

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMALGAMATIONS — COMMENTS BY MINISTER FOR LOCAL
GOVERNMENT AND PREMIER

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

I refer to the Premier's widely reported claim at the recent Liberal Party state conference that the minister never actually said he would force amalgamations of councils.

- (1) Was the Premier suggesting that the 40 Western Australian Local Government Association members at the 5 February meeting in Exmouth and journalists from both *The West Australian* and *The Australian* newspapers are lying about what the minister said to them?
- (2) Was the Premier forced to reshape the truth in order to dig the minister out of the very deep hole he is in?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI replied:

- (1)-(2) May I say again that I am totally committed to the voluntary amalgamation and voluntary processes for local councils. The Premier made it very clear that it is a voluntary process.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members on both sides of the house, I think we are all interested in the answer to this question and I am sure that all of our constituents are talking to us about it. I would like to hear the minister's answer.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: We have made it very clear —

Mr P.B. Watson interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Albany, I spoke to you earlier. I call you formally to order for the first time.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: We made it very clear —

Ms M.M. Quirk interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, member for Girrawheen!

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: I invited local governments to participate in a voluntary process of reform of local government in this state. The Premier has made it very clear that this government's policy is that it is a voluntary reform of local government.

Mr E.S. Ripper interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, Leader of the Opposition!

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: The whole industry has moved on. Local governments are working towards this process. I have had informal and formal advice from the industry. A number of local governments are actively working and participating in this process right now. We are getting on with the job.

Mr M.P. Whitely interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, member for Bassendean!

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: Local government has moved on. It is a totally voluntary process.