LOCAL GOVERNMENT — AMALGAMATIONS

Motion

HON SAMANTHA ROWE (East Metropolitan) [10.30 am] — without notice: I move —

That this house expresses concern at the botched local government amalgamation process, and in particular

(a) the government’s use of boundary changes to deny some ratepayers a vote on their local community;

(b) Minister Simpson’s comment that we are only at half-time in the process; and

(c) the failure of the Premier to rule out applying the same botched process to regional Western Australia.

I think it is very timely that this motion is before the house, given the events that happened yesterday. From the very beginning, the Barnett Liberal—National government’s botched local government amalgamation process has been a complete and utter farce. The Premier’s arrogant approach towards reducing the number of metropolitan councils by forcing mergers has absolutely outraged the affected communities. The government’s use of boundary changes to deny some ratepayers, not all, a vote on their local community is, in my view, completely undemocratic. I have previously spoken in this place about my opposition to the Barnett government’s forced merger process. I have always supported the councils of Kalamunda and Belmont in my electorate, which are against merging, as is the wish of the people. This is in stark contrast to the total lack of respect that the Premier has shown towards our communities, which demonstrates just how out of touch this government is on this issue.

It started, like many things with this government, with broken promises — promises that have been made time and again on this issue. An article in The West Australian on 6 August 2009 titled “End looms for small councils” quotes the Premier as saying —

“We are not going to force amalgamations ...”

That is in print in black and white. However, in 2012 the Premier stated, as reported in the Subiaco Post newspaper on 15 December 2012 —

“The state government is not to go down the path of widespread forced amalgamations.

“We do not intend to do what Jeff Kennett did in Victoria.”

Again, that is a very clear indication of what we and ratepayers thought the government was proposing to do or not to do with forced mergers. Then, in 2013, the Premier made claims in his residents’ newsletter that went out to Cottesloe in the summer of 2013 as follows —

There has been much said about local government over recent months. I have always believed that a combined council covering Claremont, Cottesloe, Mosman Park and Peppermint Grove makes sense, however claims that the State Government will use its powers to force such an amalgamation are simply not true.

On 21 February 2013, Minister Tony Simpson made comments in a media statement, and these are probably my favourite comments —

I recently made some remarks at a local forum that the Liberal Party supported forced amalgamations. The Liberal Party does not support forced amalgamations, I got it wrong, it was my mistake. I apologise for the confusion this has created.

...• A Liberal government will not bring in legislation for widespread amalgamations of local councils (as happened in Victoria and Queensland)

Yet now, in October 2014, local governments are being forced to merge against their will. How can we take anything that this government says as gospel truth when all it ever does is make claims that mislead communities about its plans, knowing full well that it has no intention of keeping its word? This has been one of the most disorganised and erratic processes from the beginning. The process has created much uncertainty and upheaval for the local government sector. The reform will affect not only communities and ratepayers, but also mayors, councillors and those who work in the local government sector. All those people have been critical of this process; it is not only opposition members, and some government members, who oppose this process. Local government authorities have been very outspoken about their opposition towards this. They have described the process as poorly managed and disappointing, and say that the government is not acting in good faith.
The WA Labor leader, Mark McGowan, commented —

“The Barnett Government’s forced amalgamations process has been a confused mess of uncertainty, instability and waste.”

I would like to make some remarks about statements in the Local Government Advisory Board report, particularly focusing on the Belmont and Kalamunda boundary change that has now been accepted by the minister. The minister’s proposal was for Belmont to expand its boundaries to take in Kalamunda; that is effectively what will now happen. Submissions were made on this proposal as follows: 4,155 submissions were received, of which a mere three per cent were in support. Therefore, 97 per cent of the thousands of submissions received were opposed to this proposal. Of those submissions against the proposal, 85 per cent came from residents of the Shire of Kalamunda and the remaining 15 per cent came from residents of the City of Belmont. Breaking that down, Kalamunda residents put in 3,565 submissions against the minister’s proposal. Kalamunda and Belmont have been very vocal in their opposition. In late July this year Mark McGowan and I attended a meeting in Kalamunda with local residents, the shire president and others, and we listened to their opposition to the forced mergers. They had been very active; there were many signs up and down the hill showing their opposition to the merger. The same has been done in Belmont. Both these communities have been ignored by this state government and by their local representatives.

Belmont residents also have been overwhelmingly opposed to any merger. When the Shire of Kalamunda proposed to expand its boundaries to take in Belmont, residents in the City of Belmont responded with a number of submissions; 1,266 submissions were made, of which 1,256 opposed the move. That equates to only 0.7 per cent of submissions in support of, and 99.3 per cent of submissions in opposition to, this process. I think it is fair to say that many residents of Belmont have been asking for some time, “Where is the member for Belmont and where does she stand on this issue?” She has been remarkably quiet during this whole process. I think her constituents have a right to know where she stands on this process. Make no mistake: the member for Belmont is in full support of a boundary change, and people have a right to know that.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order, members!

Hon SAMANTHA ROWE: Being quiet is no longer an option. The government that Mrs Godfrey is a part of has pushed through this merger, and it is set to happen against the will of her constituents, the people of Belmont.

On 25 March, a local newspaper, The Southern Gazette, printed a letter to the editor that encapsulates the feelings of many people in Belmont.

Hon Jim Chown: Did you write it?

Hon SAMANTHA ROWE: No, it was written by Richard Saunders from Cloverdale. The letter is headed, “Just a yes or a no”, and reads —

ANY doubt over the proposed (forced) amalgamation of Belmont and Kalamunda has been dispelled by the statement by our local MLA Glenys Godfrey, who has already decided on the new name (Roe) she would like for the amalgamated councils.

I recently sent Ms Godfrey an email outlining my opposition to this amalgamation, but never received a reply—no wonder, it seems as if it’s a done deal.

I don't know anyone from Belmont who wants this to go ahead and I'm under the impression Kalamunda residents don't want it either.

But hey, Ms Godfrey's boss, Colin Barnett, has decided that we don't know what’s best for us and Ms Godfrey seems to be keeping quiet on the subject.

Will she please state her position on this amalgamation—just a yes you are for it or no you’re not.

