

POLICE OPERATIONS — BROOME PROTESTERS

437. Mr J.J.M. BOWLER to the Minister for Police:

My one and only question will be to the Minister for Police.

Can the minister advise the house on the outcome of police operations in Broome to overcome the behaviour of protesters, such as we saw in the house on Tuesday, who are opposing the establishment of the Indigenous job-creating Browse LNG precinct?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY replied:

I thank the member for the question. Before I answer the question, I acknowledge the staff and students from Dwellingup Primary School who are here from the member for Murray-Wellington's electorate.

This government has made no secret of the fact that we believe the establishment of the Browse LNG precinct is a priority for the state. It is a priority because the project will benefit the Kimberley economy and the Kimberley traditional owners. It does have the support of the majority of the traditional owners in the Kimberley. Clearly the project is not supported by everybody. While I support the democratic right of people to object and to protest, I do not support those objections being expressed through illegal activities and through those protesters impeding people going about their lawful business. Yesterday there was a prime example of the irresponsible behaviour of anti-development protesters. Their actions have placed considerable pressure on the police resources in the Kimberley region. To go through what occurred yesterday, the police provided an escort to a Woodside convoy based on safety concerns surrounding vehicle movements to their worksite near James Price Point. The protesters locked themselves together, lying across the road.

Ms M.M. Quirk interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Girrawheen!

Ms M.M. Quirk interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Girrawheen, you are not asking a question and you are not answering a question. I formally call you to order for the first time today.

Point of Order

Mr T.G. STEPHENS: I got the impression from the interjection of the member on our side of the house that this is a sub judice matter and should not be discussed and dealt with in this way by the minister in her answer. These are matters that are apparently before the courts and the minister is reflecting on people who apparently have been charged in this circumstance.

The SPEAKER: I take your advice; I am cognisant of what you say. If there are circumstances that I believe put the particular case in front of this place in danger, I will act.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Protesters are engaging in quite unique activities at these sites. They are lying across the road and blocking access by vehicles. One of the strategies they employ, for the information of members, is that they fill up 44-gallon drums —

Mr T.G. Stephens: Is this the case that is before the courts? Are there any charges laid? Aren't these people charged? The Speaker is about to put you down, I am sure.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Member, I am well acquainted with standing order 91 —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: I will give the Minister for Police the opportunity to continue with her answer. Member for Girrawheen, I formally call you to order for the second time today. The Minister for Police is the only person I want to hear from. If I believe there is something that the Minister for Police is doing in this place that she should not be doing, I will certainly let her know; you can rest assured.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: If I could table this picture for the remainder of today's sitting —

Mr T.G. Stephens: Where did you get it from?

The SPEAKER: Member for Pilbara, I formally call you to order for the first time today. Member for North West, I do not need your assistance; I formally call you to order for the first time today. Yes, you can table that document, Minister for Police.

[See paper 5127.]

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY — Thursday, 16 August 2012]

p5174b-5175a

Mr John Bowler; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Tom Stephens; Speaker

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: The reason for my pointing out this ridiculous strategy is to acquaint members of the house with what the protesters are doing with these lock-on devices. Basically, they are impeding access to emergency vehicles, and to the Woodside convoy that is going about its business trying to get equipment through to its site. In taking these actions, these protesters —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Girrawheen, I formally call you to order for the third time today.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: In taking these actions, the protesters are putting at risk members of their own contingent who are further up the road engaging in other illegal activity. While the police resources are deployed with those who have locked themselves onto these devices, the protesters further up the road have strung ropes across the road and are using a variety of different techniques that are putting them physically at risk. Should emergency vehicles need to access those people because they have managed to injure themselves, they could not get through because the lock-on devices impede their access. They are impeding access to the Woodside convoy, and also access to tourist activities, such as Willie Creek Pearls. These irresponsible actions have required the deployment of 25 police officers and four mounted police, as well as resources. If members care to acquaint themselves with the very detailed answer to question on notice 8123 —

Ms M.M. Quirk interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Girrawheen!

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: — in which I have provided a summary detailing the line-by-line item cost of the deployment of police resources in May, earlier this year, they will see that the cost to the taxpayers as a result of this irresponsible activity is already to the tune of \$910 000. I would like to commend Superintendent Mick Sutherland and his team in the Kimberley. Superintendent Mick Sutherland has done a tremendous job in engaging professionally in going about his duty to try to allow the Woodside convoy to get through and conduct its lawful activity. Neither the state government nor WA Police will tolerate illegal activity at this site, and any alleged activity on the part of protesters will be prosecuted. The government will do whatever is necessary to prevent further impediment to the Woodside convoy going about the establishment of the Woodside LNG precinct.