

MEMBER FOR BALLAJURA - MINISTERIAL CODE OF CONDUCT

218. Mr P.D. OMODEI to the Premier:

I refer to page 1 of Labor's so-called ministerial code of conduct, which states -

Being a Minister of the Crown demands the highest standards of probity, accountability, honesty, integrity and diligence in the exercise of their public duties and functions. They must ensure that their conduct does not bring discredit upon the Government or the State.

- (1) Will the Premier concede that his decision to allow the then Minister for Police and Emergency Services; Justice; Community Safety to make an announcement on increasing speeding fines, despite the fact that he had lost his licence for failing to pay fines, reflects a clear failure to uphold his own code's standards?
- (2) What is the point of having a code of conduct if the Premier himself is unable or unwilling to abide by it?

Mr A.J. CARPENTER replied:

- (1)-(2) I am grateful for the question. First of all, I am willing to abide by the code of conduct. The member for Ballajura has resigned his commission today.

Mr P.D. Omodei: On Thursday you were dishonest, Premier.

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: No, I was not.

Mr P.D. Omodei: Yes, you were.

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: I was not dishonest on Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday or Monday; nor am I today; and nor will I be dishonest tomorrow.

Mr P.D. Omodei: And you brought discredit on your government by failing to sack that minister.

Withdrawal of Remark

The SPEAKER: Surely the Leader of the Opposition knows that the use of that terminology is unparliamentary and I ask that he withdraw it.

Mr P.D. OMODEI: I withdraw, Mr Speaker.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: I reiterate that the member for Ballajura has resigned. I do not consider myself to be anything other than as honest as I possibly can be in the execution of my duties. I do not ever go out and deceive people in the way I go about my job; neither would I expect any minister to do so; nor would I expect the Leader of the Opposition to do so. I will reiterate the point I made. The member for Ballajura has made the decision to resign. He has made that decision as he believes it is in the best interests of the government, the people and his colleagues.

Mr P.D. Omodei interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: Mr Speaker, I wanted that initiative to go ahead on Friday because I consider that the road safety agenda we are pursuing is very important.

Mr C.J. Barnett interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, member for Cottesloe!

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: In our term of government we have had a remarkably successful record of reducing the number of fatalities on the roads. I pay tribute to the former Minister for Police and Emergency Services for the great work that she has done in that area, and I want that to continue. I anticipated that we would receive some criticism for an increase in fines.

Mr J.H.D. Day interjected.

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: No, it is not.

They are a deterrent. We had scheduled that announcement for Friday and I wanted it to go ahead. I made a judgment that the member for Ballajura, as the police minister, had the responsibility to announce it. If I had

pulled the minister out of that announcement and had someone else make it, members opposite would be asking me a series of other questions going to the same accusation.

Mr T.R. Buswell: How did he get there?

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: He had his driver's licence restored on 24 April, I believe. The ministerial code of conduct requires absolute probity in the execution of public duties. I had to consider that very point in relation to the private issues of driving without a licence.

Mr C.J. Barnett: In a government car; is that private? How can that be private?

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: Was the member for Cottesloe driving a government car when he was speeding?

Mr T.R. Buswell: He had his licence.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Yes, and I paid up. I have never lost my licence in 35 years.

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: Mr Speaker, I take very seriously the issue of standards in government and probity. I gave a very full explanation of why I made the decision that I made yesterday. I do not back away from the decision I made yesterday; it was a very difficult decision. However, the member for Ballajura today has made the right decision.