On 1 April another letter appeared in The Southern Gazette. It was written by Elaine Ellis from Kewdale, and reads —

AS a Belmont resident and ratepayer, I am disgusted that our former mayor and present MLA, Glenys Godfrey, has decided for all of us that we amalgamate with Kalamunda and rename our city Roe. Considering it was probably the people of Belmont who helped advance Ms Godfrey’s political career, I find it very disappointing that these same people are not considered worthy enough of her loyalty or commitment to try to stop this amalgamation with Kalamunda. Ms Godfrey, you owe it to the
majority of Belmont residents who do not want this amalgamation at least to put up a fight for them. Unfortunately, I find your silence on the matter to be extremely deafening.

On the same day, an article in The Southern Gazette featured the Leader of the Opposition, Mark McGowan, who had visited Belmont Forum Shopping Centre to meet with local residents, who shared their concerns about retaining good local administration. They also fear that rates will rise under the forced merger. They wanted to know where their local member stood on the issue. The member for Belmont made a comment in the same article that featured the Leader of the Opposition, which is entitled “Residents vent merger anger”. She stated that should local government reform involve a merger between Belmont and Kalamunda, her preference would be for a boundary change instead of amalgamation. Clearly, the member for Belmont did not want her community to have a say or to have a vote.

Hon Helen Morton: I thought you said she was silent on the issue!

The PRESIDENT: Order, members! Members must speak one at a time.

Hon SAMANTHA ROWE: The Local Government Advisory Board notes that five members of Parliament lodged submissions about the proposed merger between Belmont and Kalamunda, with four supporting it in principal—albeit with relatively minor differences—and one opposed. I know that the member who opposed it was not the member for Belmont because I submitted the opposing submission. Mrs Godfrey has done nothing to defend the overwhelming majority of the Belmont community who do not want the amalgamation to go ahead. In the years to come, the people of the City of Belmont—as it has been known for the past 100 years—will know that the amalgamation happened under the watch of Mrs Godfrey and that Mrs Godfrey chose to nod her head in agreement with the Premier and the Liberal Party rather than stick up for her constituents.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Mr President, can you assist me with this morning’s motion? I note that this is a time-bound debate and that the member speaking at the moment is the creator of the motion. I note that she has specifically decided that the house should consider three things—namely, the government’s use of boundary changes, Minister Simpson’s comment and the failure of the Premier to rule out applying the same—apparently—botched process to regional Western Australia. The member saw fit to be very specific in her motion with three limbs for us to consider in this time-restricted debate.

Several members interjected.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Thank you, Mr President. It is unfortunate that the usual suspect opposite always has to interject, even on a point of order. It is unfortunate that he is unable to understand that the point I am making —

The PRESIDENT: Order! Now the member is getting into a wide-ranging comment.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: I will come back to my point. The motion before the house is very specific. This is a time-bound debate with members having limited time to contribute. There is no reference in the motion whatsoever to the member for Belmont, yet virtually the entirety of the past 14 minutes has been an attack on the member for Belmont. Mr President, can you assist the house with what ought to be the convention in this regard?

The PRESIDENT: I hope I can assist the house. A motion of this nature is of the mover’s making and although particular points have been outlined, there is scope within the motion for a broad discussion on local government processes. I assume that the member on her feet thinks she is wasting her allocated time—that is a personal view. It is up to any member in the chamber to express themselves as they want. It is not a point of order. Hon Samantha Rowe has the call.
Several members interjected.

**The PRESIDENT:** Order, members!

**Hon SAMANTHA ROWE:** I will talk about how this process has been an undemocratic one. As has been confirmed, the state government will use a technicality to escape the Dadour provisions by boundary changes.

**Hon Helen Morton:** It is legal.

**Hon SAMANTHA ROWE:** The minister can pull funny faces, but that is the truth.

The Dadour provisions were designed to give ratepayers a say, a vote—it is part of the democratic process—but for a number of councils, that will change. Some will be given the opportunity to have that vote through the process of amalgamation. As we learnt yesterday, the Minister for Local Government has decided to use only a boundary change for Belmont and Kalamunda, so their right to have a vote about whether to merge has been removed. The residents of Belmont and Kalamunda have been overwhelmingly in favour of a poll. It is probably fair to say that the government fears that a poll in these areas would not go the way it would want it to go.

Kalamunda previously held a poll on this issue in 2013. Forty per cent of electors cast a vote, with 88.6 per cent against the amalgamation. Of course, we will now never know what it would have been like this year for residents had they been given that opportunity. In December 2013 the Belmont Council unanimously passed a motion for a poll of residents in 2014. The Mayor of the City of Belmont, Councillor Phil Marks, was on TV last night saying that he was disappointed that residents would not be given the opportunity to have a poll. Clearly, a democratic vote of the people is the preference for both councils involved—the Shire of Kalamunda and the City of Belmont. We know that polls are the most practical tool to be able to gauge the community’s attitude towards amalgamation. It is fair to say that because these forced mergers are so unwanted, the minister has made the decision that some ratepayers will be given the opportunity and some will not. Mark McGowan made comments that I have to say I agree with. He questioned why ratepayers in some areas would get a vote on council mergers while others would not. He said Mr Barnett’s rules were unfair and created second-class ratepayers with lesser rights than others. Since this announcement, my electorate office has received a number of complaints from residents about the fact that their concerns have been ignored, that a community of interest has not been taken into account, that they are worried whether their rates would rise and, of course, that they are upset that they will not even get a say.

We are meant to be at the business end of this process, yet, as we know, the minister has said we are only at half-time. I am not sure how mayors, shire presidents, councillors and affected communities will feel when they hear those comments made by the minister that this long and chaotic process taking place—the government’s botched reform process for local government—is still only halfway. Not only that, we still do not have a clear business case for this to be going on. There has been no cost–benefit analysis. We have seen from amalgamations in this state and interstate that rates have risen. The government cannot give any relief to ratepayers that rates will not rise. Not only that, the government cannot even afford to fund the amalgamations. It is asking local councils to fund the amalgamations they do not even want. Who will wear the brunt of that cost? Ratepayers, that is who. It is about time that this government was honest with the constituents of WA, with the ratepayers of WA, about what is actually going on with this local government process.

