

Speaker; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Bill Johnston; Ms Rita Saffioti

---

**MINISTER FOR HEALTH — CHIEF OF STAFF — BULLYING ALLEGATIONS**

*Matter of Public Interest*

**THE SPEAKER (Mr P.B. Watson)** informed the Assembly that he was in receipt within the prescribed time of a letter from the Leader of the Opposition seeking to debate a matter of public interest.

[In compliance with standing orders, at least five members rose in their places.]

**DR M.D. NAHAN (Riverton — Leader of the Opposition)** [2.50 pm]: I move —

That this house condemns the McGowan government for its culture of bullying at the highest level of government, specifically the abysmal handling of the bullying of a female staff member in the Deputy Premier's office.

We are dealing with a serious issue. There is clear evidence of systemic bullying in the Deputy Premier's office.

**Mr M. McGowan:** What's the evidence?

**Dr M.D. NAHAN:** We will get to that.

This issue deals with the chief of staff and a mate of the Deputy Premier, who has said things to the former media adviser that are despicable. Five days after she complained, she was sacked and escorted out of the office with no explanation why she was sacked. Some two weeks later, the government responded to the many complaints of bullying that had been sent to senior people in the Deputy Premier and the Premier's office and is having an inquiry, and now they are hiding behind that: "We know nothing. We can't say anything."

**Mr J.E. McGrath:** Sergeant Schultz!

**Dr M.D. NAHAN:** It is the Sergeant Schultz response: "I know nothing." We have tried to inquire into this because we have clear evidence that the Deputy Premier knew about, saw and witnessed bullying before there was an official complaint, and we will make the case here. Government members will, in response, go back and talk about Troy Buswell, who is not here.

**Mr B. Urban** interjected.

**Dr M.D. NAHAN:** Member for Darling Range, just be quiet. This is a serious issue.

Several members interjected.

*Point of Order*

**Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE:** This is a matter of public interest. I am trying to listen to the Leader of the Opposition putting his case. I am finding it difficult with all the noise.

**The SPEAKER:** Members!

*Debate Resumed*

**Dr M.D. NAHAN:** The fact that there were cases of bullying in and around Parliament in the past is irrelevant—the bullying and the evidence. In this case, the government has to address the case at hand, but it has been hiding behind the inquiry.

**MR S.K. L'ESTRANGE (Churchlands)** [2.52 pm]: This is a serious matter and I want to read in a quote from the Deputy Premier on 20 February 2018. He stated —

The staff member in question left my office on 8 November, and the complaint about bullying and harassment was made on 20 November, so that is the point upon which we are conducting the investigation. It is appropriate that that investigation is independent and that it is respectful and provides procedural fairness to all parties involved.

The point I want us to focus on today is this notion of procedural fairness. I want to step you through a time line, Mr Speaker, with regard to how we got to this point today. The time line begins on 11 November 2008, when the Deputy Premier, in his maiden speech, thanked his valuable friend Mr Erik Locke. On March 2017, when Labor won the election and Mr Cook became the Deputy Premier; Minister for Health; Mental Health, he appointed Mr Locke as his chief of staff. On 19 April 2017, Mr Locke completed his ethics and integrity training by the Public Sector Commission. Around 20 September, it has been reported that Mr Locke posted a tweet putting forward Ms Grljusich's name in a thread about fat clogging London sewers, and that source was *The West Australian* of 20 February 2018. Between September and November 2017, Mr Locke made critical, personal comments to and about Ms Grljusich. Before 3 November, Mr Locke sent an email to Ms Grljusich entitled "Kim Jong Lard". The source for that was *The West Australian* of 17 February 2018. Again

Speaker; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Bill Johnston; Ms Rita Saffioti

---

pre-3 November, Mr Locke apparently sent a text message to Ms Grljusich with a message saying, “Here’s an idea”, and an image of a woman trying to raise money for liposuction through a GoFundMe campaign page. We have been informed that, also prior to 3 November, Mr Locke asked Mr Daniel Pastorelli, the director of communications in the Premier’s office, to move Ms Grljusich to another office. On 3 November, Mr Pastorelli, informed of issues between Mr Locke and Ms Grljusich, advised the director general, Darren Foster, to make inquiries with her. Between 3 and 7 November, Ms Grljusich sought to follow-up with Mr Foster on several occasions. It needs to be noted that between 8 November and 19 November, Mr Cook, the Deputy Premier, was actually the Acting Premier and Acting Minister for Public Sector Management. He also kept his portfolios of Minister for Health and Minister for Mental Health. On 8 November, Ms Grljusich’s contract with the government was terminated and she was marched out of her office. On 20 November, legal correspondence was sent to the Premier by Ms Grljusich’s legal representative outlining aspects of the treatment endured by Ms Grljusich. It took until 16 February, long after 20 November and long after she was sacked on 8 November, for *The West Australian* newspaper to make inquiries to government into this matter. The minute that happened, Mr Locke, the chief of staff to the Deputy Premier, resigned for personal reasons. On 18 February this year, the Premier was quoted as saying —

“Obviously there was a personality conflict,” ...

“I’m not very happy with what has taken place and he has now offered his resignation and it’s been accepted.

