

OOMBULGURRI — RETENTION OF NURSES AND POLICE OFFICERS

**460. Hon SALLY TALBOT to the Minister for Indigenous Affairs:**

Given that the minister has told us repeatedly that he regards his role as one of a coordinator, has the minister discussed with his ministerial colleagues the question about how much longer the two nurses and two police officers will remain at Oombulgurri?

**Hon PETER COLLIER replied:**

I thank the honourable member for the question.

The situation at Oombulgurri is a very vexed issue—it really is. I just say at the outset that nobody from Oombulgurri has been forced to leave the community; that needs to be established.

**Hon Sally Talbot:** That might be your view, but it's not their view.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** I am sorry, honourable member, but that is the view. This issue comes up on a daily basis.

**Hon Sally Talbot:** I'll find you lots of people who say that they were forced to leave.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** Can the member just listen for a minute, please? I am trying to answer her question.

**The PRESIDENT:** Order! The question has been asked. Let us hear the answer.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** Service delivery is gradually being removed from Oombulgurri. The chief operating officer has provided a report and the report contains a number of recommendations. At the moment I am waiting for some recommendations from the Department of Housing to determine what is going to happen with the housing in the community and what improvements need to be made to the housing in that community for the long-term strategy. What we will do with the asset management of the Oombulgurri community is still to be decided. However, I am in constant dialogue with my ministerial colleagues on service delivery within the community. As I said, Oombulgurri has a very chequered past. The advice that I receive consistently is that nobody has been forced to leave Oombulgurri. I received exactly the same letter as the honourable member did, so I know which letter she is referring to.

**Hon Sally Talbot:** It's not just the letter.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** I got exactly the same letter, and I am sure that if the honourable member had followed up on that letter, she would have found that a number of the accusations made in it were not accurate.

**Hon Sally Talbot:** But you are investigating it now. You told us on Tuesday that you are investigating the claims.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** Yes, we are.

**Hon Sally Talbot:** So, have you investigated them now?

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** I have just responded to that. I have just said that a number of the accusations made within that letter are inaccurate. One of the accusations was that the property of some of the people was removed. I have asked the Department of Indigenous Affairs to investigate that and a couple of other areas. I received that letter. I immediately followed up on that letter. But I will say at the outset—I give this information to the honourable member with complete sincerity—that a number of accusations that were made in that letter are inaccurate. I think the honourable member will find, if she speaks to the author of that letter, that he will verify that.