

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY, REPORTS

1140. Dr CONSTABLE to the Premier:

I refer to the Premier's commitment to accountability in government.

- (1) Is the Premier aware of the previous Government's undertaking to release all data on -
 - (a) government travel;
 - (b) imprest account travel by members of Parliament; and
 - (c) consultants engaged by government?
- (2) If so, as a further measure of government accountability, will he undertake to table on a regular basis comprehensive reports containing all details of government-initiated reviews, task forces, committees of inquiries and summits?
- (3) If not, why not.

Dr GALLOP replied:

(1)-(3) The Government does that very thing.

Mr Barnett: Except for the health minister.

Dr GALLOP: Fancy the Opposition interjecting on this matter! When the Labor Party was in opposition and its members asked questions about reviews and committees, they did not get any information at all from the then Liberal Government. The Minister for Health explained last week that there are so many different cost centres in his department that it is very difficult for him to put all that information together.

Mr Barnett: He did not even try.

Dr GALLOP: The Government will provide that information to the Parliament when it can be collated.

We do not initiate these reviews and committees just to let the reports gather dust on a shelf; we do it because we want to change things. I explained last week the three reasons for the reviews that have been carried out since we came to government. First, the normal process of government is going on. The clearest example of that is the national competition reports required under the national agreement. Secondly, there is the mess we inherited from the previous Government, and we needed advice on how to deal with it. We will hear more about some of those issues as the week goes on. Thirdly, we are a Government with a very broad-ranging agenda for reform. We believe that to implement those reforms properly, we must have the best advice. The clear example of that was our commitment to reduce the number of government departments. The Government initiated a review, chaired by Stuart Hicks, to consider how to reduce the number of departments. He submitted a report and we are now carrying through the detailed process of that. I have no problem with the Government of Western Australia indicating what it is doing with reviews, reports and committees, because it is part of our policy commitment to bring about a better Western Australia. We now have a reform Government in Western Australia. We do not have a Government that just wants to enjoy the fruits of government. The Government wants to use the powers and resources of government to change Western Australia. We are doing it in the public sector, in our legislative reform program, in the health system, in education and in the way in which we deliver government through the consultation processes in Western Australia. Indeed, it was a massive document -

Mr Omodei interjected.

Withdrawal of Remark

The SPEAKER: That is inappropriate language from the member for Warren-Blackwood and I ask him to withdraw.

Mr OMODEI: I withdraw.

Debate Resumed

Dr GALLOP: We tabled in this Parliament a massive document indicating the range of reviews and committees established. On 10 March 1998 a similar question was asked of the then Liberal Premier on reviews and inquiries, the answer to which reads -

The detail sought by the Member is not readily available. I am not prepared to divert resources to extract this information, however, if the member has a specific query I will have the matter investigated.

That is the record of the previous Government.

Mr Barnett: It is not my record. If I was asked a question I always answered it.

Extract from *Hansard*

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Dr Elizabeth Constable; Dr Geoff Gallop; Speaker; Mr Paul Omodei

Dr GALLOP: Did the Leader of the Opposition? We will do a little bit of research on that. This Government tabled a very comprehensive document on its intentions and I answered a question in Parliament on the background of all the reports and inquiries it has instigated. We now have an open and accountable Government. I appreciate the point raised by the member for Churchlands. All our reports are being circulated in the public arena so that people can comment on them. We have even released a report that I commissioned in my department on how federal, state and local governments can consult with the community. That indicates how accountable we are. We are setting up a framework that can be used by people to judge our performance in that area.

Several members interjected.

Dr GALLOP: Interjections from the Opposition on that matter are a bit rich. I appreciate that information comes from the Opposition, as we saw in *The Sunday Times* on Sunday. The Leader of the Opposition might need not only a researcher or two but also a good plumber, because his organisation has many leaks at present.