

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT REVIEW — CONSULTATION

242. Mrs L.M. O'MALLEY to the Minister for Local Government:

- (1) Can the minister update the house on the extensive consultation that has been undertaken as part of the second phase of the review of the Local Government Act, including the submissions received and any workshops held?
- (2) Can the minister advise the house whether he is aware of anyone who is trying to undermine the process?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN replied:

I thank the member for Bicton for her question and I acknowledge her contribution to local government.

The SPEAKER: Minister, through the Chair.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I also acknowledge in your gallery, Mr Speaker, the president of the Shire of Morawa, Councillor Karen Chappel. I welcome her. She is watching with great interest the debate currently before the house on our first phase of reforms.

- (1)–(2) I am very pleased, member, that we have had a very pleasing response to the consultation period on the second phase of the local government reform process. I need to remind the house that on coming to government, we made a very clear commitment that we believed very strongly that the Local Government Act, which is over 20 years old, needed to be reformed for a range of reasons, but particularly to assist the overwhelming number of people in local government who are doing a tremendous job to do their job within the modern context. I am pleased that we have already embarked on that. A number of local government reforms have been passed through this house, including, of course, the provisions giving the Auditor General responsibility for financial reporting and performance reporting. We have passed the Local Government Amendment (Suspension and Dismissal) Bill 2018 in this place, which allows the minister, on rare occasions, to deal with individual councillors rather than a whole council. They have been the reforms already in the two years since the election of the McGowan government.

We are now into the second phase. We have had 3 145 responses to date. Those responses have come from a very broad area. They have included responses and submissions from elected members, councils and stakeholders. Pleasingly, over half of them were from members of the public, which is very important. We have had a very good cross-section. Over 100 workshops, forums and meetings were held across Western Australia, including 28 community workshops and pop-up stalls. We have had a very good consultation process.

I congratulate the member for Balcatta, who has done an outstanding job in his stewardship as the chair of the reference group that was made up of a range of representatives from key stakeholders such as the Western Australian Local Government Association, Local Government Professionals WA, the regional chambers of commerce, the Western Australian Council of Social Service, multicultural advisory groups, the Australian Services Union and the Association of Mining and Exploration Companies. This has been a very broad, but important, process.

Earlier today, we heard from the person who probably should be the opposition spokesperson for local government, the member for South Perth, who highlighted, as he does in his measured, responsive and clear-thinking way, the response of local government—unlike his counterpart, the member for Carine, who was all over the shop with his often quite illogical responses.

We are on track to deliver quality reform to the local government sector. I thank all those who have been involved so far. We look to use the information that has been collected to begin to discuss and draft responses and, indeed, formulate a green bill. We want to make sure that we create a green bill that we can further consult on before we bring landmark reform legislation to Parliament in the near future.