

OOMBULGURRI — CLOSURE

1216. Hon SALLY TALBOT to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs:

- (1) How many criminal convictions resulted from investigations into the violent and sexual abuse of children in the Oombulgurri community that led to the government closing the community and evicting the residents in 2011?
- (2) What steps has the government taken to minimise the trauma and hardship for the women and children who were evicted from their homes as a result of the government's closure of the Oombulgurri community?
- (3) Is the minister aware of the concerns expressed by Amnesty International that the closure of Oombulgurri is not consistent with Australia's obligations under articles 11 and 15 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and articles 8.1, 8.2 and 12 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in that the closure violates the right of Indigenous people not to be dispossessed of their land?
- (4) If the minister disagrees with the views in (3), can he explain why?

Hon PETER COLLIER replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

- (1) In 2008 the State Coroner, Alastair Hope, investigated five deaths in the Oombulgurri community, four of which were suicides, and found the community to be in a state of crisis. This included high rates of domestic violence, child neglect, sexual abuse and excessive alcohol consumption. The exact number of criminal convictions resulting from investigations into the violence and sexual abuse of children in Oombulgurri cannot be provided within the time frame available. However, I will provide a response on the next sitting day.
- (2) The Departments for Child Protection and Family Support, and Health arranged counselling and support during the investigations, and during and after relocating the women and children to Wyndham.
- (3) Yes.
- (4) I have responded to a letter received from Amnesty International. The state government remains convinced that the decision to close a community in a state of crisis was necessary and in the best interests of residents and the wider community.