

ELECTORAL REFORM — LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

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

I have a supplementary question. Will the Premier reject any recommendation from the “independent” committee that reduces the number of regional representatives in the Legislative Council thereby increasing the number of metropolitan representatives?

**Mr M. McGOWAN replied:**

Obviously, I am not going to prejudice what Mr McCusker will come back with. I do not know whether the Leader of the Opposition knows Malcolm McCusker.

**Ms M.J. Davies** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Order, please, Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** You asked the question; I didn’t interject on you. New members, you will get used to this.

I will not prejudice what Mr McCusker will come back with. He will come back with a report in the next eight or nine weeks. But I can tell members one thing that I will reject. “Big Nick” Fardell was on ABC Goldfields radio on 3 May. Members might know Big Nick. I have met Big Nick. I understand the Leader of the Opposition is very fond of him. Big Nick Fardell said that the review that we have launched does not go far enough because it rules out abolishing the Legislative Council. He was one of the National Party’s candidates. He was number one on its ticket. He has been a shining light in the National Party for a long time. The Nationals have tried to get him in the Senate and into the Mining and Pastoral Region; they hold him in high regard. He said, and I quote —

I’m a fan of actually scrapping it.

That is, the Legislative Council —

It works in other places. We’re the most over represented population in the world.

...

I’m going to do a petition to say who wants to save \$50 million and get rid of 36 politicians altogether.

...

A lot of the people in the upper house are nameless people and faceless people. So we don’t know about them.

This is from someone who has run for the upper house.

**Ms M.J. Davies:** He’s entitled to his opinion, Premier.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** He is —

**Ms M.J. Davies** interjected.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** But he is a senior National Party figure. I am telling members now that we are ruling out abolishing the upper house. It is one thing that we have ruled out; but, obviously, the National Party has a secret plan to abolish the upper house. We will take into account the review by Malcolm McCusker, which the Attorney General has established, because he is an eminent Western Australian whose views we should listen to.