

ELECTION PROMISES

136. Mr M. McGOWAN to the Premier:

I refer to the Premier using “sudden and unforeseen structural changes” —

Point of Order

Mr N.W. MORTON: Mr Speaker, I draw your attention to standing order 77. As a member who has already been sat down in this chamber for allegedly delivering a preamble, I draw your attention to the Leader of the Opposition’s preamble.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Have you finished your point of order, member?

Mr N.W. MORTON: Not quite. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Given that I was denied the right to ask my question, I just ask that the same rules apply.

The SPEAKER: Thank you for that point of order. Carry on, Leader of the Opposition.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr M. McGOWAN: I refer to the Premier using “sudden and unforeseen structural changes” as an excuse for breaking a series of key promises, and to the Premier’s claim yesterday that GST receipts in this week’s federal budget was the latest unforeseen structural change.

- (1) Is it not true that in the Premier’s midyear review just prior to the state election, state Treasury forecast that GST receipts for this coming financial year—2013–14—for Western Australia will be \$2.371 billion?
- (2) Is it not also true that the *Pre-election Financial Projections Statement* during the election campaign had GST receipts at \$2.357 billion for Western Australia?
- (3) Is it not also true that the actual GST allocation for Western Australia from Tuesday night’s federal budget was \$2.457 billion—that is, \$100 million more than was forecast just three months ago?
- (4) Given all this, is it not also true that GST receipts are not an unforeseen change but simply another excuse for —

Mr P.T. Miles interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Wanneroo!

Mr M. McGOWAN: I will ask the question again —

- (4) Given all this, is it not also true that GST receipts are not an unforeseen change but simply another excuse for the Premier’s budget mismanagement, just like the Premier’s previous flimsy excuse of making commodity prices a reason for breaking his promises?

Mr C.J. BARNETT replied:

- (1)–(4) I would assert that we have not broken promises and we do not intend to.

Several members interjected.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: We do not intend to.

Ms M.M. Quirk: You are pathological!

The SPEAKER: Member for Girrawheen!

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I am not pathological.

We are in the third week of Parliament in a four-year term.

Mrs M.H. Roberts interjected.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The member for Midland can giggle. We had speeches today about what happened 17 years ago. As an opposition, members opposite need to actually move forward.

We have not broken and we will not break election promises, but we do have to deal with what has been a change in the economic environment, a change that has occurred particularly over the last two to three months, before, during and after the election campaign. There is no doubt that in the mining industry, the heat has gone out of it; it is still strong, but the heat has gone out of it. Investor sentiment has softened. Our job in terms of that

sector is not the current projects but the projects that will come in three years, and making sure that happens—that is the job of government.

With respect to the GST, it is a shameful—shameful—situation that the Gillard government in its budget sets up a scenario in which for the coming financial year, 2013–14, Western Australia will actually get \$400 million less than we got this year. And the Leader of the Opposition defends that by the tone of his question. The Leader of the Opposition does not stand up for Western Australia. Instead of standing up for Western Australia, the Leader of the Opposition, by his question, condones and accepts a \$400 million cut in funding. Given the softening of the minerals industry, and given commodity prices coming off, although production will grow, we face a very uncertain environment in terms of royalty income.

One of the arguments for the GST, apart from the tax rebalancing, is that it would provide a reliable source of income to the states. It has not done that, and, indeed, while the Howard government maintained reliable funding, under the Gillard government this state has faced a scenario of not only declining shares, but absolute cuts in the GST. As the Treasurer pointed out yesterday, how shameful is the Gillard government —

Dr A.D. Buti: interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Armadale, I call you to order for the first time.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: How shameful it is that, as the Treasurer pointed out yesterday, for a state with 10 times the population of the Northern Territory, the Gillard government will give more to the Northern Territory than it will give to Western Australia! How shameful is it that our current level of funding of GST at about \$3 billion could be \$1 billion in three years' time! How shameful is that! The Leader of the Opposition, who will not stand up for this state and will not stand up for Western Australia, comes into this chamber and defends the Gillard government as it rips money out of this state. If this continues, it will impact on public sector jobs, on schools and on health care, yet the Leader of the Opposition comes in here and defends the Gillard government. Shame on you!