormous debt and ongoing deficits and put us under incredible constraints, will not necessarily be able to be achieved in the current environment. We will be responsible with how we use taxpayers' money.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Is the minister happy to provide a copy of that review? He has said that the recommendation was for indexation and so forth.

Mr P. PAPALIA: It was not a formal review; it was just an assessment of an allocation, which was done in the same way as every other education allocation is internally assessed on an annual basis. No, I will not provide it.

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Mr R.R. WHITBY: My question relates to the two line items “Adjustment to Commonwealth Grants—Universal Access” and “Adjustment to Other Commonwealth Grants” under the heading “Spending Changes” on page 160 of budget paper No 2. Can the minister elaborate on those spending changes, the reasons for them and whether the state is worse off because of the changes to those grants?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Yes, I can. I have been provided with an answer and some information by the Minister for Education and Training about this particular issue. There has been a delay in moving to a fairer share of funding for WA public schools under the commonwealth—this is about commonwealth grants —

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: The minister has to tell them, because he is Dorothy.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Does the member for Churchlands not want to know about the impact of commonwealth grants?

The CHAIR: Member for Churchlands, please. Minister, continue with the answer, please.

Mr P. PAPALIA: It is about the delay in the move to a fairer share of funding for WA public schools under the commonwealth's quality schools package. Because that has been delayed and extended out over six years instead of what was originally proposed, the federal Liberal–National government has imposed on the state an obligation to fill the gap between the present time and when we reach a fairer system. Typically of that government of the moment, it has committed to a fairer system but not until after the next federal election and beyond. As a consequence, the state has to find \$339 million over four years to fill the gap. That obviously will place the state's financial position under further pressure and will have an impact.

What was the second part of the member's question? I would say, it is going to have some specific impacts. A couple of the things that those adjustments would have provided funding for —

[9.20 am]

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Maybe the minister can table the answer he is reading.

Mr P. PAPALIA: No.

Ms A. SANDERSON: I am interested in it.

The CHAIR: I think it is pretty clear he is providing the answer.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Member, I am representing a minister in the other place, so I am quite happy to read her answers. If the member thinks that is an unfair or inappropriate response, I think he had better reappraise.

The CHAIR: I remind members that there is no capacity for anybody to table anything during estimates, anyway. Minister, continue.

Mr P. PAPALIA: There is an issue with commonwealth funding for 15 hours a week of kindergarten in 2018. We currently have another year of funding but the ongoing funding for that particular purpose is yet to be negotiated, so we are still concerned there may be additional costs imposed on the state. Ultimately, the impact of that delay in moving to a fairer share equates to an additional \$339 million over four years that the state will have to find and, interestingly, that is a little less than the loss of the gold royalty that the National Party and the member opposite, in his irresponsible fashion, have indicated that they will be opposing. In the event that the revenue measures that have been identified in the budget that equate, in this case for gold royalties, to \$400 million are removed, then interestingly, the amount of the gap between what the federal government should be giving us to make a fairer system that we have to find from our own budget will have to be found from somewhere else or there clearly will be an impact.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: I refer to page 119 of budget paper No 3 and the line item “Internal Reallocation to Fund Election Commitments” under “Education”. I have added up the amount of appropriation for 2017–18 to 2020–21 and it totals \$69 million. Can the minister outline what projects had money withdrawn to reallocate this \$69 million to fund these election commitments?

Mr P. PAPALIA: No, I cannot do that.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Can the minister provide supplementary information about how that \$69 million is being reallocated?

Mr P. PAPALIA: As part of our election commitments we identified the need to reallocate funds from the previous government's mismanaged budget process to our priorities. That was done. If the member wants detailed information about whether, where, how much and by what means project funding was reallocated, I suggest that he put it on notice.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Just to be clear, we have an appropriation figure totalling \$69 million through the forward estimates. It specifically states “Internal Reallocation to Fund Election Commitments”. I would have thought that the government would know what those election commitments were, given that it has come up with some quite specific figures: \$7.5 million in 2017–18, \$17.5 million in 2018–19, \$28.3 million in 2019–20 and

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\$15.7 million in 2020–21. This is not plucking figures out of the air; it looks like the government is looking to reallocate this money to some specific projects. I would have thought it would not be very difficult for the Department of Education, through the minister, to provide Parliament with how that money is being reallocated.

Mr P. PAPALIA: No specific project has been cancelled, but I can give the member some indication of the areas from which money was reallocated or part of the processes by which money was reallocated. He would be aware that there is an equity adjustment to the student-centred funding model. That is one part of it. There is also the cessation of the administrative grant to independent public schools, and the reduction in senior executive service positions. We went to the election saying that we would reduce SES positions by 20 per cent, and we have exceeded that across government. In Education, that will be a component of where that money will be found. There are some efficiencies from central office fleet management, other operational support areas in central office and a couple of other administrative things. Savings or reallocations have occurred across a range of activities. Some of those are headline figures, which doubtless the member wants to explore, but they are already on the public record.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: I appreciate the minister providing some context for Parliament in his answer and I note that he was reading some answers from a document, which is good. Will the minister provide that as supplementary information to the question?

Mr P. PAPALIA: No.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Could the minister please provide the value of the reallocation of grants from independent public schools? How much of that \$69 million over four years is coming from the independent public schools program and which specific grant is he talking about?

Mr P. PAPALIA: In 2017–18, \$10.27 million.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Is the \$10.27 million just in general grants to the operations of independent public schools?

Mr P. PAPALIA: It is a cessation of the administrative grant to independent public schools. With regard to that administrative grant, when the previous government implemented the independent public schools process, independent public schools at the outset were clearly in the minority and there was a task for them to undertake that had not previously been the case. They had a single-line budget and they were given an allocation of administrative funds to support implementing that single-line budget. Now they are rapidly becoming the majority—in fact, they are well and truly the majority of schools—and all the other schools are required to manage a single-line budget as well, so it is inappropriate that an administrative grant be applied just to IPSs as opposed to all the other schools that are doing exactly the same activity.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Given that other public schools are now on a single-line budget, do they not need the assistance of an administrative grant to administer a single-line budget in lieu of the independent public schools?

Mr P. PAPALIA: No, it is a standard practice now. We are not going to provide an administrative grant to conduct a standard practice.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Just to wrap this one up, we have on notice: can the minister outline the projects that have had money withdrawn to reallocate to fund election commitments?

Mr P. PAPALIA: For questions to be put on notice, the member has to do that himself in another process.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: I am just making sure that we know what we will be putting on notice, and that for the benefit of *Hansard*, it is in there. Have any jobs been impacted as a result of this reallocation?

[9.30 am]

Mr P. PAPALIA: Yes, the senior executive service jobs have clearly been impacted because they are part of the savings. Our election commitment was to reduce SES jobs by 20 per cent. The Department of Education is working towards achieving that objective by March next year, and obviously those people's jobs have been impacted.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Regarding the SES positions that have already been shed, can the minister provide the number of SES positions that were identified and the individuals who have left the Department of Education to this point in time?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I can tell the member that the Department of Education's target is eight out of 39 SES positions, which equates to 20 per cent. I cannot give the member the detail of the positions but the target will be achieved by the end of March next year.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Can the minister give me the gender breakdown of those 39 positions?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Not every position has been resolved at this stage so it would not be appropriate to pass out that sort of information.