“I don’t want to get into the business of character assassination and so I really don’t want to, and I won’t, make comments about the individuals involved.”

That quote was sourced from ABC online news of 18 February. Again on 18 February the Premier said —

“To the best of my knowledge I found out about that on Friday,” ... “I understood last year—and I don’t recall when—that there was a personality issue in the office of Roger Cook.”

...

“My understanding is there were other issues, unrelated issues, that resulted in that outcome.”

That was in *The West Australian* of 19 February. Then, of course, we had the editorial in *The West* of 20 February, which stated —

So nearly three months after a letter about the matter was sent to his office, Mr McGowan was none the wiser about it until the media raised it ...

That is the situation we find ourselves in.

**Mr D.J. Kelly:** What’s your point?

**Mr S.K. L’ESTRANGE:** We are trying to unlock and uncover whether procedural fairness was followed, member for Bassendean.

**Mr D.J. Kelly:** To whom?

**Mr S.K. L’ESTRANGE:** Procedural fairness to the female staff member who was a victim of bullying and harassment in the workplace. That workplace is the second-highest office of government in this state—the office of the Deputy Premier

**Ms J.M. Freeman** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member, you will have the opportunity to talk.

**Mr S.K. L’ESTRANGE:** That is what we are talking about. I will give a quick summary. The complaint of bullying and harassment —

**Ms J.M. Freeman** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Mirrabooka, I call you to order for the first time.

**Mr S.K. L’ESTRANGE:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Let us be clear: the complaint about bullying and harassment from Ms Grljusich to the Premier’s office occurred before 3 November. That is not in dispute.

**Mr M. McGowan:** Really?

**Mr R.H. Cook:** Yes it is.

**Mr S.K. L’ESTRANGE:** If you are saying it is, when you get to your feet, tell me I am wrong.

Speaker; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Bill Johnston; Ms Rita Saffioti

---

**Mr B. Urban** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Darling Range!

**Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE:** The Premier's director of communications, Mr Pastorelli, and the Premier's director general of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet knew of this complaint around 3 November. Ms Grljusich was sacked and marched out of the office only five days later, on 8 November.

A complaint was made—a serious complaint—about harassment and bullying in the workplace. Ms Grljusich was treated very disrespectfully by her superior in that workplace. The result of that complaint, or the result of that period, was that she was marched out on 8 November. Was procedural fairness applied between 3 November and 8 November? That is the question. It is all well and good for the Deputy Premier to stand in the chamber and say that he found out about this officially in a letter from a lawyer on 20 November. He can say that and be accurate in that comment that he officially received the letter on 20 November. That is not in dispute either. But the fact remains that Ms Grljusich was sacked on 8 November and the fact remains that she made complaints prior to 3 November. Was procedural fairness followed and was the situation of harassment and bullying in the office of the Deputy Premier between the media advisor, Ms Grljusich, and the chief of staff, Mr Locke, looked at carefully? That is what we are asking—nothing more, nothing less. No other workplace in this country would demand anything less than exactly that.

We are asking the Premier to look very carefully at the culture that is going on in his ministry and the culture that is going on when a senior female member of staff in the office of the second most senior person in government makes a complaint against the chief of staff of the Deputy Premier. What did the Premier do about it? Regardless of gender, the Premier must be serious about supporting people who feel harassed and bullied in the workplace. What did he do about it? We have not seen anything.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Members!

**Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE:** The government has to stop treating people like objects. This employee made a complaint of harassment and bullying. She was not an object; she was a senior member of the government's staff.

**Mr B. Urban** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Darling Range!

**Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE:** She made a complaint and instead of applying procedural fairness to her complaint, she was treated like an object—a political object—to get out of the way. She was removed from the office five days later. That needs to be looked at; that is a serious, serious situation. Those members who work in ministerial offices or have worked in ministerial offices will know that, on average, about 10 to 12 staff are in a ministerial office. The two most senior staff members in a minister's office are the chief of staff and the senior media adviser; they are the two people with whom the minister spends the most time. Whenever a minister deals with the government issues of the day in his or her portfolio, they deal with their chief of staff. Whenever a minister gets into a vehicle to go to a press conference or to make a media announcement, they are with their media adviser. No other staff member in a minister's office has as much access to or face time with a minister than those two staff members. In this case, there has clearly been a breakdown in the relationship between the chief of staff and the senior media adviser.

**Mr P. Papalia** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Minister for Tourism!

**Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE:** It is completely and utterly improbable that a minister would not be aware of a breakdown between his chief of staff and his senior media adviser. To say that he had no idea that there was a problem in his office between those two people is farcical. If it is the truth, by the way, it means that the minister is so out of touch with his office that he is not fit for his office. First and foremost, it is the minister who sets the standard of behaviour in their office. They set the tone of the culture of that office. A serious allegation of bullying and harassment has occurred in the Deputy Premier's office; that is the issue. To say that the Deputy Premier first became aware of it on 20 November or 21 November when the letter was received does not add up. Linked to that, the Premier is not absolved from his responsibilities either. I will tell members why. The Premier's number one director general is the director general of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. That is his DG. The other person in the Premier's office who runs all government media and communications strategy is the director of communications. Linked to what I said earlier about the minister's office, the Premier's office is very similar. The director of communications is his left-hand man or woman—whoever it might be—looking after his communications affairs. It is highly improbable to say that the Premier had no idea of this problem when the director of communications' job is to either promote the government or put out bushfires that are about to kick off in the government. The fact that that was happening and that we have to believe that the director of communications would not have alerted the Premier to

