

ORD–EAST KIMBERLEY EXPANSION PROJECT

713. Mr P. PAPALIA to the Minister for Regional Development:

I refer to the minister's claim in this place last week regarding the Ord–East Kimberley expansion project, when he said —

There are currently ... 91 Indigenous workers employed on the construction site direct ...

- (1) Why did the Miriuwung Gajerrong Corporation newsletter state in its June 2012 edition that only 29 Indigenous workers were employed on the Ord stage 2 works?
- (2) Who is right, the MG Corporation or the minister?
- (3) Have any binding requirements been placed on Shanghai Zhongfu to provide jobs for locals, including the MG people; and, if so, what are these requirements?
- (4) What other guaranteed Indigenous employment requirements have been negotiated as part of the lease arrangements?

Mr B.J. GRYLLS replied:

- (1)–(4) I thank the shadow spokesperson for agriculture for his question today. Before I answer the question, I think it is important to put the question in the context of where the Ord development comes from. I would like to go back to the 2007 *Hansard* and talk about the shadow spokesperson for agriculture's colleague, who is right behind him, the member for Belmont—who has been rightly recognised for his role in filling the vision of the development of the Ord—and just what the Labor Party's position was at that time compared with its blatant opposition to the expansion of the Ord now. The 19 June *Hansard* states —

I have been the minister responsible for native title since the election of the government. I was the minister who supervised the negotiations of the Ord final settlement. I would not have done that at a \$56 million cost if I was not committed to stage 2. As Treasurer, I would not have supported that \$56 million or the allocation of \$11 million to \$12 million for the Ord enhancement scheme if I was not committed to as far as possible making Ord stage 2 a success. I therefore say to the people in the east Kimberley that we are on the case; we are committed —

Mr P. Papalia: Are you going to answer the question?

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: Shadow spokesperson for agriculture, are you still committed to delivering on the Ord final agreement signed by your side of politics?

Several members interjected.

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: Are you still committed? I do not think you are committed.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: I suggest to everybody in this place that I want to keep the volume down. Minister for Regional Development, I doubt you will make any progress asking questions. You have been asked a question yourself.

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I further quote the member for Belmont —

We will get a better outcome from the expressions of interest process —

Mr M.P. Murray interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Collie–Preston, you are not helping the process. I formally call you to order for the first time today.

Mr M.P. Murray interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Collie–Preston, I can hear you; I formally call you to order for the second time today.

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: The member for Belmont said —

We will get a better outcome from the expressions of interest process if we say up-front how much infrastructure support we are prepared to provide. If we can combine that with a commonwealth commitment, there might be sufficient joint government commitment up-front to attract more proponents ...

The Liberal–National government has done exactly that. That is exactly what we have done. It is very clear that when the Labor Party was making commitments to the people of the East Kimberley in the lead-up to the 2008 election, they were lying to them.

Mr P. Papalia: Is it 29 or 91?

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: — because there is a very clear commitment to progress Ord stage 2, that the government would need to make an infrastructure commitment to; that they work hard to deliver on the outcomes for the Miriuwung–Gajerrong people. The Liberal–National government made the same commitment. There is one big difference. When the Liberal–National government makes a commitment, we follow through on it.

Several members interjected.

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: Next week the Premier will be opening the Goomig channel, 31.9 kilometres long, that can hold a volume of water of 1.9 million cubic metres. The volume of earth that was excavated to create this channel that our Premier will open is 1.4 million cubic metres, the bottom width is 10 to 14 metres and the top width 26 to 30 metres. As the Premier said, built into that channel will be the capacity to allow water to flow across the border into the Northern Territory to allow the Ord project to continue to expand. It is a truly nation-building project in the East Kimberley of Western Australia that this government, as opposed to those opposite, committed to and has delivered in our term of government. The shadow Minister for Agriculture needs to understand that if he wants to be a shadow minister, he needs to support agriculture. If he wants to be a shadow minister, he probably should not oppose one of the biggest ever agricultural projects in the north of Australia, because he does not do himself much good moving out and about —

Point of Order

Mr B.S. WYATT: The question from the shadow Minister for Agriculture related to the disparity in Indigenous employment claimed by the minister as opposed to claimed by the people of the Miriuwung–Gajerrong. At no point has the minister got back to that question.

The SPEAKER: If you have a point of order, I need to know what that point of order is —

Mr B.S. Wyatt: Relevance.

The SPEAKER: I will certainly give the call to the member for Warnbro if he wishes to ask a supplementary question. I think the issue of relevance is very correct, member for Victoria Park.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: I turn now to the question put by the member for Warnbro. The MG Services division of MG Corporation—remember MG Services is the business group set up under the MG Corporation to deliver the Indigenous employment benefits of the project; it is actually in charge of delivering those benefits—advises that it has exceeded its Aboriginal employment target on the phase 2 expansion with 81 employees on the construction site, while the town-based employment team has 39 employees based with local businesses. There are 81 plus 39 employees of MG Corporation’s MG Services division working on this project.

Mr T.G. Stephens: Indigenous?

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: Indigenous. There are 81 employees and 39 employees who have been put to work by the MG Services division. Further, small businesses have been set up. I mentioned Duck Chulong’s Wanna Work business last week. Many contractors are working across the Kimberley. There is a bus company doing tours out to the site. That is owned by an MG person—another new MG business. There is also a catering company. As the Premier said, we have ensured Indigenous benefit has been entwined with this project. That is why, member for Warnbro, the state, the commonwealth and the Miriuwung–Gajerrong people came together to push this project through, which the former Labor government started. I think it is absolutely disgraceful that the member worded them up that he was going to do this, and then quite clearly his pathological hatred for regional development means that he would have pulled the rug from under them. All those people who got their first job would not have got their first job and all those new businesses would not have got those opportunities. There is a clear and stark difference —

Mr T.G. Stephens: You can’t tell the truth about a food bowl; why would we believe you about Indigenous jobs?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Minister for Agriculture and Food, you’re in good form today! I formally call you to order for the second time today. Member for Pilbara, I do not need to hear you interjecting at this point.

Mr T.G. Stephens: You may not, but he does.

Extract from *Hansard*

[ASSEMBLY — Wednesday, 14 November 2012]

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Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Brendon Grylls; Mr Ben Wyatt; Speaker

The SPEAKER: I formally call you to order for the second time today, member for Pilbara. Have you finished, Minister for Regional Development?

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: Just about.

Member for Pilbara, the reason that I can be trusted on my commitment to Indigenous employment is because Miriuwung Gajerrong Corporation's MG Services tells me there are 81 employees on the construction site and more than 30 in town-based employment. That is a good outcome for the Miriuwung–Gajerrong people.