

PUBLIC SECTOR JOBS — REGIONAL SERVICES

78. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Premier:

On a week when the Community and Public Sector Union–Civil Service Association of WA is holding rolling meetings about the government’s broken promises on wages policy, I refer to the Premier’s plan to slash jobs in the public sector and the disproportionate impact this will have on regional service delivery.

- (1) What percentage of jobs will be lost in regional WA compared with the metropolitan area?
- (2) Which departments will lose their regional presence?
- (3) Where will those cuts be made?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

- (1)–(3) Can I congratulate the Leader of the National Party on changing themes! It is true that we made some announcements in respect to the amalgamation of government agencies a number of weeks ago, and I think they were well overdue. Most people across Western Australia understand that some rationality in the structure of government in this state will result in better service delivery both in the city and in the regions. In the lead-up to the election we announced that there would be a 20 per cent cut to the senior executive service, which grew in excess of 40 per cent over the last eight years. That is something we are currently working through. This is about making government stronger, about making our agencies stronger and about creating greater collaboration between agencies, and that will benefit people in the regions as well as those in the city.

One thing that I always find inexplicable when I visit regional communities, as I regularly do, is that when walking down the street of a country town, one will find a multitude of government offices in the same street in the same town. I thought there would have been greater opportunities—I thought all members would support the opportunities—for government agencies to work together in regional communities. A much-talked-about example of not just government agencies but also non-government organisations has been the community of Roebourne. Walking down the street in Roebourne one can see one agency next to the other next to the other. Clearly there is some scope for rationalisation there, better service delivery and savings that we can put into service delivery across the regions.