

HARRISON FAMILY — PUBLIC HOUSING

684. Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN to the Minister for Housing:

I refer to the Harrison family, which includes mum, dad and six children, three of whom have a disability. Today, they are still living in a bush camp just outside Dwellingup, and have been doing so for over six weeks.

- (1) What has the minister and his department done to ensure that this family, including the six children, have suitable accommodation immediately?
- (2) Why has the minister sat on his hands for over four weeks since I first alerted his office to my grave concerns about the safety and wellbeing of this family?
- (3) What will the minister do today to ensure that this family is not simply forgotten by the minister and his department?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL replied:

(1)–(3) This is the case of Mrs Harrison and her partner who currently reside in a bush camp in Dwellingup. In relation to that specific circumstance, I can provide the house with this advice. Mr and Mrs Harrison had a Homeswest property in 2006 that was located in the metropolitan area, but, for reasons not known to the department, they abandoned that property. The department came back to that property, found it vacant, waited for a while, changed the locks and put new tenants in. Recently, Mrs Harrison and her partner have been in private rental accommodation in North Dandalup. I have had a call to my office from people associated with that private rental property, although I have not been able to get back in touch with them; that would be the landlord or people associated with the landlord. What I have read is that that property was sold and the family was unable to find either private or public rental accommodation. I was also advised that they had a meeting with a crisis care provider and that, unfortunately, for reasons I am not aware of, they did not attend that meeting.

Mr D.A. Templeman: That was a meeting with the father, not with the family.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I am just giving the member the advice that I have.

Mr D.A. Templeman: What have you done in the last four weeks?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: The advice I subsequently received was that they had another meeting with the crisis care provider. I have not followed up since then. My view is that the family needs crisis care assistance in the short term. I heard the mum—her name escapes me temporarily; Kelly—in an interview on south west radio in Bunbury saying that one of the reasons they were unable to work through crisis care accommodation was that it had impacts on the family. I am not aware of what those impacts would be.

Mr D.A. Templeman: This family is at risk of being split up and their children seized by the Department for Child Protection and you are doing nothing and have done nothing in the four weeks since I raised this with your office.

The SPEAKER: Member for Mandurah!

Mr D.A. Templeman: You've had two pieces of correspondence and one phone call to your office and you've done nothing at all. When are you going to act? Are you going to act today? The family has been there for six weeks. Six weeks—six children, three disabled children.

The SPEAKER: Take a seat, minister. I have given you leniency, member for Mandurah. I think you have made your point. You have asked your question and I think the minister is going to endeavour to answer it.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: The short answer is no.

Mr M.P. Whitely interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Bassendean, interjections like that are not helpful. I formally call you to order for the first time today. I am going to give the call back to the minister.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: As I said, what we need to do with this family is two things: firstly, understand the issues —

Mr D.A. Templeman: Find them a house! They'll take a three-bedroom house. It's better than a caravan and a tent. You've got vacant houses now. They will take a house anywhere in the state. Why can't you act now? You've had four weeks' warning. You won't do anything. Why don't you act today? You can. You have the power to do it.

The SPEAKER: Member for Mandurah, you know how this place works.

Mr D.A. Templeman: Mr Speaker, this is an appalling display from this minister.

The SPEAKER: Member for Mandurah, I understand full well how this place works and you do as well. I will formally call you to order for the first time.

Mr D.A. Templeman: I'm trying to help a family of six children.

The SPEAKER: Member for Mandurah —

Mr P.B. Watson interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Albany! I formally call you to order for the first time today. Member for Mandurah, my suggestion to you is to listen to the answer from the minister.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Let me just explain it again, member for Mandurah. The family had an appointment with the crisis accommodation provider, which had an available property.

Mr D.A. Templeman: No, they did not have an available property.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: The advice I have —

Mr D.A. Templeman: There is no available property in Peel. You are either not listening to your department or the department is giving you the wrong information.

The SPEAKER: Members, I am going to sit down and call for another question. Member for Riverton.

Mr D.A. Templeman: He hasn't answered the question.

Mr B.J. Grylls: Grow up; it's the Parliament of Western Australia.

Mr D.A. Templeman: There are six children in Dwellingup who are in grave danger. He's known about it for six weeks.

Mr P.B. Watson interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Albany. I have given the call to the member for Riverton. That is the only person I want to hear from. Member for Mandurah, I suggest that if you want to follow up this issue, you follow it up outside of this place with the minister in your own time.

Mr M.P. Whitely: That doesn't work with this minister. You can raise serious issues about your constituents and he does nothing. He kicks out women who are seven months pregnant without having the dignity of responding to my office. You're a disgrace, member for Vasse, an absolute disgrace; a pig of a man who should understand the benefit of a second chance—an absolute disgrace!

Withdrawal of Remark

The SPEAKER: Member for Bassendean, I am going to instruct you to withdraw that comment.

Mr M.P. WHITELY: I withdraw. You can't stop me thinking it, though.

Point of Order

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: In the exchange with the minister then, he made a comment that I responded to because he responded to me. You then cut off the capacity for me to ask a supplementary question. The minister —

Dr M.D. Nahan: You should've behaved yourself.

Mr A.P. O'Gorman: Why don't you lot behave?

The SPEAKER: I have given the call to the member for Mandurah, on a question of a point of order, and that is all I am doing. He does not need any assistance and I do not need to hear any interchange across this chamber whatsoever from anybody.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I am simply saying that the supplementary question, which I have been unable to ask, was curtailed because of an interjection from the minister himself. I ask you to give me an opportunity to ask the supplementary question.

The SPEAKER: I have given the call to the member for Riverton.