

ROAD SAFETY COMMISSIONER — KIM PAPALIA

244. Mrs L.M. HARVEY to the Premier:

Does the Premier still have confidence in his Minister for Police; Road Safety given that she said that she had no idea that her director general wanted to leave the agency and no idea that he was seeking a Supreme Court injunction against the release of papers to the inquiry?

Mr M. McGowan: I am sorry; I missed the second half of the question. I could not hear the second half of the member's question.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: The minister said that she had no idea that he was seeking a Supreme Court injunction against the release of papers to the inquiry.

Point of Order

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: I have been misrepresented. I said that I had not been advised by him on both of those instances, which is a lot different from saying that I had no idea.

The SPEAKER: That is not a point of order.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

I think the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has confirmed the allegation made against her by the Minister for Tourism—that is, that she is always negative.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr M. McGOWAN: I have full confidence in the Minister for Police; Road Safety. There is the answer to that part of the member's question. In relation to the remainder of the question on the Supreme Court injunction issue, I find it highly unusual that a public servant would ignore the State Solicitor's advice and seek an injunction on an independent inquiry to prevent government information being released to it. I find it unusual that a letter would be written to the Leader of the Opposition. The minister would not be advised, the Premier would not be advised, the director general of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet would not be advised, but the Leader of the Opposition would.

Mr S.K. L'Estrange: But you knew three weeks ago and didn't do anything.

Mr M. McGOWAN: The member has not listened to the arguments and the issues. I will explain that, too; if the member likes.

Mr P.A. Katsambanis interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Hillarys, I call you to order for the third time.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I find all of that highly irregular and highly unusual. I find the fact that the Leader of the Opposition wrote back to the Road Safety Commissioner stating that he did not want to see government documents released to be a blemish against his name. The fact is that he would not have government documents released to an independent inquiry about a decision that did not go to cabinet and that released a large amount of money from the road trauma trust account for a sponsorship deal that obviously has no benefit for road safety. I think, on all of that, the Leader of the Opposition has questions to answer.

In relation to the point made by the pretender over here, the member for Churchlands, about what I found out and what happened on 7 and 8 June, the Road Safety Commissioner, Mr Kim Papalia, indicated to the steering committee on machinery of government that he did not contemplate an ongoing role for himself in the Road Safety Commission. On 13 and 14 June, he indicated to the Public Sector Commission executive director that he was not interested in working there. On 19 and 20 June, he indicated that he had no intention of being there. The allegation as I understand it—I understand it this way because it is the way the member said it—that somehow on Thursday or Friday of last week, I and the acting director general decided to get rid of him holds no weight, because he indicated that he did not want to remain in the agency weeks and weeks ago. The reason he indicated that is that he does not support the reforms we are putting in place. We are going to make reforms to the public sector that need to happen. The Liberals and Nationals are obviously of the view that they do not support reform. That is a big difference between us and the opposition. We want effective, robust government. Opposition members want it to be chaotic and useless, like it was when they were in office.