**HON PHIL EDMAN (South Metropolitan)** [10.53 am]: When Hon Sue Ellery brought it to the attention of the house yesterday that this motion would be moved today, I thought I had better start thinking about ringing all the mayors and CEOs of local government in my electorate, have a yarn to them and see what they thought about the boundary maps that were released. I have tried to get in touch with as many as I could in the last 12 hours. I could not get hold of all of them, but I would like to go through what local governments in my electorate think about the maps. I contacted the Mayor of the City of Kwinana, Carol Adams, who is happy enough with the boundaries, but very concerned and unhappy that there are not designated wards. I will talk to the Premier and the ministers to find out whether they can still be implemented or whether the fact that they are not there is just an interim thing, but I would be very worried if there are to be no wards. I know people might get upset about this, but I would hate to see this issue get hijacked by the Australian Labor Party or a political party. I do not think that would be a diplomatic thing to do. I spoke to the CEO of the City of Cockburn, Stephen Cain. Stephen, was, I guess, reasonably happy, but he is disappointed that Coolbellup, Hamilton Hill and North Lake have been lost. But he said, “Let’s just get on with it.” There is a concern, however, that to change the names from Cockburn and Kwinana to the City of Jervoise Bay will cost around $7 million. Who will pay that? It will ultimately be the ratepayer. However, Cockburn is happy to move forward. I spoke to the Mayor of the City of Fremantle, Brad Pettit, this morning and he is very happy, obviously, with his new boundaries, but, once again, he is very concerned that there are no wards. He is also sort of concerned about the next step of the process and the fact that there does not seem to be any discussion on what is next and the way forward. He is definitely
happy with the boundary though. The CEO of the City of Melville, Shayne Silcox, said that Melville would have liked a bit more of Bibra Lake, but once again it is okay with the map. Again, he said we should just get on with things and move forward. I spoke to the Mayor of the Town of Victoria Park, Trevor Vaughan, and the Mayor of the City of South Perth, Sue Doherty. They are happy with the new map. They are really glad that the Burswood Peninsula is staying on the map.

**Hon Ken Travers:** For now.

**Hon Phil Edman:** I will get to that. They complimented Hon Nick Goiran, John McGrath, Hon Simon O’Brien and me for trying to keep it there. They are concerned about the comments made by the Premier that it will possibly be looked at again in five years. I share that concern because local governments plan ahead some 20 years, and if in 20 years that revenue is not received, it could make things quite difficult. I share their concerns if that is looked at again in five years and I am sure Hon Simon O’Brien, Hon Nick Goiran, John McGrath and I will do what we can to make sure that Burswood Peninsula stays in the boundaries of that local government area.

I also spoke to the Mayor of the City of Rockingham, Barry Sammels. It is obviously unaffected. It has lost a small part of its industrial area, which is BHP. That will now stay in the City of Jervoise Bay. Barry said it makes perfect sense. The city could probably lose up to $1 million in rates. All the mayors and CEOs I have spoken to have asked me whether I know what the economic benefits will be. I have not been successful in trying to sell that, but they all seem to reasonably happy with the maps. They feel like they have had a reasonable win. The only disappointment I have, and I have already spoken to the Premier about this, is that 90 per cent of the western trade coast will now be in the City of Jervoise Bay, so for all the pain and anguish, why would the boundary not go just a bit further south and take over all the IP14 land? Speaking from my experience in local government, planning has been very difficult, with Cockburn, Kwinana and Rockingham all having different planning policies. When trying to get industry to that park, it makes sense to have the whole industrial park under one local government area, just like what occurred in Gladstone some years ago. Why would we go to all this trouble and not go just a bit further south and take over the IP14 land? The City of Rockingham is not getting any money from rates anyway because that land has not been leased or sold—there are no rates coming in yet. Once it is built, there could be an extra $10 million in rates should it stay with the City of Rockingham, but there would definitely be no loss if the boundary was moved further south so the whole of the western trade coast, the state’s premier industrial park, which we would like to get up to about a $30 billion turnover, could just have one local government planning policy apply to it.

I have had a bit to say about this process, but it looks like there is some movement forward. The mayors and the chief executive officers whom I have spoken to all seemed reasonably receptive with their maps. There are some concerns but, once again, I have been unable to sell to them the real economic benefits, which I would really like to do.

In closing, I refer to the name changes for the councils affected. We have one called Jervoise Bay and another called South Park. I do not know whether someone is taking the mickey or not.

**Hon Ken Travers:** They should have one named after the minister, called the City of Simpsons.

**Hon Phil Edman:** It is not a joke; it really says the City of South Park.

Who will end up paying for the change of signage and so forth throughout that area? In my opinion I guess it will be ultimately down to the ratepayers, and that is something that will have to be worn, but I find that a little bit unbearable.

I deliver some positive news this morning, and I look forward to listening to the contributions of others.

**HON KEN TRAVERS (North Metropolitan)** [11.01 am]: I congratulate the member for bringing this motion before the house because nothing has been more botched in this state than local government amalgamations. Hon Phil Edman just finished by referring to the names of the new councils. I do not know why they did not take it the whole hog and have a locality out in Armadale called the City of Simpsons, named after the local member and Minister for Local Government. When they finally get the new City of Perth, let us change that to the whole hog and have a locality out in Armadale called the City of Simpsons, named after the local member and Minister for Local Government. When they finally get the new City of Perth, let us change that to the whole hog and have a locality out in Armadale called the City of Simpsons, named after the local member and Minister for Local Government. When they finally get the new City of Perth, let us change that to Modern Family, in recognition of many of the members of that community.

On a more serious note, this government has absolutely botched this process, nowhere more so than that, as a result of the decision taken yesterday, it has created a group of stateless people who used to be in the City of Subiaco. When the government abolished the City of Subiaco and failed to create the City of Riversea, that resulted in 3,000 residents currently in the City of Subiaco who will be without a local government. Members of the community of Mt Claremont, who are currently in the Town of Cambridge, will be excised from the Town of Cambridge, and again become stateless. It is like the Middle East. We will have so many stateless people as a result of this process. Who will take out their rubbish bins? Will they have to create a roster for the street and...
find out who has a trailer to collect the rubbish and take it off to the tip? What an absolute nonsense! The minister smiles, but her mob has made a complete mess up of it, in the way in which they have gone about it. There are two reasons for this mess up. The first is the process by which the government tried to circumnavigate the Dadour provisions, denying the people of Subiaco —

**Hon Nick Goiran:** I think the word you’re looking for is “circumvent”, not “circumnavigate”.

**Hon Ken Travers:** I think it should be circumnavigate, in reference to the long circuitous route the government is taking. Mark my words, the government will end up right back where it started from. The people, as a result of the Supreme Court, will have the final say. It will be a circumnavigation, but the member is right—the government is also trying to circumvent the provisions.

