

GOLDFIELDS ARTS CENTRE

251. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Minister for Culture and the Arts:

I note that the government has decided to cease \$300 000 a year of operational funding support for the Goldfields Arts Centre, sealing its fate as the only multifunctional arts venue in the goldfields region.

- (1) Did the Minister for Education and Training seek the minister's advice or request that the GAC be transferred to the Department of Culture and the Arts prior to advising the City of Kalgoorlie–Boulder?
- (2) If yes to (1), why did the minister reject assuming responsibility for the GAC?
- (3) Will the minister be following the Minister for Education and Training's lead and ceasing the \$14.5 million worth of subsidies to the Perth Theatre Trust, which includes the Albany Entertainment Centre?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN replied:

I thank the member for Central Wheatbelt; Leader of the National Party for the question.

- (1)–(3) First of all, I want to make it very clear that, as Minister for Culture and the Arts, I do not want to see any centre closed because these centres are important for communities. Seventeen regional communities have CircuitWest-based venues and, of those, 14, or 82 per cent, are owned and operated by local government. Therefore, they are not funded by the state government.

This issue relating to the Goldfields Arts Centre is very interesting when we delve into what occurred whilst the member was a minister in the former government.

Ms M.J. Davies: You're closing it. Answer the question. Your government is closing it—a letter direct to the mayor.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: No. Let us just go through this. The Kalgoorlie–Boulder council was provided with \$1.2 million at a rate of \$300 000 per annum under a four-year lease with the primary objective of giving the city time to look at the issue of reducing the operating loss of the centre. In late 2016, the previous government offered the ownership of the Goldfields Arts Centre to the city. The member's government did that. It made an offer to the City of Kalgoorlie–Boulder in 2016, with a contribution of \$650 000.

Ms M.J. Davies interjected.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Does the member want me to answer the question or not?

Ms M.J. Davies: You're not.

The SPEAKER: Minister, talk to me. I will talk to the Leader of the National Party and I will call her to order for the first time.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The former government offered to contribute \$650 000 and the city rejected it. The member's government made that offer and the city rejected it. One of the problems we have that is bearing out all the time is the lack of attention by the previous government to a range of areas.

Ms M.J. Davies interjected.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the National Party, I call you to order for the second time.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Members opposite did not do anything when they were in government to address some of these funding constraints and funding problems. Then suddenly they ask what we are doing about it. Members opposite did nothing at all about it when they were in government and now they are asking what we are going to do about it. The former government did nothing. The member gets all excited about it.

Mr R.S. Love interjected.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: What is wrong with the member?

The SPEAKER: He asked you the question. I will give you the answer. I call the member for Moore to order for the first time.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: They are the worst set of figures, and you were part of it, of course.

Mrs L.M. Harvey interjected.

The SPEAKER: Minister, you talk through the Chair. Deputy Leader of the Opposition, I call you to order for the first time. Minister, I am sure you are getting towards the end of this answer.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I would be if I was not interrupted so much. The member for Moore is a constant interjector. He is a premature interjector.

Several members interjected.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Let me say this—this is very serious. Arts and culture in Western Australia, be it in the regions or in the metropolitan area, are very important to communities. We know that. One of the fiscal responsibilities of any government is to make sure that the operation of these centres continues into the future and that it does not ignore issues when it knows that there are circumstances in which there is a finite agreement for centres like this. Unfortunately, when in power, the former government did nothing to put in place an effective future for this centre. This is what we are doing.

The SPEAKER: Minister, wind it up.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I will be very interested to get a call from the Mayor of Kalgoorlie–Boulder because, according to the radio this morning, it is now looking for \$1 million. The whole request is changing. Under the current constraints of the budget, we will look at all the options that are available, but the people of the goldfields should be very clear that the former government failed in its delivery of appropriate budget processes and that is why we are in this situation now.