

SOUTH WEST TIMBER TOWNS, VISIT BY PREMIER

965. Mr OMODEI to the Premier:

I remind the Premier of his commitment on radio on 28 February this year to visit south west timber towns “when it is appropriate”, and ask -

- (1) Given that 1 000 jobs have already been lost in these towns, 4 000 jobs are expected to go in timber and related industries, a further 37 small timber businesses are being forced to close and this Government’s failure to resolve the issue of log allocations, when will it be appropriate to come down to these towns to face the people and offer alternative prospects to these communities?
- (2) Will the Premier admit that since coming to government 64 weeks ago, he has never visited the timber towns of Manjimup, Nannup, Pemberton or Northcliffe?
- (3) Why will the Premier not visit those towns?

Dr GALLOP replied:

- (1)-(3) I have visited an enormous number of regional centres and towns in Western Australia since becoming Premier.

Mr Omodei: None has been more impacted upon than those towns. Why haven’t you been down there? You have been to Albany.

The SPEAKER: Order, member for Warren-Blackwood!

Dr GALLOP: If the Parliament wishes, I could get the figures for the number of times ministers from my Government have visited that region.

Mr Johnson: What about you?

Dr GALLOP: I cannot visit every town in Western Australia; that is a simple fact of life. This is a stunt by the member, and everybody knows it, including the local governments and the local communities in those areas. They know the significant support we are putting in. I could show members correspondence I have received only in the last few days on the tremendous support we are getting from that area.

Mr Omodei: You have not been near the place and you don’t care. That is what I do not like.

The SPEAKER: Member for Warren-Blackwood!

Dr GALLOP: Mr Speaker, I will give the member some advice. He is very passionate about his community and I have no problem with that.

Mr Omodei: You do not give a damn.

Dr GALLOP: Our Government’s support is there for everyone to see, and a stunt by this member will not detract from the fact that, firstly, we will not be logging the old-growth forest again, and it is about time his side of the House caught up with that; and, secondly, unlike the previous Government, we will support individual workers and communities in managing that transition. Members on that side of the House are pathetic.