

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT — ROLE EXPANSION**

*Statement by Member for Jandakot*

**MR J.M. FRANCIS (Jandakot)** [12.52 pm]: I want to place on record my concern about the growing trend of local governments expanding their role beyond what the community expects their core role to be. Much of this expansion is nothing more than a waste of ratepayers' money, or a power grab by local councils that appear to be growing appetites beyond what is expected by ratepayers. I am that told the City of Cockburn recently handed over \$1 000 to a tarot card readers' group—\$1 000 of ratepayers' money. Last year, the City of Melville wasted more than \$10 000 of ratepayers' money travelling to Europe to collect some award for the world's most liveable cities. I refuse to believe that a single cent was invested or a single person moved to Melville due to this investment. At the same time, the city increased rates by 10.4 per cent and lost \$23 million in consolidated debt obligations. The City of Stirling employs 10 people in its planning department, and eight people in its public relations department. It spends countless thousands of dollars on advertising on metropolitan radio to promote its own local newsletter! Another regional council is advertising a \$137 000-a-year job for a manager of culture, arts and heritage—equivalent to the rates of 100 households. Many of the CEOs of these councils are earning more money than the Premier of Western Australia. In all these and hundreds more examples, it is clear that if local governments can waste money like this, they are either spending too little on their core services and infrastructure, or charging too much for rates. It is about time that some these councils pulled their heads in and got back to what their core jobs are—essential services and value for money for the ratepayers.