

CITY OF BELMONT, AUTHORISED PERSONS REPORT OF INQUIRY

1213. Hon JIM SCOTT to the Minister for Local Government and Regional Development:

- (1) Why did the authorised persons report of inquiry into the City of Belmont, tabled by the minister on 10 April 2003, significantly water down the findings outlined in the 7 March 2003 version of the report as supplied to the City of Belmont council for its response?
- (2) Is the minister aware that the 7 March version of the report found that the council had failed to provide good governance and has allowed the integrity of the City of Belmont to be thrown into doubt to such a degree that nothing can be taken at face value?
- (3) What was the additional information provided to the authorised person which resulted in the radical changes to the findings of 7 March?
- (4) Will the minister table that new information; and, if not, why not?

Hon TOM STEPHENS replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

- (1),(3) I am advised by the authorised officers from the Department of Local Government and Regional Development that the natural justice report that was distributed to interested parties in March 2003 contained a number of draft findings. Those findings were subsequently reviewed in light of submissions received from interested parties and legal advice. I am advised that this is a normal part of the inquiry process.

Hon Jim Scott: Were legal threats involved in that?

The PRESIDENT: Order! There is no room for supplementary questions, particularly in the middle of the answer to the first set of questions.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: I urge Hon Jim Scott to please absorb that information. The answer continues -

- (2) No. It was a natural justice report and not the final report; that is, it was part of the process. It was a draft report that contained draft findings to which people could comment, respond and make submissions. That became the basis upon which the final report was presented to me. I only ever saw the final report.

Hon Jim Scott: What about the authorised officer? Did he or she see -

The PRESIDENT: Order! No supplementary questions. That was a good try.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: The authorised officer drafted the first report and the drafted findings were circulated to a range of people. Adverse and possible adverse findings were found. People could comment on those adverse and possible adverse draft findings, which were modified in response to the commentary that came back. The final report, which I tabled, was then released.

Several members interjected.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: Is someone confused?

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: The minister is doing an excellent job and so far he has been very accurate.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: I thank Hon Derrick Tomlinson, who is a distinguished member of the Chamber. We can pick an erudite member when we hear one. The answer concludes -

- (4) No. Submissions were provided to the inquiry on a confidential basis.