

OIL SUPPLIES AND ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORT FUELS

**585. Mr A.P. O'GORMAN to the Premier:**

Will the Premier please explain to the house the recent findings of the federal Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee's interim report on Australia's future oil supply and alternative transport fuels?

**Mr A.J. CARPENTER replied:**

I thank the member for Joondalup for the question. Energy and the security of energy supply are crucial to all economies, not least to Western Australia's and, incidentally, Australia's. As a state government, we are actively confronting this very important issue. Yesterday, with the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, I opened the international Hydrogen, Fuel Cells and Alternative Transport Energies Conference here in Perth. Everybody knows and - in this chamber, at least - supports the fact that the state government has a policy to reserve some of the gas from Western Australia's abundant natural resources for domestic consumption. To date it seems that, unfortunately, the commonwealth government has failed to demonstrate any understanding whatsoever of the importance of securing energy supplies for the future of the state and the nation. However, there is some hope. Last week the Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee - it is a Senate committee - released its interim report on Australia's future oil supply and alternative transport fuels. The deputy chair of the committee is Senator Bill Heffernan, who is close to the Prime Minister. The report considered issues such as peak oil, Australia's demand for and supply of oil, and the possibilities of alternative transport fuels. The report states -

In the Committee's view it is clear that gas will be the most significant transition fuel option for Australia, and as such a national reserve should be established.

I repeat that the Senate committee reports that a national reserve should be established. As I said, there is some hope. I only hope that Senator Bill Heffernan is able to convince his close friend and colleague the Prime Minister of the correctness of Western Australia's longstanding position on domestic gas, and that we can get some federal support rather than very hostile opposition to this policy that is in the interest of the state and the nation.