



18 August 2011

Decision Time for Canning Re Willetton Child Care Centre

Dr Mike Nahan, the Member for Riverton called on the City of Canning to stop procrastinating and to sign the lease on the Willetton Child Care Centre.

"I have raised this issue as a Grievance in Parliament because it is totally unacceptable that a local family child care centre that has been providing much-needed community services for more than 20 years could be put in a situation like this," said Dr Nahan.

"The centre's volunteer committee under Lindsay Holland, its President, have done everything right. They have worked particularly hard over the last two years to turn the centre around and get it back on an even financial keel."

"They have organised for the provision of a new roof, air-conditioning, repainting of the building and an electrical upgrade. Dated equipment has been replaced, good governance policies are being followed and they have secured a \$132,000 Lotterywest grant to upgrade their kitchen and wet areas."

"These achievements are significant and it is disappointing that the council is using its asset facilities audit as an excuse for not signing the lease to allow the kitchen and wet area upgrade to be done. They seem to be exploiting the fact that the Department of Communities failed to renew the lease three years ago when it expired."

Dr Nahan said he was aware that the land the centre stands on is vested with the City of Canning but the council has made little or no contribution to the Willetton Child Care Centre over the last 20-odd years.

"And yet the council is well aware that the State Government has spent more than \$200,000 on the facility in the last two years. The State Government also has another \$50,000 earmarked for providing a safe kitchen on top of the \$132,000 Lotterywest grant that the group has already secured," said Dr Nahan.

"What is rapidly coming to light is that it is not the council's asset facilities audit that is the problem, it is the council's desire to take over this thriving community asset and how best to do that that has become the stumbling block."

"While this lease stalemate remains, the 90 or so families who use the centre continue to have no sense of permanency over the centre or its future. I believe they deserve better."

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