



Procedure and Privileges Committee

Report on a Person Adversely Referred to in the Legislative Assembly — Mr Glenn Dewhurst

**Report No. 6
August 2018**

**Legislative Assembly
Parliament of Western Australia**

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Mr Glenn Dewhurst*

Report No. 6

Presented by

Ms Lisa Baker MLA

Deputy Speaker of the Legislative Assembly

Laid on the Table of the Legislative Assembly on 23 August 2018

Report

In my capacity as Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, I referred to the Procedure and Privileges Committee a submission from Mr Glenn Dewhurst seeking to use Standing Order 114 to respond to statements made in the Legislative Assembly on Thursday 14 June 2018 by the Member for Southern River, Mr Terry Healy MLA.

The Committee has agreed to recommend the incorporation in *Hansard* of the appended response by Mr Glenn Dewhurst.

In accordance with Standing Order 114, the Committee has not considered or judged the truth of any statements made in the Legislative Assembly or in the submission.

Recommendation

The Committee recommends —

That a response by Mr Glenn Dewhurst, in the terms specified in the Appendix to this Report, be incorporated in *Hansard*.



HON PETER WATSON MLA
CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEE
23 AUGUST 2018

Appendix One

Response by Mr Glenn Dewhurst

Agreed to by Mr Glenn Dewhurst and the Procedure and Privileges
Committee pursuant to Standing Order 114

Response Pursuant to Legislative Assembly Standing Order 114

I wish to notify you that my good name and the reputation of City of Gosnells councillors have been adversely referred to in the Legislative Assembly by Mr Terry Healy MLA, the Member for Southern River, and I therefore seek redress under the provisions of Legislative Assembly Standing Order 114.

The following extracts from *Hansard* (Legislative Assembly – Thursday 14 June 2018), which record Mr Healy’s speech, are the cause of my concern. I write to object to some of Mr Healy’s comments in this speech which are false and misleading and which confirm his poor knowledge of what is occurring within his local government.

Mr Healy’s adverse references, and my responses to them, are as follows:

- 1) *“A travel register is also very important. I very much dislike the fact that council members can claim \$6 000 in international and interstate travel. I think that is a ridiculous amount. It certainly does not serve my City of Gosnells community. We now publicly list any interstate or international travel and the fuel that councillors claim. After we made those things public, although they were still declared each week, their use dropped drastically. Again, I am not saying that anything dodgy was happening, but ratepayers’ money was used less on things that I think were a little bit frivolous.”***

Response:

This comment is not correct. There was no drop in travel. I am sure the majority of residents within the City would like a well-educated and informed Council. The use of interstate travel has not decreased as described by Mr Healy. The interconnectivity and sharing of knowledge between Gosnells councillors and other local, state and federal government representatives and industry is paramount to become truly a part of the global community. To remain isolated and not integrate or discuss best practice is a very narrow look at the world.

- 2) *“I will briefly mention some media articles. I would like to quote the Comment News of 16 February 2016. I warn members that this article says some nice things about me, but I will read it anyway! It is headed, ‘Healy’s proposal for online gift register popular with big gallery’. It states —***

Councillor Terry Healy proposed that the City’s chief executive make Gosnells’ elected member and employee gift register publicly accessible in electronic form on the website.

...

The almost full gallery exploded into applause following Mr Healy's statement and when the councillors voted for the motion to pass."

Response:

This is not what occurred. I was at this meeting and there were the usual four to five people in the gallery and one person applauded. I have the recording to confirm this version of events. Further to this, the article was written in response to a media release which Mr Healy released to the media. From my recollection there were no media present that evening; it was at a time when local media stopped coming to our meetings.

- 3) "I have mentioned that we should broadcast council meetings. Another level of this comes partly into the broader aspect of the review that the minister is undertaking, but we should have direct election of mayors and ensure that the people get to have a say in that. I quote the minister from my local paper, the Comment News, of 20 March 2018 —**

Drawing mayors out of a hat, social media 'running riot' and a lack of councillor training are just a few of the quirks and issues in the spotlight at local councils across Perth.

...

Some councils allow constituents to directly elect the mayor, while others have their councillors choose; a deadlocked vote in Gosnells last year resulted in the mayor being drawn out of a hat.

That is what we did in the City of Gosnells. There was a three-way draw and the mayor —

Mr D.A. Templeman: What sort of a hat did they use?

Mr T.J. HEALY: I was not there, minister.

In the article, the minister continues —

'I think there's a better way and I think most people in the sector would say it's a bit embarrassing.

'Let's find a way that is absolutely fair and equitable.'"

