

CITY OF BELMONT, INQUIRY

1064. Mr J.P.D. EDWARDS to the minister representing the Minister for Local Government and Regional Development:

I refer the minister to the "Report of the Inquiry into the City of Belmont", tabled on 10 April 2003, and to the Minister for Local Government and Regional Development's press release of 25 August regarding the Government's response to the Belmont inquiry, in which he stated -

... the inquiry had identified shortcomings in the council's governance and recommended significant improvements to its administration.

- (1) Can the minister advise what steps have been taken to implement the recommendations of the inquiry?
- (2) In particular, what action has the Department of Local Government and Regional Development taken on recommendation 10 of the inquiry, which deals with Colin Evans, a director of Urban Focus as an employee of the city, not complying with the financial interest obligations placed on him under the Local Government Act 1995?
- (3) What involvement did the minister have in reviewing an early draft of the report of the inquiry and in removing recommendations that the minister establish an inquiry panel in accordance with the Local Government Act similar to those set up in the Cities of South Perth and Cockburn?
- (4) If the minister did not change the initial recommendation, who did and why?

Mr J.C. KOBELKE replied:

I thank the member for some considerable notice of the question. The answer I have was provided by the Minister for Local Government and Regional Development on Thursday, 28 August. It was only a few minutes or so before the start of question time that I was advised that this question would be asked today. This answer was correct at that date. Matters that may have transpired since are not addressed in this answer provided by the Minister for Local Government and Regional Development.

- (1) The City of Belmont has advised that it has made progress in implementing the inquiry recommendations. The minister has deliberated over the city's response and required it to implement two of the recommendations within 28 days. The Department of Local Government and Regional Development has completed the actions required by the inquiry recommendations.
- (2) The relevant documentation and information has been forwarded to the Crown Solicitor's Office for consideration of prosecution.
- (3) The minister was not involved in reviewing early drafts of the report. The minister has been advised that early drafts of the report did not contain any recommendations.
- (4) The minister is informed that a number of options were considered by the authorised officers before finalising the report.