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Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Are there 39 positions generally but the department has not identified who it will target?

Mr P. PAPALIA: No; eight out of 39 SES positions will be reduced. The department is in negotiations with individuals; that process is still underway and it is therefore inappropriate to provide further detail at this stage.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I know the minister has this data available so could he provide, either today or by supplementary information, the gender breakdown of the SES positions that are being targeted in this separation process?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I do not think —

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I know that the department provides this information to the Public Sector Commissioner so it should be able to.

Mr P. PAPALIA: The only issue is that deliberations with individuals are still underway. It would be inappropriate to give out detail about those positions and people until such time as they are resolved. On completion of those deliberations, the information will be available. I do not want to provide that information and I do not think we should at this stage because the negotiations are still underway. Until they are resolved, we cannot say specifically, and we should not.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: This is general information about the SES positions. There are a broad range of SES positions —

Mr P. PAPALIA: There are only 39.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: — and the department has targeted 39 for separation.

Mr P. PAPALIA: No, it is eight out of 39 positions.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Eight out of 39 positions have been targeted for separation. Of those 39 positions, surely the minister can provide a gender breakdown—how many females and how many males—but not necessarily who has been targeted?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Member, I am not willing to release detail of information about the eight positions that are being negotiated because they are currently in negotiations.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I am not asking about the eight positions; I am asking about the 39 positions.

The CHAIR: Sorry, we cannot just have argument between you two. Could you restate your question, please, member for Scarborough? What exactly are you seeking information about?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: All am asking for is a gender breakdown of the 39 positions.

Mr P. PAPALIA: If the member wants information on the 39 SES positions in total —

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Yes.

Mr P. PAPALIA: — we can give the member that.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Thank you. Does the minister have it now or will he provide it by supplementary information?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I think we might provide that as supplementary information.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Thank you.

Mr P. PAPALIA: What were the page and line number?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: What is the gender breakdown of the 39 SES positions?

Mr P. PAPALIA: The member will need a page number and line item for supplementary information in *Hansard*.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I refer to page 119 of budget paper No 3 and the internal reallocation of \$69 million to fund election commitments. Of the pool of SES positions that were targeted for separation, what is the gender breakdown of those 39 individuals?

Mr P. PAPALIA: No; the member has changed her question from the one I was willing to provide information on. As I have repeatedly said, we will not release detail of the individual positions that are being negotiated at this stage. That is eight out of the 39 positions. If the member wants a gender breakdown across the total 39 positions, and that is her sole question, that is fine, but we will not provide detail of positions that are being negotiated.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: No; I am asking about the pool of 39 positions. What is the gender breakdown? I am not asking about the eight positions that have been identified.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Okay; in that case we will provide it as supplementary information. It is on page 119 of budget paper No 3, with respect to —

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Mrs L.M. HARVEY: It is regarding the reallocation to fund the election commitments.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Regarding the reallocation to meet election commitments, we will provide the gender breakdown of the SES positions in the Department of Education.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Thank you.

[*Supplementary Information No B15.*]

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: With reference to the WA colleges of agriculture, where can I find funding for these colleges in the budget?

Mr P. PAPALIA: What page and line item is it, member?

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: As I said, that is what I am having difficulty finding. I will refer to page 161 and the first dot point; that is about the closest I can come to it. I am asking where I can find funding for the colleges of agriculture in the budget.

Mr P. PAPALIA: The colleges of agriculture are not subject to individual line items. They are part of the department's total appropriations.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Can the minister detail the funding available for each of the WA colleges of agriculture in Cunderdin, Denmark, Harvey, Morawa and Narrogin for individual calendar years over the forward estimates?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I will ask the director general to provide the member with the allocations for this year. She can read them into *Hansard* so the member has them. I am not willing to provide the breakdown over the forward estimates at this stage, but the member can have the amount allocated to each of the colleges, which is just part of the department's total appropriations. I will get the director general to read it in.

Ms S. O'Neill: The funding for agricultural colleges is provided in three components: farm operations, residential operations and general operations for the school itself. As such, the funding comes in three components. I will provide the funding figures for 2017. Obviously, we are going through the process for 2018 that is built on projections and now that the budget has been released, they will be able to project their forward budget amounts. They are in that process right now. For Cunderdin, the figures are: farm operations, \$1.2 million; residential operations, \$1.4 million; and school operations, \$2.3 million. I am rounding these figures. For Denmark, the figures are: farm operations, \$1.2 million; residential operations, \$1.3 million; and general operations, \$2.1 million. For Harvey, the figures are: farm operations, \$1.3 million; residential operations, \$1.4 million; and general operations budget, \$2.5 million. For Morawa, the figures are: farm operations, \$983 000; residential operations, \$1.2 million; and general operations, \$1.6 million. For Narrogin, the figures are: farm operations, \$1.2 million; residential operations, \$1.5 million; and general operations, \$2.2 million.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Are there any changes to the model of funding as a result of organisational changes in the Department of Education?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Can the member specify which model of funding, and which changes, to where he is talking about?

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Are there any changes to that particular model?

Mr P. PAPALIA: To those colleges?

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Yes.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Can I ask the director general to respond.

[9.40 am]

Ms S. O'Neill: The structure that I think the member is referring to is in central office, which is part of the governance of the agricultural colleges. There is no impact of those central changes on the funding for agricultural colleges, but in 2018 the agricultural colleges will be funded in keeping with the principles of the student-centred funding model. They have been aware of that, and that is why, over the past year and a bit, we have worked with those agricultural colleges to sort their funding arrangements into those three elements that I spoke about, because they are quite distinct areas, and we wanted to ensure that all the costs of running the farms and the residentials, as well as the school operations, were made clear to them, and that we had a good assessment of the cost of running those operations. For 2018, they will come into line with our other schools in the SCFM. They are going through that process as we speak.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Will the colleges still have the ability to pool and utilise funding as required for the purchase of things like agricultural and on-farm equipment?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I might get the director general to respond.

Ms S. O'Neill: As the member is aware, there is a trust, so in addition to the funding that has been already described, the agricultural colleges get to keep the revenue generated by the enterprises that they have. They have always kept 60 per cent themselves and 40 per cent goes into the trust for allocation to the capital purchases that the member is describing, and that situation will continue. There has been no change to that, and in fact the trust has, in 2017, \$1.2 million sitting in it, so their operations will not change. They will have the same flexibility to combine together to make those capital upgrade purchases that they have done before.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Will the minister provide an organisational structure of the department prior to and after the machinery-of-government changes?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Is the member talking about the senior executive service reduction as being part of the machinery-of-government changes?

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I am really talking about the structure within the department, as in the director general of agricultural education, if you like—how that is structured.

Mr P. PAPALIA: In Education, there has only been one director general. Education Services has been combined with Education, and that is the change structurally. I think that what the member is getting at is that there is a vacant position of director of agricultural education. It has just become vacant recently, and it is not subject to the machinery-of-government changes.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Will that position be reinstated or filled?

Mr P. PAPALIA: That is just part of the administration and operational matters for the department, but it is not subject to the machinery-of-government changes. Whether it can be filled or not filled is unrelated to the machinery-of-government reforms.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Forget the machinery-of-government changes. Will that position be reinstated? Is there someone who will be in charge?

