

BELMONT CITY COUNCIL, REPORT OF THE INQUIRY

**527. Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON to the Minister for Housing and Works:**

Each month for the past three months I have asked the minister when he expects to receive the report of the inquiry into the Belmont City Council. The answer invariably has been, "Next month".

- (1) Is this month next month?
- (2) When does the minister expect to receive the report of the inquiry into the City of Belmont?
- (3) Have all persons who may be the subject of adverse observation in the report been given an opportunity to respond to those adverse observations?

**Hon TOM STEPHENS replied:**

I thank the member for his question. He alerted me in general terms earlier in the week to the fact that he would ask me a question on this subject. I will respond with the briefing note that has been prepared for me.

- (1)-(3) I have been informed by the Department of Local Government and Regional Development that it has completed the first draft of the report of this authorised inquiry. The department is currently in the process of identifying any adverse comments contained within that report. The department will then prepare correspondence to any people who may have had adverse comments made against them, to enable them to respond to those comments prior to the report being made available to me, my office or my staff. This is a necessary, natural justice procedure to ensure procedural fairness. I understand that any person about whom adverse comments are made in the report will be given a copy of those comments and will have the opportunity to respond. Those responses will be examined by the Department of Local Government and Regional Development and the Crown Solicitor's Office before a final report is presented to me. I make it clear that I have not yet received a report. The process appears to be one in which the department will put the information in a particular format before the issue is delivered to me. I have found it to be an interesting process. The Department of Local Government and Regional Development officers who handle this area have learnt a lot about how best to go through these processes. They have gone through a baptism of fire with recent inquiries, and so are being particularly careful and meticulous in the way in which they are handling these issues in the hope that they can deliver to anyone about whom adverse comments may be made procedural fairness before anything is put in my direction. I have been left with the general impression that I will see something next month.