

SEWAGE SPILL, VICTORIA PARK

**200. Mr P.D. OMODEI to the Premier:**

I refer the Premier to last Sunday's sewerage debacle - brown Sunday - when the health of the residents of Victoria Park was placed at risk because of another breakdown in the Water Corporation's infrastructure network. That was in the Premier's electorate - his backyard - yet he failed to make an appearance until 36 hours after the commencement of the crisis that those residents were facing. Why did the Premier not take responsibility for the crisis as Minister for Water Resources, or is this just another chapter in the continuing saga, manufactured by the Premier's advisers, that Dr Dolittle fronts the media only when he has a good news story or a tap to turn on -

*Withdrawal of Remark*

**The SPEAKER:** The member knows that he should not refer to members in this place by anything other than their title or their seat. He will withdraw that comment.

**Mr P.D. OMODEI:** I withdraw that comment.

*Questions without Notice Resumed*

**Mr P.D. OMODEI:** I replace it with the comment that the Premier faces the media only when there is a good news story to announce.

**Dr G.I. GALLOP replied:**

There was a very serious incident in Victoria Park on Sunday. I was informed of that incident at about 4.30 pm on Sunday, at which point I contacted the Water Corporation and made a couple of requests. The first was that I be given a full briefing on this matter, which I received very quickly. Secondly, I wanted a clear statement about what the Water Corporation had done to assist the residents in that area. The Water Corporation indicated to me that most of the residents had agreed to go to their relatives, but some were put up in motels. I told the Water Corporation that I wanted to speak to those people to make sure everything was okay. I was given a phone number and I rang one of the senior citizens who had been put up in a motel. That person was in fact a resident of the senior citizens complex in that area, of which I have been a committee member for many years. I spoke to those people, and they said they were very happy with the way in which the Water Corporation had responded. The next morning I fronted the media on this matter and answered all the questions that were asked of me. We then had the cabinet meeting. After the cabinet meeting, I inspected the area and met with the residents, all of whom said they were very happy with the way in which the Water Corporation had responded on this issue.

**Mr P.D. Omodei** interjected.

**Dr G.I. GALLOP:** If the deputy leader of the Liberal Party thinks that by attaching himself to this particular line of inquiry - which of course is directly linked with the line of inquiry that was pursued by *The West Australian* - he will be able to bolster his political position, he is mistaken. I take my responsibilities as a local member of Parliament very seriously. I take my responsibilities as Premier very seriously. Whenever I front the media, I answer questions on a whole range of issues. Yesterday I answered questions on the one vote, one value legislation and its implications for the funding of electorate offices; and I notice the ABC pursued that matter in its news report. I also answered questions from the media about this issue and went through my knowledge of it and what I believe needed to be done. I did face up to my responsibilities.

**Mr P.D. Omodei:** When is the Minister for Water Resources not the Minister for Water Resources? When he is the Premier of Western Australia!

**Dr G.I. GALLOP:** What the people of Western Australia have needed on this issue for a long time is strategic direction from the top. That is what they are getting for water today. The implications that are drawn in the newspaper today are wrong. The implications that are drawn in the member's question today are wrong. I did accept responsibility for this major incident that has occurred in Western Australia - as I do in respect of all the matters that need to be addressed in Western Australia's current political situation - just as I did in February 2004 when there was a serious problem with the state's electricity system, and just as I did with the Water Corporation problems that have occurred in recent times. If the deputy leader of the Liberal Party keeps pursuing that matter, he will stay on that side of the house for a long time.