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MLA Refutes Union Claims Re Contract Cleaners

Dr Mike Nahan, the Member for Riverton, said the Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Union's mischievous claims that he has stopped a pay rise for contract cleaners are not correct.

The previous Labor Government promised the contract cleaners a \$3 per hour pay rise that was due to commence from 1 October 2008 but because Labor called an early election, the pay rise was put on hold.

"The Liberal/National Government wrote to the union in October 2008 clearly advising that this issue is essentially a private sector industrial relations matter," said Dr Nahan.

"The Government does not support this particular pay rise because it would have the effect of the Government subsidising the wages of private sector employees. I am sure that most local taxpayers would agree that their money should not be used in this manner."

"The LMHU and the employers know that it is their responsibility to negotiate appropriate market rates and conditions of employment for contract cleaners. They should not be playing politics with people's livelihoods."

"The Department of Treasury and Finance has estimated that if Labor's policy had been implemented, it would have added approximately 20%-25% to the cost of Government cleaning contracts."

"In addition, Labor made no specific budget allocation for the proposed policy. It would have had to come out of public sector agencies' existing budgets and the increase would have applied on an ongoing basis."

Dr Nahan said the existing Government policy provides sufficient protection for employees.

"The Government's existing procurement policy requires contractors to provide wages and conditions of employment that reflect the industry standard as expressed in awards and agreements and any code of practice that may apply to a particular industry," said Dr Nahan.

Dr Nahan said the union's decision to drive a trailer around the Electorate of Riverton with a statement on it saying, "Barnett and Nahan Stopped Cleaners' Pay Rise" was incorrect, did not help their cause and was a waste of their member's funds.

"The LHMU should not be using an important issue like this simply to do some early campaigning for Labor. They should be giving their members their full support by negotiating a collective agreement with the private sector to improve the wage rates for contract cleaners," said Dr Nahan.

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