



14 January 2009

MLA Condemns Fiscal Legacy of Labor in Riverton

Dr Mike Nahan, the Member for Riverton, said the previous Labor Government's poor fiscal legacy should be condemned after its own union members have been on the receiving end of a broken Labor promise.

The previous Labor Government promised contract cleaners who are members of the Liquor Hospitality and Miscellaneous Union a \$3 per hour pay rise that was due to commence from 1 October 2008. However, following Labor's loss in the early State election, the new Liberal/National Government reviewed the pay rise and decided not to support it because it would see tax payer's dollars being used to subsidise the wages of private sector employees.

"I can fully understand why contract cleaners would be disappointed but it is the responsibility of the LHMU, which is their union, to negotiate with the private sector to provide them with a fair wage. State Governments should not use tax payer's funds to subsidise private sector wages like these," said Dr Nahan.

"Contract cleaners should be furious with Labor and with their union because they have been duped. Labor's promise was made months before the Budget but Labor did not fund the proposal and the union continues to ignore its obligation to negotiate on behalf of its members with the private sector to improve their wages."

"In addition, Labor's proposal to use Government funds would have added approximately 20%-25% to the cost of Government cleaning contracts and the increase would have applied on an ongoing basis with the funds having to come out of public sector agencies' existing budgets."

Dr Nahan said the LHMU may as well declare itself a branch of the Labor Party following its false campaign within the Electorate of Riverton saying that Dr Nahan has been instrumental in the contract cleaners not getting their pay rise.

"The union knows the onus is on it to negotiate a pay rise with the private sector but it continues to tell its members that it is a Government responsibility. They are running a political campaign in a marginal seat four years out from a State election despite the fact that Labor misled them and had no money for the policy."

"I urge the union to act more like a union and less like a political party. They should stop playing party politics with their member's livelihoods and get on with their key role of negotiating a collective agreement with the private sector to improve the wage rates for contract cleaners," said Dr Nahan.

Media Contact: Mike Nahan 9457 1282 or 0412 911 969