

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ADVISORY BOARD REPORT —
METROPOLITAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM

837. Mr I.M. BRITZA to the Minister for Local Government:

Before I ask my question I acknowledge the students and teachers from Servite College, which is in the electorate of the member for Balcatta.

I understand that earlier today the Minister for Local Government released the Local Government Advisory Board report for metropolitan local government reform. Can he please advise the house what the report means for ratepayers and the community more broadly in the Perth metropolitan area?

Mr A.J. SIMPSON replied:

I thank the member for Morley for his question and for his interest in local government, but, more importantly, sustainable local government.

Today the government announced its final blueprint plan for local government in the metropolitan area. As the Premier pointed out, there have been eight reports in the past 50-odd years all of which have tried to come up with a conclusion. This government has had the guts to make a decision and to get on with the job.

I will pick up on a couple of points that opposition members made about why one area will get a vote and why another will not.

Mr D.A. Templeman interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Mandurah, I call you to order for the second time; and, member for Armadale, I call you to order for the second time. Direct your answer through the Chair, please.

Mr A.J. SIMPSON: I make a comment about the Local Government Advisory Board and what is clearly stated in the act. Having gone through a process, the board gave me 38 proposals. As I have said in this place many times before, when a report comes back to me I can do one of two things—I can either accept or reject, but I cannot amend. The advisory board gave me boundary adjustments and amalgamations. I cannot change that. That is what is stated in the act—I either accept or reject. It was good this morning to make the announcement to the sector.

There are 325 councillors for 30 metropolitan councils. There are more councillors in the western suburbs than there are members in this house.

Mr D.A. Templeman interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Mandurah, I now call you for the third time, and I ask you to please now let the minister answer the question.

Mr A.J. SIMPSON: The member for Morley raised a very good question. Some comments were made about the size of some local governments, and the most important thing that the Local Government Advisory Board looked at was developing the community of interest and also the economic benefit to the community; hence why there are variations still. It is ultimately very well known in the local government world that with 100 000 residents the actual rate base is becoming a quite compatible rate. We have not achieved that 100 per cent, but we have developed some great communities. It is great to see the Mayor of Fremantle very supportive of Fremantle, our second capital city. More importantly, it is also good to see support from the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia and the Urban Development Institute of Australia, and a number of mayors who have been very supportive. It is all about delivering good local government that can deliver better services to the ratepayers.