

CITY OF MELVILLE — INQUIRY

**933. Hon SIMON O'BRIEN to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Local Government:**

I refer to my question about the inquiry into the City of Melville, the first part of which was answered, and I now re-ask the other parts in these terms.

- (1) Is it the intention that this inquiry will be conducted without the council or anybody else knowing the identity of the investigator; and, if not, who is the investigator and what is their level of experience in these matters?
- (2) Accepting for the moment that the reported 300 complaints about the City of Melville received since 2014 were dealt with in accordance with departmental procedures, which is not what I asked, I now ask —
  - (a) What steps were taken to deal with these complaints? For example, is there a primary assessment process to weed out vexatious or frivolous complaints; is the complainant contacted for more information; and is the local government asked to comment?
  - (b) Were the complaints, being mostly from an individual or a small number of individuals, each investigated or were they mostly lumped together as possibly vexatious or frivolous and not thoroughly examined?

**Hon SUE ELLERY replied:**

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

- (1) No. As previously answered, a senior investigator within the governance branch of the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries is undertaking the inquiry into the City of Melville. The officer is suitably qualified and experienced to undertake investigations of this nature. The officer is in contact with, and known to, the City of Melville and other relevant parties.
- (2)
  - (a) The complaints are assessed by a senior officer from the department to determine jurisdiction, complexity and veracity of the allegations made. There is an acknowledgement process and, when necessary, complainants and the local government will be contacted to supply additional information or evidence.
  - (b) No. I understand that there is commentary that the 300 complaints cited by the department are from two or three vexatious complainants. This is not the case. For example, the Minister for Local Government; Heritage; Culture and the Arts has received approximately 250 pieces of correspondence from at least 100 individual people either raising concerns or complaining about the City of Melville.