

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

389. Mr D.R. MICHAEL to the Minister for Local Government:

Before I begin, on behalf of the member for Southern River, I welcome staff and students from Canning Vale College to the assembly today.

I refer to the Western Australian State and Local Government Partnership Agreement.

- (1) Can the minister update the house on the implementation of the agreement and how it promotes a respectful and productive relationship between the state and local government sectors?
- (2) Can the minister advise the house whether he is aware of any attempts to undermine this relationship?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN replied:

- (1) I am very pleased to respond to this question. I thank the member for Balcatta for this question and his abiding interest in and contribution to local government in Western Australia as a former elected member of the City of Stirling.

As members would be aware, when the government came to power in March 2017 one of our election commitments was to institute a partnership agreement between Local Government Professionals Australia WA and the Western Australian Local Government Association. That promised partnership reflected a longstanding Labor Party approach to working with local government, which was reflected in the Gallop government proposal back in 2001 to also sign a partnership agreement. That agreement was signed in August last year at the WALGA conference. The principles of that agreement are all about relationships and making sure that we work together for the benefit of the state and the residents and ratepayers of local governments across the state. It was signed by the Premier and myself and representatives of those two bodies. That is an important agreement and its principles will be adhered to. Amongst ourselves we will not always agree about some of the issues, but it is the principle of a relationship. It is, of course, unlike the relationship that those on the other side of this house had with local government during their eight and a half years of tenure. There will be a meeting in the coming weeks. Part of that agreement requires that we meet every 12 months, and the Premier will chair the meeting as per the agreement. Another feature of the agreement is consultation.

- (2) Yesterday in this house during the debate on the Local Government Amendment (Suspension and Dismissal) Bill 2018 that is currently before the house, the member for Carine again, as is his habit, made inferences and assertions that are not correct. In fact, they are factually wrong. I went to the *Oxford Dictionary* to find out what “fact” means. The definition of fact is “a thing certainly known to have occurred or to be true.” The definition of truth is “the state or quality of being true, accurate, honest, sincere, accurately shaped or adjusted”. I really think that the Leader of the Opposition needs to counsel his spokesperson very carefully, because we already see —

Mr A. Krsticevic interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Carine!

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: You have not apologised to those two people you impugned, son! We had a report this morning from the Procedure and Privileges Committee. You have not taken the opportunity to get up and apologise to those two people! Why won't you? You impugned them! Why won't you? One must ask the question: why won't you do it? Because you are gutless!

Mr D.C. Nalder: You're grandstanding!

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: No. He impugned —

Withdrawal of Remark

The SPEAKER: You will withdraw that remark, minister.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I withdraw.

The SPEAKER: And also talk through the Chair, please.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The simple fact is this: during a debate in this house on the budget reply speech, two people were impugned by the member for Carine. They wrote to the house through the Procedure and Privileges Committee to highlight their grievance with the comments that were made and this morning that committee highlighted the letters that were responded to and, indeed, authorised the inclusion of letters of response from Mr Fini and the suspended councillor Jemma Green to be incorporated into *Hansard*. One of the requirements in the requests by those people was a public apology by that member, and he has not done it!

You have been happy over the years to take your donations, of course, from various people.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members! Minister, you will talk through the Chair. That wall of noise is coming up.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: You are happy to do those sorts of things, but you cannot come into this place and make imputations about people and members of the public.

Mr A. Krsticevic interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Carine!

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: We just had a debate about the privileges of the place. The member also has to respect the rights of people that he comes into this place and incorrectly impugns.

How many phone calls did your party make to one of those aggrieved? How many? I heard it was a couple. Why? Because you know that he did the wrong thing, Leader of the Opposition! But you have refused to act. You can solve this quickly. Why do you not simply say to him, “You should get up during a personal explanation and apologise for the comments that you made in this house under the protection of this house”? Why won’t you do it? You won’t do it! You have had an opportunity to do that.

Point of Order

Mr S.K. L’ESTRANGE: The minister is inviting the Leader of the Opposition to answer a question. He cannot do that. Under the standing orders, he cannot answer a question.

The SPEAKER: No, he does not answer a question. Minister, through the Chair, or I will sit you down.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I will, Mr Speaker. It is the honourable thing. We had a debate earlier today about the whole issue of privileges and comments made in this house and protection of people, et cetera. There were two people about whom, clearly, statements that the member for Carine made to this place were incorrect. They were incorrect—absolutely. When that is recognised—there are now two reports that were presented to the house this morning—the decent, honourable thing to do is say, “I got it wrong.” That is what he needs to do—stand up and simply say, “I apologise; I got it wrong.” Why will he not do it? He was requested to do it, as was the Leader of the Opposition, through letters from both of those aggrieved people to them. Why has he not done it? It is simple to do. It does not take very long. You can do it through the procedures of this place as a personal explanation. I again call on the Leader of the Opposition to simply turn around behind him and say, “Why don’t you simply stand up after question time and apologise to those two people?” It is the decent thing to do.