Mr P. PAPALIA: It is still being considered.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I refer to the second last dot point on page 168 of budget paper No 2, which reads —

Planning has commenced for the new Inner City College on Kitchener Park in Subiaco at an initial cost of \$67.8 million with Stage 1 due to open in 2020.

With reference to this option replacing the City Beach high school site, can the minister confirm whether any representative from the Department of Education has met with the Town of Cambridge to discuss the City Beach high school site?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I might get Mr Fischer to respond to that.

Mr J. Fischer: There have been no direct meetings between the staff of the Department of Education and the Town of Cambridge at this stage. We have had some officer-level discussions, but no detailed discussions about the future of the City Beach high school site.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: There has been some media commentary that meetings were held with the Town of Cambridge, so just to confirm, there has been no departmental engagement at all with the Town of Cambridge about the City Beach high school site?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Mr Fischer's evidence was pretty clear.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Can the minister outline what protections are currently in place to ensure that the City Beach high school site will remain reserved for education purposes?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I cannot do so, and I do not know whether, at this stage, there has been a determination on the ultimate use of those lands. At this stage, it is still being considered.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I understand that there are potentially some caveats over that site to do with the Perry Lakes Trust Fund and a few other instruments. Can the minister advise what the caveats are and whether there are any restrictions on that site at present?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I think the member is starting to get into the realms of questions that should be put on notice to the minister, because she will undoubtedly be able to provide the member with some answers in more detail than I can as the person representing the minister.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I am sure Mr Fischer would know.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Put it on notice.

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B — Wednesday, 20 September 2017]

p283c-302a

Chair; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Paul Papalia; Mrs Liza Harvey; [9.10 Am]; Mr Peter Rundle; Amber-Jade Sanderson; Ms Emily Hamilton

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Just to be clear—through the Chair—minister, we have here the senior officers of the Department of Education, who are clearly well aware of the caveats over the City Beach high school site. They have been working on getting this site ready for a new high school build for over three years, so I think it would not be hard for us here, for the benefit of the Parliament, to get an answer about whether any caveats or protections over the City Beach high school site land can be overturned by the minister.

Mr P. PAPALIA: The questions the member is pursuing are not related to funding in this budget and the plan for the Kitchener Park proposal. I understand that the member has an interest, but if he wants to ask the minister responsible on-notice questions about the future plans for the land that are not yet determined, I am sure the minister will, when that determination has been made, provide him with an answer.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Just to be very clear for *Hansard*, the individual in the department who would have the information is not being given the opportunity to provide it, and the minister is requesting that we put the question on notice.

Mr P. PAPALIA: To be very clear for *Hansard*, this question is unrelated to the current budget. The determination about that land has not yet been made. If the member wants to know what the intention is for that land, I suggest she put a question on notice.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: I am not convinced that it is not part of this budget, because the second last dot point on page 168 refers to planning commencing for the new inner-city college, at a cost of \$67.8 million, with stage 1 due to open in 2020, so it is clearly a budget item, and money was clearly put into the budget for the construction of a new western suburbs high school at the City Beach site, so a decision has been made by this government to reallocate the money that was in the last budget to this budget for this Kitchener Park proposal. For the minister to say that the City Beach high school site is not part of the budget is not correct.

[9.50 am]

Mr P. PAPALIA: Member, in every portfolio right across the budget, we have had to look for opportunities to shift expenditure from things that the member's government would have funded or may have funded or has potentially allocated future funding towards, to fund our commitments, which is a clear undertaking. Prior to the election, that is what we said we would do. It was something we had to do to rectify the mess we inherited from the member's government. We have also had to seek savings measures wherever we can. That is what we have done. If the member wants to find out further detail about the intended use of the land he has referred to, which has not yet been determined and has not yet been considered fully, I am assuming by either the minister or cabinet, I suggest he put it on notice.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: I thank the minister for the answer. It is good to hear that he acknowledges that the reallocation of money away from the City Beach high school site to the Kitchener Park site was part of the budget deliberations and therefore the line of questioning we have taken today is valid.

Mr P. PAPALIA: When the member was standing on that truck in Kalgoorlie advocating \$400 million be ripped out of the forward estimates, did it occur to him that we might have difficulty funding education as a consequence of his actions? Was that something he has thought about?

The CHAIR: We will draw a line through that; this is not a debate session.

Ms E. HAMILTON: I refer to the line item "Put Education Assistants Back in the Classroom" under the heading "Election Commitments" on page 160 of budget paper No 2. Can the minister advise how far along we are in providing full-time equivalent education assistants?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Thank you, member. I am pleased to say that that was one of the very first election commitments we pursued. The response was announced in June, only a couple of months after taking office. A total of 238 primary schools and district high schools have been identified as recipients of funding to employ education assistants over the next three years—2018, 2019 and 2020. Each of those schools have been advised what additional staff they will get and whether it will be in 2018, 2019 or 2020. In 2018, 100 FTE education assistants will be in schools supporting students. These schools have received funding for these positions and either have started or will soon start to recruit staff. The additional education assistants will be employed in schools where there is most need for young children from kindergarten to year 2 to provide extra support for their learning development. The member will be aware that early development is critical to their education and the most vital area for additional resources where we can afford it. Education assistants will play a vital role in elevating the services provided to families of young children.

Regarding the government's commitment to education assistants, I will say that it is in direct response to cuts made by the previous government. That government determined that education assistants were not making a valuable contribution to our education system. As a consequence, it ripped out some 350 education assistant positions across

the state. Those are FTEs, so the impact would have been far higher and I am pretty certain that in some of the more vulnerable schools across the state, for instance, I think in Kununurra District High School, that equated to many more than the number of FTEs. In the order of 17, I think, individuals fulfilling the role of Aboriginal and Islander education officers or education assistants were impacted by that cut. We are putting the replacement education assistants where they will focus on the most need. They will be going to places in the low socio-economic status environments where there is an acute need.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Can the minister provide a breakdown of the number of education assistants employed by the state government for each year for the previous decade?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am not sure about the whole decade but I will check on what might be possible. Because of the number of years and the number of lines, I will give the member supplementary information and get it put into a decent table.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: By way of supplementary information, can we have a breakdown of the number of education assistants employed —

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am sorry; it is not for the decade; it is from 2013.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Is there any way to get the information from 2010?

Mr P. PAPALIA: The problem with that would be that it would not be comparing like for like necessarily—the type of assistants, locations and the like. We were going to give the member mainstream EAs, Aboriginal and Islander education officers, and education support assistants, including special needs, as the three lines. We can do that from 2013 to the present, but beyond that the type of individuals we are talking about would have been different.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: We are happy to have the information the member can provide.

Mr P. PAPALIA: The member's question referred to the line item "Put Education Assistants Back in the Classroom" under "Election Commitments" in the spending changes table on page 160. I undertake to provide to the member a table detailing the number of education assistant average paid FTEs—to be very specific about how it works; that is the category—for each of mainstream EAs, Aboriginal and Islander education officers, and education support assistants, including special needs, over the period 2013 to 2017 in calendar years.

The CHAIR: Is that what you are providing?

Mr P. PAPALIA: That is what we will provide.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: To clarify, does that cover every category of education assistant that will be employed over that period?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Yes.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Thank you. That will be terrific if we can have that by supplementary information.

Mr P. PAPALIA: It is AIEOs as well; it is not just EAs.