Response:

This comment is disappointing and reflects badly on the City of Gosnells. Mr Healy should be excited there was more than one person wanting to lead the city. In a time of deadlock, the State Government's legislation states that the returning officer must draw lots. This is what he did. This is the tool we have to use. Three people putting their hands up to lead is surely better than one.

- 4) *"I would like to read the article 'Mayor's medal mistake' from today's Gosnells Examiner. It states —*

Confusion surrounding the City of Gosnells mayor's medals was finally cleared up at council this week after more than a month of questioning

...

By the way, not that councils are too partisan, but a Liberal Party member is mayor at the moment. The article continues —

At Tuesday night's council meeting when Councillor Olwen Searle asked the mayor to reply in words of one syllable 'yes' or 'no' whether he had the Australian Police Medal, Mr Dewhurst said he did not ...

'I always thought I had the Australian Police Medal ...'

The article states that the mayor thought —

... that he had the Australian Police Medal, issued by the Western Australia Police Department in 2004, as well as a further three medals, one for Police Bravery, a National Service Medal and a medal for Diligent and Ethical Service.

Again, this is not transparent. This is not a good look."

Response:

Making comment about people from media articles is simply wrong. In the last four negative articles relating to myself, I noted with interest that councillors have been approached for comment, but not once was I given the opportunity to respond to any allegation. There is no balance in reporting. The matter went on for four weeks because we have a meeting once every two weeks. I had never purported to have an Australian Police Medal. However, what Mr Healy should be celebrating is that I hold the Cross for Bravery, one of 29 from 16,000 officers who have received this. To bring discredit upon myself, a decorated officer, is appalling.

- 5) *"I found it interesting that there were some councillors—this got a gasp from the public gallery—who publicly said that this was too much information for the public and that councillors should not have to disclose this sort of information."*

Response:

Mr Healy is again incorrect. There were no gasps from the four to five people in the public gallery; nothing is heard on the recording.

- 6) *“By the way, not that councils are too partisan, but a Liberal Party member is mayor at the moment.”***

Response:

I am not a Liberal Party member, which was then clarified by Mr Healy in *Hansard* on Wednesday 20 June 2018. In this clarification, he indicated that I am a Liberal supporter. I am not a Liberal supporter and Mr Healy knows that. I am apolitical and am very proud to support good and effective policy, no matter who raises it. Mr Healy knows I voted Labor in the last election as I told him this at the time

- 7) *“An article in the Examiner from 10 May 2018 on Councillor Liz Storer’s resignation from the council states —***

Ms Storer handed in her resignation on April 24 ...

She told The Examiner her resignation was for personal reasons ...”

Response:

Former Councillor Storer was afforded an opportunity to move to Canberra for personal reasons. If I were in her shoes, I would have taken the option. To reflect this as anything else than what it actually was, is again simply wrong.

- 8) *“It is really important that finally, for the first time, we have a better level of gender equity on the City of Gosnells council. I certainly ask for more female candidates to stand for council. The City of Gosnells can do better, and I will always seek for that to occur. Senior staff as well—we have so few female CEOs and directors, and I encourage more. Not everyone will run for council. I always look at the picture of Edith Cowan looking down on us and saying, ‘When will this chamber have more female members of Parliament? When will councils have more female councillors, or at least have a 50–50 balance that reflects the community?’”***

Response:

Following the last election, the City of Gosnells Council contained seven women to five men. Regarding gender equality, Mr Healy states ‘Gosnells could do better’. I query: better at what? Again, the Member’s statement is factually wrong. We take gender

diversity very seriously at the City of Gosnells. This is either an inflammatory comment or Mr Healy not knowing what actually is occurring in the City of Gosnells.

Conclusion

Mr Healy's comments are inflammatory and defamatory to the City of Gosnells Council, others and myself.

I request the opportunity to set the matter straight in a public forum and request that this response be incorporated in *Hansard*.

**Mr Glenn Dewhurst
Mayor, City of Gosnells
August 2018**

Appendix Two

Committee's Functions and Powers

Legislative Assembly Standing Order 284 provides the following functions, powers and terms of reference to the Procedure and Privileges Committee —

Procedure and Privileges Committee

- 284.** (1) A Procedure and Privileges Committee will be appointed at the beginning of each Parliament to —
- (a) examine and report on the procedures of the Assembly; and
 - (b) examine and report on issues of privilege; and
 - (c) wherever necessary, confer with a similar committee of the Council.
- (2) Membership of the committee will consist of the Speaker and four other members as the Assembly appoints.
- (3) Standing Order 278 will apply except that where possible any report of the committee will be presented by the Deputy Speaker.
- (4) When consideration of a report from the committee is set down as an order of the day it will be considered using the consideration in detail procedure.