

MEMBER FOR ROCKINGHAM — APOLOGY TO ETHNIC COMMUNITY

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

- (1) Is the Premier aware of comments made today by the President of the Ethnic Communities Council of WA in relation to the member for Rockingham's comments yesterday and his refusal to properly apologise today. The president said, according to my notes —

The comment that he made is not just intemperate . . . it is racist.

He further said —

The Premier should show some leadership and tick him off publicly. This is not the set of standards that you want West Australians to follow.

- (2) I understand that the Premier may have already apologised, but will the Premier direct the member to apologise properly and appropriately for his comments, which have caused offence to many Western Australians with ethnic backgrounds; and, if not, why not?

Mr A.J. CARPENTER replied:

- (1)-(2) The member for Warren-Blackwood is right: I went outside, I spoke to the media and I apologised for any offence that was taken. I apologised on my behalf and on behalf of the Parliamentary Labor Party. I indicated that the member for Rockingham had also apologised here in the chamber for any offence that might have been caused. The member for Rockingham also pointed out that the terminology is widely used in Australian political discourse. Nevertheless, I believe its use is offensive to people and it should not be used. I say that unreservedly.

At the same time, I must say that this morning's performance in the chamber caused my memory to go back a couple of years. I remember when the member for Ballajura was being pilloried with language like "Mafia" and "Godfather", and I was the only person who was defending him.

Several members interjected.

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: I will get to those guys in a minute, because I have got them in *Hansard*. I remember that and the media conducting a campaign of vilification —

Mr T. Buswell: Is he your hero again?

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: No, far from it. The media conducted a campaign of vilification against the member for Ballajura.

Several members interjected.

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: I say to the member for Ballajura that we can pursue that now if we need to, but suffice it to say that I have also said to the Parliament that the member for Ballajura's behaviour two years ago was completely unacceptable, and I believe nothing has changed.

Mr J.B. D'Orazio interjected.

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: Let me just raise this issue.

Mr J.B. D'Orazio interjected.

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: Let me just raise the issue of the language and the appropriateness of the language. Who was it, do members think, who in this chamber described the member for Ballajura as the "Godfather"? Back in 2006 a member said —

Let us look at the misdemeanours of the member for Ballajura, John D'Orazio, the rising star of the now Premier and now better known as the "Godfather".

Who do members think said that? It was the member for Cottesloe. Who else referred to the member for Ballajura in those terms? Does the Leader of the Opposition think that he might have done it?

Mr T. Buswell: Done what?

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: Referred to the member for Ballajura as the "Godfather". The member for Warren-Blackwood used that terminology —

Mr P.D. Omodei: What?

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: The "Godfather", in relation to the member for Ballajura. I do not see in *Hansard* anybody —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the Leader of the Opposition to order for the first time.

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: I remember many a press conference when I took great exception to the application of that terminology to the member for Ballajura. I do not recall at any time any member on that side of the chamber leaping to his feet and complaining when his own members were referring to the member for Ballajura as the “Godfather”.

Mr T. Buswell: Did you?

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: I have just told the house what I did. Let us keep that little performance this morning in perspective.

Mr R.F. Johnson: You are going to lose this.

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: I am happy to debate this matter day in and day out. Nevertheless, I have made my position clear on the use of the terminology that the member for Rockingham used yesterday.