

PICABAR

837. Mr A. KRSTICEVIC to the Minister for Culture and the Arts:

- (1) Why did the minister mislead Parliament yesterday when he stated that negotiations are occurring with Picabar until the end of March, given the owners have sent the opposition correspondence that states, “We didn’t hear about the 31 March deadline until parliament yesterday” and they said that any reference to negotiating a lease is incorrect?
- (2) If the minister continues to assert an offer of a lease until March to Picabar was made, who made that offer and on what date?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN replied:

I thank the member for the question.

- (1)–(2) As the member is well aware, this issue has been going on for a long time. You did not fix it, but that is fine; we are going to fix it! You sat there on your hands and did nothing—you did nothing but we are going fix it! Tomorrow I am going to meet with Mr Buckley, but I will tell you this: if the member looks at what was said, the offer was made last Friday for a licence for the operator and it was confirmed by Mr Buckley on 26 October, last week —

We accept your offer to stay in place between 14 November and the completion of the EOI process. Thank you. Please note however that we do not accept the validity of the EOI process and reserve all of our rights.

That is understandable; it is a business and they have a right to argue their case. But they have been offered and they have accepted that they can continue to trade into next year. We will sit down with them and talk about the options.

Mr A. Krsticevic: Is it until 31 March?

The SPEAKER: Member for Carine!

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Well, 31 March is the date that we are offering, but if it is beyond that, it is beyond that. The simple fact is it is untrue for the member to say there was no confirmation that there was an acceptance of a deed of licence. That deed is now being drawn up.

Mr A. Krsticevic: Have they got it?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: It is now being drawn up. There are negotiations happening between the Perth Theatre Trust and these—so the member’s assertion is wrong. Again, this points out the fact that we have an important tenancy in a state-owned building that has heritage connotations or considerations, and before any long-term lease is signed all the elements need to be considered. I am happy to sit down with them, as I will do tomorrow and come from their case, but the assertion the member makes is incorrect. According to —

Mr A. Krsticevic: According to them!

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: There are lots of conversations going on around, but according to the meeting that was held last week, there was an agreement: “We accept your offer to stay in place.”

Mr A. Krsticevic interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Carine!

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The member has been asserting it is going to close on 14 November, but that is not true, because they say here —

We accept your offer to stay in place between 14 November and the completion of the EOI process.

We are going to sit down and talk to them. We are going to solve this problem of the long-term lease because you could not! You could not do a thing, because you were lazy! I have got to tell the member this: he might want to go and talk to the former Minister for Culture and the Arts about this because he would also, I am sure, assert that this has been an ongoing issue that is complex and has been going on for too long, and all issues need to be considered. The member wants us to go and sign a 10-year lease—sign it up! Do I do that on behalf of the state? No, I do not do anything of that nature until we make sure that all the issues are canvassed. That is what a sensible, transparent process is. If the member wants to go down the road of a process that is non-transparent, which is what he is arguing, then, sorry, that is not going to happen.

The SPEAKER: Through the Chair, minister.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I will meet with them tomorrow; we will have a conversation. We know, according to what I am aware of, that Picabar, as it is known—it is its business name, and I accept and acknowledge that—will

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continue to operate. We will then, in the interim period, work out the long-term future for that tenancy and also those other tenancy elements that will be essential activation elements of the Perth Cultural Centre going forward.

Tabling of Paper

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Mr Speaker, during the minister's answer he referred to aspects of a contract or something. I am asking, if that is an official document, whether it could be tabled?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Hold on, I will rule on it. Is it an official document?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: No.

The SPEAKER: It is not a point of order, member.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I am happy to table the quote, Mr Speaker.

[See paper 1990.]