Speaker; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Bill Johnston; Ms Rita Saffioti

---

a problem in the Deputy Premier's office is also highly improbable. Yes, the Deputy Premier and the Premier can stand up in here and say, "We didn't get anything official until a lawyer wrote a letter of complaint", but all of us in this place know full well that those two holders of the most senior positions in this state, the Premier and the Deputy Premier, would have known exactly what was going on with Ms Grljusich between 3 November and 8 November, and they chose to ignore it. They chose to treat Ms Grljusich as an object, a political football, to get out of the way to protect the Deputy Premier and his chief of staff and cover it up.

**Ms J.M. Freeman** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Mirrabooka! You have an opportunity to talk on this, but you do not shout across the chamber. I call you to order for the second time.

**Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE:** Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The media got onto this in February. We looked into it ourselves on behalf of the people of Western Australia, because whether the Premier and the Deputy Premier like it or not, it is our job under the Westminster system as the opposition to hold them to account to their standards. They have failed on the basic public sector management standards of supporting employees in the workplace and have failed to do that at the second most senior office in government—the Deputy Premier's office. The Premier's office was intimately involved in that failure.

**MRS L.M. HARVEY (Scarborough — Deputy Leader of the Opposition)** [3.07 pm]: I note that the government chose not to have anyone get up to present even some defence on this issue and I would put to the Deputy Premier and the Premier that when they respond to this matter, they can address a couple of things that can take a lot of heat out of this issue. What is the special inquirer looking into? Is she investigating the actions of Darren Foster, the director general of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet? Is she investigating the actions of Daniel Pastorelli, the director of communications? Is she confined to looking only at the relationship between Ms Grljusich and Mr Locke? These are the things we do not know; the government is not advising us. I note that a response to a report of a special inquiry was tabled with great fanfare yesterday. The terms of reference for that inquiry were made public, so that, as a matter of transparency, the community, the media and Parliament would understand what was being inquired into and what we could expect as a result of that inquiry. The government has still not explained to us whether the report by the special inquirer into this matter is going to be tabled in Parliament, whether it will be made available to the director general of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet or whether it is going directly to the Premier.

The government has not answered why neither of the agencies it set up specifically for the purpose of investigating workplace bullying and harassment—the Public Sector Commission and WorkSafe—are involved in looking into this matter. Why does the government have to bring in an external source if it has government agencies in WorkSafe and the Public Sector Commission, and a gentleman called the Public Sector Commissioner who is the author of "Prevention of workplace bullying in the WA Public Sector: A guide for agencies"? This is the guideline for senior people in government dealing with workplace bullying and harassment issues, yet the author of this document, who sets the standard for the public sector, has not been involved in this inquiry. The government has not satisfactorily explained to anybody why that is the case. The government needs to respond to that, instead of dragging up past history. The Premier promised transparent and accountable governance, but he is not being transparent and accountable about this.

The member for Churchlands raised a number of matters about due process and procedural fairness. Section 19 of the Occupational Safety and Health Act requires all employers to provide a safe and hazard-free work environment as far as is reasonably practicable. The report of the Public Sector Commissioner states that a requirement of the Public Sector Management Act is that a suspected breach of that act is to be immediately reported.

Interestingly, after a report of harassment or a report of this nature, generally both parties are stood down while an investigation occurs. That is in the interests of procedural fairness. There are two parties to the dispute, and generally both parties are stood down until the investigation has been completed. We know for certain that did not occur in this case.

Interestingly, page 6 of the Public Sector Commissioner's document reads —

Should an employee consider he or she has been dismissed as a result of making a complaint in relation to bullying, —

As appears to be the case here —

or is forced to resign due to the effects of bullying the employee may be entitled to lodge a claim under the unfair dismissal provisions in the Industrial Relations Act 1979. ...

The report also has a chapter on the responsibilities of CEOs and agencies, and the most senior public servant in the state, Darren Foster, director general of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, needs to come under

---

Speaker; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Bill Johnston; Ms Rita Saffioti

---

scrutiny. If the state's most senior public servant does not abide by this code of ethics—by this document put out by the Public Sector Commissioner that outlines the legal obligations of CEOs—what message is that sending to every single public servant in Western Australia? It sends the message that this document is irrelevant, and that the head of the public sector—the most senior person—is exempt from the provisions of this document. What will that do for a culture of bullying in the future? It will enhance it and ensure it stays. That is the issue at hand.

The report reads —

Public sector CEOs and agencies must comply with specific obligations set out in legislation to ensure a safe working environment and to take action on allegations of bullying as required. Preventing bullying from occurring, and dealing with it when it does occur, is the responsibility of all public sector agencies.

We have been told by not only the media adviser who was sacked for reporting bullying and harassment, but also other people working in the Deputy Premier's office that there are other victims of this harassment —

**Mr R.H. Cook:** Who?

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** — from Erik Locke, the Deputy Premier's chief of staff, who was allowed to resign on Friday in an attempt to escape scrutiny. We are encouraging those frightened victims to come forward.