The CHAIR: Are we clear with what we are doing. I think that is clear enough.

[*Supplementary Information No B16.*]

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: The minister referred to the student-centred funding model in his answer. I have noticed in the media recently—it is linked to the student-centred funding model aspect of his budget and in his answer—that there has been a redirection of student-centred funding away from schools with rolls greater than 1 200. I believe that for every enrolled student above 1 200 students, \$1 000 will be taken from the school. Schools such as Churchlands, Willetton and Riverton will have upwards of \$1 million taken away from them. What impact will that have on the operations of these schools?

Mr P. PAPALIA: As the member is aware, his government left the state budget in a parlous situation. As a consequence, wherever we can, we have to use the money in the most efficient and appropriate fashion. In this case, at the larger schools to which the member referred, we are seeking efficiencies as a consequence of numbers to be able to reallocate that funding to smaller schools, particularly often in remote and regional areas where they have smaller numbers. As a result of those numbers, the current student-centred funding model has been tweaked to ensure that those schools are able to provide a range of courses and services, particularly in literacy and numeracy, to ensure that they are not unduly impacted by the student-centred funding model. It is not a huge change; it is intended to focus on achieving equity across the system.

[10.00 am]

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B — Wednesday, 20 September 2017]

p283c-302a

Chair; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Paul Papalia; Mrs Liza Harvey; [9.10 Am]; Mr Peter Rundle; Amber-Jade Sanderson; Ms Emily Hamilton

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: For a school that is losing over \$1 million, that is the equivalent of 10 full-time equivalent staff. Can the minister confirm that the equivalent of 10 or more full-time staff will be cut from the schools that are having these funding cuts made to them?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Not at all, member. As the member is aware, independent public schools—in fact now all schools—have single-line budget management. That enables principals to use the funding they are allocated in the most efficient means possible and in a way that is most appropriate and most important. I have great confidence that the particular school the member referred to has the capacity to deal with the shift in funding. It will achieve equity. Some of its funds will go to schools that do not have the capacity purely through a natural consequence of an increase in student numbers. I am aware that the bigger schools have far bigger budgets. I have a large school in my electorate. It will be suffering a change to its budget as a consequence. Having served on the board of that school until recently, I am aware of that school's ability to be flexible in the use of its money. It does not mean that schools have to sack staff. It might mean that they might employ their funding in a more focused manner. It might mean that some of the things that they used that money for in the past will no longer be available. It will not mean that they have to sack staff.

[Mr T.J. Healy took the chair.]

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: From the minister's answer, we can confirm the expectation from government is that schools that have over 1 200 kids will lose \$1 000 for every student. Is the minister saying that it is up to the school to determine which services it will cut as a result of that funding cut?

Mr P. PAPALIA: No. Every principal has the capacity to manage their single-line budget. They will do so in the interests of their students. I would love to have ensured that there was no change to any school's budget allocation, but, unlike the former government, we have to be responsible. We have to ensure that every dollar is spent in an appropriate way. This will ensure that the state provides a high school option for students in differing electorates who attend schools with fewer student numbers. Those schools will be given a little more funding to ensure that they are able to provide a suite of course options that were not previously available because of the funding model. Also, they will be able to provide an additional focus on literacy and numeracy, which is essential to good outcomes in all our schools. All kids across the state deserve a good education. It should not be isolated to just locations that have large schools.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I refer to “Willetton Senior High School—Stage 3” on page 185 of budget paper No 3. In 2018–19 and 2019–20, there is an asset investment totalling \$11.8 million for stage 3 of Willetton Senior High School. Could the minister articulate on what basis the decision was made to withdraw the allocation from Willetton as opposed to other high school upgrades?

Mr P. PAPALIA: The third stage of the Willetton Senior High School upgrade included additional learning blocks comprising 24 classrooms, three incidental learning areas, student toilets, storerooms, staff parking and landscaping. That has been deferred.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Can the minister tell us when it has been deferred until?

Mr P. PAPALIA: At this stage I cannot give the member a projected time of that being re-funded. I note again that every dollar across all portfolios, particularly in education because it is so large, has to be scrutinised, considered, rationalised and prioritised. Willetton Senior High School has received a significant amount of money in recent times. It is a great school. It was made even better by a huge allocation of funding in recent times, but this particular component of it has had to be deferred.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Presumably the 24 classrooms were required for students. What accommodation will be provided to the 600 or so students who would have occupied those classrooms?

Mr P. PAPALIA: It was for an upgrade of existing accommodation. It was not necessary to build capacity to meet requirements; it was an upgrade of existing buildings.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: What is the age of the classroom block that was to be replaced? When was it built?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I cannot give that answer. I am sure we could find that out for the member.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I will put that question on notice.

Further to that, Mount Lawley Senior High School was to receive funding for an upgrade. I notice that is not in the budget. Has that also had a change to its asset investment program?

Mr P. PAPALIA: It will be in future budgets. An allocation for that requirement will be put in future budgets.

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B — Wednesday, 20 September 2017]

p283c-302a

Chair; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Paul Papalia; Mrs Liza Harvey; [9.10 Am]; Mr Peter Rundle; Amber-Jade Sanderson; Ms Emily Hamilton

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Could the minister be any more specific than that? I understand quite a lot of planning was done for that. That was a capacity upgrade because of the growth in student numbers. What provision will be made for the additional students that Mount Lawley Senior High School was to receive?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I might ask Mr Fischer if he can perhaps indicate how we are going with numbers and capacity at that school, and the nature of the need to meet the numbers.

Mr J. Fischer: Mount Lawley Senior High School's current enrolment is about 1 646. It is projected to grow to 1 988 by 2020. What we found with the location of the school at Kitchener Park is that Kitchener Park provides greater relief for Mount Lawley. I think I quoted 1 988 students by 2020; but with Kitchener Park commencing in 2020, that number is likely to be about 1 837. Referring to a previous question, the intention is still to consider an additional build at Mount Lawley for 450, which is smaller than what we had anticipated under the previous model. In the short term, those students will be accommodated in transportable classrooms.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: One thousand nine hundred and eighty-eight students is quite a lot. Large student growth is also projected at Churchlands Senior High School and Shenton College. Will Kitchener Park have the capacity to cope with all of the student growth that was predicted for Mount Lawley Senior High School, Shenton College and Churchlands Senior High School?

[10.10 am]

Mr P. PAPALIA: The situation has significantly changed since the work on Mount Lawley Senior High School that the member referred to was undertaken. As the member is aware, this government committed to building a new school at Kitchener Park. The opportunity for students from surrounding areas to attend is significant and will impact on the projected growth of numbers at all the impacted schools in the western suburbs. I think it is quite reasonable to assume that any of the projections regarding growth at Mount Lawley are not going to be seen in the near term, noting that the school at Kitchener Park will open in 2020.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I know the department has these projections. I am particularly interested in the western suburbs school strategy, because I know that predictions for the growth in student numbers for Scarborough, Doubleview and Innaloo are particularly high. I want to seek some reassurance for my electorate that the inner-city high school at Kitchener Park will cater for all the students from Doubleview, Innaloo and Scarborough, as well as the predicted growth from Mt Lawley and the inner-city areas of Mt Hawthorn and Highgate, for example. There are a lot of students there and, without the other capacity upgrades, I do not think that one high school will cope with the growth.

