

REGIONAL INVESTMENT FUND, ADVERTISING COSTS

938. Hon BARRY HOUSE to the Minister for Local Government and Regional Development:

My question is without notice to the minister.

- (1) What is the cost of the television and other media advertising campaigns for next year's proposed regional investment fund, which commenced recently?

Hon Nick Griffiths: This is a question without notice!

Hon BARRY HOUSE: Well -

Hon Nick Griffiths: And you want it down to the last cent!

Hon BARRY HOUSE: The Government made a huge media announcement -

The PRESIDENT: Order! Hon Barry House - will complete the question and the minister will not interject until it is finished.

Hon BARRY HOUSE: The fund was announced publicly in Bunbury; I therefore expect the minister to know these sorts of things. The question continues -

- (2) Is it not a fact that there are currently no funds in this account?
- (3) Is this not another blatant case of political advertising in the lead-up to a general election, which should be paid for by the Labor Party, not the taxpayer?

The PRESIDENT: The third part of the question is out of order, but the first two parts are in order.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH replied:

- (1)-(3) I thank the honourable member for the question, although no notice was given. The regional infrastructure fund has been a very successful initiative introduced by this Government.

Hon Kim Chance: Hear, hear! It has created 3 400 regional jobs.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: I think it is closer to 3 500 regional jobs.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The Hansard staff are not recording interjections.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Because of the success of this project -

Hon Murray Criddle: What project?

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: The fund. Because of the success of the fund, we are allocating an additional \$80 million, as we will fund \$20 million a year over the next four years. This initiative is in response to this Government's recognition that some pressure has been placed on infrastructure due to the massive economic growth and level of unprecedented economic activity in the State. Western Australia has an economic growth rate in the order of 6.8 per cent. This initiative is the Government's response in meeting some of the challenges of those infrastructure pressures.

Hon Norman Moore interjected.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: The member is quite correct: it is the regional investment fund. However, we have indicated that the moneys are there and will be allocated, unlike the Pilbara fund. I am glad the member asked this question. It gives me an opportunity to mark the difference between this side of the Chamber and the other side of the Chamber. The simple fact is that we have allocated the amount we intend to spend on this specific project, unlike Hon Norman Moore and the Leader of the Opposition.

Point of Order

Hon PETER FOSS: I know that it is possible to wander around an answer but eventually the minister must either answer the question or refuse to answer the question about the cost of the advertising. Mr President, can you draw the minister's attention to getting on with the answer to the question?

The PRESIDENT: I am sure that the minister would be able to draw her comments to a swift conclusion if she did not receive quite so much help in answering the question from five or six other sources.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: I wanted to mark the contrast between members on this side of the Chamber and those on the other side of the Chamber, because Hon Norman Moore and the Leader of the Opposition sold a \$50 million power plant fund for which he had only \$25 million.

Extract from *Hansard*

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Hon Barry House; President; Hon Ljiljana Ravlich; Hon Peter Foss; Hon Norman Moore

Point of Order

Hon NORMAN MOORE: I make the same point of order that was raised by Hon Peter Foss. The minister made a ministerial statement the other day during member's statements, which I am happy to respond to later today, but could she answer the question?

The PRESIDENT: There is no point of order.

Questions without Notice Resumed