**Mr M. McGowan:** Who?

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** There are a number of them.

**Mr M. McGowan:** You're misleading the house again. You could go to privileges.

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** I am not naming them until they give me permission.

Several members interjected.

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** I am not naming them until I am given permission by them to name them.

Under section 29(1) of the Public Sector Management Act, CEOs have a responsibility “to resolve or redress the grievances of employees” and “to implement any health and safety standards and programmes adopted with respect to employment in the Public Sector”. The Public Sector Commission guide then states —

When bullying is identified or reported steps must be taken to deal with the immediate incident ...

It then goes into a range of ways of how bullying can be identified and reported, which I will not read out. However, in response to an immediate incident —

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Members! I want to hear this, please; no more interjections.

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** When it comes to a response to an immediate incident, which is the issue we are highlighting in the Parliament today—the immediate incident that we are advised Ms Grljusich reported to Daniel Pastorelli on 3 November—we are told that Daniel Pastorelli said he was going to inform Darren Foster, the director general of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, and that Ms Grljusich could expect a phone call from him and that she should save all that evidence and present it to him because he was the person who would do something about it. What did he do about that? I will tell members what he did. Did he carefully consider the principles of procedural fairness to ensure a fair and reasonable process was applied? No, he did not. Did he make it clear to Ms Grljusich what was involved in the process to be undertaken to investigate this?

**Mr B. Urban** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Darling Range!

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** Did he make it clear how long the process of investigation was expected to take and how she as a victim would be kept informed of what was happening? No, he did not do that. Did he provide information about the support that is available to all parties—the employee assistance program, safety and health representatives, and a grievance officer? No, he did not do that. Did he maintain a factual record, including any investigations, interviews, outcomes et cetera? Perhaps the Deputy Premier or the Premier will outline whether Mr Daniel Pastorelli as director of communications and Mr Darren Foster as director general of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet maintained a record and took notes of the conversation alleging a very serious incident of harassment and bullying. Did he take note of investigations, note when the interviews were coming, or note outcomes from those interviews? We do not know. We expect the Premier and the Deputy Premier to articulate that to us today. It will be interesting to see whether any of those notes are uncovered by the inquiry into this matter.

However, I will tell members some of the actions that the director general is required to take in response to a report of bullying or harassment. What the director general, Darren Foster, did was worse than do nothing. What he did

Speaker; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Bill Johnston; Ms Rita Saffioti

---

was instead of standing Ms Grljusich and Mr Locke aside and allowing procedural fairness, he terminated her employment. Did Mr Darren Foster or Mr Daniel Pastorelli have the mettle to ring her and tell her themselves? We are advised no. We are advised that neither Mr Foster nor Mr Pastorelli spoke to this individual and told her that her employment was terminated. We are told that two individuals, whom she had not met before, were sent to her, came to her desk, and said, "You've been terminated. We're here to escort you from the building." She did not get even a phone call from her employer, saying, "You're terminated"; she was told by another employee. That is the way that this woman has been treated. We have listened to outrage in this place about the way women are treated in the workplace. As a female Liberal, I get all sorts of outraged comments from members opposite about women in the Liberal Party. This is the standard you set. This is the standard you set in the Deputy Premier's office.

**Ms M.M. Quirk** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Girrawheen!

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** On the day that this woman's job was terminated and she was marched out of her office, the Deputy Premier was the Acting Premier, and Darren Foster, as the DG of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, was reporting directly to him. He said that he did not know that his media adviser's employment had been terminated; moreover, he did not know about the allegations of harassment and bullying. He has stood in this place and said that he has not witnessed any bullying or harassment; he has not heard Erik Locke, his mate from high school, say disparaging remarks to any person in the office, any female individual, about their appearance or their weight. He has not heard that, apparently. Does he wear headphones when he is in the office and have blinkers on? When this type of activity is happening in an office, an office is toxic. It is up to a minister and their chief of staff to resolve those issues, not by terminating a victim but by having the perpetrator of abuse held to account. He cannot be held to account now because he has had the ability to resign after the benefit of three months' pay, which was denied Ms Grljusich. She did not get three months' pay. She got terminated—gone. There was no procedural fairness for her. There was an attempt at procedural fairness for the perpetrator of the abuse and he got three months' pay of his chief of staff salary until he was told that it would blow up tomorrow and he had better get out of here. He has taken off—probably back to Victoria. He cannot be interviewed. There is no fairness for Ms Grljusich.

**MR M. McGOWAN (Rockingham — Premier)** [3.21 pm]: The government does not support this motion. I will say a few things at the outset. I heard the Leader of the Opposition with his one and a half minute address and I heard the member for Churchlands and his comments on the issue. The central thesis of the member for Churchlands's speech was that he wanted to know about procedural fairness, so he kept saying that we want procedural fairness around all these issues and we want to know about procedural fairness. Then I heard the member for Scarborough throw allegation after allegation. I am not exactly sure how that fits with the procedural fairness theme of the member for Churchlands' speech, because the two are irreconcilable.

