

LOCAL GOVERNMENT STRATEGIC PLANS

139. Mr P. PAPALIA to the Minister for Local Government:

On 15 October the minister announced a joint state-local government steering committee to implement recommendations made in the Western Australian Local Government Association's Systemic Sustainability Study. A key recommendation of the study was that the Local Government Act 1995 be amended to require local governments to prepare and publish five-year strategic plans linked directly to asset management and financial plans.

- (1) Does the minister agree with this recommendation?
- (2) Is he preparing draft changes to the legislation?
- (3) In the interim, will such strategic plans be a prerequisite for regional local governments seeking grants from the \$70 million country local government fund and other grant schemes, such as the even larger regional infrastructure funding program?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI replied:

I thank the member for his question.

- (1)-(3) It is my absolute intention to be very proactive in ensuring the long-term sustainability of local government. I believe that the majority of local government members are heading down that path. There is a real appetite for change. One of my initiatives was to establish a joint steering committee on sustainability. I have on that committee some very good people from my department, Treasury, the Department for Planning and Infrastructure, WALGA, and Local Government Managers Australia. I have asked those people to consider a range of issues. They met on 7 November. They will report to me by 8 December on a strategy forward. They will have 12 months to report back to me. They will use the SSS report as the basis for their work, but they will look at other areas in the long-term sustainability of local government.

The Minister for Regional Development will announce very soon the details of the royalties for regions program. All the parameters will be outlined in that announcement. As I have said, I am very committed to working closely with local government for long-term sustainability, and by that I mean the long-term sustainability of governance and financial capacity. Those are some of the issues that I have asked the steering committee to report to me on.