

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMALGAMATIONS — DADOUR PROVISIONS

594. Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN to the Premier:

I refer to the Premier's often-announced removal of the Dadour poll provisions from the Local Government Act.

- (1) When will the Premier remove the Dadour provisions from the Local Government Act?
- (2) When will the Premier provide ratepayers and local governments with clarification on how the government will strip them of their democratic rights?

Mr C.J. BARNETT replied:

- (1)–(2) If anyone thinks the Dadour provisions are democratic, I suggest they have a closer look at them. They are not democratic; they are basically a way for a minority to stop sensible reform of local government.

Mr M. McGowan: That is wrong.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: That is the Leader of the Opposition's opinion. The Labor Party is just weak on this.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Armadale to order for the first time. Let the Premier answer the question on the Dadour provisions.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: There are 140 local authorities in Western Australia, with 30 in the metropolitan area where 75 per cent of Western Australians live. That is not a structure that suits this state, and particularly metropolitan Perth, for this century. Every other state has had the courage, difficult as it has been, to reform local government and to set up their cities and metropolitan areas for the future. The government has taken it on. Yes, it is difficult because there are a lot of vested interests and arguments between local authorities, which proves the point somewhat. As I have said before, in my constituency of Cottesloe there are seven local authorities, some of which cover an area less than five square kilometres. If the opposition thinks that is logical for the development of metropolitan Perth, I disagree with it. We have gone through a process. Yes, it is taking time, and if it takes longer, so be it. We will not relent; we will keep going. We have asked every metropolitan local authority to put in a proposal to the Local Government Advisory Board; 18 have done so but the other 12 have decided not to.

Mr D.A. Templeman: When will you remove the Dadour provisions?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: My view and the view of most members is that the Dadour provisions are outdated.

Mr D.A. Templeman: What about your party room members? They rolled you last time.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Mandurah to order for the first time. Will the Premier now come to the Dadour provisions and add whatever further he wishes to?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: This government does not support the Dadour provisions. There are 18 submissions and the government will deal with them one by one, starting with the City of Perth. The boundary for the City of Perth will include all Perth's major sporting, entertainment and cultural facilities and iconic areas such as Kings Park and the major hospitals. The structure for the City of Perth will serve as the capital city, just as the City of Melbourne has done since the 1990s. We will work from that.

Mr F.M. Logan interjected.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The City of Melbourne, my friend.

Mr F.M. Logan interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Cockburn! Premier, I ask you to wind this up, if and when you are going to address this amendment.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Whether we do or do not have the Dadour provision is not central to what this government is doing, but it has been used to prevent, for example, in country areas some logical amalgamations of very small shires. In one shire, a minority of people have stopped the will of the majority. If the opposition wants to stand with those groups in our community that will do all they can to preserve their position on a local council or prevent amalgamation and reform, then so be it.

I will conclude, Mr Speaker. In the area covered by the group of seven local authorities in the western suburbs, there are three members of state Parliament, one member of federal Parliament and 76 local councillors. Is that good governance? I do not think so.