

LOCAL GOVERNMENT — AMALGAMATIONS

Motion

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah) [6.54 pm]: I move —

That this house condemns the Barnett government for breaking another promise and totally misleading the people of Western Australia with regard to forced council amalgamations in the metropolitan area.

I will be very happy to commence discussion on this important motion. In doing so, I want to highlight first of all that of course we are aware of the promises that were made by the re-elected Barnett government prior to the election. I want to start off very briefly because I have only five minutes to highlight one of the impacts of the now new way for local government in the metropolitan area and the effect that it has on the Peel region. The government's announcement last Tuesday included the excising of the Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale from the Peel region. It is currently one of the five local government authorities of the Peel region. As a result of the decision made last Tuesday, it has now been effectively excised from the Peel region because it will be amalgamated with the City of Armadale. The Peel region will effectively lose over 900 square kilometres of its region, and also a population of about 20 000 to 25 000 people. As we know, the Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale has a rapidly growing population. That has major implications for the Peel region, particularly as the Peel region, in my view, is at great threat from this government in future reform to councils outside the metropolitan area.

The Premier and the government have made it very clear—this was reiterated today at the Western Australian Local Government Association annual general meeting, which both the minister and I attended and spoke at this afternoon, and the president of WALGA, Mayor Troy Pickard, repeated it to the audience there—that the reform of local government will now cross the metropolitan border into country Western Australia. The implications for us in Peel are stark, because we recognise that if the Premier is to effectively challenge the promise that has been made by the Leader of the National Party regarding the National Party continuing to oppose any forced amalgamations in regional Western Australia, some targets will be first on the Premier's hit list. It is my firm view—this has been confirmed by some senior Liberals, I might say—that Mandurah and the local government authorities that make up the Peel region are in his sights, as are, in particular, the four local governments in the greater Bunbury area; namely, the City of Bunbury, the Shire of Capel, the Shire of Dardanup and the Shire of Harvey, particularly the area of Harvey that takes in Australind.

This move by this government is a direct challenge to the so-called deal made between the Premier and the Leader of the National Party, but it is also a direct challenge to the very existence of the Peel region. It is of major concern to me when I hear that there are plans by this government to do one of two things. It could simply bring the City of Mandurah into the metropolitan area. I understand, minister, that there would need to be an act of Parliament or an amendment to bring Mandurah into the metropolitan area. Actually, I have heard of three options. One is to bring the City of Mandurah into the metropolitan area. The second is to amalgamate Mandurah and the Shire of Murray, and bring that new amalgamated entity into the metropolitan area, or, indeed, simply amalgamate Mandurah and the Shire of Murray but maintain them as an entity that is still outside the metropolitan area.

Before any of this is decided, it is important that the people of Mandurah, my electorate and my region, are directly consulted, because we will fight any attempt to foist a decision on us without proper and effective consultation. We have a right to plead our case for our identity and for our aspirations. I simply ask the minister to consider that when that discussion is held in cabinet and, indeed, when that discussion is held even in the Liberal Party room. I think that some senior Liberal members who represent parts of the Peel region would be opposed to such a proposal. It looks as though the Deputy Speaker is going to sit me down. I will, of course, be able to continue my remarks if we bring this motion on at a future time.

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.

House adjourned at 7.00 pm
