

PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY OF THE CABINET — APPOINTMENT

**34. Hon MICHAEL MISCHIN to the Leader of the House representing the Premier:**

The first Commission on Government report of August 1995 advised on processes to ensure that, among other things, the abuses of the era of the Burke Labor government would not recur. I refer to recommendation 3.5.3.5, which urged the abolition of the position of Parliamentary Secretary to the Cabinet and its replacement with a Cabinet Secretary who “should be a senior level public servant appointed on the basis of merit with extensive experience in government, parliamentary and cabinet matters”.

- (1) Why has the McGowan government reverted to a practice that was criticised by not only the commission established to reduce the prospect of abuses by the executive, but also former Labor Premier, Hon Dr Geoff Gallop?
- (2) Was it so that the Premier could have in his gift a position that carried an increased salary?
- (3) What merit criteria did Ms Amber-Jade Sanderson, MLA, meet to warrant appointment and what is her extensive experience that has given her detailed knowledge of the operations of Parliament, government and cabinet?
- (4) What functions does she perform for the additional \$42 260 above the salary of a parliamentary secretary?
- (5) Given that she is the sort of political appointment the Commission on Government specifically deplored and recommended against, what confidence can the public have that political imperatives and loyalties will not influence the manner in which she performs her functions?

**Hon SUE ELLERY replied:**

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

- (1)–(5) The position of Parliamentary Secretary of the Cabinet is an important part of the cabinet, as it was in the Court Liberal government. The Parliamentary Secretary of the Cabinet’s role includes working with the Premier and ministers to coordinate cabinet submissions, ensure government priorities are progressing through cabinet and working with the cabinet to ensure government election commitments are being delivered as they were promised to the people of Western Australia. The position is also in place to avoid the dysfunction that characterised the former Liberal–National government. The position of an independent note taker has been maintained.

**The PRESIDENT:** Hon Donna Faragher.

Several members interjected.

**The PRESIDENT:** Order! I called Hon Donna Faragher. There are three other deep voices that do not sound like Hon Donna Faragher’s.