

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMENDMENT (SUSPENSION AND DISMISSAL) BILL 2018

883. Mr Y. MUBARAKAI to the Minister for Local Government:

I refer to the Local Government Amendment (Suspension and Dismissal) Bill 2018 that passed Parliament last week. Can the minister outline to the house how this delivers on the McGowan Labor government's commitment to implement local government reforms that deliver for all Western Australian workers?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN replied:

I thank the member for Jandakot for his question and also his support of strong, efficient and effective local government.

I am very pleased the bill passed, and I thank the other place for its support last week of the suspension and dismissal bill. This is the latest in a raft of reforms in local government. In fewer than two years the Auditor General's bill passed the Parliament. That will now ensure the auditing of Western Australian local governments by the Auditor General, and performance orders to be undertaken—a reform achieved by this government. There was the signing of the agreement between the Western Australian Local Government Association, Local Government Professionals and the government at last year's WALGA convention. That, again, underpinned our respect for the sector, and indeed our willingness to work in collaboration and partnership to achieve reform in the local government sector.

Additional to that, we also had the reform of the Local Government Act. The first phase of that has been completed, and in the next few weeks I will introduce a bill that will address issues associated with universal training. That will mean that at the next local government council elections in 2019, there will be an understanding that there is a requirement for universal training of elected members. That legislation will also address CEO performances, recruitment and gifts. We are now in the middle of the very, very important second phase of the Local Government Act reform process that is canvassing the sector and wider community on issues associated with other important elements of a modern act.

In fewer than two years we have achieved legislative reform, working in partnership with the sector. We have implemented a range of important reforms in fewer than two years. To contrast, of course, what this government has achieved in fewer than two years, we look across at the other side's performance in eight and a half years. We know that all that was left on reform was the carnage of the ill-fated attempt to forcibly amalgamate councils in the metropolitan area that was of course handled in a ham-fisted way.

We saw a cavalcade of local government ministers from the other side—the former member for Bunbury, the former member for now Darling Range and the former member for Wanneroo. A cavalcade of local government ministers failed to do what the former Premier was trying to do in forcibly amalgamating councils. There is no other record of achievement by the Liberal government in its eight and half years, but in less than two years we have achieved this. I hope those opposite will continue to support the reform program and ensure that, at the end of that process, we end up with modern local government legislation that underpins good governance, transparency and a modern approach to how local government should function. That is what I hope and that is what I think we are already delivering in less than two years.