The motion prejudices the entire issue. It does not allow for the procedural fairness to which the member for Churchlands referred, and it does not allow for the independent inquiry set up by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet to run its course. The fatal flaw in the opposition's argument is this: the individual involved, whom the opposition has obviously been talking to, left the employ of government for completely unrelated issues, which I suspect the opposition knows. The matters for which she left had nothing to do with the allegations that she subsequently made. I am in a position —

Several members interjected.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** I listened to members opposite. As I said on Sunday, my position is that I do not want to engage in the character assassination of people who are not a member of this place and cannot come in here and defend themselves, but I will say this to the house: the reasons that she left—terminated, as members opposite put it—were totally unrelated.

We then received a letter on the twenty-first, apparently dated the twentieth, that was addressed to me, I think, and then went to the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, as it should have done, for its assessment. On receiving that letter, the Department of the Premier and Cabinet determined that the allegations that she was making had to be looked into by an independent inquiry. That letter arrived after she had left the employ of government. As a lot of people understand, she left the employ of government for very different reasons from those that were contained in the letter that she sent to me. As I said, I do not want to go into those reasons because I do not think it would be in a lot of people's interests for me to do that. Anyway, that is the reason for her departure.

A question raised by members opposite was: why not the Public Sector Commission? As I understand it, when it is a complaint within a ministerial office between ministerial staffers, if you like, the usual course of events is for it to be managed by DPC and some sort of independent inquiry undertaken in respect of it. If the complaint was between a ministerial office and public sector employees outside a ministerial office, it may well be investigated by the Public Sector Commission. I can give members a case study of when that has occurred, so they will be aware. Back

Speaker; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Bill Johnston; Ms Rita Saffioti

---

in 2010, bullying allegations were made against some staff members in Hon Peter Collier's office. It was about how staff in Hon Peter Collier's office dealt with the Department of Training and Workforce Development because he then was the Minister for Training and Workforce Development. The Public Sector Commission investigated that matter. I understand that that was because they were staff members who were ministerial staffers engaged in alleged bullying against departmental officers in the department of training. That inquiry was undertaken by the Public Sector Commission. The recommended outcomes were that Mr Collier's office staff undergo an accountable and ethical decision-making training program and that departmental workers be placed within the ministerial office to assist in interaction. Obviously, the complaint was upheld as otherwise that would not have occurred. The complaint about Mr Collier's staff was upheld by the Public Sector Commission and this outcome was recommended. As I understand it, that staff member is now working in the Leader of the Opposition's office.

**Mr A. Krsticevic** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Carine!

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** If members opposite talk about bullying —

Several members interjected.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** I have outlined the difference to members opposite; they do not listen.

Members opposite talk about bullying but the Leader of the Opposition has someone in his office who had to take a course on accountable and ethical decision-making and two departmental workers were placed within the ministerial office to assist with interaction. The Leader of the Opposition then employed the staffer in his office. When the Leader of the Opposition says that he is concerned about these issues, he may want to have a look at his own conduct. If the Leader of the Opposition has any time left, maybe he could answer that question; if he had not used only 90 seconds, he might have answered it in his original statement.

In question time, I was able to refer to the commentary by Dixie Marshall, who worked in the former Premier's office describing a former staff member as a "sanctimonious moll". What do members opposite call that? Do members opposite think that that is appropriate? What inquiry was conducted into that? Was there an inquiry? No, there was not. When members opposite talk about due process, what inquiry was held into that? It was hurtful and shocking language by a senior staff member in the former Premier's office. What inquiry did the now opposition launch? No inquiry was launched. When members opposite come in here and ask, "Where's the due process?", I ask where the due process was around that.

**Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup** interjected.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** There we have the protector of the former Premier. A couple of weeks ago the member for Dawesville lost his mate, his support network, and his great helmsman. He was present in the former Premier's office when this was going on. What did members opposite do with him? They put him in Parliament! That was the punishment for this sort of thing going on in the former Premier's office. Members opposite promote the people who were part of it into Parliament.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Members!

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** I have explained it to members opposite, but I will explain it to them again because they do not listen. The staff member involved left for unrelated reasons, which she understands and a range of other people understand. As I said on Sunday, I do not want to go into character assassination of people in relation to these issues.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Members!

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** She left for unrelated issues.

**Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup** interjected.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** She has obviously been talking to members opposite; that is clear from the way that they are conducting themselves, but, obviously, that is what happened.

**Mrs L.M. Harvey** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Scarborough!

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** Then we have the —

**Mr S.K. L'Estrange:** Why did Mr Locke leave if there's nothing to see here?

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** He offered his resignation a week ago.

Speaker; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Bill Johnston; Ms Rita Saffioti

---

**Mr S.K. L'Estrange:** Why?

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** Obviously, the matters were of concern to him, but members opposite will have to ask him. The matters were of concern to him —

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Members!

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** Mr Speaker, I did not speak to Mr Locke, but he offered his resignation. Maybe the Deputy Premier will comment on that.

**The SPEAKER:** Opposition members, when your side talked, I told everyone to keep quiet. Give the Premier the same opportunity.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** He offered his resignation on Friday, and it was accepted.

**Mr A. Krsticevic** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Carine!

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** That is what occurred, and maybe the Deputy Premier will want to comment on that.

