

SHIRE OF CARNARVON — FASCINE WALL — INVESTIGATION

**175. Mr V.A. CATANIA to the Minister for Local Government:**

Firstly, on behalf of the member for Nedlands, I would like to acknowledge the students from Dalkeith Primary School who are in the public gallery today.

I refer to the report released today by the Minister for Regional Development into the waste of taxpayers' money by senior leadership in the Shire of Carnarvon in relation to the Carnarvon fascine wall.

- (1) Is the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries investigating the Shire of Carnarvon on this matter?
- (2) If yes to (1), when does the minister expect the investigation to conclude?
- (3) Given the issues outlined in today's report, as a result of the decisions taken by the shire, will the minister refer the shire to the Corruption and Crime Commission for investigation?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN replied:**

- (1)–(3) I thank the member for North West Central for his question, and I appreciate the seriousness of this issue. It is an issue that goes back some years, as the member is well aware, to 2012, when issues associated with procurement and other matters of funding of the fascine wall project and the main streetscape were raised. The Minister for Regional Development's report today of course highlights some major concerns and, as she has highlighted in her report, that will create two further investigations specific to those projects. In answer to the member's questions specifically, can I say this: firstly, yes, member, there is an authorised inquiry by the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries currently underway. That investigation will encompass aspects of the shire and associated business entities that have had, or may have had, dealings with the shire. It will include operations and practices relating to tendering, procurement and financial management, and will span from 1 January 2011. I need to highlight, of course, that that is a significant period during the previous government's tenure. I am aware that the member has told me that he has strongly lobbied previous Ministers for Local Government. I am pleased, though, that under this government the department has initiated that authorised inquiry. How long will the inquiry take? Authorised inquiries are processes that the department needs to carry out extensively. I cannot give the exact date that it will be concluded, but it will certainly be a comprehensive investigation. There are a range of matters that need to be investigated and I expect that when the inquiry is concluded, I will receive and assess the recommendations.

Regarding the CCC, the member is well aware that referrals to the CCC can be from various sources, including, indeed, from the member, if he has any evidence. As the member is aware, the CCC responded to complaints and referrals some years back—from memory, about 2012 or 2013—but if the member, or indeed anyone in his community, has any new or additional evidence, they are very welcome to refer that to the CCC. This is serious. Obviously, I will not fetter the investigation of the department. It needs to carry out its authorised inquiry. At the end of the day, for all the people in Carnarvon we want to make sure that their local government is delivering quality governance to the community, which it deserves. I will watch the outcome of the authorised inquiry by the department with interest.