

FOREST PRODUCTS COMMISSION — MINISTER FOR FORESTRY — VINCE ERASMUS

**28. Mr M.P. MURRAY to the Minister for Forestry:**

I refer to the recent freedom of information application and appeal revealing a serious breakdown in the relationship between the minister, her office staff, and board members of the Forest Products Commission. Given the minister's previous refusal to answer questions over the departure of Mr Vince Erasmus, I ask —

- (1) Will the minister today outline the circumstances leading to the departure of Mr Erasmus?
- (2) Why did the minister doctor a letter to staff and stakeholders highlighting the loss to the industry that Mr Erasmus' departure was likely to precipitate?

**Ms M.J. DAVIES replied:**

(1)–(2) Mr Speaker —

**Mr D.T. Redman** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** The question is not aimed at you.

**Mr F.M. Logan:** She can answer it.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** I can, absolutely, because I absolutely make no apologies for having high expectations of my departments and the leadership therein. Being a minister is not a popularity contest. The member should ask some of his colleagues who have been in that position. I make no apologies for having the highest expectations —

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Collie-Preston and member for Girrawheen, let the minister answer—and can the members for Alfred Cove and South Perth please stop talking.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** I make no apologies for holding my departments to the highest account and the leadership therein. They are in charge of significant budgets on behalf of the taxpayer. I expect them to conduct themselves appropriately and to the standards that we set.

I had a very cordial relationship with Mr Erasmus. He elected to resign. In relation to the letter, the board expressed —

Several members interjected.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** I did have a cordial relationship with Mr Erasmus.

The board expressed its disappointment about Mr Erasmus' resignation. That was reflected in a letter that was sent to key stakeholders. I disagreed with the then chair's decision to include that in the letter, because Mr Erasmus had already resigned.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Supplementary.

**Mr M.J. Cowper** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** There is a lot of shouting going on. Member for Murray–Wellington, I call you to order for the first time.