

MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT — ELECTORATE STAFF — UNION SOLICITATION

14. Hon LIZ BEHJAT to the Leader of the House representing the Premier:

It has been reported by a number of offices of members of Parliament, mine included, that since the date of the election on 11 March this year, a number of newly appointed staff members of MPs have been contacted in person by a representative of the Community and Public Sector Union–Civil Service Association of WA, encouraging them to join the union. I am reliably informed that approaches such as this from unions or those affiliated with unions were not made during the eight years of the previous government.

- (1) Who authorised officers of the CPSU to make telephone calls to newly appointed staff in MPs' offices to recruit those staff as members of the union?
- (2) Who provided the CPSU with the names, contact details and starting dates of the newly appointed staff members?
- (3) Does the Premier consider these approaches to be a breach of privacy laws by providing personal details of an employee to a third party without that employee's express permission?
- (4) Will the Premier take all necessary steps to ensure that an employee's private details are not passed to a third party in the future without that employee's express permission?

The PRESIDENT: Members, I will let the Leader of the House answer, but we all know that electorate officers are technically employed by the Presiding Officers, who delegate that role to the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. In terms of the administration, that question is relevant.

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question. It is indeed a good one and I am delighted to provide the answer.

- (1)–(4) The member would need to direct that question to either the CPSU or the Presiding Officers of the houses, who employ electorate office staff. In the meantime, I direct the honourable member to the public sector award 1992, specifically clause 36(5)(e), which states that union representatives will be provided with “notification of the commencement of new officers, and as part of their induction, time to discuss the benefits of union membership with them.” This clause was put in place throughout the previous Barnett and Carpenter governments.