Mr P. PAPALIA: We are doing the same thing that the former government had been doing in planning to build one school in addition to the current schools to accommodate growth, with projections for additions to other schools as necessary. We have just changed the location of the school. We are not necessarily ruling out any additions to schools to meet capacity needs in the future, but they are not currently needed. Kitchener Park will have capacity for 2 000 students and we will obviously be looking at the needs at other schools like Mount Lawley and Shenton Park as time goes on.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Have the Willetton Senior High School upgrades been cut—shelved—and is there no provision in this budget for Mount Lawley Senior High School?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Willetton has already received \$53 million in upgrades in recent times and stage 3 of the proposed upgrade, which was worth \$11.78 million, has been deferred. What was the other part of the member's question?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Mount Lawley Senior High School is not funded in this budget.

Mr P. PAPALIA: The needs of Mount Lawley Senior High School, like those of all the high schools, will be assessed as required in light of the other impacts of our capital works program, such as the building of Kitchener Park senior high school or whatever it will be called.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I understand that up to 120 transportable classrooms will be removed out of the regions to be allocated towards the likes of Churchlands Senior High School and others. Have we got some detail on that?

Mr P. PAPALIA: What page and line item is the member referring to?

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: That is just a further question in relation to the questions on Churchlands, Mount Lawley et cetera.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am not sure that that relates. Can the member find a page and line item?

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: It is page 119 of budget paper No 3 and the question is in relation to the line item "Internal Reallocation to Fund Election Commitments".

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B — Wednesday, 20 September 2017]

p283c-302a

Chair; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Paul Papalia; Mrs Liza Harvey; [9.10 Am]; Mr Peter Rundle; Amber-Jade Sanderson; Ms Emily Hamilton

Mr P. PAPALIA: Member for Roe, that line item has nothing to do with demountables.

Ms A. SANDERSON: I refer to the new works outlined on page 171 of volume 1 of budget paper No 2. My question is about the \$50 million allocation for the John Forrest Secondary College redevelopment. Can the minister outline the scope of works for that project and what consultation is being engaged in with the school community?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Yes. The government has allocated funding for John Forrest Secondary College. That will become available in the 2019–20 financial year. As the member is aware, that was an election commitment and it is part of a broader capital works program to upgrade secondary schools in the metropolitan area. An indicative scope of works for the project has been developed in consultation with the college's leadership team and includes new buildings and refurbishments. New buildings are for administration, science, design and technology, and there will also be a new sports hall and a new performing arts facility. In addition, there will be general refurbishments. The department will conduct further consultation, and confirmation of the scope of works will be undertaken with the college community in 2019.

Ms A. SANDERSON: Is there any time frame for when those works will commence and be completed?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I ask Mr Fischer to respond.

Mr J. Fischer: The funding does not commence until 2019–20, so that is when the construction will commence. Because it is an operating school, there will be an extended program. It is currently predicted to go until probably 2023, but that will really depend on the detail of the scope. It will be an extended program to minimise the impact on the operations of the existing school.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I refer to page 160 of budget paper No 2 and the line item “Regional Workers Incentives Allowance Funding Change” under “Other”. What does this represent?

Mr P. PAPALIA: That reduction reflects a change right across government, not just in education, and it is a consequence of the lower cost of living after the mining boom. The need for ongoing funding has been reassessed and that is not just limited to education.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Why is the incentive so heavily back-ended?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Does the member mean why the impact is greater in the out years as opposed to the immediate time?

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: That is right—to 2020–21.

Mr P. PAPALIA: There are reductions this year and the next couple years of the forward estimates, and in 2020–21 there will be an increase, so it is projected. Initially, the impact is negative because there are assumed to be lower costs as a consequence of the end of the mining boom, but in the out years there will be a growth in costs associated with living in those regions that has to be accommodated and it goes up.

[10.20 am]

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Is this funded through royalties for regions?

Mr P. PAPALIA: It is consolidated, and there is a royalties for regions component.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Can the minister provide a breakdown of regional payments?

Mr P. PAPALIA: What does the member mean by that? By region?

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Yes.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Is the member asking where this funding is allocated by region? Again, the particular allowance to which the member has referred is not the sole responsibility of the education department; it is actually across government. Therefore, it is probably more appropriate that that type of question and the sort of detail the member is seeking go to Commerce rather than to Education.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Is it possible to break it down between the different departments? The minister is saying that this involves Education, Police et cetera.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Again, I think the member needs to ask the Minister for Commerce.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I thank the minister.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I refer to page 185 of budget paper No 3 and to the item on the primary school minor upgrades program, where it states —

A total of \$15.3 million (additional funding of \$2.2 million, along with the reallocation of \$13.1 million from within the existing asset investment program) ...

Could the minister detail where the reallocation of \$13.1 million is from? I understand that this was allocated last year to a list of primary school upgrades that are now no longer occurring because the funds are being reprioritised to the other schools that are mentioned.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Mr Fischer is indicating that the funding that has been announced is still going to those schools. I understand that the implication is that no funding under that particular allocation has been removed from previous allocations to make this additional money.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: But it actually says that a reallocation of \$13.1 million has occurred to fund these new upgrades. Obviously, it was there for primary school upgrades that were previously required.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I have been advised that the reallocation is from the forward estimates, so from future allocations rather than from already allocated funding.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I understand that the Department of Education has a very robust asset program. The funding in the forward estimates is done to achieve that program of upgrades. Obviously, some schools have fallen off that program, because the department does not just get a bucket of money that is not allocated.

Mr P. PAPALIA: As the member knows, the education department allocates funding to upgrades in the forward estimates without specifically allocating the money until it approaches a time closer to the budget requirement. In this case I think the member's concern was whether some schools that had been told they were going to get allocations from this particular area might have had those cancelled to achieve the reallocation. That is not the case. I can confirm that what is happening is that unallocated money from the forward estimates is being reallocated in this budget.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: I refer the minister to pages 164 and 165 of budget paper No 2, volume 1. On page 164 there is an item for public primary education and a table, and on page 165 there is an item for public secondary education and a table. Both tables include a total cost of service and a net cost of service. Does this cost of service for schools include funding for the ChemCentre to test for lead; and, if not, why not?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Why would those service allocations include a test for lead?

The CHAIR: Minister, I am not sure whether you can ask the questions.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: I am happy to take that. It is a good question. The reason is that Mr McCafferty, the CEO of the ChemCentre, made a recommendation on Wednesday, 6 September during a Public Accounts Committee inquiry hearing. The question was put to him —

... will you make those recommendations that all schools get checked?

His answer in part was —

... we certainly will.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Fortunately, Mr McCafferty is not responsible for the health standards in public schools; the Chief Health Officer is responsible for that. I can advise the member that there is no reason to test the water in our public schools in the same way that there is no reason to test water across the suburbs, towns or community centres of Western Australia. The whole interest in this matter has been generated by the fiasco that the previous government created at Perth Children's Hospital —

The CHAIR: Minister, I draw you back to the estimates.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Unlike that particular site, there is no indication that lead levels are rising in our children across the state. There is no catalyst for us to change practices or to address any particular issue, because it does not actually exist. As much as I am sure the member would like to scaremonger and create anxiety in the communities of Western Australia, there is really no need to do that. There is no need to test the water. However, what I can say is that some of the other observations that Mr McCafferty made were completely erroneous. It was nice of him to make the observation, but he is not the expert on school administration or the practices in schools. Schools are not left vacant for 10 weeks on end with no water being passed through the system. There is a regular cleaning program. There is flushing of the water systems in schools during school holidays as normal practice. When new schools are built, there is significant flushing of the water prior to any occupation by students. It is actually really quite scurrilous of the member to engage in this sort of scaremongering activity, although having witnessed his behaviour in Kalgoorlie yesterday or the other day —

The CHAIR: Minister!

