

GOLD ROYALTIES

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

I have a supplementary question. Why is the Premier pursuing a tax on jobs and small miners when the state only retains 40 per cent of what is collected for an improvement as part of the government's overall budget measures of \$3.5 billion to the state's coffers?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

The reason we are doing it is because the previous government wrecked the finances. We would not have to do it but for the former Liberal–National government. Last Thursday I apologised that this has occurred, but I will take members through it again.

Ms M.J. Davies: You know when you apologise, you're then supposed to make amends.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the National Party, I call you to order for the first time.

Mr M. McGOWAN: The previous government left the state with \$42 billion worth of debt. It has declined—through no fault of our own, but the GST system that the Liberal Party signed us up to—by another \$5 billion since then. We are attempting to manage the situation that we have inherited the best way that we can. If, in the previous government's term of office it had not so comprehensively devastated this state's finances, these sorts of things would not have to happen.