

KALGOORLIE ELECTORATE, LABOR CANDIDATE

752. Hon BARRY HOUSE to the Minister for Local Government and Regional Development; the Kimberley, Pilbara and Gascoyne:

Is the minister aware of an article in yesterday's *Kalgoorlie Miner* titled "State policies blamed for loss", which contains comments of the defeated federal Labor candidate for the seat of Kalgoorlie, Mr Paul Browning, including -

"The State Government needs to develop with some urgency a measure of political smarts if it is to avoid complete annihilation at the next election in my view."

One-vote, one-value, law reform and the ailing health system were the three areas in the State domain which Mr Browning said had been particularly damaging.

As the member for the Mining and Pastoral Region, which incorporates most of the federal seat of Kalgoorlie, and as the minister responsible for these important portfolio areas, what changes to these policy directions does the minister intend to recommend to the Government of which he is a member?

Hon TOM STEPHENS replied:

I was watching to see whether any part of the question would be ruled in order.

The PRESIDENT: The last part of the question was veering towards being in order.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: I was wondering whether that part of the question in which I was asked whether, in my capacity as a local member of Parliament, I agreed with the report in the -

Hon Barry House: No, in your ministerial capacity.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: Under my ministerial responsibilities - I see. Saturday's election was a contest between -

The PRESIDENT: Order! I hope the minister is not answering the part of the question that is not in order.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: I will answer it in this way: in my capacity as minister with responsibility for local government and regional development; the Kimberley, Pilbara and Gascoyne, I will not recommend, as a result of Saturday's election, any change in the policy of the State Government on any of the issues on which it is currently focused. The reason I will not make recommendations for a change of policy, or implement any change of policy, is that in Saturday's election the voters of our State, including those in the federal electorate of Kalgoorlie, went to the polls knowing that they were voting for the party that would represent them in their electorate and in the federal Government. They made a decision to entrust the Liberal Party with both those tasks.

As the member knows, the backdrop to those issues was the overwhelmingly results that flowed from the tragic events on 11 September, the need for people to rally behind the federal Government, and the issues that arose concerning the MV *Tampa*. The member tried last Thursday, and has tried again today, to politicise the issues surrounding those people on temporary resident visas and to make political capital at the expense of people in great need. The member will know that last Saturday's election had little to do with policy issues. As the Premier of Western Australia has said in the other House, and as I say today, Mr Browning and Mr Birney are wrong. If the member is suggesting they are right, he is wrong too.