

COAL-FIRED POWER STATIONS — CLOSURE

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

I refer to the Premier's announcement to shut the Collie and Muja power stations and news today that Synergy will not renew its contract to purchase energy from Bluewaters power station, placing at risk thousands of jobs in Collie and across the south west.

- (1) Can the Premier confirm that his promise to transition workers extends to all energy workers in Collie and is not limited to employees of just government agencies?
- (2) Will the Premier guarantee there will be no net loss of jobs or population in Collie as a result of this announcement?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

- (1)–(2) I did go to Collie last Tuesday to meet with the affected workforce in the community and various other community groups. I met with hundreds of people about this, a subject about which I was criticised by the state opposition—going down to Collie. It is a bit rich for the state opposition to flee the Parliament and then complain about me going to Collie. It is a little bit rich on opposition members' behalf, but not unusual.

We announced over \$650 million worth of investment, including the existing Collie transition fund of \$115 million, specifically in job-creating projects in Collie. That is designed to ensure that Collie has a sustainable and long-term future. I cannot think of another community that has received that attention before out of an event such as this. That is designed so that over the coming years, particularly in the lead-up to October 2029, we are able to successfully transition Collie and ensure that it remains a productive and successful community.

On top of that, in conjunction with, I expect, the private sector, we will invest \$3.8 billion into renewable generation because we know that renewable generation is cheaper, reliable and a large part of the future in making sure that we can keep household prices down across Western Australia. The expectation is—we will do all the relevant engineering studies now—that a lot of that will be in the Collie area because of the nature of that area. With dams and hills, pumped hydro makes sense in that vicinity. They are the sorts of things we are doing.

In terms of every single individual, the expectation and the commitment is that people will be case managed. Certainly, that is what I want to do. There is money in this announcement for specific training and support packages for individuals. Obviously, a range of individuals will be entitled to various forms of redundancy payment. As I committed the other day, the transition group will continue to talk to the community and individuals about redundancy payments to make sure that people are treated fairly. I look forward to further advice coming forward on that.

The first of the closures that we announced the other day will not take place until 2027, and the second will take place in 2029, so we have a considerable period of time to work this through. What we have successfully done is provide certainty. We have not just said we are going to close you down tomorrow, like the Liberal Party did in the state election campaign. We have given people time on these matters. We have a process that we will phase out coal, which is no longer working in the way it once did, and will transition to renewables, and that we will treat Collie fairly.