

SWAN VALLEY NYUNGAH COMMUNITY FAMILIES, NUMBER AT HENLEY BROOK CAMP

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON to the Minister for Housing and Works:

I preface my question by singing, “Glory, glory, hallelujah.”

Hon Tom Stephens: Would you like me to join in the refrain?

The PRESIDENT: Order! I am already regretting my decision to give Hon Derrick Tomlinson the call.

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: I ask -

- (1) How many of the families from the former Swan Valley Nyungah Community are now housed at the Saunders Street, Henley Brook camp?
- (2) What arrangements is the Department of Housing and Works making for the long-term accommodation of those families?
- (3) Has the Department of Housing and Works, in collaboration with other government agencies, put in place any measures to prevent the recurrence of matters that caused the Government to take action with the Swan Valley Nyungah Community?
- (4) What action will be taken when those people are relocated in other accommodation?
- (5) Is the Department of Housing and Works the source of the information that caused the member for Swan Hills to advise local residents that only one adult and 10 children were relocated to Saunders Street?

Hon TOM STEPHENS replied:

If Hon Peter Wells, whom we used to call “War Cry”, had been here, no doubt he would have been able to play the tambourine while the member was singing his question.

- (1)-(5) The member has asked a detailed question. I will make further inquiries of my department to provide a detailed response. However, I provide a response to an aspect of the question that I think the member will find helpful. A great aspect emerging from the Government’s response to the Gordon inquiry in reference to the Swan Valley group of Aboriginal people and the wider Aboriginal community of the metropolitan area and remote and regional Western Australia is that it has triggered a collaborative response by a range of government agencies to lift their collective game in delivering programs to support children at risk, women at risk and Aboriginal families who seek support to respond to the challenges they collectively face. That will be the best aspect of the entire sorry saga on display throughout the Gordon inquiry. The response has included the substantial injection of \$75 million of taxpayers’ funds into post-Gordon inquiry initiatives that will result in a collaboration of agencies in the Swan Valley area and, more comprehensively, throughout the metropolitan area. This money will be put to great use, not only in government agencies’ work in dealing with the Aboriginal community, but also more widely in recognition that there is only one game in town in this area - that is, collaborate, cooperate and work inside the Government’s framework.

The PRESIDENT: Will the minister be referring to the question?

Hon TOM STEPHENS: I am providing an answer to part (3) of the question.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: When will you do something about the former residents of the Swan Valley Nyungah Community?

The PRESIDENT: There is no provision for supplementary questions.

Hon Peter Foss: When will he get to the question?

The PRESIDENT: The minister is not to answer the supplementary.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: I will move past my answer to question (3) to deal with the specifics.

I understand that the Department of Housing and Works has no direct engagement in one of those areas to which the member referred; that is, it is not the agency’s specific area of responsibility. It has not been drawn to my attention that it is the case.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: I think you need to get yourself advised before you proceed with the answer.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: I will.

Hon Peter Foss: It’s worrying that you don’t know already.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: No.

Hon Simon O'Brien: We have limited time for questions, and you're using it up.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: The member should tell his colleague to stop asking such good questions that require such fine and detailed answers.

Hon Simon O'Brien interjected.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: The member is getting an answer; it just happens to be an answer he does not like.

Several members interjected.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: I will check. If I must come back tomorrow or the day after and do a mea culpa, I will find the appropriate Gregorian chant to accompany it.