

ROYALTIES FOR REGIONS — EXPENDITURE

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

Before I ask my question, I would like to add a note on behalf of the Nationals WA on the announcements by both the member for Albany and the member for Collie–Preston, two worthy opponents in regional Western Australia. We wish you the best for the remaining 12 months and note the service to your communities over that long period of time. These members are very well regarded in their electorates. They do not need me to say that. Certainly, when we are in their electorates, there is absolutely no doubt about the service that they have provided. Congratulations on behalf of the Nationals.

I refer to the Western Australian Regional Development Trust 2018–19 annual report, which states that since the Premier’s government was elected in 2017, the royalties for regions fund has made a significant contribution to support the budget repair process. Will the Premier now admit that his government is deliberately short-changing the people of Western Australia and manipulating royalties for regions to pay for Perth projects?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

I thank the member for the question. It is a ridiculous argument. We have retained the royalties for regions program, as we said we would when we came to office. We are funding important priorities across regional Western Australia. People can go to any community across the state and see this government doing important things, whether it is in health, education, road building, rail to the south west, tourism support, airline marketing, supporting the pensioner fuel card, subsidising school buses, subsidising water or whatever else it might be. All these things the government is continuing to do and boosting across regional Western Australia.

We have strongly supported our regional communities. We have some great regional members in the house. In fact, the strongest contingent of regional members of Parliament in the Parliament of Western Australia is Labor MPs. What I have noticed about the Nationals WA —

Ms L. Mettam interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Vasse!

Mr M. McGOWAN: I have watched the National Party at a federal level. I hope that disease that has infected the federal National Party does not infect the state National Party, although we saw an outbreak last year, when poor Hon Jacqui Boyde, a member for the Mining and Pastoral Region, came under assault and was undermined by one of the Nationals MPs. All I would say is that stability, responsibility and competence are important in government. What the National Party is showing federally, and has shown locally, does not exhibit that.