I now want to deal with why it is so hypocritical for members opposite to come into this place and launch a matter of public interest on this issue, and why it shows that members opposite have no recognition of what they did. That is the behaviour of Troy Buswell. Troy Buswell is actually world famous for what he did. He appeared in United States' television shows. His story went around the world because of the scale and depravity of the bullying he conducted.

**Mr S.K. L'Estrange:** That does not have anything to do with this debate today.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** Yes, it does.

**Mr S.K. L'Estrange** interjected.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** The member made his speech; I will make mine. The member said it has nothing to do with it. The member for Churchlands was not a member of this house at the time, but other members were here at the time. What did they do post Troy Buswell's bullying? They made him Leader of the Liberal Party! Where was the inquiry into his conduct? Where was the procedural fairness for the women he sexually harassed in the most depraved and shocking manner?

**Dr M.D. Nahan** interjected

**The SPEAKER:** Leader of the Opposition!

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** I am saying that members of the Liberal Party are complete hypocrites.

**Dr M.D. Nahan** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Leader of the Opposition, I call you for the second time.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** I am saying that members of the Liberal Party are complete hypocrites. There are members in this house and in the other house who promoted Troy Buswell. The member for Dawesville is not one of them. He shakes his head, with his holier-than-thou attitude. He was not one of them. He was a young Liberal activist, or whatever he was at that time. There are senior members of the Liberal opposition who were part of that affair and protected and supported Troy Buswell in his activities. So do not come in here and be holier than thou about these issues. The stuff that Troy Buswell did was beyond shocking. Once Troy Buswell stopped being Liberal Party leader, members opposite made him the Treasurer in government—not once, but twice! Where were all the inquiries? Where was the due process around the chair sniffing, around assaulting women, around assaulting other members of the Liberal Party, and around assaulting members of the public at party fundraisers and the so-called dry humping affair? I mean, my God! You guys bear no responsibility for the example you set and what you did in office.

I will explain it to members opposite again. What Troy Buswell did was wrong and shocking. Members opposite held no inquiry whatsoever into that conduct.

Several members interjected.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** Was there an inquiry into the chair sniffing? No, there was not. Was there an inquiry into assaulting women? No, there was not.

Several members interjected.

Speaker; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Bill Johnston; Ms Rita Saffioti

---

**The SPEAKER:** Members, please! I want to hear this. I listened to you; now I want to listen to the reply.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** Was there an inquiry into assaulting businessmen? No, there was not.

**Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup:** Were there complaints?

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** There were complaints everywhere, my friend.

When this complaint came to our attention, a formal inquiry was launched, which is far more than members opposite ever did. As I have said on a number of occasions, the individual involved, who was a press secretary, left the employ of the Deputy Premier for completely unrelated reasons.

**MR R.H. COOK (Kwinana — Minister for Health)** [3.33 pm]: In the 30 seconds the Leader of the Opposition took to the floor on this important matter, he promised us two things. He promised us evidence of bullying, and he promised us evidence of systemic bullying. To simply state that there is bullying is not evidence, and to simply state it 20 times does not make it systemic. This issue has been subject to a serious allegation or complaint.

**Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Dawesville, I call you to order for the first time.

**Mr R.H. COOK:** When we receive a complaint of this nature, it is important that we respond in a dispassionate and balanced manner that provides procedural fairness to all the parties concerned. A complaint was received—or dated 20 November, so it was probably 21 November, as the Premier pointed out—that was drawn to my attention, and the director general of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, who is the employing agency, made the decision that his department would undertake an investigation into the claims made about this issue.

**Dr M.D. Nahan:** He knew on 3 November—a complaint was received by Mr Pastorelli on 3 November, not 20 November.

**The SPEAKER:** Leader of the Opposition, I call you to order for the third time.

**Mr R.H. COOK:** Just because the Leader of the Opposition says it is, does not make it so. That is the problem with his whole case today. None of the opposition has provided any evidence. Simply reading out quotes that have come out in the media does not provide evidence, it is simply following the story. That is not evidence. The fact is that a formal complaint was made on 20 November and an inquiry was instigated as a result of that. It is not appropriate to say, first, that it was bullying, because that is for the inquiry to decide. Second, it is not appropriate for us to provide ongoing commentary, because that is to prejudge the outcomes of the inquiry. This is the appropriate way to manage these affairs. I notice with some contempt that the motion states —

... specifically the abysmal handling of the bullying of a female staff member in the Deputy Premier's office.

The way we manage these things is consistent with the policies and authority of the employing agency. The employing agency in this case is the Department of the Premier and Cabinet.

This stands in stark contrast to the way the previous government operated when it received complaints of bullying. A complaint was made against Hon Peter Collier about his conduct and that of his staff towards the then director general of the Department of Training and Workforce Development. The accusation of bullying was made.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Members! Not across the chamber.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Members, please!

**Mr R.H. COOK:** There was going to be an inquiry into the allegation of bullying. Hon Peter Collier decided that he did not want that.