The problem the government has is that it has tried to be too tricky by half, by using boundary changes. That is the first problem it has created. The second problem the government has created is sending this off to the umpire, and then calling half-time so that it can go back and try to change the rules by bringing it into this place.

**Hon Helen Morton:** What rules?

**Hon Ken Travers:** What rules? Exactly! The minister does not like what the umpire decided for the City of Perth and the City of Riversea, so she is going to come back in and try to change the rules through an act of Parliament. If the minister had only waited and listened, she would have got the point. I suspect this is the problem. I expect the minister sits in cabinet and uses the same approach—not listening or waiting for the points to be made. That is why not one of the 17 great minds that sit around the cabinet table could pick up the glaring mistake that I saw as soon as I looked at the map. “Hang on a minute”, I said, “there’s something wrong here!” What happens to the good burghers of Subiaco when we abolish their council but do not create a new council for them? What happens to the good people of Mt Claremont when they are taken out of the current Town of Cambridge but are not put into a new council? That is the complete mess that this government has made. This cabinet will become the laughing stock of Australian politics. It is now just like South Park; it is a comedy show. That is why one of the new municipalities is called South Park—because this government’s local government reform is a comedy show. If Utopia were to do a program on this, people would argue that what this government has done is too far-fetched to be believable.

So many issues will arise out of this process. It will be worse than the botched process of the Court government when it split the City of Perth, which has resulted in the government paying $11.5 million—at least it is down to pay it; we will find out later today whether it actually does—to the Town of Cambridge to resolve the Bold Park agreement, which goes back to the original splitting of the City of Perth. Note that the land that has now been excised into nowhere land—one of two stateless parts of Western Australia where there will be no local government—covers area G of the Bold Park agreement, for which the $11.5 million will be paid. Who will get it? Where does the money go? I bet the government will not even be able to answer those questions today. This is how incredibly incompetent this government is. It shows the lack of detail, rigour and explanation on the part of the government. Is it any wonder that at the back of the local government report, on page 652, we see a disclaimer? There is a disclaimer in the government report on local government saying that we should not rely on anything the government says in the document: “We’ve done our best with it, but don’t rely on it, whatever you do!” What a joke! The government does not even trust its own report, and no wonder it does not trust its own report, and no wonder it has put a disclaimer at the back. What a complete nonsense!

I want to keep focusing on my friends in the Town of Cambridge and the great City of Subiaco. Let us have a look at what the government is doing. We have talked about the fact that the government is going to abolish the City of Subiaco. It is then going to expand the boundaries of the Town of Cambridge, and then rename the Town of Cambridge the City of Subiaco! It is like a game of snakes and ladders at this point. Then they push those people off into the stateless zone in the strip down to the University of Western Australia. It gets better. Then the Town of Cambridge wanted wards. The Local Government Advisory Board accepted every recommendation of the Town of Cambridge except one—it is not going to get wards; it will be a whole area. The people who live in Subiaco, to the south, will have no representation and will not be able to vote for anybody, and for the people who live in the current Subiaco, from 1 July 2015—I suspect that because of the mistake this government has made this will not now go ahead; it will have to defer this one along with the City of Perth one, when it comes back to try to change the rules to override the umpire’s decision—four councillors who currently represent wards in the Town of Cambridge will now be responsible, until 2017, for representing everybody in the new City of Subiaco, which is the old Town of Cambridge, amalgamated and expanded. What a nonsense! What a complete affront to democracy! Why does the act say that when the government wants to amalgamate two councils, it should abolish them both and create a new one, so that it does not create this absolute nonsense? Imagine what would happen if we were to put through a bill in this house to abolish this house, but half the
members can stay on, although they will not be representing their old regions. It is a complete affront to democracy.

Many of us have talked about Colin Barnett being like a dictator from North Korea in his liquefied natural gas policy. Now, in his democratic approach to local government he is doing the same; he is removing people’s rights. Some people in Subiaco will not have democratic representation on council, but the government will be spending their money for up to two years, and even then it is debatable that they will get a fair go on that council. It is a nonsense. If the government wanted to do this, it should have abolished both local authorities and then amalgamated them. Hon Samantha Rowe is right in what she says about the local government authorities of Kalamunda and Belmont in her electorate. If members read the report, the board said it had to determine whether to go for amalgamation or boundary changes. It asked, “What was the request?” The people of Kalamunda said, “We do not like it, but if you’re going to do it, we’d prefer amalgamation rather than a boundary change.” The board ignored that and wiped Kalamunda out! The people of Kalamunda will be denied their right to have a democratic say.

**Hon Alyssa Hayden:** What about the rest of her electorate? Does she know about them?

**Hon Ken Travers:** I am sure that Hon Samantha Rowe does. If I had more time, I would talk about the disaster that is the abolition of the City of Canning, which in my view will trigger the Dadour provision. I finish by saying that Subiaco, the home of the Dadour provision, should have access to the Dadour provision.

**Hon Helen Morton (East Metropolitan — Minister for Mental Health)** [11.11 am]: I start by commenting on the comments made about the member for Belmont and indicate what a first-class member she is. She has been a councillor for the City of Belmont—I cannot remember exactly how long—for something like 20 years, and in that time was mayor for eight years. I cannot imagine another person with greater knowledge, understanding, empathy and involvement in a community than Glenys Godfrey, the member for Belmont. She is diligent, hardworking and genuine. I have doorknocked with her, and it was amazing; she knows almost everybody by their first name as she has been around that electorate for so long. I know that her winning that seat irked the opposition like nothing else did. Members opposite cannot handle the fact that they had what they thought was a safe seat, but they arrogantly selected a person who was basically unknown in that area.

Several members interjected.

**The President:** Order! Members, I know you are all very keen to help the Minister for Mental Health make her speech, but it is her responsibility as the minister to make her own speech. Let her make it.

**Hon Helen Morton:** Thank you, Mr President; I appreciate that. Basically, they ran an unknown person in that seat, because they imagined that somehow or other the seat of Belmont would always be a Labor seat. It has very clearly turned. The people of Belmont appreciate the genuine work of the member for Belmont, better than the fake community action group that has been established and purports to somehow or other have overwhelming community support—we know that it does not! Members opposite have underestimated the people of Belmont if they think that they cannot see through that fake and disingenuous approach and it is another mistake and level of arrogance the opposition has shown. I feel comforted by the knowledge that Glenys Godfrey will be the ongoing member for Belmont for years to come.

