

CITY OF FREMANTLE — PREMIER'S COMMENTS

539. Ms S.F. McGURK to the Premier:

My question is to the Premier —

Mr A. Krsticevic interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Carine, that is enough! I call you to order for the first time.

Ms S.F. McGURK: I refer to the Premier's veiled threat to the City of Fremantle to "not bite the hand that feeds you" after the council raised concerns about government policy to privatise the port and also its policy to spend \$1.6 billion on the Perth Freight Link.

- (1) Does the Premier think it is appropriate that he threaten a council for standing up for its constituents?
- (2) Will the Department of Housing be relocated to Fremantle as he committed to in 2012?

Mr C.J. BARNETT replied:

- (1)–(2) I share the concern of the member and indeed of the City of Fremantle, which up until the Second World War was the major commercial centre for Western Australia. It is far from that today.

Mr M. McGowan interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members! Leader of the Opposition!

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Kermit over here really needs to be quiet for a while.

The City of Fremantle has lost employment. The Myer store has gone and the area, to put it bluntly, is dead in the centre.

Mr P.C. Tinley interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, members! Member for Willagee, I do not want to hear from you.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: For the last couple of years the City of Fremantle—I have a lot of respect for its mayor Brad Pettitt—has been approaching the state government on whether we could assist with the revitalisation of Fremantle. One proposal was to place a major government department into the area —

Mr R.H. Cook interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Kwinana, I call you to order for the first time. I do not want any more interjections.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: As I said, that was happening over the last couple of years, and it is now 2015. It is not an easy project to put together. It is very marginal—in fact, it may even be negative. However, in good faith, the state has worked on the proposal of moving state housing from East Perth to Fremantle. The Minister for Finance has carriage of that, and negotiations have taken place with a prospective developer. Indeed, we may well go out to tender, and may well move some other government employees to Fremantle. It is not an obvious win for state government. To justify that project depends on, I guess, the goodwill and the revitalisation of Fremantle as being worth a price, because it will come at a price. The member for Fremantle should support that because her constituency is dying at its heart. While the City of Fremantle —

Mr M. McGowan: There were no conditions on the promise.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Kermit, give it a break!

This is an ask from the City of Fremantle. The state government is doing all it can to make that happen, but it may well come at a cost to the state. We are trying to get it to at least break even. Fremantle has been talking about that for several years. I have been listening, and we hope we can do it.

Mr R.H. Cook: It was your promise.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: It was their ask long before we made a commitment.

However, when the City of Fremantle —

Mr R.H. Cook interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Kwinana, give it a rest now.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I do not think it is wise for the City of Fremantle to presumably use ratepayer funds to run public campaigns about the port of Fremantle or Roe 8. I do not think that is very good politics on its part. It is not good politics.

Several members interjected.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Come on, Kermit! We would think that if the City of Fremantle wanted the state government to pour tens of millions of dollars into Fremantle —

Withdrawal of Remark

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: I want to know why the Speaker is letting the Premier use that word.

The SPEAKER: Premier, you called the Leader of the Opposition by something other than his title.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I did.

The SPEAKER: Could you please withdraw?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I withdraw that insinuation.

The SPEAKER: Premier, I call you to order for the first time.

Question without Notice Resumed

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I do not think it is very good politics to be going out there using ratepayers' money to run campaigns against the state government on unrelated issues if they want the state government to do what the council has wanted it to do for years.

Ms M.M. Quirk: That sounds like a threat.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: It is not a threat at all. Indeed, when this state government announced the refurbishment of the warders' cottages in Fremantle, what did the member for Fremantle say? She opposed it publicly, even when everyone else was clapping.