

CITY OF SOUTH PERTH - INQUIRY REPORT

Statement by Minister for Local Government

MR OMODEI (Warren-Blackwood - Minister for Local Government) [9.07 am]: My statement relates to an inquiry into the City of South Perth appointed by the Executive Director of the Department of Local Government under section 8.3 of the Local Government Act 1995.

The executive director determined that an inquiry was warranted after considering several allegations and concerns regarding issues involving the council. Mr Gary Martin was appointed to undertake the inquiry and to report on aspects of the City of South Perth, its operations and affairs in the period 1 January 1999 to 15 September 2000.

The 12 terms of reference relate to termination of the employment of the previous chief executive officer, the creation of the general manager position, its subsequent redundancy and the appointment of the former general manager as the CEO of the city. Other terms of reference deal with the payment of redundancy amounts, the role of the council, mayor and elected members and the adequacy of record-keeping in the city.

The conduct of the council, the mayor and the councillors, with some exceptions, and the CEO Mr David Moylan is of grave concern. Mr Moylan's behaviour in relation to the calling of the inquiry and its conduct was threatening and inappropriate. It is of concern that the mayor and a majority of councillors apparently sanctioned such behaviour.

Mr Martin's report indicates a range of matters of concern and concludes that -

. . . the operation and affairs of the City . . . are not being conducted in an acceptable manner and that there is little prospect that the Council has the will or ability to return it to a reasonable standard . . .

Mr Martin concludes that -

. . . the avoidance of proper process has allowed a serious breakdown in accountability . . .

It continues -

. . . the failure of the majority of elected members to properly fulfil their role, provides potential for a major breakdown in local government . . .

The inquiry has made findings of improper conduct against the current CEO Mr Moylan and finds that the mayor and eight councillors failed in their duties on a range of issues.

The inquiry report and subsequent advice to me from the executive director identify courses of action available to me in dealing with the report's recommendations. I have not taken a decision on a course of action and will consider the possibilities.

In accordance with advice from the Crown Solicitor's Office, I table the "Report of the Inquiry into the City of South Perth", and I move -

That publication of the report be authorised.

Question put and passed.

[See paper No 547.]