I represented the Premier at the mayoral dinner at the City of Bayswater last Saturday, where I was inundated by mayors and CEOs of government agencies saying to me, basically, “Just get on with it. Do not go weak at the knees!” I can only imagine how daunted the opposition would have felt when members opposite read the positive coverage in today’s paper, saying —

Several members interjected.

**The President:** Order! I will not allow members to make their point by trying to shout over everybody else. The rules of debate are that the member on their feet has the floor and when it is somebody else’s turn they have the floor.

**Hon Helen Morton:** If I were to read out what was presented in the paper, which sets out what the local authorities wanted and what they got, I would use up all my available time letting the house know that what they wanted is what they got, with the exception of one or two. How awful would it have been for the opposition, knowing it had already brought this debate on, to read such overwhelmingly positive coverage of the report? It must have been hard for the opposition to imagine how it would run this argument today.

Several members interjected.

**The President:** Order, members!

**Hon Helen Morton:** If I can go on, I want to make a few other comments in the time that I have available. The first is that the government accepted all recommendations from the Local Government Advisory Board,
except for the two that related to the City of Perth and the proposed City of Riversea. I would like to add that after all the analysis done by the Local Government Advisory Board, which is an independent board, it supported only one of the suggestions put forward by the Minister for Local Government as part of the outcome, the rest of the recommendations were based on proposals from local governments and from a community group. How on earth could anybody say that is forced amalgamation, when these were proposals from local government authorities, plus a community group, and only one of the proposals from the minister was accepted?

It is worth noting that the Local Government Act makes frequent references to boundary changes, but the term “amalgamation” is mentioned only once in the entire act, at clause 8 of schedule 2.1. The act does not contain a definition of amalgamation. Both merger mechanisms, either boundary amendments or amalgamations, are slightly different means to the same end. Local governments put forward their boundary proposals to the advisory board, which included how they intended to achieve the change. The Local Government Advisory Board chose the proposal with the best boundaries and then accepted whatever method for change that the local governments nominated.

I do not understand why people find it so hard to accept that the outcome was derived from the proposed processes that local government nominated. The minister’s only choice was to accept or reject the Local Government Advisory Board’s recommendation. There has been extensive consultation about this, which I think went far and above what I call the ramblings of the opposition around the views of the overwhelming public majorit et cetera—all of which we have heard again today. There has been extensive consultation and widespread media coverage of the plans for reform since government first announced those plans in 2009.

In 2011, the government appointed the metropolitan local government review panel, chaired by Professor Alan Robson. That was a year-long review of local government structures that, once again, consulted widely throughout the review. That was released for public comment from October 2012 to April 2013, and the feedback from that review informed the development of the government’s initial model for Perth’s new local government structure. Further comment on the government’s proposals was also taken into account in developing the government’s final model and its submission of 12 proposals to the Local Government Advisory Board. There have been huge amounts of consultation and involvement of people across the board. The consultation included nearly 450 submissions to the review panel during its year-long review; more than 280 submissions during the five-month public comment period following the release of the report; previous proposals by the Local Government Advisory Board; input from the local government sector, including the G20 proposals and the WA Local Government Association’s systemic sustainability study and report of 2008; and a review of findings from national and international experiences. There have been huge amounts of consultation and huge amounts of input; people have had their say. There was also analysis by the Department of Local Government and Communities; consultation across government; and community feedback on the government’s proposed model.

As part of its inquiries, the Local Government Advisory Board also invited public submissions on the 38 original proposals it received. It considered more than 33,000 submissions and met with local governments and other interested groups throughout the development of its recommendations. No-one could suggest that there has not been extensive public consultation in this process.

An announcement has been made; a decision has been made. There is clear direction for the local government sector. We are working with local governments to achieve the reform program, and the high-level Metropolitan Reform Implementation Committee—MetRIC—was formed at the end of 2013 to oversee the changes. This is moving ahead. MetRIC’s role is to facilitate collaboration and information sharing between transitioning groups and to resolve technical issues as the reforms progress. The director general of the Department of Local Government and Communities chairs the committee, which includes the presidents of the WA Local Government Association and Local Government Managers Australia, WA Division. The committee reports to the minister on the progress of implementation, and local implementation committees established by local governments for the transition process are responsible for planning for the mergers and implementation of key arrangements for the start of the new councils. Representatives from the LICs are also members of MetRIC and provide feedback to MetRIC, sharing their experiences and drawing MetRIC’s attention to local issues. They are very much involved in the process.

The decision announced by this government yesterday represents the most significant step towards local government reform in Western Australia in more than 100 years. Members opposite cannot handle it, but there we go; it is this government. Yes, there is still work to do —

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! All of that will be recorded in Hansard as just “Several members interjected”, and it will not contribute to the debate at all in terms of the record.
Hon HELEN MORTON: I will just finish my comments with regard to regional Western Australia. The Premier confirmed yesterday that he had no plans to pursue local government reform in regional Western Australia during this term of government. The minister has confirmed that his priority is overseeing the reform process in the metropolitan area and that he has no time frame for reform in regional WA. Having said that, yesterday’s announcement underlines the leadership the Liberal Party has shown in advancing metropolitan local government reform. There is no question that local government reform is required in regional Western Australia. We will continue to work with regional local authorities who are proactively pursuing a reform agenda.