Mr P. PAPALIA: — I am not surprised that he is engaging in this sort of behaviour. It is appropriate that we be responsible. When people hold public office they need to consider the impact of some of the things they say. In this case, there is no need and no requirement to conduct testing. Our water in our schools is safe. It is safe in our communities. In the event that some site is identified as having an issue, that is when we would test the water.

The CHAIR: Minister, if I can ask you to please keep as much as you can to the estimates questions and what has been asked.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Of course you can ask that, Chair.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: My question relates to information given to us by the head of the ChemCentre. It is not me as a shadow minister who is saying these things; it is the head of the ChemCentre. He indicated that he was going to have discussions with the Department of Education. Given the minister's answer, has the education department been providing additional information to Mr McCafferty?

The CHAIR: Minister, I guess that question fits within the context of estimates. Are you happy to take that question?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Yes, sure. If the member wants to continue with his scaremongering, that is fine. What I would say is that lead tests are conducted at the commissioning of every new school. As I said, the taps are flushed prior to the start of every new school year. The schools are never unoccupied or the taps untouched for 10 weeks, as erroneously claimed by Mr McCafferty in the evidence he gave. Taps are regularly used by cleaners as there is a cleaning program. As the member knows, many other people attend schools during school holidays. Schools are not barren wastelands where lead is allowed to accumulate. The whole premise of the question is based on some observations made by someone who does not have much to do with schools or school administration. It is nice that he made those observations, but the person responsible is the Chief Health Officer.

[10.30 am]

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: With respect, we are not scaremongering. We are repeating what the head of ChemCentre has said about lead. He stated —

... I think schools, as you have mentioned, are one of potential risk. One, you have a population of children. But in this particular case we believe part of the problem has been a period of stagnation, or low flow, and schools would have that just about every year with the summer vacation.

Surely, as a precautionary measure, it would be prudent to do some testing of some schools before children go back at the end of summer break to see whether what Mr McCafferty said is accurate. It is not scaremongering. It is just asking whether the Department of Education is considering doing this testing as a precaution for our students, as the head of ChemCentre has said he would recommend.

Mr P. PAPALIA: The head of ChemCentre did not know that schools' water systems are flushed at the start of every new year or that water lead levels are tested prior to commissioning a new school. He did not know a lot of things. He made some observations from a position of lack of knowledge. Taking that into account, there is no evidence of rising lead levels across the population of schoolchildren in Western Australia. Ultimately, the member is using this as an opportunity for her party to unnecessarily raise concerns across the population of Western Australia. I do not see much value in pursuing this line of questioning.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Does the education department liaise with the Chief Health Officer? Is the Chief Health Officer responsible for the quality of water in schools? It is my last question on this matter.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I can give the member a specific response from the Minister for Education and Training about lead testing. The minister has said that lead testing will be conducted at the commissioning of every new school and the taps will be flushed at the start of every new year. That is what she has committed to doing in response to any concerns that might arise.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: That is for new schools. Is the department not contemplating any testing of existing schools?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Not that I know of.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: The reason I am asking this is that in the estimates hearing yesterday, the Minister for Science said that it was the Minister for Education and Training's decision whether to engage with the chief executive officer of ChemCentre about testing for lead in schools as a result of his recommendations. Will the minister have discussions with the ChemCentre people about testing for lead as outlined in that Public Accounts Committee hearing?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I can say that the minister and Mr Fischer have already met with Mr McCafferty and discussed schools and the observations he made in the evidence he provided.

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B — Wednesday, 20 September 2017]

p283c-302a

Chair; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Paul Papalia; Mrs Liza Harvey; [9.10 Am]; Mr Peter Rundle; Amber-Jade Sanderson; Ms Emily Hamilton

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Will the minister provide supplementary information about the plan for testing schools as a result of the meeting between the Minister for Education and Training and ChemCentre?

Mr P. PAPALIA: No. As I indicated, the primary source of advice on the health of students in our schools is the Chief Health Officer. The minister and Mr Fischer also met with the Chief Health Officer and determined that that was unnecessary.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I refer to the fourth line item, "Improving Teacher Quality", under "Election Commitments" on page 160 of the budget papers. Can the minister outline this program?

Mr P. PAPALIA: That is one of the government's election commitments. It provides for half of the level 3 teachers in the state to have 0.1 of their time dedicated to mentor, teach and share their knowledge and to be leaders in classroom teaching practice. The member will be familiar with the additional skills of level 3 teachers. This program will provide them with a bit of time to share the benefits of their knowledge and to mentor others in schools. It will raise the standard of teaching and guide better practice.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: My wife is a level 3 teacher, so I am well familiar.

Mr P. PAPALIA: There you go. The member is all over it.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Given the difficulties in some regional schools, will this program be used to assist inexperienced teachers and principals in managing their schools?

Mr P. PAPALIA: This program will run in schools that have level 3 teachers. If a school has a level 3 teacher, it will benefit from it. Is the member talking about schools that do not have a level 3 teacher?

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Coming back to my original question about the outline of the program, if a school does not have a level 3 teacher, will someone be brought in from elsewhere? How will that work?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I might refer to the director general and ask that she answer the member's question.

Ms S. O'Neill: This program, as the minister has said, is for schools that have an existing level 3 teacher. Those schools that do not have a level 3 teacher on staff will benefit from existing statewide services that already provide direct support. We have a whole lot of teacher development schools, for example, that service regional schools and metropolitan schools that do not have level 3 teachers. Some level 3 teachers also provide outreach to other schools, as do the teacher development schools. This particular line item in the budget relates to the election commitment. Some of the FTE is for level 3 teachers to have 0.1 time to mentor and assist other teachers in the school and beyond. The other part of the commitment is for some level 3 teachers to have time to coordinate mental health programs, given the rising challenge that is in our schools. In total, the election commitment provides those schools with existing level 3 teachers to get 0.1 for either mental health coordination or the more common level 3 teacher support that the member's wife would give. Schools that do not have a level 3 teacher will get similar support through our statewide services and other support mechanisms.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Thank you. I am very supportive of the program.

Mr P. PAPALIA: It is a good program.

[10.40 am]

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: I refer to page 127 of budget paper No 3 and the line item "Respectful Relationship Programs in Schools". Can the minister please outline the idea of the curriculum for this program, for which funding of \$927 000 has been committed?

Mr P. PAPALIA: It is being provided by the Minister for Child Protection; Women's Interests; Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence; Community Services, and it is in her budget papers, not our own.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I refer to page 120 of budget paper No 3. There is additional expenditure totalling \$10.6 million for Aboriginal and Islander education officers. Is that \$10.6 million over 2017–18 to 2020–21 to be spent solely on recruitment or is any training component involved in that?

