

PERTH MAJOR SPORTS STADIUM — PREMIER'S COMMENTS

Statement

HON KATE DOUST (South Metropolitan — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [10.06 pm]: I had not planned on rising to speak until the Leader of the House got up and sought to correct the words of the Premier in the other chamber yesterday, and also the comments passed by Hon Troy Buswell. I want to clear up this matter so that people understand the issue. When I found out that both the Premier and Hon Troy Buswell had made comments—I must say Hon Troy Buswell's comments were factually incorrect; he has difficulty dealing with integrity and fact—I trawled back through all the media I had and I listened to all the audio.

Withdrawal of Remark

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Reflections on members of another place and saying that they have difficulty with integrity in fact, I think was the expression —

The PRESIDENT: Yes, the member on her feet would be aware of reflections on members of another place. The honourable member may wish to withdraw those terms.

Hon KATE DOUST: Thank you, Mr President. If that has offended the colleagues on the other side, I will withdraw those terms, but I will say that on this occasion Hon Troy Buswell was factually incorrect in the comments he made about me yesterday.

Hon Simon O'Brien: That is fine. That is not to say that we are offended. The thing that is offended is parliamentary standards.

Hon KATE DOUST: With all due respect, having had that discussion elsewhere —

The PRESIDENT: Order! I think that matter has been dealt with. Let us move on.

Hon KATE DOUST: That is absolutely right; thank you, Mr President. I am happy to have that debate another time.

Statement Resumed

Hon KATE DOUST: I trawled through all the media and listened to all the audio and I could not find one occasion when I personally had talked about scrapping or axing anything. What I had talked about was my concern about the impact upon the consumer that this \$8.5 billion bid by Western Power would bring. Whilst I acknowledge that it is a very important bid, that it is indeed essential to make sure that energy infrastructure is upgraded and supported into the future and that the bid offers a number of challenges for this government to find those dollars, in every interview I provided I talked about the need for government to prioritise what was important to it. In my view—I am sure the Minister for Energy would agree—ensuring that there is appropriate energy infrastructure throughout our state to ensure energy security into the future should be a top priority of government.

There was an article in WAtoday in which the headline referred to “axing” the stadium. I phoned the WAtoday office and tried to speak to the journalist. I said that those statements were incorrect and I had never said those things and I asked for them to correct their headline and the comments in their article. I said to them that at no stage in my press release or in any of my media had I made those types of comments. The journalist I spoke to said she would take it up with her producer and see whether they could make the correction. They did not do that. I do not know whether that has led to both the Premier and Minister Buswell making their comments, but I just felt that I needed to stand and correct them. In fact, if members go back and have a look at the transcript of the discussion I had with Paul Murray, I think on 16 September, I actually said that it is not about cutting back on things like the stadium. In fact, I think I might just go back and find that direct quote so that I am quite clear. I said, “It's not about saying you can't have a stadium; it's about saying get your priorities in order.” Mr President, that is what I kept saying, because this government does need to get its priorities in order, and it cannot go around having a whole range of other things and then saying, “Where are we going to find this money from?” All that will do is place a burden on the taxpayer and the consumer. So, my focus was about getting priorities in order. Not once did I say that the government should delete any of those projects; it is about getting priorities in order. The government needs to work at how it can do that.

I know this is a very important issue, because my question to the minister yesterday was about the number of power poles that had failed and the number of power poles that had to be replaced, and he provided that information. I asked whether or not Western Power had complied with the EnergySafety audit dated 29 September, and he said that it had met virtually all of EnergySafety's requirements, except for one aspect. Western Power has a substantial job ahead of it, and it would be interesting to find out exactly how extensive the work is going to be to deal with both upgrading and maintaining all power poles throughout this state. Maybe we can ask further questions about this as we go through the next couple of months, because I will be interested in

those responses. If the government is legitimate about wanting to ensure—this being probably the single biggest issue in our state—that we have a proper plan for energy and an appropriate security of energy supply into the future, I would have thought that making sure that the government can provide the necessary funding for this infrastructure for Western Power would have been the top priority issue over and above all others. At the end of the day, if the government cannot deliver on its energy infrastructure and supply the energy required by business and residential users, it will have a whole range of flow-on problems. If the costs then flow back to the householder, it will mean that they tighten their belts. I think I did actually make the comment that unless the priorities are right and there is an attempt to reduce householder costs, a lot of people are not going to be able to afford to go to the football anyway—a lot of them are not going to be able to do a whole range of the other things that we would like people to be able to do to enjoy their lives. But at no point can I actually recall ever saying personally “axe” or “scrap”. The journalists may have used those words themselves, but they are not words I have used.

I have found it quite offensive that Minister Buswell goes into the chamber and throws these words around as though there were truth or fact, when they were not. I just get a little bit tired of this government getting away with making these blasé statements or just throwing ideas out into the wind and not being challenged on them.

All I wanted to do was get up and put on the record the things I actually said, and correct the misinformation that was put forward in the other place yesterday.

House adjourned at 10.13 pm
