

INNER-CITY PRIMARY SCHOOL — LAND

64. Mr P.J. RUNDLE to the Minister for Education:

I refer to recent reports of the state government's most unusual offer to the City of Perth for land associated with the planned inner-city primary school. Does this government think it can now bully any council into forfeiting land by dreaming up some bizarre cost-benefit analysis for adjoining land instead of paying the fair market value or providing a land swap?

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members, thank you.

Dr A.D. BUTI replied:

As the Minister for Education in the Cook Labor government, I will stand up for quality public education in Western Australia and I will stand up for trying to also provide quality schooling in the inner-city areas of Perth! That is what I will stand up for, member. We are committing to a significant investment into this school. If we were to have to pay for additional land, maybe we would not be able to do the things in Esperance that the member wants us to do. Does he want me to spend money on a project without the cooperation of the City of Perth instead of looking at some regional school improvements? What would the member prefer?

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members!

Point of Order

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: The last time I checked, question time is for the government to answer questions.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. There is no point of order.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Dr A.D. BUTI: The new inner-city primary school that is being proposed will be a major boost for the city. It will not only attract families to the heart of the city but also provide very necessary amenities to bring more people and vibrancy to the inner city. The school was scheduled to open for the start of the 2028 school year, for students in kindergarten to year 6; however, any further delays in negotiations with the City of Perth could see that target pushed back. The proposal will provide a major benefit to the city of around \$63 million because we will be unlocking land that can be used by the city. At the moment, under the Chevron-Hilton Hotel Agreement Act, that land has to be used for a car park. That is it; it has to be used for a car park. We are proposing a state-of-the-art world-first inner-city vertical primary school and unlocking land that the city can use in the future. The member does not have to listen to me; he can go to the Lord Mayor's newsletter of 19 April 2023, when he made the announcement. He stated —

Hello again,

I'm thrilled to be able to share today the State Government in partnership with the City of Perth has announced a significant milestone towards the establishment of a primary school in East Perth.

I was delighted to join Education Minister Tony Buti, Planning Minister Rita Saffioti and Lands Minister and Member for Perth John Carey for the announcement.

As you know a primary school is an absolute priority for the City, and one your City of Perth Council has been championing since our election.

A local primary school for local families is essential, and will further turbo charge our inner city residential population.

As I have alluded to in previous updates, I have been very pleased to be able to work with the State Government on behalf of the City to help deliver a project of this significance.

This is a partnership. We are working to achieve this outcome together.

PREFERRED SITE CHOSEN

The State Government have identified two of the three City of Perth car parks opposite Queens Gardens on Nelson Crescent near the WACA as their preferred site for the primary school.

The preferred site has great merit ...

We will undertake ... due diligence ...

He then stated —

Currently the State Government is proposing to take approximately 50 per cent of the total car park site (closest to Gloucester Park) and build the primary school as indicated above.

It has a photo, a diagram —

The remaining 50 per cent of the site (closest to Plain Street) would be retained by the City of Perth—but with the current Chevron Hilton Act rescinded.

This would effectively allow the City to explore the best possible opportunities and development potential for that land.

Ms R. Saffioti: It's a win-win!

Dr A.D. BUTI: It is a win-win. It is a win for the City of Perth and a win for people who live in the City of Perth but, more importantly, a win for the children of the inner city. That is what we are about, member! I thought that, as shadow Minister for Education, the member would be supporting us rather than the Lord Mayor of Perth, who may be writing his questions; I do not know.

But there is more! What we are doing is not unusual, member. Local governments have worked together with the state government to identify appropriate land for significant projects in the past, such as building primary schools or other key infrastructure projects that have major community benefits. For example, a good local government that worked with the state government for the betterment of the city was the City of Joondalup with its contribution of 11 hectares of freehold land to the state government to support the delivery of the world-class Ocean Reef Marina. We are talking about 11 hectares of waterfront land that was provided by the City of Joondalup to the state government for free, acknowledging the huge investment the state will undertake to transform the Ocean Reef Marina.

Member, a new primary school in East Perth is too important to play politics with.