WESTERN SUBURBS COUNCILS — MEETING WITH PREMIER

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

I refer to recent media reports about a secret meeting of councillors and chief executive officers from the Peppermint Grove, Mosman Park, Cottesloe and Claremont councils at which the Premier —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr P. PAPALIA: — offered access to lucrative parcels of land in Cottesloe and the Sunset hospital site in return for these councils agreeing to amalgamate. The Premier also offered to pay all costs associated with the transition, new council offices and staff redundancies.

(1)   Was the minister aware that the Premier was brokering a secret deal with the "Monaco" of Western Australia and other western suburb councils in his own electorate, and does he endorse the Premier's actions?

(2)   Has the Premier met with any other councils to broker such deals, and if so, where and when?

(3)   What other parcels of public land are being offered to councils across the state to entice them to amalgamate?

(4)   How many workers will lose their jobs if these western suburbs councils take the Premier's bait?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI replied:

(1)–(4) Sometimes I feel for the member for Warnbro! If it was a secret, he would not know about it. The Premier is entitled to meet with anyone he wants. Any local government can meet to look at the reform process, and I am encouraging them to do that. I hope they continue to do it. I am not aware of any of those details about land being offered to councils or whatever. I do not know about such a meeting because it was a secret, and I was not there.

With regard to the land, the answer is: I do not know. I am not aware of anyone else offering any parcels of land as part of the reform process. I am offering some financial incentives and cost recovery, if we like, for the reform process. There is no basis for claiming that people will lose jobs if local governments amalgamate, because I know some that are looking at increasing staff numbers. I think I have answered the member's questions.