

CITY OF PERTH — SUSPENSION

114. Ms L.L. BAKER to the Minister for Local Government:

I refer to the decisive action taken to suspend the City of Perth council and address what has become an untenable situation.

- (1) Can the minister outline to the house how proper process was followed in taking this action?
- (2) Is the minister aware of anyone who does not understand how proper process is meant to be followed under the Local Government Act?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN replied:

I thank the member for Maylands for the question.

- (1)–(2) First of all, to answer the member’s first question, it is important that people understand the constraints of the Local Government Act and the minister’s capacity to deal with councils and indeed councillors. That is why our first act in coming to government is to reform the Local Government Act, because the Local Government Act—unlike what the other side thought when it was in government—is in need of reform. That is what we are doing. We are now reforming the Local Government Act. One of the key factors in reforming the Local Government Act is being able to deal with individual councillors, and we will introduce legislation for that tomorrow.

The member’s question is about the current processes that the Minister for Local Government has to address problems. As members who know the act well would know—a number of members in this place know the act very well—under sections 8.15 and 8.19 the minister of the day has mechanisms before them to address councils that have, in the minister’s view, breached their capacity to deliver quality local government. When we look at the action that I have taken, we see that I took that action very, very carefully because there are high benchmarks and thresholds for enacting these sections, particularly section 8.19 of the Local Government Act, because legal issues must be considered when one makes that decision. One would think that was not the case for the member for Carine, the opposition spokesperson. He has absolutely no understanding of the Local Government Act. His first approach was that I should have sacked them all when I first came into government. Anyone who has read the Local Government Act would know we cannot sack a local council. One needs to go through a process.

Mr A. Krsticevic interjected.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Here he is over here —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Minister! Member for Carine, I call you to order for the first time.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I was listening to him on the radio during this whole process as he lurched from one view to another view—“Yeah, but no, but yeah, but”. Then I realised who he reminded me of—Vicki Pollard from the *Little Britain* series! That is who he is.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Talk through the Chair.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: That is who he is, jumping around. I looked up the definition of “Vicki Pollard”, which states —

She is a moody, obnoxious teenage girl seemingly incapable of doing much but gossip in a strong Bristol accent.

Apart from the Bristol accent, that is you!

Point of Order

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: In this place, it is disorderly to be impugning the character or indeed reflecting on the character of members of this house. I ask you to call this minister to order for the imputations and the reflections on the member for Carine that he has just made.

The SPEAKER: It is not a point of order. He is not impugning his character. Minister, tone it down a bit.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Of course. He reminds me of that person. I think that is what I said; he reminds me of that person. The fact of the matter is this: when we make a decision about suspending a council, as I did, we have to ensure that we believe that we have met the hierarchy of benchmarks to make the decision. We have to make sure that we do it legally under the Local Government Act. What the member for Carine was proposing to do is act against the act. We cannot act against the act.

Point of Order

Mr A. KRSTICEVIC: The Premier has been calling for the council to be sacked for a number of years now. I assume the Premier must know his job.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Carine, you are on three now. I called you twice. Minister, you are on two.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: The member has twice referred to the member for Carine other than the member for Carine.

The SPEAKER: I advised him on that.

Withdrawal of Remark

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Second, he just called the member for Carine an unparliamentary name and he should apologise and withdraw.

The SPEAKER: I did not hear it. Did you say anything unparliamentary?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I called him a dill and I withdraw it.

The SPEAKER: Withdraw properly, minister.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I withdraw.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The Liberal Party or the National Party has nothing on the City of Perth in terms of a chaotic reign. Look at what is happening between the National Party and the Liberal Party with the royalties for regions issue. Look at the two people in the front bench and their view of the Leader of the Opposition. You do not like what you are hearing, do you?

The SPEAKER: Minister Templeman, I do not like what I am hearing and I call you to order for the third time.

Point of Order

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Standing order 78 states that an answer must be relevant to the question. I seek your ruling on whether royalties for regions could be relevant to the Perth city council issue.

The SPEAKER: Yes, it is a point of order. Minister, you will get back to it and you will finish very quickly.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The fact of the matter is this: when we make a decision under the Local Government Act, we must act in accordance with the law. It is the law we have before us in the Local Government Act and the reason that we are reforming it. I hope the member for Carine is going to support our reforms, because all you do when you go out there publicly —

The SPEAKER: Through the Chair, minister.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The member goes on and on about a range of things that are not relevant.

Mr A. Krsticevic interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Carine, you are on three.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: We will reform the act. In response to the final part of the member for Maylands' question about who does not understand the act, it is the member for Carine.