Mr P. PAPALIA: It provides for an additional 50 full-time equivalent Aboriginal and Islander education officers over two years, with 25 FTEs in 2018, and growing to 50 in 2019 in regional government schools. It will be provided through a targeted initiative that will specify that the funding is exclusively for secondary schools with a high proportion of Aboriginal students. Essentially, it is replacing what the member's government cut.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: With respect to the 50 Aboriginal and Islander education officers, can the minister outline how the recruitment process is going to work?

Mr P. PAPALIA: It will be in compliance with normal government practices for recruitment processes.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: What is the expected annual salary of these teachers?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I do not have the answer immediately. For an FTE it is about \$60 000, we think, but I would not want to be held to that as the absolutely correct response. That is a pretty easy answer to get as a supplementary, if the member wants.

The CHAIR: Just to be exact, it is the salary range.

Mr P. PAPALIA: It is the salary for an FTE. Clearly, there are 50 FTE positions, but many more people end up being employed in many cases because we have smaller components of that, such as the number of days a week, and there is a lot of leverage out of each of those FTEs.

The CHAIR: Is the minister sure of exactly what he is going to provide?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Yes.

[*Supplementary Information No B17.*]

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: It is just one of those programs that has proved problematic in the past to recruit for. I was just wondering whether there was a recent initiative to try to better engage with prospective candidates.

Mr P. PAPALIA: The focus will be on schools that have identified a need through a large proportion of Aboriginal students. I am not sure about the suggestion that it has been difficult to recruit. Perhaps that is an experience that the member for Scarborough might have witnessed.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: To recruit and retain.

Mr P. PAPALIA: From what I have witnessed in my electorate and from travelling around to other electorates with high Aboriginal representation, there are regularly some really high quality people attracted to do that role. I am certain that we will find good people who are committed to making a significant difference in their communities, particularly in some of those remote areas, as the member would be aware. Some of these people are the difference between kids going to school and not and feeling comfortable about going to that environment and not. Often they can apply significant pressure to ensure the kids get out of bed in the morning and attend. That is the sort of person whom we will be looking for. We acknowledge that sometimes those people might need more support than what might otherwise be the case with an EA. That is understood and the benefits that they provide are easily significant enough to justify this program. We have always committed to it; we have always believed in the value of Aboriginal and Islander education officers and promised during the election campaign that we would deliver that commitment.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I hope it works. I refer to page 6 of budget paper No 3 and the voluntary targeted separation scheme. How many department staff members have been invited to express an interest in the VTSS and from which divisions and business units?

Mr P. PAPALIA: The department is still examining that process and there is no specific plan as yet. It is still under consideration.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: The department has not identified the business units that might be targeted or when that scheme will be operational?

Mr P. PAPALIA: No.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: To achieve the savings that the government is required to achieve, how many education department employees will need to seek voluntary separation?

Mr P. PAPALIA: The department has not been allocated a target saving yet.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I thought that the department would have a role as part of the \$355 million worth of savings to be booked this budget year.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Clearly, it will have a role, but it has not been allocated a specific target as yet.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: I refer to the title "Improving Teacher Quality" on page 120 of budget paper No 3 and the allocation of \$31.7 million for level 3 teachers to mentor less experienced teachers. Will it take teachers out of the classroom for long periods?

Mr P. PAPALIA: As indicated in the response to the member for Roe, it is 0.1 of an FTE for a week. Essentially, half a day in the school week is funded to ensure that level 3 teachers are able to mentor, train and guide other teachers and raise the teaching standards. The funding means that the classrooms are not left unattended or anything of that nature. It provides additional funding to cover the classroom from which the level 3 teacher moves, but the benefit resides in the mentoring, instruction and support that is provided to other teachers to elevate their teaching standards.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Is the minister able to provide, as supplementary information, the percentage of that \$31.7 million that is to go to the level 3 teacher in terms of a promotion allowance, for example, and the percentage that is allocated to backfilling the classroom for the 0.1 FTE, which the minister just mentioned, while they are away?

Mr P. PAPALIA: It is all for relieving the level 3 teacher whilst they mentor and train other teachers, as the member for Roe's wife does. It is not to create new level 3 positions. That is just part of the Education budget. They are already paid in excess of other teachers, which the member is aware of. The system creates, trains and fosters level 3 teachers already.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: To confirm, the \$31.7 million is for that 0.1 FTE allocated to —

Mr P. PAPALIA: The last government cut a significant amount and we are replacing it.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: I am just confirming that it is for that 0.1 FTE.

Mr P. PAPALIA: That is what it is for.

[10.50 am]

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I refer to the election commitments on page 160 of budget paper No 2. Line item 5 refers to independent learning coordinators. Can the minister provide a breakdown of where these coordinators will be stationed?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Independent learning coordinators will be appointed to 10 key regional high schools in Albany, Collie, Kalgoorlie, Geraldton, Carnarvon, Karratha, Newman, Port Hedland, Broome and Kununurra.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I refer to page 159 of budget paper No 2. The total appropriations are flatlining in the out years, which seems to be contrary to the growth the department has announced for teachers' assistants and others. This does not take into account any escalation for growth or student numbers. I put it to the minister that it is a cut in real terms in the out years.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Unfortunately, the total appropriations reflect some changes in the federal government allocations but the member will see that the total cost of services allocation is growing and the total funding from the state government grows.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: I refer to "Other Spending" on page 119 of budget paper No 3 and the line item for the boarding away from home allowance. Can the minister explain why no money is allocated for this fiscal year and why there has been a cut of \$400 000 in 2018–19?

Mr P. PAPALIA: The table on page 119 shows major spending changes. The reason there is no item in the column for this year is that the money is already there and there is no change to that. What was the other part of the member's question?

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: In 2018–19, there is a reduction of \$400 000. Why has there been a cut?

Mr P. PAPALIA: That is a net impact on the allocation. I think we responded to the member for Roe's question on this earlier. There is an impact as a consequence of the royalties for regions top-up of this allowance. The allowance will continue but it has tapered down as a consequence of the impact on the budget of the former government's appalling mismanagement of the state's finances. Beyond that, there is still an allocation but, by necessity, it tapers down over time. If members opposite block \$800 million of forward estimates revenue-raising measures, we will be in a world of hurt trying to even meet the current budget.

The CHAIR: Minister, if you could just focus on the estimates aspects.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am absolutely focused, Chair.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: The minister indicated that funding would not be cut to the boarding away from home allowance in 2018–19. Where has that \$400 000 been allocated in the budget papers?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Sorry; can the member say that again?

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: On page 119, in 2018–19, the line item is for a reduction of \$400 000. In the minister's answer, he said the services were still being provided.

Mr P. PAPALIA: No. The question the member first asked was: why is there no figure in this year's current column?

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Yes; the minister answered that. He said it was to do with changes.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I said it was because the money had already been allocated and there was no change to the allocation.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Correct; no change is understood.

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B — Wednesday, 20 September 2017]

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Chair; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Paul Papalia; Mrs Liza Harvey; [9.10 Am]; Mr Peter Rundle; Amber-Jade Sanderson; Ms Emily Hamilton

Mr P. PAPALIA: Clearly, there is a net impact of minus \$400 000 in next year's financial column.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Yes, and I am asking why.

