

WESTERN POWER — PUBLIC OWNERSHIP

**1107. Ms J.J. SHAW to the Minister for Energy:**

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to keeping Western Power in public hands.

- (1) Can the minister advise the house how the decision to stop the privatisation of Western Power has allowed a greater investment in training for WA workers, as well as supported the government's commitment to delivering a cleaner and more affordable energy supply?
- (2) Can the minister outline to the house why it is only the McGowan Labor government that Western Australians can trust to keep Western Power in public hands?

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON replied:**

Before I answer, on behalf of the member for Bassendean, I want to acknowledge the members of the Ashfield Primary School Parents and Citizens Association who are in the gallery today.

I appreciate the question. It is a great question.

- (1)–(2) I was recently able to inform the house about the standalone power system training that has been engaged by Western Power to support the future skills of Western Australian workers. That is being done in conjunction with the publicly owned TAFE college North Metropolitan TAFE. I can also report that we are delivering 61 extra traineeship opportunities this year through Western Power—19 apprentices compared with 2016, when there were none; five new trainees compared with 2016, when there were none; nine graduate trainees compared with 2016, when there were none; and 26 pre-apprenticeships compared with 2016, when there were also none.

**Ms J.J. Shaw** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Swan Hills!

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** This shows that when we have a state-owned enterprise, we can get it to do things that are in the interests of the whole community. There is a danger for us here in this state, and that is of course the potential for a change of government and the sale of Western Power. I want to quote from budget paper No 1 from 2016. On page 6, it says —

Mr Speaker, I am announcing today that the government proposes the sale of:

- Western Power ...

Who was that?

**Ms J.J. Shaw** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Swan Hills, listen to the answer.

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** When the Leader of the Opposition was Deputy Premier, she supported through the Parliament the budget proposing the sale of Western Power. That was her agenda. In October 2017, the then Deputy Leader of the Opposition went on radio and said this —

The one big promise out there that the Premier could break and solve his issues is to partially sell Western Power.

But that was not the end of it. In February 2018, on ABC radio the then Deputy Leader of the Opposition said —

Sell Western Power ... That is a good solution.

She knows, and we all know, the Liberal Party. It is in its DNA. It cannot help itself. It has to privatise. It has no choice. More recently, the Liberal Party said that it would have a look at that policy closer to the election. In 1996, the Liberal Party —

**Mr V.A. Catania** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for North West Central, you threw a couple of things up there and you got the crowd behind you, but I call you to order for the first time.

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** In 1996, prior to the election, the Liberal Party said that it would not sell Alinta. It said that it had no plans to privatise. What did it do afterwards?

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Members!

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** It sold Alinta and it sold Wanneroo Hospital.

**Mr V.A. Catania:** What about the TAB? Didn't you say the same?

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** No.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for North West Central!

**Mr V.A. Catania:** What about Landgate?

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** We have not sold Landgate.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for North West Central, I call you to order for the second and third time. You were too busy shouting to hear the second call.

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** This is one of the problems of the Liberal Party. It will say anything. The facts are that the Labor Party did not say that it would not sell the TAB. That is just not true. Go back and have a look at what we said.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Members!

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** It is not in my portfolio, but anyone who comes in here and says that, is lying. Let us make it clear: Western Power has only one way to be protected from privatisation and that is the maintenance of a Labor government —

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Members!

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** — because only the Labor government believes in public enterprise. Only the Labor government thinks that the best approach is to keep it in government.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Members, please, I want to hear the answer. I am sure you do too.

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** Whether people live in Albany, Perenjori or Perth, they know that they are going to be better off with Western Power in government hands, and only the Labor Party will not privatise Western Power.

**Mr M.P. Murray:** You're gone!

**The SPEAKER:** No, but you will be in a minute. I will put "Minister for Ageing"!

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** It is the last day; it is a happy day, so we will go in order, even if the member is very slow!