**Mr A. Krsticevic** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Carine, I call you to order for the first time.

**Mr R.H. COOK:** He wanted to send a letter that basically said that the director general of the Department of Training and Workforce Development was incompetent. That is how he wanted to manage the allegation. He did not want an investigation. Regrettably, in this instance, the Public Sector Commissioner decided there should not be an investigation, when that is exactly what should have been undertaken the moment Minister Collier was aware of those allegations. The Public Sector Commission decided, strangely enough, that it would not investigate Mr Collier's office at all but undertake an investigation into the director general of the Department of Training and

Speaker; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Bill Johnston; Ms Rita Saffioti

---

Workforce Development. The department could have made that decision only following interference from the government of the day, which decided it did not want that allegation looked into. Contrast that with our approach, which was to say that a complaint had been made, therefore, it must be investigated in an independent manner. It is even more galling that, ultimately, the chief of staff in Minister Collier's office was paid out \$83 000 as a result of the bullying allegation, despite the investigation by the Public Sector Commission into the Department of Training and Workforce Development. That chief of staff accepted a payout from his job following a reshuffle, so that was a good outcome. He then came back after a holiday and was parachuted into a \$300 000-a-year job created by the restructure of Synergy. Contrast this with our approach, which is to say, "Hands off; we've got this complaint and we have to undertake an investigation", with the managing or the ongoing manipulation of the process, which is the way the mob on the other side undertakes these things. Where is that former chief of staff now? He is sitting in the Leader of the Opposition's office. Do not come to us with entreaties and testimony about cultures of bullying. Do not come to us with accusations without a piece of evidence.

**Mr D.J. Kelly** interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Minister!

**Mr R.H. COOK:** Do not come to us and say that we should treat this stuff with seriousness because, in fact, that is exactly what is happening. People are getting an independent investigation that provides procedural fairness to all parties. That might be inconvenient for the narrative that the opposition wants to run, but it is the truth of the matter. Ultimately, we will leave this in the hands of the independent investigation. The independent investigation, which is being undertaken by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, is the appropriate way that these things should be handled. We are addressing the issue.

We live in interesting times. We see a lot of commentary and what could be regarded as bullying of the member for Darling Range. The systemic and cultural way in which that is being pursued by those on the other side might give them cause to reflect on the definition of bullying. We are managing this serious allegation in the appropriate way. We are undertaking an independent investigation, which will provide fairness to the two staff involved who are, regrettably, now former staff. It is appropriate that that investigation be allowed to take its course and that we not try to prejudge or to anticipate the outcome. We will allow it to take its course because that is the professional, balanced and appropriate way to pursue it.

**MR W.J. JOHNSTON (Cannington — Minister for Mines and Petroleum)** [3.41 pm]: I was impressed by the length of the Leader of the Opposition's contribution to this debate today. He has asked questions that took longer than his speech today. That is what happens in this place. It is interesting that the opposition talks about bullying. I will quote from an article, and perhaps the member for Dawesville can explain why he was involved in this. Hon Helen Morton talked about the bullying culture in the former Premier's office. The article states —

Ms Morton said her ministerial office had been affected by a "bullying" culture amongst the Premier's staff that had contributed to her losing her Cabinet post.

Member for Dawesville, what was your role in that bullying culture? Tell us! I am happy to hear from you. What was your responsibility in that bullying? Were you part of that or did you just watch it as an observer? Were you into it? Were you part of the bullying that led to Helen Morton losing her job? Was that your role? Did you bully Helen Morton? Was that what you did or did you just watch it when other members bullied a cabinet minister?

There is silence from the other side of the chamber because he was up to his neck in the constant cover-ups and disgraceful behaviour of the former Premier.

**Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup** interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Member!

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** Do members remember what happened with Troy Buswell? He got drunk, crashed a government car all over Subiaco and they provided a cover-up. They would have got away with it —

**Mrs L.M. Harvey** interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Member for Scarborough!

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** — except for one guy who came home to his house and rang Channel Seven. That is the only way that cover-up was exposed. They would have gotten away with it. They said, "Mental health issues here—nothing to see" while they took a government car to a private repair place to get it fixed. That was part of the cover-up. The member for Dawesville was up to his neck in the Premier's office in every single bullying action out of that office that is detailed in the Langoulant report. The public service was bullied into not doing its job

Speaker; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Bill Johnston; Ms Rita Saffioti

---

because the former government—the member for Dawesville was up to his neck in it—bullied public servants not to provide advice. They were told, “Don’t tell us the law. Don’t tell us that we’re not allowed to do it.” Then we heard the ridiculous contribution to the debate from the member for Churchlands, who said that the most important person in a minister’s office is the media adviser, not the policy officers. It reminds me of the former Minister for Environment, Albert Jacob. I used to call him the oxygen thief because the only thing he ever did was turn up and cut ribbons. The idea of being involved in policy was alien; it was an alien thought to the Liberal Party. I say to the member for Churchlands that I spend more time with my policy officers than I do with my media adviser, and my media adviser is a fine person who does a great job. I talk to my policy officers because what motivates the Labor government is not cutting ribbons; it is delivering for the people. I say to the member for Dawesville that we are certainly not involved in a bullying culture, as occurred under the former Premier. Colin Barnett’s bullying culture drove Helen Morton out of the ministry and out of Parliament.

