

**MINISTER FOR POLICE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES**

*Personal Explanation - Adam Spagnolo and Tony Drago*

**MR J.B. D'ORAZIO (Ballajura - Minister for Police and Emergency Services)** [2.03 pm] - by leave: Members will be aware that on 22 February *The West Australian* newspaper, under the front page headline "Police Minister is the 'Godfather'", made the claim that I was the "Godfather" referred to in 2005 Corruption and Crime Commission hearings and that, as this "Godfather", I had brokered a business deal between Mr Adam Spagnolo and Mr Tony Drago during a meeting in my electorate office in August 2003. This, it was claimed by *The West Australian*, led to Adam Spagnolo facing corruption charges. Mr Speaker, this is not true. I have never brokered any business deal, arrangement or agreements between Mr Spagnolo and Mr Drago.

Last Friday the CCC reported that its assessment of the newspaper's allegations had found them to be completely and utterly false. The CCC found that I had not engaged in any misconduct and that "there is no evidence of improper, illegal or corrupt deals discussed during the meeting between the three men". The CCC also reported that the term "Godfather" had been a throwaway line, used once by counsel assisting the CCC, Patti Chong, at a public hearing last June, and was not intended to have any further meaning or significance.

As I have said consistently to the public, the Premier and the Corruption and Crime Commission - and I again say for the record - the meeting between Mr Spagnolo, Mr Drago and me was an attempt to resolve a personal dispute between Mr Spagnolo and Mr Drago. Those two men are cousins and had been close friends. I repeat that no business deals or arrangements were discussed or brokered at the meeting. It was an attempt purely to resolve a breakdown in a personal relationship. I also state again that I was unaware then, as I am now, of either Mr Spagnolo's or Mr Drago's business arrangements. It is also worth noting that the recorded telephone conversation between Mr Spagnolo and me made as part of the CCC's investigations into his conduct reveals me as saying very clearly to Mr Spagnolo that the meeting was not about business but was about his personal friendship with Mr Drago.

As a member of Parliament, I see it as my role to help constituents, if I can, to sort out such issues. I am sure many members in this house have found themselves in similar situations. Would I help in such a situation again? Absolutely, otherwise what is the point of being a local member? What has been most distressing to me has been the effect the allegations have had on my family, friends and supporters. Those who know me will know that in 25 years of public life I have always been honest and straightforward in everything I do.

I thank members of this place for their support, including those on the other side of the chamber. I also acknowledge the caution shown by the Leader of the Opposition during this issue. I am sure that he will give me a hard time over this and other issues, but I feel that the opposition's approach to this issue has been responsible to this point in time. Finally, but most importantly, I thank my family and friends for their unwavering support throughout this ordeal.