

BHP — UNPAID ROYALTIES

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

I have a supplementary question. Given the Premier intends to hit mums and dads and small businesses with fee increases and charges in the upcoming state budget, why is he softer on BHP than he is on ordinary households in Western Australia?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

The dispute goes back, from memory, to the late 2000s. For eight and a half years of that period, the National Party was in government and did not do anything about it.

Ms M.J. Davies: Your own words—you say they owe us money.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the National Party!

Mr M. McGOWAN: That is what happened. The National Party was part of the government and did nothing about it. It always talked big on these issues, but never actually did anything.

Ms M.J. Davies: You've made some pretty big statements yourself, Premier.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the National Party!

Mr M. McGOWAN: I remember some of the language that the National Party used about these companies in Western Australia. It was very inflammatory, but when it came to the crunch about doing anything, it did not do anything. We look forward to, hopefully, an amicable solution to the issue. Obviously, I want to make sure that major investors such as BHP—I welcome its recent South Flank investment and a range of other things it does in Western Australia—continue to invest in Western Australia and create jobs for our citizens.