

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION APPLICATIONS

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

I have a supplementary question. I note that my question was in relation to freedom of information requests lodged by the Nationals since May last year. Will the Premier uphold his claim that his government will strengthen governance, accountability and transparency across government; will he increase resources to the FOI unit; or, if not, will he apologise for breaking his promise to provide gold standard transparency in government?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

It is hard for me to answer that question considering I do not have my notes any more. The reality is that if members put a lot of frivolous and meaningless FOIs, as I just demonstrated, it puts the public servants under huge pressure. The journalists cannot get theirs answered and members of the public cannot get theirs answered, but the unit is working as hard as —

Ms M.J. Davies interjected.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Please, the member asked me a question and now she is just interjecting incessantly.

Ms M.J. Davies: Well, you're not answering it.

Mr M. McGOWAN: What did you say?

Ms M.J. Davies: You're not answering it.

Mr M. McGOWAN: You did not.

Ms M.J. Davies: I did so.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the National Party!

Mr M. McGOWAN: If you put in a lot of frivolous applications —

Mrs L.M. Harvey: If you don't answer parliamentary questions, we have to FOI.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Mr Speaker, I am trying to answer the question.

The SPEAKER: Member for Scarborough, I call you to order for the first time. You know better than that.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Obviously, if the number of FOIs are doubled, the unit is going to be under pressure. I believe in FOI; I want FOIs to be answered. All I would ask the opposition to do is for there to be a little —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr M. McGOWAN: The member asks for accountability and she will not even let me answer.

Mrs A.K. Hayden interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Darling Range.

Mr M. McGOWAN: All I say to the opposition is that it should do a little bit of coordination. It should make sure it works out the information it actually wants, and not ask huge, broad freedom of information questions that cannot possibly ever be answered, as they never have been in the last 30 years.