

ROAD SAFETY COMMISSION — WESTERN FORCE PARTNERSHIP

88. Mr M. HUGHES to the Minister for Road Safety:

I have an interesting question for the minister. I refer to the special inquirer's examination into the \$1.5 million Road Safety Commission and Western Force partnership deal.

- (1) Can the minister outline to the house the process that led to that deal?
- (2) Can the minister inform the house whether that deal went to cabinet?

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS replied:

- (1)–(2) It certainly is a very interesting question and a very important one. The Langoulant report has a whole chapter about the Road Safety Commission and Rugby Western Australia partnership with Western Force, as outlined from page 569 onwards in volume 2 of the Langoulant final report. In that report there are some pretty interesting conclusions and information. It states —

“... the proposal to allocate \$1.5 million ... to the Western Force partnership was far and away the largest partnership involving [the] Road Trauma Trust Account ...”

...

The Special Inquirer was told that, up until March 2017, the biggest allocation had been about \$50 000.

Taking into account the whole history of the road trauma trust account, when the biggest allocation had been about \$50 000, the special inquirer said, “This is interesting. In the dying days of the former government in Jan 2017, they came up with an idea to spend \$1.5 million out of the road trauma trust fund.” It is interesting that the member for Scarborough should talk about business cases, because the business case here was very much lacking. If members look to the bottom of page 569, it states —

... and, despite specific requests, the Special Inquirer did not see any documentation that explained how the State would benefit from the decision.

What a quick decision it was. On 25 January 2017, just before the election, just before the writs were issued on 1 February, a memo came to the member for Scarborough's office when she was Minister for Road Safety. It arrived there on 25 January. By 30 January—the date is actually scratched over; it looks like she has written the twenty-ninth first and then crossed it out and put the thirtieth—fewer than five days after it was signed off by the Road Safety Commission, she put her moniker on it. She signed up to the \$1.5 million worth of expenditure without any proper information about how it would benefit the state.

The second part of the member for Kalamunda's question is even more interesting; the question whether it went to cabinet and what was the process. If one were to believe the Leader of the Opposition, on 20 February, earlier this week—after the Langoulant report was released—he said on ABC NewsRadio, according to my notes —

“The appropriate agencies recommended, through the Minister to Cabinet, that we reallocate surplus funds to support Western Force, and that's what we decided to do.”

Perhaps the Leader of the Opposition might like to correct the record, because the Langoulant report makes it very clear that it did not go to cabinet. Mr Allen, the minister's former chief of staff, made it quite clear that it did not go to cabinet. If members turn to page 586 of the report, they will see that Mr Langoulant states that there was no meeting of cabinet between 16 January and 30 January 2017 when the minister signed it off. It could not have gone to cabinet. We do not need to trawl through anything; it did not go to cabinet.

Mrs L.M. Harvey: It was on 18 January; check your records.

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: Are you saying that it went to cabinet now? Are you saying it went to that meeting?

Mrs L.M. Harvey: It was discussed.

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: Oh!

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister!

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: Perhaps the Leader of the Opposition would like to correct the parliamentary record too, because if I look back to 29 June last year, he said —

The Road Safety Commissioner wrote to me. He was responsible for making submissions to the Minister for Road Safety about using money from their trust funds. He was responsible for putting together the

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submission for the \$1.5 million for the Western Force. He is responsible and he knows it was brought to cabinet, ...

The Leader of the Opposition says that Mr Papalia did the submission and it was taken to cabinet. Further in that same debate, while the member for Scarborough was on her feet, Mr B.S. Wyatt interjected to say that it did not go to cabinet. The Leader of the Opposition interjected on him, on 29 June, and stated, "Yes, they did." They cannot get their story straight between them. Despite the fact that in June last year the Leader of the Opposition was in this house saying that a submission went to cabinet on it—a position that he maintained on radio even after the Langoulant report had come out—his deputy, who is sitting next to him, never gave him the elbow and said, "Actually, the submission didn't go to cabinet at all." Then his own deputy—talk about dysfunction opposite—still did not enlighten him, we must believe, by saying "Hey, buddy, it didn't go to cabinet" because she lets him go along to the Langoulant inquiry and still say that it went to cabinet. When questioned about that further, he said, "Well, it could be a bit of a confused recollection; it might have just been a chat with the Minister for Road Safety." Since when is that any kind of a proper process?

When we get to the matter of unlawful, either you are deliberately misunderstanding what Mr Langoulant is saying, member for Scarborough, or you are much, much dumber than I ever thought, because you unlawfully, time and time again, spent money from the road trauma trust account without the proper authority. You had it pointed out to you time and time again by myself and the former member for Hillarys that you were in breach of the Road Safety Council Act.

Point of Order

Mr R.S. LOVE: Madam Deputy Speaker, under standing order 75, questions may be asked of ministers "regarding matters under the Minister's administrative responsibility". It also states, in the further explanations, that a question cannot relate "to events which occurred before he became a Minister". These events relate to a time prior to when the member for Midland became the Minister for Road Safety. The report may have come out, but the minister is talking about events that occurred prior to that time. It is not a commentary about the report.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Madam Deputy Speaker, on that point of order, the matter is clearly out of order. This is in relation to a report that was released this week and matters related to that report.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

This minister cannot plead ignorance, because she did know. When she appointed —

Point of Order

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Madam Deputy Speaker, the minister referred to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition as a minister. That is incorrect.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member is quite right.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: When the member for Scarborough was minister, she gave a statement in the house on the appointment of Mr Papalia as Road Safety Commissioner. She said, and I quote —

The necessary amendments to the Road Safety Council Act 2002 to create the advisory council are currently being progressed, and, until these changes occur, the Road Safety Council will continue to operate in its current form.

That was back in November 2015. Did you ever progress those amendments, member for Scarborough? No; never! There was never any change to the statutory obligations of the Road Safety Council. From all that time onwards, when the former government treated it like the RTTA, like its own little private slush fund, you were in breach of the law.

Point of Order

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Madam Deputy Speaker, this looks more like a ministerial statement than it does an answer to a question in question time.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members, please! Thank you.

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: I will come to a conclusion.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Extract from *Hansard*

[ASSEMBLY — Thursday, 22 February 2018]

p473b-475a

Mr Matthew Hughes; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Shane Love; Mr David Templeman; Mr Sean L'Estrange

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: The original question from the member for Kalamunda was about the process. If the member wants to ask me about what this process looks like, it looks pretty much like a collapsed rugby scrum!

Several members interjected.

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: The dummy half fed it to the hooker, and all the forwards and the whole lot of you collapsed like a pack of cards!

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Have you finished, minister?

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: I am not sure that I was able to be heard. The dummy half fed it to the hooker, and all the forwards pushed forward and you all collapsed in a big heap! That is why you lost the election in March! It is because you could not follow proper process.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members, we have a problem that Hansard cannot hear the proceedings. Would you please stop yelling.

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: You could not follow proper process. It was a dodgy deal, done in the dying days of government. When the member for Scarborough went on radio earlier this week, she said, "Well, if we'd had more time and the election wasn't coming up, perhaps we could have had a better business case." How irresponsible of you, member for Scarborough, in committing a future government to your dodgy deal!