

LOCAL GOVERNMENT — RESPONSIBILITIES

590. Mr W.R. MARMION to the Minister for Local Government:

I refer the minister to his speech at yesterday's Western Australian Local Government Association conference. Can the minister please explain in more detail his comments that local government responsibilities should be expanded and, in particular, his reference to them having greater responsibility in connectivity?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN replied:

I thank the Deputy Leader of the Opposition for his question because it gives me a great chance to make some comments. I am very pleased to have a debate about local government in Western Australia, because if members recall, my comments yesterday referred very clearly to the range of services and programs that are delivered now—currently—in Western Australia by local governments, including in the area of the member for Nedlands and the Leader of the Opposition. Yesterday I highlighted the award-winning Kaleidoscope program, being operated by the City of Stirling, which does not fit within the roads, rates and rubbish definition, but certainly sits within the definition of community service and delivering quality outcomes focused on putting people into work. We need only look at the electorates and local government areas around Western Australia to see where that is happening. For example, in Halls Creek the local government is working very closely to ensure young people who might normally be out on streets during the evening and potentially in vulnerable situations, are now engaged very closely with and linked back to family, agencies and services. That is a very important program. If the member, as he highlighted in his criticisms of local government, wants to go back to roads, rates and rubbish, those sorts of programs will be at risk. I put to the member for Nedlands: Does he want those programs to cease? Does he want the sorts of programs that are delivering outcomes for young and older people to cease? I think the general view is no. It is recognised that local government now plays a critical role that is different from the role it played 30 or 50 years ago. The nature of community has changed.

We are going through a review process with the legislation because we want a modern piece of legislation that reflects the roles and responsibilities local governments will need in the future. We are working closely with the sector. It would be very good were the member, as the opposition spokesperson for local government, to engage with and talk to local government about the challenges they are facing, because they are real challenges. We know that the former government in 2016—I think the member for Nedlands actually took part in the debate—imposed upon local government the responsibility of providing and creating local government health plans in the 2016 legislation. He was part of the government that passed the Public Health Bill 2014, which passed in this place in 2016. What does that act say? Division 2, section 16 is very clear about the functions of local government. It states —

A local government has the following functions in relation to the administration of this Act —

- (a) to initiate, support and manage public health planning for its local government district;

That is an important role for local government.

Ms J.M. Freeman: He's on the committee.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Yes, he is on the Education and Health Standing Committee. I do not remember a disputing minor report with recommendations being proposed by the member for Nedlands. Let me read recommendation 26 of that committee's report. Better still, let me read recommendation 25 of the committee that the member for Nedlands was a member of. It recommended —

The Department of Health liaise with the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries regarding changes to the *Local Government Act 1995*, which would empower local governments to enable restrictions on unhealthy food and beverages in their facilities and on advertising materials.

He was part of it! He was part of it and now he is stepping away. We should be having a very good debate about local government because the role of local government is now more complex than ever before. We, the McGowan government, want to support local government so it can continue to do the great things it needs to do throughout the community of Western Australia. Yes, they make mistakes. Yes, quite often they do things that make us ask why and how; but, fundamentally, local governments play a critical role in how society is shaped and, indeed, how we face the challenges that society will face going forward.

Mr F.M. Logan: How'd you like that, "Sprinkles"!

Several members interjected.

Mr W.R. MARMION: Point of order.

The SPEAKER: No. Sit down. Minister for Corrective Services, I call you to order.

Mr F.M. Logan: No, it was sport and rec.

The SPEAKER: It was sport and rec, was it? Sorry.

Withdrawal of Remark

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Mr Speaker, are you asking the minister to withdraw his comment; and, if so will he?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Just hold a minute, please. What was that? When you stand up for your point of order, you keep standing so I can hear it.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: I was clarifying whether you were asking the Minister for Corrective Services to withdraw what he said about the member for Nedlands; and, if so, will he do so?

The SPEAKER: No, it was the Minister for Sport and Recreation, I think.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: No, it was not.

The SPEAKER: It was him?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: The honesty rule is really going well here today!

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: I did not hear what the comment was; I just heard the comment. Is there anything you want him to withdraw? No.