Members of the Liberal Party skip over certain things. Let me make it clear that a bullying allegation is being investigated and we do not know the outcome of the inquiry. Whatever the outcome, it will have to be acted on. Where was the bullying inquiry into the behaviour of Troy Buswell at Rottneest Island, which involved another member of the Liberal Party caucus who was denied preselection following that incident? Where was the inquiry into a Liberal Party minister who got drunk at a public function and sexually harassed a departmental staff member at the same table? When the Liberal minister got up to give a speech, the departmental official was moved from the head table to another table so she could get away from the drunken minister. Where was the investigation into that incident? These are things that happened when the Liberal Party was in government. Where was the investigation into the sexual assault by Troy Buswell on a woman in the Speaker’s chambers? Troy Buswell sexually assaulted a woman. Where was the investigation by the Liberal Party? Let us not get into chair sniffing.

**Mr S.K. L’Estrange** interjected.

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** The member said he never heard about this. That is the whole point here. The Liberals’ standards are so low, we cannot trip over them. Then Liberal members come into this place and say that we should provide procedural fairness. Procedural fairness is being provided by the inquiry because there are two issues here. Not only does the woman involved need to get procedural fairness but so does the person who is accused of that behaviour. That needs to be provided, and I am sure that it will.

**MS R. SAFFIOTI (West Swan — Minister for Transport)** [3.47 pm]: The matter of public interest motion condemns the McGowan government “for its culture of bullying at the highest level of government”. Nothing was demonstrated by the opposition today. We saw no new information and heard no new evidence. As the Deputy Premier said, the investigation is currently underway. We should let that investigation play out and then look at the results of that investigation. I know that members of the opposition do not like looking into a mirror to see their own performance but let us do that. Do members on this side of the house recall the performance of the former member for Vasse when he sat on this side of the chamber and attacked women on the other side? Do members remember what he said about the member for Midland? I do. He made sexist comments all the time, which were cheered on by members opposite. The idea that members opposite ever stood up for women in this place is ludicrous. They used to cheer him on and clap, saying how good he was when he used to make disgraceful remarks in this place. They allowed it to happen and that is why there are few women on that side, because who would want to join that side?

In relation to transparency and cover-up, I will go back to the night the former Treasurer and Minister for Transport wiped out half of Subiaco. Do members remember that night? The member for Scarborough was questioned in the Parliament very soon afterwards as Minister for Police. I quote —

... Police Minister Liza Harvey refused to say if Mr Buswell’s car was involved in any accidents in the drive from a function at Kings Park to Roberts Road.

“What I can confirm is that ... an ongoing investigation ... and I’m not prepared to comment on an ongoing investigation by police ...

That was about a minister of the Crown who wiped out and did serious damage to vehicles throughout Subiaco. The member for Scarborough was the police minister. We all know the cover-up that happened after that.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Members!

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** When we talked about bullying under the member for Carine’s government, he said, “What’s new about that? Tell us something we don’t know.” We have seen it time and again.

**Mr A. Krsticevic** interjected.

Speaker; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Bill Johnston; Ms Rita Saffioti

---

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Carine!

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Time and again he encouraged and applauded sexist comments made by the previous government to members on our side. After one of the worst ever acts by a minister, the former police minister came into this house soon after and said, “Well, I can’t tell you anything because there’s an investigation underway.” That is what she did. No-one believes that she did not know that a ministerial car was taken to a panelbeater —

**Mrs L.M. Harvey** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Scarborough, I call you to order for the first time!

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** It was the worst cover-up ever, and as police minister she sat there saying, “I don’t know anything.” A ministerial car —

**Mrs L.M. Harvey** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Scarborough, I call you to order for the second time!

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** It was the most sexist, bullying government in the state’s history and we all remember it.

*Division*

Question put and a division taken with the following result —

Ayes (15)

Mr I.C. Blayney	Mr A. Krsticevic	Mr J.E. McGrath	Mr D.T. Redman
Ms M.J. Davies	Mr S.K. L'Estrange	Dr M.D. Nahan	Mr P.J. Rundle
Mrs L.M. Harvey	Mr R.S. Love	Mr D.C. Nalder	Ms L. Mettam ( <i>Teller</i> )
Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup	Mr W.R. Marmion	Mr K. O'Donnell	

Noes (38)

Ms L.L. Baker	Mr W.J. Johnston	Mr S.J. Price	Mr C.J. Tallentire
Dr A.D. Buti	Mr D.J. Kelly	Mr D.T. Punch	Mr D.A. Templeman
Mr J.N. Carey	Mr F.M. Logan	Mr J.R. Quigley	Mr P.C. Tinley
Mrs R.M.J. Clarke	Mr M. McGowan	Ms M.M. Quirk	Mr B. Urban
Mr R.H. Cook	Mr K.J.J. Michel	Mrs M.H. Roberts	Mr R.R. Whitby
Ms J. Farrer	Mr S.A. Millman	Ms C.M. Rowe	Ms S.E. Winton
Mr M.J. Folkard	Mr Y. Mubarakai	Ms R. Saffioti	Mr B.S. Wyatt
Ms J.M. Freeman	Mr M.P. Murray	Ms A. Sanderson	Mr D.R. Michael ( <i>Teller</i> )
Ms E. Hamilton	Mrs L.M. O'Malley	Ms J.J. Shaw	
Mr T.J. Healy	Mr P. Papalia	Mrs J.M.C. Stojkovski	

Pair

Mr P. Katsambanis

Ms S.F. McGurk

Question thus negatived.