If I have a little time left, I would like to go through what local governments wanted and what they got so that members can see precisely how this unfolded. Fremantle wanted to merge with East Fremantle; it got a merger with East Fremantle and boundary adjustments including the addition of Rottnest Island. That is a big tick. East Fremantle wanted to remain a stand-alone council; it got a merger with Fremantle. South Perth wanted to merge with Victoria Park and for Burswood peninsula to be included; it got a merger with Victoria Park to create South Park, including Burswood peninsula. That is a big tick. Similarly, Victoria Park wanted to merge with South Perth, including Burswood peninsula; it got a merger with South Perth to create South Park, including Burswood peninsula. That is another big tick. Cockburn wanted to merge with Kwinana; it got a merger with Kwinana to create the City of Jervoise Bay, but will lose some suburbs to Fremantle and Melville. I think that is a tick. Kwinana wanted a boundary amendment to include about half of Cockburn; it got a merger with Cockburn to create the City of Jervoise Bay. Again, that is another tick. Canning wanted to remain stand-alone—as Canning would—or else merge with Gosnells as a plan B; it got a merger with Gosnells with some boundary adjustments, so it got its B option. Gosnells wanted a boundary amendment to take part of Canning and give up some suburbs to South Perth and Victoria Park; it got a merger with Canning and some boundary adjustments. That is a tick. The one that surprises me is Bassendean, which wanted to merge with Bayswater; it got a merger with Bayswater to form the City of Bayswater. That is a big tick, in the East Metropolitan Region! Mundaring wanted amalgamation with Swan, and will be amalgamated with Swan—tick. Swan wanted a merger with Mundaring and Bassendean; it got a merger with Mundaring and some boundary adjustments—tick. Belmont wanted to merge with Kalamunda and to pick up Perth Airport; it got a merger with Kalamunda and will pick up Perth Airport and part of Welshpool to form the City of Belmont—tick.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Let us bring some commonsense back to this debate. I want to talk about what is really going on south of the river, because it is apparent from the minister’s comments that she has no idea. There are three sections in my electorate in which residents will have a say about the changes that are to be made as a result of this halfway mark of the most significant shemozzle in local government in Western Australia for the last 100 years. Those three areas are Fremantle and East Fremantle; Kwinana and Cockburn; and Victoria Park and South Perth. I am not even going to talk about the South Park reference just yet. The citizens in those areas get to have a say; the citizens of the City of Canning do not get to have a say.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: I thought they said that no-one in Belmont wanted that.

Hon HELEN MORTON: That is right. Unbelievable, is it not?

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order, members! Order!

Hon HELEN MORTON: I am fast running out of time, but I want to get a couple more in. Armadale wanted the northern part of Serpentine–Jarrahdale; it got the northern part of Serpentine–Jarrahdale—tick.

Several members interjected.

Hon HELEN MORTON: Just let me finish on this one.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order, members!

Hon HELEN MORTON: Kalamunda wanted amalgamation with the city of Belmont, if ratepayers could vote; it got a merger with Belmont to form the City of Belmont, but with no vote.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order, members! Time has elapsed for the member.

HON SUE ELLERY (South Metropolitan — Leader of the Opposition) [11.27 am]: Let us bring some commonsense back to this debate. I want to talk about what is really going on south of the river, because it is apparent from the minister’s comments that she has no idea. There are three sections in my electorate in which residents will have a say about the changes that are to be made as a result of this halfway mark of the most significant shemozzle in local government in Western Australia for the last 100 years. Those three areas are Fremantle and East Fremantle; Kwinana and Cockburn; and Victoria Park and South Perth. I am not even going to talk about the South Park reference just yet. The citizens in those areas get to have a say; the citizens of the City of Canning do not get to have a say.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: That’s not true, not all of them; some of them do.

Hon SUE ELLERY: The member is quite right; the tiny bit that is going into the new South Park will get a say, but that is only a tiny sliver. The vast majority of people in the City of Canning will not have a say. The minister
referred to doorknocking, so I would like to invite her to doorknock in the suburbs of Riverton and Willetton, to attend the Herald Avenue Senior Citizen’s Centre in Willetton —

Hon Helen Morton interjected.

**Hon SUE ELLERY**: Why does the minister not keep quiet and listen to what I am inviting her to do? I am inviting her to put her money where her mouth is and go to the southern suburbs to ask the people who live in the City of Canning what they think about not being given a vote in this shemozzle that she calls local government reform.

Hon Helen Morton: You’ve got no support over there for this.

**Hon SUE ELLERY**: I am inviting the minister to do something. She can say yes, no or maybe she will look at her diary. She can say any of those things, but that is what I invite her to do.

Hon Helen Morton: Your members have deserted you on this.

**Hon SUE ELLERY**: Seriously, is this the contribution the minister has to make?

Hon Helen Morton: Where are they?

**Hon SUE ELLERY**: Where is your brain, minister? Seriously, I am not entertaining this nonsense!

Several members interjected.

The **DEPUTY PRESIDENT**: Order, members! The Leader of the Opposition has the call and members should listen to her in silence.

**Hon SUE ELLERY**: There is outrage from ratepayers in Riverton and Willetton about not being able to get a vote. I have attended a number of very large community meetings. The emails have been building and building and building, and people have been dropping in to my office. The member for Riverton knows this because he ventured into Herald Avenue Senior Citizens Centre, and until this shemozzle I think he had a pretty good working relationship with those people. Hundreds of them attend there. They are absolutely furious with him. Those people have been coming to my office as well. The emails started last night. The emails peaked when the member for Riverton sent out his own email to residents in Riverton and Willetton and told them that they actually had no choice. He told them that there was no possibility for their preferred option. That option is for the City of Canning—a viable, large, growing demographic area—to stay as it is. There is no capacity for them to have that.

I note that the minister has left the chamber on urgent parliamentary business, and I am terribly disappointed about that, because I was also going to invite her to talk to us about what is going on in Subiaco. Hon Ken Travers outlined to us today that some 3,000 residents in Subiaco and Mt Claremont were left off the map. I particularly want someone from the government to tell me about this matter. The minister is unable to tell me, as she has already made her speech. Perhaps one of the members for North Metropolitan Region can tell me. When the maps were released to the cities and the mayors yesterday, did anyone from Subiaco raise, either with the Minister for Local Government or with the Department of Local Government and Communities, what was glaringly obvious, I suspect, to the residents of Subiaco—that 3,000 residents were left without a local governance structure at all? Did anyone raise that matter yesterday? I suspect the answer to that is yes.

It is astonishing when we think about how long this process has taken and that Minister Simpson tells us we are only at the halfway point. We know that this issue has been before cabinet on several occasions, so how many people checked those maps? How many people checked the boundaries in the process between receiving the Local Government Advisory Board report about two and a bit months ago and yesterday’s release? How many people checked the maps and nobody noticed that there was a gap in the maps covering 3,000 people in one of the areas on which the Premier said he wants to focus? Talk about a botched process!

As Hon Ken Travers said, if we were to pitch this to the producers of the *Utopia* program on ABC and say, “Guess what? Here’s a proposal for a show. Every possible thing that can go wrong goes wrong. The maps are missing a critical part of the metropolitan infrastructure, and we’re going to name one of the new ones South Park”, can members imagine what the producers of *Utopia* would say? I reckon they would say, “Well, no-one would believe that was even vaguely possible.” But that is what has happened here.

