

ELECTORAL REFORM — LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

**15. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Premier:**

I refer to the announcement of the government's intention to pursue electoral reform in the Legislative Council, despite repeated statements from the Premier prior to the state election that this was not on the government's agenda.

- (1) Did the Premier mislead the people of Western Australia?
- (2) Did all 21 regional MPs in cabinet and caucus agree to pursue an electoral reform agenda, thereby agreeing to disenfranchise regional voters?

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr M. McGOWAN replied:**

- (1)–(2) Obviously, at the election a few dramatic things happened. One of them was that a gentleman who lived in America was elected to the Legislative Council with 98 votes—98 votes. He was elected for a region that fundamentally opposes what he stood for. This young gentleman, Mr Tucker, got 98 votes. His success was orchestrated by Mr Glenn Druery, who we will all be familiar with. Glenn Druery makes a business of getting around organising voting tickets, in upper houses in particular, to ensure that certain people with a low number of votes get an opportunity to get elected, and then he gets a payment at the end of it. I understand that he got a \$50 000 payment as a consequence of this. Mr Tucker was elected to the Mining and Pastoral Region with 0.2 per cent of the vote, or 98 votes. The Liberal Party in the South Metropolitan Region got one member elected with 67 000 votes. That is 67 000 votes for one Liberal member and 98 votes for one Daylight Saving Party member. In what world is that fair? In what world is that sensible? This has occurred. Apparently, Mr Druery, who I do not know or hold any ill will towards, said words to the effect that getting Mr Tucker elected to the Legislative Council was his finest work yet. The Western Australian electoral system allows for this, and this should not stand.

We also have a situation—this is very interesting; I was not aware of it—whereby a vote for the upper house of Western Australia in Kalgoorlie is worth 3.48 times a vote in Albany. Someone's vote at the polling booth in Kalgoorlie is worth three and a half times someone's vote in Albany. As fine as Kalgoorlie is, member for Kalgoorlie, with very fine and wise people in their choice of a local member of Parliament, a vote in Kalgoorlie is worth 1.48 times—in effect, one and a half times—a vote in Esperance. Kalgoorlie is a wonderful place. It does a lot for the state. It has a railway, an airport and certain other things available to it that Esperance does not. Esperance is actually further from the city than Kalgoorlie, but a vote in Kalgoorlie is worth one and a half times a vote in Esperance. Also, a vote in Wundowie, just out of Perth, is worth four times the value of a vote in Wooroloo. Wooroloo is nine kilometres away from Wundowie, but a person's vote in Wundowie is worth four times that of a person's vote in Wooroloo. Does anyone think that any of those things is fair? Does the Leader of the Opposition think that that is fair? She does not answer. Our role should be to promote fairness.

What the Attorney General has done is to get Mr McCusker, QC, an eminent Western Australian, to look at all these issues. Mr McCusker is a former Governor of Western Australia. He is a highly respected local citizen. He will have a look at all of that and come back with a report for us to examine. How were we to know prior to the state election that someone from the Daylight Saving Party would be elected with 98 votes and that only one person from the Liberal Party would be elected in the South Metropolitan Region with 67 000 votes? How were we to know that? We will get Mr McCusker to look at that. We will make sure that we examine what he brings back so that we can look at the fairness of the system.