

PICABAR

820. Mr A. KRSTICEVIC to the Minister for Local Government:

I refer to the minister's ruthless decision to evict the operators of Picabar in the Perth Cultural Centre.

- (1) Why was Picabar given only two and a half weeks' notice to vacate the premises by 14 November?
- (2) Why is the minister ruining a family business, which employs 15 people, in the lead-up to Christmas?
- (3) Will the minister, as landlord, now negotiate a new lease directly with the owners of Picabar?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN replied:

I thank the member for the question.

- (1)–(3) Many of us in this place would be aware that Picabar is a very important component of the Perth Cultural Centre and we want it to continue, and it will continue. There will be operations out of that bar because it is an important part of the activation of the Perth Cultural Centre. The member would be aware, I assume, that there has been an unsatisfactory, month-by-month lease between PICA and the tenant, which dates back to 2012. The issues of certainty for the tenancy and its continuity were never addressed.

The member will be aware, I am sure, that responsibility for the total cultural precinct was only recently transferred to my portfolio area, whereas previously it was under the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority. The letter that the member is referring to was actually a letter from the Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts to the tenant, but I can assure him that there are ongoing negotiations between the Perth Theatre Trust, which now has management authority over that tenancy, and the current tenant about the continuation of a licence through to at least March next year. I understand that the tenant is negotiating that outcome. With regard to the future of that site, it is a public site; therefore, there are issues of probity that we need to be aware of. That will be part of the negotiations with regard to Picabar, but I can assure the member that it is not closing on 14 November. Activity there will continue, and the activity by the current tenant has been very, very good. That is widely accepted. We will make sure that there is a transparent process in place and we will negotiate with the current tenant, but the member should remember that we have, as part of the Perth Cultural Centre Precinct, a number of other state-owned entities that are still to come onstream with regard to commercial tenants, including restaurant and cafe tenancies at the new museum and at the Art Gallery of Western Australia. We want to make sure that the cultural precinct is absolutely activated, and Picabar is part of that activation. There will be no closure of Picabar on 14 November.