

KIMBERLEY REGIONAL ALCOHOL MANAGEMENT PLAN

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

I refer to the Barnett government's 2008 promise to introduce a Kimberley regional alcohol management plan.

- (1) Does the minister agree with the Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Culture Centre chairman, Wes Morris, that such a plan would reduce abuse, self-harm and suicide rates?
- (2) If yes to (1), has the minister raised the urgent need for action with his colleague Hon Helen Morton, the new Minister for Mental Health?
- (3) If no to (1), does the minister have alternative strategies in mind, and when does he plan to share his thoughts with KALACC?

**Hon PETER COLLIER replied:**

I thank the honourable member for some notice of this question.

**Hon Sally Talbot:** I didn't give any notice.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** Sorry, for the question; I apologise.

- (1)–(3) I think one of the biggest issues we have with Aboriginal communities around the state is alcohol abuse; there is no doubt about that. With regard to the strategy, I think it is an endless piece of string. My role as Minister for Indigenous Affairs is to ensure that there is coordination between various departments, including between mental health, health, housing et cetera. I assure the honourable member that I spoke about these issues with my advisers this morning in terms of having a holistic approach to social issues such as these across government. My role as Minister for Indigenous Affairs is, for want of a better term, to act in a coordinating role.

**Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich interjected.**

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** No, no, sorry; I am the minister. That is something that Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich probably should have taken note of when she was minister and she might have still been there.

Several members interjected.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** The Department of Indigenous Affairs acts as the coordinating, or policy framework, department.

**Hon Sally Talbot:** That's exactly how I phrased the question.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** Exactly. That is the role of my office and that is the role of the department, and that is my role as Minister for Indigenous Affairs. If the question was whether I have a solution to it at the moment, I will be perfectly frank: no, I do not. In the past week I have had discussions, and to just sit there and say, "Look, there is no solution to these issues", particularly the alcohol abuse issue, would be nonsensical—it really would. It would be idealistic to say that there is a solution in the short to medium term.

**Hon Sally Talbot:** But you promised a management strategy in 2008.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** Sorry; I have been minister for three months.

Several members interjected.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** Not at all! Bear with me.

**The PRESIDENT:** Order! There is little point in members asking a question if they also want to jump in and answer it. Ministers are responsible for answering questions.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** Thank you, Mr President, and I will excuse the cynicism that permeates from the other side of the chamber.

I can assure the honourable member that I have every intention of making sure that we have some tangible outcomes on issues such as alcohol abuse. We have a number of strategies in place at this stage. For example, the Western Australian Aboriginal Affairs Coordinating Committee is now operational and has been providing good, sound advice to government since we have been in office, and the Indigenous Implementation Board has now reported to me; I am considering its recommendations and we will be implementing policies. That is the role of the Minister for Indigenous Affairs, and that is why I will continue to work with my cabinet colleagues and departments to ensure that we have processes, procedures and policies in place to provide tangible outcomes. I give members a cast-iron guarantee at this stage that I have a plan that will provide positive outcomes for overcoming —

**Hon Sally Talbot:** Have you spoken to the Minister for Mental Health about it, because that question comes directly out of the Minister for Mental Health's predecessor.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** I beg your pardon?

**Hon Sally Talbot:** You have two failed ministers: the previous minister in your position and the previous minister in Hon Helen Morton's position.

**Hon Ken Travers:** They've given it to the upper house to see whether it can do it better than the lower house could.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** I am not going to give that due consideration.

What I will say, and I will continue to say, is that I am very, very confident, given the enormous amount of consultation I have engaged in in the past three months—including consultation with my predecessor, Kim Hames, who has a passionate regard for Aboriginal people—that we will, through bodies such as the Aboriginal Advisory Council, through the recommendations of the IIB, and through dialogue with my good friend and colleague Hon Helen Morton and other ministerial colleagues, ensure that we have strategies in place that will provide tangible, positive outcomes for Aboriginal people.