

REGIONAL SERVICES REFORM PROGRAM

255. Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE to the Minister for Regional Development:

I refer to the regional services reform program set out by the former government under remote Aboriginal communities.

- (1) Will the new government continue the reform program set out by the former government under the same terms of reference?
- (2) If yes to (1), does the minister agree that some communities will have services altered, diminished or removed all together?
- (3) If no to (1), when will the government announce the new terms of reference from the reform program?
- (4) Does the minister agree with the former government's commitment to provide priority funding to just 10 Aboriginal communities and will the rollout of this priority funding program continue unchanged?
- (5) What is the future for the approximately 40 communities with 50 residents or fewer that remain habited year-round, also known as not seasonal communities?

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN replied:

I thank the member for that question.

- (1)–(5) I share the member's concern about the situation of many of these remote Aboriginal communities. As I have said before in this place, many communities heard, without any consultation, that they were being closed down.

Hon Peter Collier interjected.

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: I have gone back and checked. The former Premier made very definitive statements in the press —

Hon Peter Collier: Not me.

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: But Hon Peter Collier was minister at the time. I am sorry; I do apologise —

Hon Peter Collier: You're a disgrace!

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: I gave the member some credit. I did not think that he was going to be a totally ineffectual minister, so I presumed that if his Premier was going off and making a statement —

Hon Peter Collier: Just answer the question.

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: Sorry, you interjected. I presumed that if the former Premier was going off and making a statement that he would have had at least some compatibility with his Minister for Aboriginal Affairs at the time.

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I say to Hon Robin Chapple that although the Regional Services Reform Unit will continue to operate and a number of mechanisms are in place whereby we are looking at service delivery to ensure that government-funded services are efficient, innovative and effective and deliver real outcomes for the community, some services, including those in remote Aboriginal communities, may be changed to deliver better outcomes. We have also committed \$152 million to improve Aboriginal housing and essential services in remote regional communities. No decision has been made to change the service delivery arrangements for these remote Aboriginal communities, but, obviously, this is something that is under review. As the member will be aware, through the machinery of government changes, it is possible that the Regional Services Reform Unit may move to become the responsibility of the Minister for Housing. A body of work will be done to check the policy settings that are currently in place.