

LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN THE SOUTH WEST - MANIPULATION

883. Mr M.P. MURRAY to the Minister for Peel and the South West:

Is the minister concerned about attempts to manipulate local government in the south west for the benefit of developers?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

I thank the member for Collie-Wellington for the question and say what a privilege it is to be the Minister for Peel and the South West, which are great regions of Western Australia. It is a great honour to be a part of those communities. The Corruption and Crime Commission hearing has shown over time that Canal Rocks Pty Ltd will go to extraordinary lengths to push forward its proposal and to manipulate the Shire of Busselton. I have grave concerns about the integrity of the Shire of Busselton as a consequence of the evidence that was provided at the CCC hearings. Mr Crichton-Browne was engaged by Mr Burke as someone with Liberal Party stature and connections to push forward the interests of Canal Rocks in the Shire of Busselton. What did Mr Crichton-Browne do? He made contact with the member for Vasse on this matter. As the member for Vasse said in his evidence before the Corruption and Crime Commission, Mr Crichton-Browne asked the member for Vasse if he knew of any people who would be interested in running for the council. The member for Vasse provided Mr Crichton-Browne with three names. The member for Vasse knew that Mr Crichton-Browne was a consultant or paid lobbyist for Canal Rocks. He provided that information. First of all, we must ask whether he knew why. The obvious answer is yes; he knew Crichton-Browne would try to use that information to push more councillors onto the Busselton Shire Council.

He provided him with three names, one of which was Mr Joe White. He was recommended by the member for Vasse but he did not run for council. However, he then ran two other people's campaigns. Does the member for Vasse want to tell us the names of the other two people whose campaigns Mr White ran?

Mr P.D. Omodei: You obviously know.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I am asking the member for Vasse. Does he want to reveal them to us?

Mr T. Buswell: I will tell you this: you have made a mistake there because, allegedly, according to the evidence, he ran the campaigns of four candidates, one of whom was successful and none of whom were known to me prior to the council elections.

Mr A.J. Carpenter: "I will fix it for you." That is what you said. "I'll get Joe; he'll fix it for you."

Mr T. Buswell: He spoke to Brian Burke all the time. Read the evidence.

Mr M. McGOWAN: The member for Vasse provided names to Mr Crichton-Browne. Joe White was one of them, and he ran the campaign for two other people. We must get to the bottom of this because not only did the member for Vasse engage in conversations in the car park on two occasions, potentially in breach -

Mr T. Buswell: One occasion.

Mr M. McGOWAN: There were two conversations, one in the Parliament House car park, both of which could potentially be in breach of section 151 of the Corruption and Crime Commission Act. What is more, he acquiesced, and assisted Mr Crichton-Browne -

Mr T. Buswell: No, I didn't.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Yes, he did; he gave Mr Crichton-Browne three names. He acquiesced and assisted Mr Crichton-Browne in his efforts to take over the Shire of Busselton so that Mr Crichton-Browne could push forward that proposal. They are very serious questions for the member for Vasse to answer.