

FISHERIES — DISTRICT OFFICE CLOSURES

644. Mr V.A. CATANIA to the Minister for Fisheries:

I refer to the proposed closure of Fisheries shopfronts in key fishing locations in Denham, Carnarvon, Exmouth and Karratha, which are utilised by both recreational and commercial operators to seek important information and purchase licences.

- (1) When does the minister expect these closures to take effect?
- (2) Other than the internet, which not everyone is able to access, how does the minister intend to ensure that the public is able to interact with the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development's Fisheries teams, access information to ensure they are complying with the requirements and pay for necessary licences, especially if they do not possess a credit card?
- (3) What impact will these closures have on full-time employees and the headcount within Fisheries' service-delivery areas of the department?

Mr D.J. KELLY replied:

- (1)–(3) That is an interesting question from the National Party—to ask about head counts and service delivery out of the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development. As members of the house will know, under the previous government, certainly the agriculture side of DPIRD was absolutely gutted. For the National Party to preside over the level of cuts that that department saw, is quite extraordinary. You really have no shame.

Ms M.J. Davies interjected.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the National Party!

Mr D.J. KELLY: Yesterday, I outlined the devastating impact that the Water Corporation had on families who had their water cut off, especially in the agricultural region. The member for Central Wheatbelt —

Point of Order

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Mr Speaker, I have asked a specific question about Fisheries, not about the Department of Water and the Water Corporation. Can the minister please answer that question.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members! I want to hear this is silence. Start again.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Mr Speaker, the minister is not answering the question. I asked specifically about Fisheries and the shopfronts that Fisheries has in those towns, not about the Department of Water or the Water Corporation or anything else.

The SPEAKER: Okay. It is a point of order. Minister, you will get back to the question.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr D.J. KELLY: For the member's benefit, I was just taking the interjection from the member for Central Wheatbelt.

Mr V.A. Catania: Answer the question. That's the benefit that we want.

Mr D.J. KELLY: Yesterday, when I pointed out those figures about job losses and the impact on families in the agricultural region, the member for Central Wheatbelt said nothing during that time, but I notice that now she is interjecting.

To the point that the member raised, when we came to government, we amalgamated the old Department of Agriculture with Fisheries to create the new DPIRD. In the last budget, I think the figure was \$130 million worth of additional funding to enable that new amalgamated department to get back on its feet after the disastrous state that the former government left it in. So for the member to come in here and ask a question like this really shows that he did not know what was happening in that department.

Mr V.A. Catania interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for North West Central, you will if you kept quiet.

Mr D.J. KELLY: That just shows that either he did not know what was going on under the previous government, or, and probably more likely, he did not care.

In respect of the over-the-counter services that the member referred to, I think it is in five locations, as part of getting that department back on its feet, we have rationalised some of the shopfronts. In the locations that the member has talked about, where those over-the-counter services will not be provided from the old fisheries department site, those services will be provided through either a DPIRD office or a community resource centre. I know the member says he is very supportive of the role that community resource centres provide. In each of

those locations, an over-the-counter service will still be provided. We have rationalised the resources, to try to fix some of the budget mess that the member and his mates left for us to inherit. People will still be able to access those services, but through a rationalisation. They will do it through either a DPIRD site or a community resource centre.

In respect to job losses, there will be no compulsory redundancies as a result. No-one will lose their job. I can say to the member that we have had some very constructive discussions with the Community and Public Sector Union—Civil Service Association of WA, which is the main union representing DPIRD staff. It has raised a number of issues—not this one in particular, but a number of other issues—and we have addressed virtually all of them.

Ms M.J. Davies interjected.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the National Party!

Mr D.J. KELLY: What was that, Leader of the National Party?

Ms M.J. Davies interjected.

Mr D.J. KELLY: When the National Party cut 400 jobs out of the Water Corporation, including 100 out of regional WA —

Ms M.J. Davies interjected.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the National Party! Minister, talk through the Chair; and, Leader of the National Party, no interjections.

Mr D.J. KELLY: When the National Party cut 400 jobs out of the Water Corporation, including 100 out of regional Western Australia, when the Leader of the National Party was the minister responsible, the National Party had a very poor relationship with the CPSU—CSA, because every time people came to work —

The SPEAKER: Minister, can you get back to the answer to the question.

Mr D.J. KELLY: Sorry. I thought I was being interjected upon.

Ms M.J. Davies interjected.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the National Party, I call you to order for the first time. You can hear me, can you not?

Mr D.J. KELLY: We have a very good relationship with the CPSU—CSA. The issues that it raised with us have largely been resolved, and we have given it a commitment that throughout the whole department, there will be no compulsory redundancies. So we are very pleased with what we have done. Sometimes we have to make difficult decisions when we are in government, especially when we start with a department that has been absolutely gutted by the previous government, and when the overall budgetary position that we have been left with is terrible.

Before the member for North West Central comes into this place and asks questions like that, he really should take ownership of what he has done in particular to the public sector.