

CITY OF PERTH — CEO — TERMINATION

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

I refer to the continuing chaos engulfing the City of Perth, including the termination yesterday of the services of chief executive officer Mr Martin Mileham.

- (1) Why were Mr Mileham's services terminated while he was on sick leave; and is this an appropriate example for all employers?
- (2) As stated by Mr Mileham, why was he not told directly of his termination instead of the deliberate decision to inform him via the media?
- (3) Why are the minister and his hand-picked commissioners refusing to be accountable to the ratepayers of Perth and to fully explain the continued chaos at the City of Perth?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN replied:

- (1)–(3) I thank the member for his question, but I am concerned about his assertions on the reputations of three people whom I actually have respect for. He has obviously come into this place and attacked them and slandered them; that is his choice. He can use this place to attack people. It is part of your habit, mate—it is part of your habit. You have done it before.

Point of Order

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: The minister is not answering the question through the Chair.

The SPEAKER: Yes, he is. Oh, through the Chair?

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: It is part of the way you operate.

The SPEAKER: Minister, through the Chair, please.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: You come in here and have a go at individuals and throw out things, and then, when you are queried, you say, "I'm just asking questions." You are wrong. The fact of the matter is this: whilst you were in government, you sat on your hands and did nothing about the City of Perth.

Several members interjected.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: While the City of Perth burned, you did nothing! You did nothing at all! Your cavalcade of ministers did nothing at all, except to go out on an ill-fated amalgamation process with councils in the state. So, you have no credibility. But the fact of the matter is —

Point of Order

Mr A. KRSTICEVIC: Mr Speaker, the question is about the termination of the current CEO under the commissioners. I would like the minister to return to that point.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members! Minister, you will get to the point.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: As I said, I started my comments about "the commissioners". You have now gone and attacked them. You obviously have no confidence in the commissioners—I do.

Mr A. Krsticevic interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Carine, I call you to order for the second time.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I do, and they were appointed because you and your government failed to address the ongoing issues of the City of Perth. We took action. I appointed three commissioners, and also initiated a panel inquiry, which is a legal process, which will now meet and which must be seen to travel its course without interruption by us. It is a judicial process. Now let me just say this about the decisions: when a council is elected, it makes decisions and it is accountable to voters. When commissioners are appointed, they are appointed to make decisions. That is part of our democratic process. Sometimes those councils and those commissioners will make decisions on behalf of ratepayers that are controversial and include, in this case, the termination of an employment contract. It is a contract that I am not privy to and I do not oversee. That is part of their responsibility. So, these three appointed commissioners, whom I have confidence in, have made a decision about the employment of the CEO. I assume that is based upon a whole range of issues that they have investigated —

Mr A. Krsticevic: Are you happy with that decision?

The SPEAKER: I am not happy with you, member for Carine.

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Mr Tony Krsticevic; Mr David Templeman; Mr Sean L'Estrange

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: — and that has led them to that decision. They ultimately are accountable for that decision. They need to make sure that they have followed due process as in the Local Government Act. There is no evidence before me that they have not; therefore, their decision has been made.

I have spoken to the commissioners and I have said if there is any information that they are legally able to make available to address some of the concerns that the media and others have raised, I would ask them to do it. Can I direct them to do it? No, I cannot. The member should know that, but, as he very often does in this place, he comes in here and sprays out a whole range of issues that he seems to know very little about. One needs to wonder: who is feeding him the information? Who is behind the information that is feeding him? That is the big question that the media probably should be asking.

I am confident that the City of Perth is on track with the three commissioners. They are very aware that the public and the ratepayers and the media will be looking at them closely while they do that work. It is not easy, it is challenging, but they are doing the job, and I support them.