

DOMESTIC HOMICIDE

Petition

HON ALANNA CLOHESY (East Metropolitan) [2.02 pm]: I present a petition containing 900 signatures and couched in the following terms —

To the President and Members of the Legislative Council of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled.

On 1 August 2008, the Homicide Act 2008 was amended to introduce changes in the context of domestic homicide where there has been a history of violence by either the deceased or the accused.

We the undersigned residents of Western Australia call on the State Government to —

- (i) Review the imprisonment of women who are currently serving life sentences for murder where these changes to the said Act apply, and to take whatever action is required to ensure these women are afforded justice; and
- (ii) To enact legislative changes to ensure that fairness and justice is properly served in relation to domestic homicide where there has been a history of violence by either the deceased or the accused.

And your petitions as in duty bound, will ever pray.

[See paper 1384.]

Nonconforming Petition

HON ALANNA CLOHESY: I have also received an additional 359 online signatures to this petition, which does not comply with standing orders but which I seek leave to table.

The PRESIDENT: To clarify it for the house, is it framed in exactly the same terms as the petition that you read out?

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: Yes, it is, Mr President.

HON PETER COLLIER (North Metropolitan — Leader of the House) [2.04 pm]: Can I have clarification about the actual petition itself? What is meant by “online petitions”?

The PRESIDENT: We do not have a provision for online petitions to be tabled in the house, but all the member is seeking to do is to table an extra document that is worded in the same way as the petition that she has legally tabled. Is everybody clear about that? The member seeks leave to table that extra document, which is, in a sense, a separate document, but she has made clear what it is. It is an e-petition worded in exactly the same terms as the petition. Is leave granted? I do not think I heard a no, did I?

Point of Order

Hon NICK GOIRAN: I specifically said no, Mr President, and I am happy to own up to it. I do not believe leave has been granted.

The PRESIDENT: In that case, it takes only one voice and the document is not tabled.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: I seek to clarify that the original petition with 900 signatures that does conform to standing orders is tabled.

The PRESIDENT: Yes, that is correct. There is no problem with the original petition with 900 signatures.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: But the additional 359 online signatures are not tabled.

The PRESIDENT: That is not tabled; that is correct.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: I listened with interest to the attempt to table the document. Personally, I have no reservations about it, but I know that some of my colleagues did and I appreciate their position as well. What this highlights, though, is an issue that we will confront more and more as a Parliament and as a Legislative Council. I am aware, through the frustrations expressed to me by constituents, that the same problem is being experienced with petitions that have been collected online, which is now quite an acceptable format for most people to use, and sought to be tabled at a local government level. It is not just an issue that we are grappling with; however, I rise to take this point of order and request through the President that he and the appropriate people within this organisation, be that the Clerks, the Standing Committee on Procedure and Privileges or some

Hon Alanna Clohesy; Hon Peter Collier; Hon Nick Goiran; President; Hon Peter Katsambanis; Hon Dr Sally Talbot

other committee, look at this as a matter of urgency and attempt to come up with a solution that will cover this area.

The PRESIDENT: Order! We are having a brief discussion under a point of order that has been raised. I have heard more of a point of view than a point of order.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: I suggest to the President, in his wisdom, that there is no way that what Hon Peter Katsambanis just raised is a point of order. I wish Hon Peter Katsambanis had been here when we used to talk about cutting the crusts off the cucumber sandwiches at afternoon teatime because I am sure he would have had a great deal to say about that.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order, members! Neither of those small contributions are points of order; they are points of view. Some members of this chamber will remember that in the last Parliament we went through a rather long and tortuous exercise of updating and rewriting our standing orders. This issue was discussed. Some jurisdictions in other parts of the world do accept e-petitions; we, in our wisdom, decided not to do that in the upgrade of the standing orders, but it is still open for this house of Parliament to consider its own standing orders at any stage. If any member feels strongly enough about it, I suggest that they can do that by way of a motion of referral to the Standing Committee on Procedure and Privileges. Then, of course, the committee would consider it and come back to the house with a recommendation, and the house itself would have to decide its own destiny.