

GOLDFIELDS ARTS CENTRE — CLOSURE

341. Hon JACQUI BOYDELL to the Minister for Education and Training:

I refer to the imminent closure of the Goldfields Arts Centre.

- (1) Why did the minister not consult with the City of Kalgoorlie–Boulder prior to directing the centre to be placed into care and maintenance?
- (2) Why did the minister not consult with the Minister for Culture and the Arts to request that the responsibility for the Goldfields Arts Centre be transferred to his portfolio?
- (3) Does the minister think that the suggested \$250 000 cost for care and maintenance provides adequate budget savings to deprive the people of the goldfields of their arts centre?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

I am not sure from where the member got the figure of \$250 000 that she referred to in the last part of her question, but I will come back to that.

- (1) Firstly, I am advised—I was not the minister last year—that over the course of 2016 ongoing negotiations and consultation occurred between the Department of Training and Workforce Development and the City of Kalgoorlie–Boulder about the future of the lease. Bearing in mind that back in 2013 the former government put in place a four-year lease, the prime objective of that four-year lease was to ensure that the city had time to put the Goldfields Arts Centre business model onto a more sustainable future. I am advised that in 2016 there were extensive discussions—I was not part of them, but that is what I am advised—that resulted in an offer being made in late 2016 by the Department of Training and Workforce Development to the city to further extend the lease arrangement for another two years with some additional money; so, the original lease was \$300 000 a year. The proposal late in 2016 was for \$650 000 over two years, which would take the lease out to 2019. That was rejected. The city got back to the previous government, I understand, in January or February this year and said that operationally it would need \$750 000 a year and an additional \$8 million for capital upgrades. It rejected the offer put to it by the previous government.

That did not change the fact that the lease from 2013 was due to expire on 30 June 2017. The city wrote to me in late May and I responded. I rang the Mayor of Kalgoorlie–Boulder last week; there was an issue with his telephone and he did not get back to me until this week. I advised the following: that there would be no disruption to booked events through to June 2018 and there would be no cancellations—all those events would proceed—and that I had instructed the Department of Training and Workforce Development to work with the centre on a smooth transition and to ensure that there was no disruption to booked events.

- (2) The entire government has to fix the financial mess left to it. I know the situation that the Minister for Culture and the Arts finds himself in; it is the same position that I find myself in. We are going line by line through our budgets to find ways of repairing the damage that has been done.
- (3) The final part of the member's question relates to a figure of \$250 000, I think. She should bear in mind that the original four-year lease was for \$300 000 a year. Late last year, the city was offered \$325 000 for a further two years. It came back and said that it needed \$750 000 a year. Today I was on radio with the CEO who indicated that what was needed operationally was \$1 million a year and between \$8 million and \$9 million for capital works. The amount of money has shifted considerably. I have to say that there have been very fruitful discussions between the department and the city today on how this matter will go forward.