That fact is that Minister Simpson is telling us that we are at the halfway point. This reform process has been five years in the making, so do we have another five years ahead of us? The minister is wrong actually, because there is just over two years until the election. In the worst-case scenario this will go on for another two years—and I believe it will. Do members know what the government has to do today? The Premier has just told the other place that the government has to go back to the Local Government Advisory Board today and make another application to fix the maps, and say, “Oops, we left off 3,000 residents in Subiaco and Mt Claremont.”

[10]
How absolutely extraordinary! Is it possible for the government to make any more mistakes? It cannot be; surely it cannot be! It is absolutely mind-boggling. I therefore invite any member for North Metropolitan Region to stand and advise me whether this matter was brought to their attention yesterday, or whether the first they heard about it was when Labor raised it in the other place this morning.

For the second time this week, in this place as well as in the other place, government members have passed a motion on a voice to avoid the embarrassment of their own members having to cross the floor. I think what the minister said is true: it is appropriate to use the words “most significant”. The rest of his sentence is completely inappropriate. It is the most significant shemozzle in local government in 100 years.

The other part of our motion is about the failure of the Premier to rule out applying the same botched process to regional Western Australia, which is why no division was taken on the vote and nobody got to cross the floor in this place or in the other place today. We know that what the Premier really wants in his little heart of hearts is to fix the western suburbs. Guess what? He has not. He has put that off until we all float into “Riversea” at some point in five years. He has put off fixing the western suburbs and has mucked up Subiaco. However, he says he wants to pursue reform into regional Western Australia, in particular into the wheatbelt, and refuses to back away from that. I think Minister Simpson is probably right when he says that we are at the halfway mark, because I think the Premier’s vision is to do this same sort of thing again in regional Western Australia.

This is a mess. The residents of the City of Canning are making it abundantly clear to me that they think this is giving them less say, fewer services and higher costs. They are confused about the options available to them, because the member for Riverton has given them conflicting information time and again. There is uncertainty. There is instability for the officers who work for the City of Canning, and instability and uncertainty over the kinds of services that will be available under the split council. The residents feel that they are being forced into this position by an arrogant Premier who does not care about what local people want, and most importantly they are sick of the mess. The notion, therefore, that this is going to go on for another five years is really horrifying people—absolutely horrifying people. There is more confusion and more uncertainty every day. We thought the events of yesterday were about drawing a line in the sand; that was it and we all knew where we stood in the metropolitan area. Guess what? No, we do not because the 50 000 people who checked the maps did not realise that 3 000 people in Subiaco and Mt Claremont are missing from the maps and will have no local governance structure. It is absolutely astonishing! This is the most significant shemozzle in local government in 100 years.

HON MARTIN ALDRIDGE (Agricultural) [11.37 am]: I do not intend to make a large contribution, as I saw another member rise to their feet and seek the call, and I made quite a lengthy contribution when we dealt with local government reform on a motion on notice in September. However, I want to rise today to address a couple of issues, and particularly some of the developments that have happened since we last discussed this matter in September. One of the most interesting things that came out of the debate in this chamber when we discussed this matter in September was a view expressed by Hon Simon O’Brien about the Liberal Party not having a position on this area of local government reform. I find that quite interesting when the Premier is saying to the Parliament that the Liberal Party is the only party that has a policy on local government reform, yet I am hearing from members of the Liberal Party that they are not even able to discuss this.

Hon Donna Faragher interjected.

HON MARTIN ALDRIDGE: I welcome the parliamentary secretary to get to her feet. I did not hear too many of her colleagues speaking in support of the Minister for Mental Health in September or today, but perhaps the parliamentary secretary will get up and be the first to support the Liberals’ local government reform process.

It is staggering that the Liberals are unable to have this discussion in the party room. It does not appear to me that there is a Liberal Party policy on local government reform. I think there is certainly a policy that is being led by the Premier and his minister, but I do not think that there is a universal position. To get to some other comments made late last week, we learned that the reform process was taking a slightly different tack and legislation would be brought to the Parliament to enact some of those changes to take place. Casting my mind back to when this reform process was launched some months ago, following the 2013 state election, I remember one of the things that the minister and the Premier were saying on ABC radio at the time was that this was not forced reform; if this was forced reform, the government would be bringing a bill to the Parliament. That was one of the main factors used in the debate. The Premier said that this is not a forced reform process and that if he wanted forced reform, he would bring a bill to Parliament. Surely now the Premier and the Minister for Local Government have to admit that this is a forced reform process.

When the announcement was made yesterday morning, the comment was made that the Premier expected universal support for the passage of the City of Perth Act, I think it was called. I have struggled to work out where this universal support might come from. Is there a member of Parliament called “Mr Universal” or a political party that has been renamed the “Universal Party”? It was quite a staggering comment. The Premier
has not asked me for my support and he does not have it. He does not have the support of the National Party for the passage of a City of Perth bill. For a long time we have opposed forced reform of local government in Western Australia. Despite some of the history that I outlined in my speech in September to the motion on the metropolitan local government reform process when we played an early role in that process, in recent months the National Party has not been party to the cabinet decisions on local government reform. Ministers have abstained from cabinet decisions. These decisions are being made by the remaining Liberal members of cabinet. Even to this day the National Party has not been consulted on its support or otherwise for the passage of legislation for forced reform of local governments in Western Australia. It is simply not true to say that we would be supportive of this. The leader of our party made it very clear on ABC radio this morning, and I am sure in the debate in the other place today, that we would not support a bill of that nature coming to the house.

Hon Helen Morton: Is that even if the people wanted it?

Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE: If the people want it, we do not need a bill to come to the Parliament. If the people want it, we can go through the Local Government Advisory Board process and even withstand the poll provisions of the Local Government Act.

Hon Helen Morton interjected.

Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE: The minister does not understand the Local Government Act. If the people want it, they can make a submission to the Local Government Advisory Board for that change to take effect. It would withstand the poll provisions of the act and we would not need an act of Parliament. It still astounds me that the Liberal Party can achieve 95 per cent of what it wants to achieve by accepting all the recommendations of the Local Government Advisory Board. I am staggered to see that the Liberal Party is still trying to get that little bit more and those last little tweaks. Unless there is to be some massive shift on this issue and the Labor Party is to cross the floor and support the City of Perth bill, I simply cannot see why the government would pursue a forced reform measure by bringing a bill to the Parliament. The National Party has been consistent in this respect and we oppose forced local government reform.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Hon Alanna Clohesy.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: This is not an opportunity to make comments across the chamber.

