

LOCAL GOVERNMENT — FORCED AMALGAMATIONS

772. Mr P. PAPALIA to the Minister for Local Government:

I refer to the Premier's stated objective of forcing at least 40 local governments to amalgamate, and last weekend's media reports that the cost of amalgamation in Queensland was \$200 million.

- (1) Will the reduction in the number of councils to fewer than 100 be achieved by the October 2011 council elections, as stated on the minister's departmental website?
- (2) How much does the minister anticipate the amalgamation of 40 councils will cost?
- (3) Where will the money for the amalgamations come from?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI replied:

I thank the member for his question.

- (1)-(3) For the first time in the history of Western Australia this Liberal-National government has embarked on significant reform in the local government sector. I am very encouraged by the feedback I have had from local government. I am very confident that by 30 September this year all 139 councils will have submitted their reform submissions to me. We have seen the reports from councils that have agreed to amalgamate. I am very confident that there are many more submissions from councils to come. A reform agenda has been embarked on in this state.

Mr E.S. Ripper: Answer the question.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: As part of the reform, I have asked local governments to indicate to me what they consider to be the cost of reform to them. I anticipate that information will come to me with their reform submissions. I have no doubt that significant gains will be made in the reform of local government in this state.

Mr E.S. Ripper: Answer the question.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: I am answering the question.

Several members interjected.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: For the first time, this Liberal-National government has had the intestinal fortitude to try to reform the local government sector. What did members opposite do in eight years?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: I say to the member for Collie-Preston, who is waving around that bit of paper, the train left Perth railway station many, many months ago and it is about 100 metres out of Sydney station. Do members know what? Some people are still standing on the platform wondering where people are and what the hell is going on. We have embarked on the reform agenda. I have asked local governments to indicate the cost of reform, and I will present a report to cabinet. I have already written to the Treasurer identifying the fact that there will be some costs associated with reform and that is what will happen.