

REMOTE ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES — FEDERAL BUDGET

276. Ms J. FARRER to the Minister for Housing:

Can the minister advise the house whether commonwealth funding for Western Australia's remote Indigenous communities was cut in yesterday's federal budget as my community had feared; and, if yes, what will be the impact of this funding cut?

Mr P.C. TINLEY replied:

I thank the member for the question. It is my sad duty to report to the house that in spite of all the goings on in the state of Western Australia, there was a federal budget last night, as some people might have noticed and when members got into the detail of that budget, they would have seen at the appropriate line item for remote and Indigenous housing, zero dollars were allocated for the state of Western Australia—zero dollars. Despite the toing and froing and the hard work of officials in my agency and the commonwealth agency, the determined effort of the Premier at the Council of Australian Governments and the determined effort of the Treasurer; Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, we have a significant problem in commonwealth–state relations. Last night, the commonwealth government voted, via its budget, to dud first nation Australians. There are 14 000 Western Australians who live across 165 communities from here to the South Australian border for whom, we, the people of Western Australia, take the moral and actual responsibility for their wellbeing.

Mr D.T. Redman interjected.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: I will come to you, my friend, in a minute. The reality is —

Mr D.T. Redman interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Warren–Blackwood, it is not your question.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: The reality is that there are 2 650 homes out there in those 165 communities that deserve the sort of service that the Nationals WA keep banging on about us receiving in the metropolitan area and in large regional towns.

Member for Warren–Blackwood, the next time the National Party does anything for the remote communities in Western Australia will be the first time.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr P.C. TINLEY: While I am at it, the Liberal Party has shown nothing but indifference in this matter. I want to put in context what has happened here and the canard of lies that is coming from Canberra about this. We had Senator Cormann here a couple of weeks ago, raining money on the state—\$189 million in his own words to Joondalup Health Campus—which in his own statement he said will take our GST equivalent to 50c in the dollar. I can tell members that last night, \$450 million to \$500 million was taken out of the forward estimates of the public accounts of Western Australia, which takes us back to 44c in the dollar. I want to know what the Leader of the Opposition and the Liberal Party have done about this. I want to know, Leader of the Opposition, the last time you went to a remote community. I want to know when you wrote to the Prime Minister and put him on the hook for the moral responsibility that he has to the people of Western Australia and the first nation people of Western Australia. I would like you to table all of that so that we can see where your true colours are. The indifference of the Liberal Party to first nation Australians is palpable. I draw opposition members' attention to their time in government when they gave up, rolled over and had their belly rubbed for a one-off payment of \$90 million to remove the commonwealth from the provision of municipal services to remote communities. Two thousand people turned up to a rally at Parliament House. The then Premier, the former member for Cottesloe, addressed that rally, and I remind members of what he said. He told the protesters to “put yourselves in my shoes”, and to understand the circumstances that he found himself in. What great hypocrisy! We have a federal Liberal Prime Minister who wants to lord over the idea of refreshing the Closing the Gap strategy. He is wringing his hands about his own remote Indigenous housing review, which found that Western Australia needs an additional 1 300 dwellings over the next 10 years.

Leader of the Opposition and members of the Liberal Party, it is time for you to man up for all Western Australians. It is time for you to take to the plate. I say that very, very genuinely. It is time for you to make your voice heard in Canberra. Get on a plane and get over there and make the case to the federal Liberal members in Western Australia that all Western Australians deserve their full attention.

Dr M.D. Nahan: Get on your bike!

The SPEAKER: And you can get called to order for the first time for comments like that, Leader of the Opposition.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: Leader of the Opposition, I look forward to your contribution to supporting Western Australians and their future needs in this case. You have been found wanting. You have a very, very clear indifference to Western Australians in remote communities. I implore you to take the role seriously and get on with it.