

LOCAL GOVERNMENT, REGIONAL ROAD GROUP FUNDING GRANTS

**745. Hon MURRAY CRIDDLE to the Minister for Local Government and Regional Development:**

No notice has been given of this question. With the refusal of the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure to inform local governments of the regional road group funding grants, I ask -

- (1) How can local governments comply with the Local Government Act, which requires an accurate four-year program?
- (2) Is the minister aware that the 2:1 ratio for funding - the agreement is for local government to fund \$1 and State Government to fund \$2 - will be lost for country roads, which will severely impact upon road safety, employment opportunities and housing?
- (3) As there is a memorandum of understanding between state and local government for consultation to occur before any major change is made to arrangements in place, will the Minister for Local Government counsel his colleagues to resolve the issue?

**Hon TOM STEPHENS replied:**

- (1)-(3) I thank the member for his question. It is a useful question for me to take some of the issues involved on board. The Minister for Local Government has responsibility to ensure local councils comply with the Local Government Act. Question (1) is a well-positioned question to me. I have never thought of the issue in those terms before, and I accept it as it was positioned across the Chamber. I take it at face value and will forward the question to the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, draw her attention to the statutory responsibilities of local government, and ask her to provide to the member and me a response to the issue legitimately canvassed.

Regarding the second and third parts of the question, it is important to acknowledge that as Minister for Local Government my primary responsibility is in the administration of the Local Government Act and to work with local councils; that is my statutory responsibility. The relationship of other portfolios with local government stand alone. They are relationships for which individual ministers are responsible. The memorandum of understanding was signed by the Premier and countersigned by me on behalf of all ministers. It would not be appropriate for me to canvass in question time issues across other portfolios for which I do not have direct responsibility pursuant to my Act. I accept that some good issues were raised in the question. To the extent that they are within my responsibility, if I can be of use to the member and local councils in positioning the points raised in front of the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, I will do so.