

LOCAL GOVERNMENT — AMALGAMATIONS

993. MR N.W. MORTON to the Minister for Local Government:

Before I ask my question, I acknowledge the presence in the public gallery of the staff and students of All Saints College in the electorate of the member for Bateman.

Could the minister please provide the house with an update on the implementation of the metropolitan local government reform process?

Mr A.J. SIMPSON replied:

I thank the member for his question and also for his interest in local government reform. I have spoken many times in this house about the local government reform process and —

The SPEAKER: That gentleman at the back with his phone on, will you switch your phone off. You are not allowed to take photos in here. Thank you.

Mr A.J. SIMPSON: As I said, I have spoken in this house many times about the local government reform process and I am very pleased to see the progress that is being made. A number of local governments have already formed their links and are working well together to get through that process by 1 July 2015. It was great to see yesterday that the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court dismissed both legal actions against me as Minister for Local Government over the metropolitan local government reform process. It is very important to make members aware that the local governments of Subiaco, South Perth and Serpentine–Jarrahdale, and a resident from the Town of Vincent, took action against me in the Supreme Court. I think the actual —

Mr P.B. Watson interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Albany!

Mr A.J. SIMPSON: The Supreme Court heard both cases yesterday and all applicants' grounds for action were rejected by that court. I think that is a great, outstanding result. We as a government have followed the Local Government Act to the letter and we have been through it a number of times. It was quite clearly stated by the court that we have done the right thing by following the Local Government Act, and that there are no grounds for action at all, and it was rejected by the court. More importantly, the opposition has made many statements about the chair of the Local Government Advisory Board and the —

Mr D.A. Templeman interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Mandurah!

Mr D.A. Templeman: They keep saying it, mate: you're an arrogant idiot!

Withdrawal of Remark

The SPEAKER: Member for Mandurah, I suggest that you withdraw that.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I withdraw.

The SPEAKER: I call you to order for the first time, and you are lucky that I am not calling you to order for the second time. Member for Perth, I call you to order for the first time.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr A.J. SIMPSON: I thank the opposition for their interjections. It has been interesting. As part of the process of the legal challenge, the opposition raised a lot of issues about the bias of the Local Government Advisory Board, including its chair. Those charges were put to the Chief Justice as well, who made the comment that the allegations against the Local Government Advisory Board were fanciful and entirely speculative. He actually dismissed that case altogether. Quite clearly, that decision endorses the government's process and the direction in which we are trying to head. The court has heard the case, we are following the Local Government Act, and now we are getting on with the process of local government reform to ensure that we lead better local governments into the future to provide better services for ratepayers.