Mr P. PAPALIA: As I said to the member for Roe, the impact is a consequence of the former government's appalling mismanagement of the state's finances. We have had to reassess all allocations of all money, including royalties for regions and consolidated allocations. We have prioritised them and used that money we need, by necessity, to get the best outcome for taxpayers. A consequence is that this allowance has, unfortunately, been impacted.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Right.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I reiterate that in the event that members opposite remove \$800 million of revenue-raising measures out of our forward estimates, it will be worse than this.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Okay. The minister is basically saying that the allowance existed before and it has now been reduced by the tune of \$400 000 for those people who would have accessed it.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Does the member want me to point out that the allowance was topped up by royalties for regions funds before —

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: The minister will get full points for staying on theme.

Mr P. PAPALIA: The allowance existed, then under the former government's extraordinary processes, and an allocation would be made on an annual basis from within the royalties for regions part of the budget—that other budget that existed concurrently with the main budget. On an annual basis, the money might or might not be allocated. People would be left guessing and they would just have to wait until it was announced whether the Hercules would fly over and someone would kick the money out the back that year. The parachute would open and the cargo cult mentality that was engendered in the regions by the Nationals in particular, and also the Liberal government, would result in people expecting that the money would come every year, even if it was not in the forward estimates. The member is now looking at a proper forward estimates process in which the forward estimates are used for budget management and so people can know what the state owes, what it can afford to pay and where money will be allocated. That is what is happening.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I point to page 119 of budget paper No 3 under the line item “Internal Reallocation to Fund Election Commitments” and the transfer of up to 120 transportable buildings. I understand that the majority of those are from regional areas, including my old year 8 classroom at Katanning. Where are these buildings being transferred to? What is the purpose of sending classrooms elsewhere that are being fully utilised at their current schools?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I sympathise with the loss of the member's year 8 classroom and the impact that insult had on his psyche! Unfortunately, the issue the member raises does not fall within those saving measures. The internal reallocation to fund election commitments had nothing to do with demountables. I read out some of the key elements of that reallocation. I can refer to them again. They include an equity adjustment to the student-centred funding model, which we have discussed; the cessation of the administrative grant to independent public schools, which we have discussed; a reduction in senior executive service positions, which is a high-profile measure that we have talked about; and some other things, including central office fleet management efficiencies and administrative processes. It does not incorporate the issue to which the member referred. There is a pool of demountables across the state that the Department of Education manages and they are removed or reallocated to schools as they are needed in direct response to population growth or a diminishing population in any school. It is not a nasty measure that is imposed on people to achieve some sort of budget outcome each year. This year, I am told, 69 will be relocated across the state—so it is not just a case of picking on Katanning—and 85 new ones have been purchased. I know that they are moved, and I have seen them being moved. My outer metropolitan electorate has an extraordinarily high number of demountables, which represents a significant population growth in a short period, exceeding the capacity to build new classrooms. As schools stabilise and more schools are brought online in a particular geographical area, and the population diminishes, some of those demountables will no longer be required. It would be wrong for them to stay in those schools, because it would deprive other schools with a higher population density of more appropriate accommodation and buildings would be left under-utilised. There is nothing mean going on in savings measures in the member's electorate.

[11.00 am]

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Is there a particular line item in relation to that or is it just an internal process?

Mr P. PAPALIA: There would not be a line item for moving the demountables around, because that is just a normal practice that goes on from year to year in responding to demand. I am sure there would be a line item for the purchase of new demountables, because that is a capital investment. I am told there is a line item in the asset investment program, and I am trying to find it for the member. The line item is on page 170 of budget paper No 2 in

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the table for works in progress. About four-fifths of the way down the page, there is a line item for transportable classrooms with an estimated total cost of \$25.83 million. This year's budget estimate is \$4.5 million, and then \$4.613 million in each of the out years. It is an ongoing allocation to buy new transportable classrooms.

[Mr R.S. Love took the chair.]

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I refer to the fourth dot point on page 161 of budget paper No 2, which refers to science in schools, and reads, in part —

Continuing strategies for public schools include training and developing teachers, and engagement with universities on teacher education.

Is this training program occurring across all schools or only in the schools that currently have science labs?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I might get the director general to respond to that.

Ms S. O'Neill: We have a range of strategies to develop teachers' skills, knowledge and understanding in science, particularly in the context of science, technology, engineering and mathematics—STEM. We already have teacher development schools. We have partnerships with Scitech, which complements the work that we do on teacher development and runs well-regarded programs in schools with teachers. From time to time we do ongoing work with universities, delivering professional development with science associations and with our schools.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Obviously, it is important to have the infrastructure in place for this program. I know that there was a program to refit classrooms as science labs. Currently, what proportion of our primary schools have science labs or have submitted applications to have classrooms made into science labs?

Mr P. PAPALIA: This is in response to an election commitment. The intention is to convert some rooms at primary schools that do not currently have science laboratories to that end. I ask the director general to respond.

Ms S. O'Neill: Unlike in secondary schools, where there are dedicated science labs, most primary schools either are built with or have a multipurpose room. The member has been in plenty of them, and she will see that they are used for art, science, drama or music. Most schools have a multipurpose area. The election commitment is to make provision in 200 primary schools for conversion of that area so that it can be used appropriately for science—having regard to things like appropriate floor coverings for wet activities, sinks and storage so that the school can use the area for primary science activities. The 200 schools that get science labs will be able to access \$25 000 resource grants so that they will be able to fit out the science lab with the appropriate equipment and materials.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: I refer the minister to the line item under outcome 2 on page 163 of budget paper No 2 that reads —

Percentage of reviewed Independent Public Schools that have met service and delivery requirements

The minister will see that 100 per cent have met those requirements. Given the success of the independent public school scheme, when is the next round expected?

Mr P. PAPALIA: The decision on the actual timing of the round has not yet been determined.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Will the minister be able to provide supplementary information about when that will be provided?

Mr P. PAPALIA: The problem is that the member is talking about a deadline of nine days, and the matter will probably not have been determined in that time frame. It is an ongoing process, and it is being discussed. I am sure that the minister will announce something of that significance at the time; we will not be trying to hide it, so I would not worry too much about exposing it to the public when appropriate.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Linked to that program, will independent public schools be required to take redeployed teachers?

Mr P. PAPALIA: No, they will have to consider them in the same way as all schools will have to, but they will not be made to take people from within the pool.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I refer to the line item “Revisions to Student Enrolment and Cost Growth Forecasts” under “Spending Changes” on page 160 of budget paper No 2. Can the minister advise of the predictions for student enrolments in the out years?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I could read them out, but would the member like me to get the department to compile these figures into a table so that they can be read easily and provide it as supplementary information?

[11.10 am]

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: If the minister could provide them as a table by way of supplementary information, that would be terrific and include a breakdown between primary schools and high schools?

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Mr P. PAPALIA: I am told that we can provide that.

The CHAIR: Since we have had another interruption, can you restate for Hansard exactly what you want?

Mr P. PAPALIA: The reference is the line item “Revisions to Student Enrolment and Cost Growth Forecasts” under “Spending Changes” on page 160 of volume 2 of budget paper No 2. I agree to provide a table containing the student enrolments forecast for both primary and secondary public schools for each year of the forward estimates and what that enrolment forecast represents in the way of percentage growth.

[*Supplementary Information No B18.*]

The appropriation was recommended.

Meeting suspended from 11.10 to 11.25 am