

22 JUNE 2001

(GENERAL PURPOSE STANDING COMMITTEE NO. 1)

PORTFOLIO

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

QUESTIONS TAKEN ON NOTICE

1. Mrs Forsythe asked the Minister for Education and Training, the Hon John Aquilina, MP—

(Relevant area in Hansard: p3, top)

Can you explain why the enrolment figures for Ultimo Public School have changed so dramatically in the last 10 years?

Answer:

Enrolment changes at Ultimo Public School have not been dramatic. The net change in total enrolments at Ultimo Public School and two adjacent schools has been a decline of five per cent.

2. Mrs Forsythe asked the Minister for Education and Training, the Hon John Aquilina, MP—

(Relevant area in Hansard: p3, bottom)

Can you please supply a list of the schools where land valuations were sought prior to the release of the Building the Futures proposal?

Answer:

In relation to school valuations in the inner city, valuations were carried out on Maroubra High School, Maroubra Junction Infants, Erskineville Public School, Waterloo Public School, Marrickville High School, Redfern Public School, Chatswood High School, Vacluse High School, Alexandria Public School, St Peters Public School, Malvina High School, Hunters Hill High School and Dover Heights High School.

3. Dr Wong asked the Minister for Education and Training, the Hon John Aquilina, MP—

(Relevant area in Hansard: p9, middle)

Could you please provide a copy of the multicultural strategy referred to in evidence?

Answer:

The Department of Education and Training is currently revising its multicultural strategy. As soon as it is complete a copy will be made available.

4. Mrs Forsythe asked the Minister for Education and Training, the Hon John Aquilina, MP—

(Relevant area in Hansard: p 12, middle)

- (1) In relation to school security, what performance indicators are kept on the system for the centre for the back-to-base monitoring of school alarms?

(Relevant area in Hansard: p 13, top)

- (2) How many alarm activations on a daily basis would be false alarms?
- (3) What is the average response time by security guards contracted to follow up on the alarm activations?
- (4) Please provide a list of the number of activations on an average daily basis and the number of those that turn out to be false alarms?

Answer:

- (1) The Department of Education and Training's School Security Unit utilises a number of performance indicators on the school alarm system and contracted guard services. These indicators include:
- monitoring alarm response times, meeting regularly with security guard contractors to ensure performance levels are maintained;
 - measuring the gathered data against the physical inspections to assess the accuracy of reported data;
 - gathering, monitoring and reporting on the number of illegal activities and client caused alarms, across the State, district by district and within individual schools to focus resources to address any reported increase in security incidents;
 - assessing comparisons between the school alarm categories for each school district; and
 - monitoring the performance of the School Security Unit's technical maintenance staff to ensure serious faults in the alarm system are rectified within the next working day.
- (2) During the past twelve months, close to 30 per cent of guard response to school alarm activations were for security incidents. The remaining 70 per cent of alarm responses were the result of a number of factors including community users, contractors, school staff and technical fault. The profile of responses is consistent with experience in the security industry for alarm systems.
- (3) The Australian Standard *AS 4421-1996 Guards and Patrols* indicates that the minimum security guard response to an alarm is 30 minutes. The Department of Education and Training's security guard contracts have response times set at better than the Australian Standard. The Department aims to have a response guard attend the school as a matter of urgency and there are incentives in the contracts for recorded guard responses below the specified time period.
- (4) Specific information on the Department of Education and Training's school alarm system cannot be provided for security reasons.

5. Mr Moppett asked the Minister for Education and Training, the Hon John Aquilina, MP—

(Relevant area in Hansard: p 21, middle)

- (1) What is the proposed budget allocation for the School of the Air following the evaluation of new technology?

- (2) Will School of the Air services incorporating new technology from the evaluation be ready and in operation for the beginning of the school term next year?

Answer:

- (1) The Department of Education and Training is committed to replacing the current distance education radio network. Evaluation of replacement technologies is continuing. Budget allocation will be determined once the technology alternative has been decided.
- (2) Until the alternative technology is determined it is not possible to provide a date for its introduction.

6. Mr Moppett asked the Minister for Education and Training, the Hon John Aquilina, MP—

(Relevant area in Hansard: p 22, middle)

- (1) When will the trial provision of pre-school facilities via radio for the School of the Air be confirmed as a permanent program?
- (2) When will the provision of pre-school facilities via the School of the Air be expanded to cope with the number of children who attempt to enrol and are refused because the facilities are not available?

Answer:

- (1) A pre-school service operates from the Dubbo School of Distance Education for children who will enrol in distance education. No radio provision has ever been made specifically for this pre-school service.
- (2) I am advised that no application which has met the terms of the Distance Education Enrolment Guidelines has ever been refused because “the facilities are not available”.