

ELECTORAL ENROLMENT — PILBARA

170. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Minister for Electoral Affairs:

I draw the minister's attention to the electoral district of Pilbara, where there was an increase in voter enrolments of 22 per cent between 30 June —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Dr A.D. Buti interjected.

The SPEAKER: Have you finished your speech, member for Armadale? I call you to order for the first time.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Mr Speaker —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members, you will be missing from the chamber if you keep that up.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: I draw the minister's attention to the electoral district of Pilbara, where there was an increase in voter enrolments of 22 per cent between 30 June and 30 September 2016. This is in contrast to a statewide increase in enrolments of 4.5 per cent between 30 June and 30 September.

- (1) Has the minister sought advice from the Western Australian Electoral Commissioner on this matter?
- (2) If yes, what information has the minister requested to assure himself that there was nothing untoward with enrolments in the Pilbara?
- (3) Will the minister table any advice he receives from the Electoral Commissioner on this matter?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON replied:

- (1)–(3) I must say that this is the third question that the National Party has asked on this topic—they have asked twice in the upper house, and now once here. The answer the Nationals were given in the upper house was to put the matter on notice, because the Electoral Commission cannot provide instantaneous answers to these sorts of technical questions. But I want to make something very clear. I make one thing very clear straightaway. I support every eligible voter casting their ballot.

Government members: Hear, hear!

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I do not care whether the people vote for me or the Labor Party or any other party. I want people to enrol to vote and cast their ballot. I think that people voting in elections is a good idea. That is what I think. I think it is important that people get enrolled and vote. If they happen to be Aboriginal people, I very much welcome the decision of Aboriginal people to enrol and vote—unlike, apparently, other people. I do not have any advice from the Electoral Commissioner on this topic. I have asked—as the member knows, because she has obviously seen the answer to the two questions in the other house—that the Electoral Commissioner seek some information. I can assure the member that when the advice is provided in respect of those questions in the upper house, the information will be provided to the Legislative Council.

I emphasise a final point. So far as I am aware, the Electoral Commissioner complied with the law that was passed by this Parliament during the life of the last Parliament. Those laws were introduced by Hon Peter Collier. So far as I recall, the Leader of the National Party was a member of the government at that time and in fact sat in the cabinet that approved the laws that were implemented by Hon Peter Collier. So I have no idea what it is that the Leader of National Party is complaining about, when the Electoral Commissioner implemented the laws passed by that cabinet that she sat in.