

CASHLESS DEBIT CARD TRIAL

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

I refer to the ongoing trial of the cashless debit card in the goldfields.

- (1) Does the government support this trial?
- (2) Does the Premier support the trial being expanded to neighbouring lands communities, such as Warburton and Tjuntjuntjara?
- (3) If yes to (1) and (2), how has the government communicated this support to the federal government, the City of Kalgoorlie–Boulder and other local stakeholders?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

I thank the member for the question..

- (1)–(3) This is obviously a federal issue and a matter for the federal government about what it does. I understand it is a controversial issue and that there are a range of views across the community, including in the Aboriginal community. My view on this is that it is one of those initiatives that, firstly, should have the support of the communities to which it will be applied prior to being implemented, and that should be a commonly held view in those communities so that there is community support and endorsement of any such policy. I have expressed that publicly. If those communities want that and it is implemented, that is a matter for them. Secondly, I think that any such rollout of the card needs to be fully and properly evaluated using appropriate and peer-reviewed research to determine its effectiveness. I would hate to see adverse and unintended consequences out of such a policy initiative. I understand that it will be quite expensive to roll it out—it costs a lot per card—so if taxpayer money is going to be spent in this way, we need to make sure that it works properly. I urge the commonwealth to ensure that each of the communities in which it is being tested, whether it is Ceduna, Kununurra, Wyndham or some of the goldfields—or further afield, perhaps Bundaberg—to not just rely on sentiment but to make sure there is appropriate evaluation of unintended consequences and whether there are any unintended consequences.