HON ALANNA CLOHESY (East Metropolitan) [11.43 am]: One second in; that is pretty good. I was trying to think of a word that encapsulated where we are now and everything that has gone before with the local government changes. I will not dare say that it is anything other than just changes. The Leader of the Opposition came up with a great word—shemozzle! That is exactly what we have. After five long years of to-ing and fro-ing about this issue what is left is a shemozzle. This reform treats some people as second-class citizens, democratically speaking. They will not get a say about what happens to their local government authority. That is because of a sleight of hand around whether it is a local government boundary adjustment, so described by the government, or an amalgamation. Of course, we know that all those local government areas that will have so-called boundary adjustments are in fact amalgamations, and that is unfair. That creates second-class citizens, democratically speaking.

The process has also caused uncertainty. It has caused uncertainty for ratepayers, councillors and the general public. People do not know what services they will get. People want to know that their services, such as libraries, will stay where they are. People are worried about the impact it will have on their rates; that issue has been raised with me. Why has all this uncertainty and confusion—all this shemozzle—happened? What has come out of it? Four different types of approaches have come out of it, all of which are unfair for not only those councils involved in the reform process, but also, more importantly, the residents living in those councils. Some of those people who live in areas with councils that are designated to be amalgamated will get a vote. The people who live in areas with councils that will experience so-called boundary adjustments will not have any say in what happens to them. That, of course, is happening to the City of Stirling.

The City of Stirling will have large chunks carved out it. That is not a boundary adjustment; that is a forced amalgamation. Parts of Dianella, Mt Lawley, Menora and Yokine and all of Inglewood will be amalgamated with the City of Bayswater. On the other side Churchlands, Herdsman, parts of Wembley, and Wembley Downs will all be transferred to the City of Subiaco. We have heard from Hon Ken Travers about the doubt that has now been created because of the dreadful map drawing for the City of Subiaco and whether parts of that will exist. That is up in the air and has created more confusion and uncertainty for the people of the City of Stirling. The City of Stirling and the Stirling mayor do not accept what has been put before them. Giovanni Italiano is reported as saying that he is bitterly disappointed at the decision to cut the city’s boundaries —
“We remain unconvinced this decision is in the best interest of the ratepayers who will likely pay the ultimate price through increased rates and fewer services,” he said.

“We understand that many ratepayers will be disappointed and more than likely have many questions that at this time we simply cannot answer.”

Spot on, Giovanni Italiano. Of course, all the way along that council has worked with its residents and its ratepayers and listened to what ratepayers want; it has given them much more of an opportunity to have a say than the state government will ever give the people of Stirling. The state government will not give them a say, but because of its sneaky shifts and turns, the City of Stirling has listened to its residents all along! That is only one part of the City of Stirling—and all because of sneaky shifts and turns! Of course, we know that people across the board do not want forced amalgamations.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order, members! Hon Alanna Clohesy has the call.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: People across the board do not want forced amalgamations. They believed what the government said about forced amalgamations. Earlier this year a Western Australian opinion poll found that less than one-third of metropolitan voters support Colin Barnett’s plan to force amalgamations, which is what will happen to the City of Stirling. The research also found that 31.8 per cent of respondents disapproved of the plan and about one-fifth said that they were unsure about it.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order, members!

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: But, of course, the government does not want to hear that!

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order, members! I remind members that Hon Alanna Clohesy has the call and should be heard in silence. I take this opportunity to acknowledge and welcome students from Mundaring Primary School, who are visiting in the public gallery. Perhaps that will be a hint to members to behave with the proper decorum.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: Of course, the state government did not take note of those who were polled. The state government does not care that people do not want forced council amalgamations. It does not care that it is making second-class citizens—democratically speaking—of some people because they will not get a vote and will lose their say about what is happening to their community.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order, members! Hon Alanna Clohesy has the call. Those members who are finding it difficult to listen in silence should consider leaving the chamber.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: Thank you, Madam Deputy President.

People are exhausted by this process. There is uncertainty about what will happen to people’s jobs, which is a serious concern for a lot of people, particularly those working in the Shire of Mundaring. They do not know when the merger will take place; indeed, there is a lot of confusion about how and when it will take place and how much the amalgamation will cost.

Hon Helen Morton: They’ve got job security for two years!

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: They certainly cannot tell their bank when applying for a home or personal loan that in two or three years they could be without a job. The proposed amalgamations have brought about confusion and instability and will be a waste—indeed, who will pay for the forced amalgamations? Everyone is sick of the mess. This is not the end of the process—that is what is such a shemozzle about it all! As the Minister for Local Government told us, we are only halfway through the process. People are tired, but people are tired because the process could have been handled so much better if the government had listened to people in the councils and if it had listened to what the residents and ratepayers want. This is not the end of the process; rather, it is the beginning of a lot more confusion and uncertainty.

HON STEPHEN DAWSON (Mining and Pastoral) [11.54 am]: I will tell members —

Hon Helen Morton: You have one minute!

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: A minute is all I need to take to task the comments made by the Minister for Mental Health this morning. If anybody was listening to the minister’s comments this morning, they would have
heard an absolute whitewash. She would tell us that there are no problems in this state and that everyone is in favour of the amalgamations. Guess what, minister? I ain’t giving a tick to this proposal and many Western Australians ain’t giving a tick to this proposal. I say: No deal, minister! As I said when the Local Government Amendment Bill came before this house a few months ago—no deal! What did the government do? It listened, because it realised that nobody supported it.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order, members! We need to remember where we are. I note that we have almost reached the close of this debate. Let us hear Hon Stephen Dawson in silence.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I have 20 seconds! I will tell the chamber what is in today’s The West Australian and what the mayors and shire presidents think about this issue, because the minister tells us that they are all supportive. The mayors of South Perth and Victoria Park have come out swinging in response to this proposal because Burswood Peninsula will be put in jeopardy. Indeed, the Town of Mosman Park has issues with the policy. The City of Vincent is concerned because of possible vote weighting. Not everyone is in favour of the policy—indeed, many people are against it!

Motion lapsed, pursuant to standing orders.